A Draft of a Proposed Response of The Episcopal Church to *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*

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*Gracious Father, we pray for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savior. Amen.*

**Introduction**

The Episcopal Church (TEC) is grateful to the World Council of Churches and its Commission on Faith and Order for its second convergence text: *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (TCTCV). TCTCV grows from Faith and Order’s first convergence text, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, recognizing that the main topics of BEM can be understood only in the context of the church. As a convergence text, TCTCV “express[es] how far Christian communities have come in their common understanding of the Church” [p. 1] while also identifying areas that need further work. We find both hope and encouragement in the great extent of convergence among the churches that TCTCV identifies.

In the United States, Christian churches and in different ways other religious traditions struggle with changes in societal views of religious organizations, with the survival instincts these changes trigger within religious groups, and with the temptation to nostalgia and self-absorption that ensues. The lack of unity, mutual recognition, and co-operative mission among religious groups and within Christianity only accentuates the negative perception of Christianity.

We rejoice in the progress toward unity brought about by the many stages in developing this text, including previous studies, responses from individuals and churches, and careful crafting and revision. We look forward to the future work of Faith and Order, shaped by the churches’ responses to TCTCV. We recognize that many issues remain, some of them apparently obdurate at this time. At the same time, while we do not know the shape of the future united church, we pray for and commit ourselves to the unity of the church, along with other churches and with our Lord Jesus Christ. Living into the unity of the church is not an easy task, but it is one we cannot

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*Prayer for the Church, 1979 Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, 816.*

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renounce. The Episcopal Church is committed to finding the fullness of the church that makes our witness credible, however arduous and difficult that may seem.

We have studied and learned from TCTCV, and we find that this text does reflect TEC’s ecclesiological understanding of the church. We also find that this text reflects our vision for the unified church for which we pray and toward which we work. We welcome further movement in this direction, including in areas where TEC may be willing to say more than TCTCV is able to. We elaborate our findings in answering the questions that TCTCV poses to the churches.

1. **To what extent does this text reflect the ecclesiological understanding of your church?**

   TCTCV reflects TEC’s understanding of the church in a very high degree. TCTCV 22 is entirely consistent with three of the four articles of the Chicago/Lambeth Quadrilateral as TEC has interpreted them in its 1979 Declaration on Unity and its 1982 Principles of Unity.²

   TCTCV also further clarifies the nature and purpose of *episkopé*, which in the Episcopal Church is expressed in the historic episcopate. For the sake of the unity of the church, TEC has interpreted this fourth article of the Quadrilateral to make possible the sharing of the episcopate with churches that are willing to receive it, such as the ELCA and the Moravian Church - Northern and Southern Provinces. We continue in dialogue with churches whose tradition is corporate *episkopé* (e.g., Presbyterian Church USA) and look forward to the day when churches are able to agree concerning the limits of legitimate diversity in this area.

   We welcome these elements in TCTCV that are particular emphases of Episcopal and Anglican ecclesiology:

   - **Incarcational theology** that ties together both the earthly ministry of Christ and the ministry of the Church as the body of Christ. We include here TCTCV’s affirmation that both baptism and the Lord’s Supper effect in a real way what they promise.
   - **The mission and the working of the Holy Spirit.** As TCTCV indicates, the Church is intended to serve God’s plan for the transformation of the world. God’s mission for the church is to proclaim in word and deed the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ. As Anglicans, we recognize that this view of mission is consistent with the Marks of Mission formally and informally embraced throughout the Anglican Communion and TEC.³
   - **Koinonia** as the fundamental characteristic of the church and so of ecclesiology suited to our contemporary global context. We welcome TCTCV’s affirmation of the eschatological character of koinonia, even as we are committed to receiving the gift of koinonia in our

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² See Appendix 3 for these statements, and the Chicago/Lambeth Quadrilateral.
³ The Marks of Mission affirm that the mission of the Church is the mission of Christ. This mission requires the church to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom; to teach, baptize and nurture new believers; to respond to human need by loving service; to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation; and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. [http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/five-marks-mission](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/five-marks-mission).
churches in our journey in history. We are grateful for the significant work done in the last several decades to elaborate the meaning and practice of koinonia within and between the churches. We hope for more discussion of the opportunities given to us by God through conflict, which can become an opportunity “to enhance our mutual understanding and to grow in the faith.”

Christians already share a real yet imperfect communion through the power of the Spirit, and seeking reconciliation within communion is an integral part of the process of growing up into full unity with Christ.

- The priesthood of all the people of God. The ecclesiology expressed in TEC’s 1979 Book of Common Prayer and other liturgies is based in the baptismal covenant that strongly affirms that all baptized persons are ministers of the Gospel and empowered for the mission of the church. TEC’s Catechism teaches that “The ministers of the church are lay persons, bishops, priest, and deacons.” All baptized persons have in baptism been called to ministry and given authority for the mission, guidance, and governance of the church in every area at every level. TEC is in the process of restructuring itself to express this understanding more fully in our structures, policies, and practices. TEC affirms that the ministry of the baptized is enhanced and encouraged by the leadership of those ordained and those otherwise commissioned.

- Legitimate diversity. In seeing ourselves as participating in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, TEC and other Anglican churches affirm that, because of “the sheer richness of the Gospel of Christ,” there is legitimate diversity in doctrine, discipline, and worship, and in morals and mission, within the one church. We recognize legitimate diversity as enriching, not dividing. We welcome TCTCV’s identification of the need for common criteria and structures for assessing diversity. We commend the approach taken in the statement “Communion, Conflict and Hope” of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, which has been useful both within and beyond TEC and the Anglican Communion.

- The necessity of the churches engaging in mission together unless this is impossible for legitimate reasons related to faith and order. TEC attempts to follow this principle at every level, even while we acknowledge that this is something we are able to do more fully than is currently the case, perhaps particularly at the local level.

- The necessity of exploring all issues, including morals, “in a spirit of mutual attentiveness and support” [¶36]. We would expand this to say that such attentiveness and support includes common prayer and worship, humility and the willingness to repent, and a habitual presumption of the good will and intentions of others. These dispositions are even more

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5 Book of Common Prayer (1979), 301-309.
6 Book of Common Prayer (1979), 855.
necessary when the issues under discussion are particularly difficult, whether because of
historic divergences or current disagreements.

2. *To what extent does this text offer a basis for growth in unity among the churches?*

TCTCV makes clear the very significant extent to which the churches already agree on
fundamental issues, such as those we have noted in #1. TCTCV helps to legitimize the
catholicity of all the churches, taken as a whole. Further, TCTCV sets out a basis for growth in
unity in many other ways, including but not limited to the following:

- “The Church, as the body of Christ, acts by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue his
  life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry and so participates in God’s
  work of healing a broken world” [ ¶5]. The Church is intended to serve God’s plan for the
  transformation of the world. We would add that the Holy Spirit also works in worship
  and prayer to empower the Church for its mission.

- The unity of the church is visible when churches “recognize in one another the authentic
  presence of…the ‘one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church’” [ ¶8]. We would state further
  that such recognition takes place in shared life, mission, and work, in worship and in
  prayer, and in instances where the baptized of different traditions acknowledge that they
  share a common faith and can live into a shared ministry. That is, the unity of the church
  may be visible in areas where formal recognition is not yet forthcoming, as ¶43 notes. As
  TCTCV says, the Church is “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic” because of the nature and
  work of God, not on its own account.

- “Legitimate diversity” contributes to the “unity and catholicity of the Church as a whole”
  [ ¶17]. We recognize that the meaning of the term “legitimate diversity” is deliberately
  vague in TCTCV, reflecting the churches’ differences on this point. We agree with
  TCTCV’s statements that there is need for common criteria and mutually recognized
  structures to distinguish in which areas diversity is enriching, in which it is divisive, and
  in which it is church dividing. Developing ways to distinguish legitimate from
  illegitimate diversity, including in matters of faith and order, also entails a nuanced
  consideration of conflict in the church.

- “Each local church contains within it the fullness of what it is to be the Church. It is
  wholly Church, but not the whole Church…The universal Church is the communion of
  all local churches united in faith and worship around the world” [ ¶18]. This view of the
  church is implicit in the Chicago/Lambeth Quadrilateral as interpreted by TEC, as well as
  in foundational documents of Anglicanism and of TEC. From the English Reformation
  forward, Anglicans have understood Anglican churches to be part of, but by no means the
  whole of, the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. We hope and aspire to believe as
  the one church believes, and we hope and aspire to do what the one church does. We
  recognize that the fullness of the church is eschatological, at the same time that that
eschatological reality is already anticipated in the Church’s life now and throughout 
history.

- All authority comes from Christ and is to be exercised in the light of how Christ 
exercised authority. His transparency, authenticity and above all his truth-telling not only 
drew the attention of the people; these qualities also created the vulnerability that led to 
his death. In this sense, Christian authority is distinguished from mere power. 
Leadership is “neither only personal, nor only delegated by the community. It is a gift of 
the Holy Spirit destined for the service (diakonia) of the Church in love” [¶28]. Faithful 
leadership should include the participation of the whole community. All churches need a 
ministry of oversight (episkopé) that is “exercised in personal, collegial and communal 
ways” [¶29]. TEC affirms that the exercise of episkopé does entail the “quality of 
synodality or conciliarity” that “reflects the mystery of the trinitarian life of God” [¶30]. 
The decision-making and other governance structures and processes of TEC are already 
personal, collegial, and communal, in that TEC is structured to require synodality and 
conciliarity at every level. We would hope that all churches may affirm the importance 
of the synodal as well as conciliar aspects of episkopé.

- Ethics are rooted in God and not isolated from “the moral struggles of humankind as a 
whole” [¶35]. The Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation in the US (ARCUSA) has 
published an agreed statement on ethics and moral life, “Ecclesiology and Moral 
Discernment: Seeking a Unified Moral Witness.”8 This document closely examines the 
processes of moral discernment and teaching that the two churches have in common, 
identifying some areas where the teachings of the two churches are consonant with each 
other (e.g., migration and immigration), and some where potentially divisive differences 
persist (e.g., same-sex relations). The statement affirms that the two churches share a 
common vision of full and visible unity to which diversity is integral, noting that unity 
need not entail the reconciliation of all differences. We encourage the Commission on 
Faith and Order to consider this agreed statement in its further work on how the church is 
both in and for the world.

- “Even now, divided Christian communities can and do” act “jointly to bring relief to 
suffering human beings and to help create a society that fosters human dignity” [¶36]. At 
a time when ecumenical agreement in faith and order seems hard to achieve, we rejoice 
that the expressions of joint work to relieve suffering and create a just society are so 
strong and widespread. TEC is thankful to be able to participate in such efforts, which 
we see at local, regional, and global levels. We note that a century ago such common 
wisdom would not have been possible, but we have since grown together in unity. This 
gives us hope that the challenges we face in the present day need not be insurmountable. 
We believe that bringing this form of common witness together with the discussion of

Doctrine and discipline would be of great benefit to discussions of faith and order, as well as to recognition of the degree of communion which the churches already share.

Further, in stating the areas of difference and disagreement that still remain, TCTCV is most helpful in clarifying the work that must be done, and suggesting possible ways in which it might proceed. We elaborate further in #4, below. Even so, we consider it important to distinguish between real differences that are obdurate, and perceived differences that may be resolvable through careful study and honest discussion.

At the same time, we note that TCTCV does not identify the barriers or challenges to unity posed by the massive historic and current inequities along socio-economic lines, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and legacies of colonialism, which are ecclesial as well as geo-political. Nor does TCTCV at any point refer to the role of women with men in the churches, though this has been a matter of considerable discussion over the decades. We consider these highly significant omissions. While social, economic, and cultural inequities may not be stated as doctrine, we think that a strong argument can be made that these are lived doctrine, and that they certainly influence doctrinal formulations. We believe such issues must be addressed within the context of faith and order, because such inequities are significant elements of the contexts of our day-to-day faith.

The Episcopal Church has focused historically on racial reconciliation as a primary aspect of ecumenical cooperation and work toward unity. Our church “understands and affirms that the call to pray and act for racial reconciliation is integral to our witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to our living into the demands of our Baptismal Covenant.”

In 2009 the Episcopal Church repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery and currently supports Native Americans and others in increasing both tribal and environmental integrity and sustainability.

Our work toward ecclesial unity is increasingly rooted in seeking deeper connection with historically African American denominations, in our continuing participation in the Consultation on Church Unity and its successor Churches Uniting in Christ, and in active dialogue with churches such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Moravian Provinces in the United States, whose own longstanding commitments to diversity and inclusion inspire us.

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12 http://churchesunitinginchrist.org/.
3. What adaptations or renewal in the life of your church does this statement challenge your church to work for?

TCTCV challenges TEC in these areas:

- *Episkopé*, especially whether the historic episcopate is intended by Christ for the future united church, and what this might mean about other forms of *episkopé*. The question of primacy is clearly a part of this.

- Primacy, especially the role of a universal primacy. TEC is not ready to say yes to universal primacy of one or more bishops. Anglicans have typically emphasized the importance of dispersed authority within the structures of the church. We believe that primacy need not entail centralization. Historically and currently, Anglicans hesitate to centralize authority and governance in what might be called primatial bodies, let alone in an individual primate at the communion level.

- Reception and non-reception. Especially in the absence of criteria and structures for assessing legitimate diversity, it is not clear how the churches are to understand important decisions by other churches before we are closer to unity. We acknowledge the need for a hermeneutics of generosity, even as we note that such decisions and their implementation do have bearing on how statements of doctrine, discipline, and moral teaching by a particular church are received.

- The range of legitimate diversity. TEC sees this range as quite broad. Unless diversity infringes the church’s true vocation, diversity helps the church pursue its mission in the widely varied contexts in which it is set. We are inspired by the motto of the Moravian churches: “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things love.”

- The moral challenge of the Gospel. Here we are particularly aware of the disjunction between our biblically-based creedal faith and the massive historic and current inequities that are such a significant aspect of the context in which we live out our lives. We are grateful for the prophetic and pastoral calls for repentance and conversion presented by other churches here and around the world, and by a wide range of social movements that are not affiliated with any church.

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13 [http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/thismonth/12_05%20In%20Essentials.pdf](http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/thismonth/12_05%20In%20Essentials.pdf). The Episcopal Church is in full communion with the Moravian Church [USA] – Northern and Southern Provinces.
• The importance of deepening and expanding our engagement with other churches, especially those that have not been part of the ecumenical movement, including so-called new and emerging churches as well as evangelical and Pentecostal churches.

Finally, all ecumenical and interreligious efforts, including TCTCV, challenge us constantly to assess the extent to which TEC, its leaders and its members, have the will toward the unity for which Christ prayed. We must constantly ask ourselves and each other, “What must we do to foster and maintain our will toward unity?”

4. How far is your church able to form closer relationships in life and mission with those churches which can acknowledge in a positive way the account of the Church described in this statement?

The Episcopal Church has a long history of engagement with other churches, with fruitful outcomes in both life and mission. Appendix 4 lists all current official ecumenical efforts in which The Episcopal Church is represented. In addition, Episcopal churches are deeply engaged in local mission engagement in “life and work.” TEC also participates in the ecumenical work of the Anglican Communion in a variety of ways.

In addition, TCTCV 7 and Ch. 4 discuss the challenges presented to the churches by religious pluralism. We believe that TEC has made significant contributions to this discussion: representatives contributed to the drafting of the NCCC Policy Statement on Interfaith Relations adopted in 1999, as well as making two significant statements of its own in 1991 and 2009. In our ecumenical and inter-religious work we also express our commitment to racial reconciliation, noted above.

5. What aspects of the life of the Church could call for further discussion and what advice could your church offer for the ongoing work by Faith and Order in the area of ecclesiology?

We encourage Faith and Order to continue work on the areas where the churches differ or disagree. We note that most if not all TCTCV’s questions and suggestions about what may be needed to move toward greater convergence are at least amenable to Episcopalians/ Anglicans. Indeed, the principal questions about what is needed for the One Church are things the Anglican Communion has been wrestling with within itself for its entire history.

We believe that the following areas may fruitfully be considered now:15

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15 In Appendix 1, we have commented on other areas where further work will be needed, areas that we consider to be of less urgency at this time than the ones discussed here.

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• Consideration of intermediate steps between division and full visible unity that entails reconciliation of ministries. TEC and the Anglican Communion are able to affirm the concept of degrees of communion. That is, we share a degree of communion with all baptized Christians, and find it helpful and encouraging to bring to light the extent of communion that churches already share. Doing so relativizes the importance of remaining differences. We welcome IARCCUM’s vision as “a eucharistic communion of churches: confessing the one faith and demonstrating by their harmonious diversity the richness of faith.”\textsuperscript{16} We rejoice that the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have now both affirmed the areas of agreement in Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry and Eucharist.\textsuperscript{17} We look forward to seeing some way for churches to recognize each other as holding the same faith even when there are outstanding issues.\textsuperscript{18} We look for ways to be reconciled with others through mutual/ reciprocal recognition of church as churches.

• Further discussion on the relationship between worship, doctrine and order, and mission. As Anglicans, we believe that worship and common prayer contribute strongly to the rule of faith, doctrine, and mission, and are in turn shaped by these.

• Common criteria and mutually recognized structures to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate diversity, including in matters of faith and order. Particularly pressing for TEC is the extent to which differences on moral questions are appropriately seen as “church-dividing.”

• The relationship of the movement of the Holy Spirit to institutional structure and ministerial order, and thus the extent to which these may be changed. This is a crucial aspect of the discussion as to Christ’s intention for the church in regard to \textit{episkopé} and the inextricably related qualities of synodality and conciliarity. TEC believes that the historic episcopate is intended by Christ for the coming united Church, at the same time that many Episcopalians and Anglicans would say that this does not invalidate other forms of \textit{episkopé} in the past or the present. We suspect that making it clear that apostolic faith is more fundamental than and prior to apostolic succession would advance greater understanding and agreement in ecclesiology as well as theology. We find that the Orthodox churches’ approach to different types of apostolicity is very helpful.\textsuperscript{19}

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\item \textsuperscript{17} http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/lutheran/upload/Declaration_on_the_Way-for-Website.pdf

\item \textsuperscript{18} The nine churches of Churches Uniting in Christ (of which the Episcopal Church is one) intends to celebrate just such a recognition of ministries. Moreover, TEC has entered into agreements of Interim Eucharistic Sharing with ecumenical partners when it is possible to say that a) there are no outstanding, significant doctrinal issues to resolve; and b) the next stage is full communion that includes reconciliation of ministries.

\item \textsuperscript{19} For example, The North American Orthodox/ Roman Catholic Bilateral Consultation, “Apostolicity as God’s Gift in the Life of the Church” (1986); Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, \textit{The Church of the Triune God} (2006); and some of the preparatory documents for the 2016 Holy and Great Council.
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Further elaboration of what the churches can already say together about the various aspects of authority. We would welcome a convergence statement that takes fuller account of the work done by many bilateral and conciliar dialogues throughout the world. A statement addressed to the local churches and congregations and their members would be most helpful at this time.

We recognize that much work is needed in the particular churches for further agreement to emerge on the following:

- Mutual recognition of various forms of baptism. TEC recognizes the validity of all baptisms performed with water “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Our official policy is that any baptized Christian may receive Communion in the Episcopal Church.
- Governance and decision-making, including the synodal/conciliar aspects that accompany the exercise of episkopé and other forms of authority. TEC, along with other Anglican churches, affirms that episkopé implies synodality/conciliarity, and vice versa. Further, we are convinced that an adequate account of reception must include the principles of subsidiarity and of mutual, widespread consultation that influences decisions.
- How Christians respond to religious pluralism. We point again to TEC’s work on this, noted in #4, above.

We think that further work on the following areas is contingent on further progress in the areas we have already noted:

- The significance of tradition and the “traditioning process” in discernment of the movement of the Holy Spirit in the new contexts of the post-colonial world. We note here the significance of this discussion for determining whether ordination is reserved for men only, and what role consideration of personal qualities (including sexual and gender identification) plays in determining who is fit for ordination. TEC ordains women (including lesbians) and gay men to all offices of ordained ministry. We do not believe that these practices need by church-dividing, though we recognize that these practices may impair communion to some extent, as is the case within the Anglican Communion.
- How visible unity is expressed concretely in communion in the fullness of apostolic faith; in sacramental life; in a truly one and mutually recognized ministry; in structures of conciliar relations and decision-making; and in common witness and service in the world [¶22]. While none of us knows what the future church will be, it is imperative to present some concrete possibilities so that the people of God can grow in the vision of and commitment to the coming church.
- A more precise understanding and agreement on the appropriate relations between various levels of a united church and what kinds of leadership are needed to serve these
relationships. This includes further work on the matter of the primacy of one or more bishops.
Appendix 1: Other areas where work is needed

In the body of our response, we have made suggestions about important work that we would like to see the Commission on Faith and Order pursue in the near term. Below are other issues we consider important, with brief comments on each.

**Sin and the church.** TEC affirms that the church is created by God and entrusted to human beings, who continue to sin even as they grow closer to Christ. We also believe that God the Holy Spirit will preserve the church indefectible. Confessing the sins of the church as an organization does not compromise the church’s nature and mission. Particularly in instances of widespread injustice, the church’s confessing its sins is a necessary and desirable part of the church’s participation in the work of God.

**The tension between the already and the not yet.** We welcome TCTCV’s emphasis on the eschatological aspect of ecclesiology and would like to see it developed further. We believe such work will also advance the discussion of sin and the church.

**The church as transformative influence in society.** As Anglicans, we strongly affirm the transformative role of the church in society. We believe this is integral to the mission of the church. We encourage further discussion of this area that takes into account the post-colonial situation of all the churches across the world.

**Scripture, preaching, and worship.** In the body of our response we point to the importance of liturgy and worship as foundational to the church. We look forward to greater convergence on the role and authority of Scripture as it is used in worship, including its interpretation through preaching.

**Reception.** Recognizing the important work done on reception by WCC, various ecumenical dialogues, and a wide range of scholars, we would welcome further development, particularly in relation to the question of how the church discerns the extent to which reception is taking place and the extent to which it is not. What are criteria for discerning reception, particularly in contexts where rapid solutions to problems are valued highly?

**Greater realism in discussing points of convergence.** We are not convinced that convergence is as strong or widespread in all instances as TCTCV suggests. We consider it necessary to assess church practices as well as statements in discerning convergence.

**Morals in relation to salvation.** We believe that further discussion of the relationship of salvation, sanctification, and holiness would be of great assistance in the discussion of any area of morals. This is a theological as well as pastoral issue.
Appendix 2: Response of the Episcopal Diocese of the Honduras

HACIA UNA VISION EN COMUN DE NUESTRA IGLESIA

Gracias a la Iglesia Episcopal (DFMS), y el Consejo Mundial y la Comisión de Fe y Orden iglesias que están trabajando en este proyecto destinado a la Unidad de la Iglesia. Que no será una tarea fácil, pero lo que sugiere el documento se basa en la unidad del cuerpo de Cristo. La respuesta de la Iglesia Episcopal es guiado por el Catecismo, la obra del Espíritu Santo, y la eclesiología Episcopal Anglicana. Una cosa que notamos es el uso de ambas palabras Episcopal y Anglicana como si fuéramos dos iglesias. Es cierto que nuestro contexto es Episcopal pero también lo es que somos parte de la Comunión Anglicana.

Durante mucho tiempo hemos recorrido dividido eclesiásticamente, esta división se alimenta la nostalgia de la humanidad. Este documento de la Iglesia Episcopal se compromete a manifestar y trabajar por la unidad que tenemos en Cristo y ahora tenemos que encontrar la plenitud de hacernos testigos creíbles de la fe cristiana. reconocimiento mutuo de los ministerios eclesiales, la profesión de una "Iglesia" es una tarea a la que no podemos renunciar ardua y difícil como puede parecer.

También nos hemos dado cuenta de que por medio de este documento veo que tratar de "legitimar" la catolicidad de la Iglesia en su conjunto.

Esta es la opinión de nuestro proyecto de documento Episcoapal Diócesis de Honduras que nos ha enviado, oramos para que el Espíritu Santo del Señor nos guiará para lograr una Iglesia unida a caminar a la luz de su palabra, una iglesia profética para anunciar la buena noticia en todo tiempo y lugar.

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20 The Diocese of Honduras is one of nine Latin American dioceses that comprise Province 9 of the Episcopal Church.
Appendix 3: The Chicago/ Lambeth Quadrilateral, Declaration on Unity, and Principles of Unity

The Chicago/ Lambeth Quadrilateral (1886/1888) affirms that the following elements “supply a basis on which approach may be by God's blessing made towards” the unity of the church:

(a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

(b) The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

(c) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself--Baptism and the Supper of the Lord--ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.

(d) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.21

Declarations on Unity (1979), approved by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church

The visible unity we seek will be one eucharistic fellowship. As an expression of and a means toward this goal, the uniting Church will recognize itself as a communion of Communions, based upon acknowledgment of catholicity and apostolicity. In this organic relationship all will recognize each other's members and ministries. All will share the bread and the cup of the Lord. All will acknowledge each other as belonging to the Body of Christ at all places and at all times. All will proclaim the Gospel to the world with one mind and purpose. All will serve the needs of humankind with mutual trust and dedication. And for these ends all will plan and decide together in assemblies constituted by authorized representatives whenever and wherever there is need. We do not yet see the shape of that collegiality, conciliarity, authority and primacy which need to be present and active in the Diocese with its Parishes as well as nationally, regionally, universally; but we recognize that some ecclesial structure will be necessary to bring about the expressions of our unity in the Body of Christ described above. We do not yet know how the particular traditions of each of the Communions will be maintained and developed for the enrichment of the whole Church. We do not see how the Church will be shaped by the particular histories and cultures within which she is called to fulfill her mission. All Christians are challenged to express more fully among themselves the biblical call to mutual responsibility and interdependence. We believe ways can now be found to express this call to a communion of the Churches in the Body of Christ. As the Churches become partners in mission they will move from present interrelatedness to interdependence.

Principles of Unity (1982), approved by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church

21 Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, 876-878.
The 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church reaffirms the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral as found on pages 876-878 of the Book of Common Prayer as a statement of basic principles which express our own unity, and as a statement of essential principles for organic unity with other churches, and affirm the following as an explication of that basic document without denying anything contained therein: that

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God as they are witness to God's action in Jesus Christ and the continuing presence of his Holy Spirit in the Church, that they are the authoritative norm for catholic faith in Jesus Christ and for the doctrinal and moral tradition of the Gospel, and that they contain all things necessary for salvation.

2. The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds are the forms through which the Christian Church, early in its history under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, understood, interpreted and expressed its faith in the Triune God. The continuing doctrinal tradition is the form through which the Church seeks to understand, interpret and express its faith in continuity with these ancient creeds and in its awareness of the world to which the Word of God must be preached.

3. The Church is the sacrament of God's presence in the world and the sign of the Kingdom for which we hope. That presence and hope are made active and real in the Church and in the individual lives of Christian men and women through the preaching of the Word of God, through the Gospel sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, as well as other sacramental rites, and through our apostolate to the world in order that it may become the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ.

4. Apostolicity is evidenced in continuity with the teaching, the ministry, and the mission of the apostles. Apostolic teaching must, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, be founded upon the Holy Scriptures and the ancient fathers and creeds, making its proclamation of Jesus Christ and his Gospel for each new age consistent with those sources, not merely reproducing them in a transmission of verbal identity. Apostolic ministry exists to promote, safeguard and serve apostolic teaching. All Christians are called to this ministry by their Baptism. In order to serve, lead and enable this ministry, some are set apart and ordained in the historic orders of Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon. We understand the historic episcopate as central to this apostolic ministry and essential to the reunion of the Church, even as we acknowledge "the spiritual reality of the ministries of those Communions which do not possess the Episcopate" (Lambeth Appeal 1920, Section 7). Apostolic mission is itself a succession of apostolic teaching and ministry inherited from the past and carried into the present and future. Bishops in apostolic succession are, therefore, the focus and personal symbols of this inheritance and mission as they preach and teach the Gospel and summon the people of God to their mission of worship and service.
Appendix 4: Official Ecumenical Relations of The Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church is in full communion with the following churches:

- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- The Moravian Church - Northern and Southern Provinces
- Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht
- Philippine Independent Church
- Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, India
- Provinces of the Anglican Communion
  - By virtue of its participation in the Anglican Communion, TEC also has communion relations with union churches formed with the participation of Anglican dioceses:
    - Church of Bangladesh
    - Church of North India
    - Church of Pakistan
    - Church of South India
- The Episcopal Church and the Church of Sweden acknowledged a formal relationship of communion on two occasions in 2015: at the 78th General Convention in Salt Lake City on June 28; and on November 18 in Uppsala at the General Synod of the Church of Sweden.

The Episcopal Church participates in these ecumenical conciliar bodies:

- World Council of Churches
- National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
- Churches Uniting in Christ
- Christian Churches Together in the USA

The Episcopal Church participates in bilateral dialogues with these churches:

- United Methodist Church—Interim Eucharistic Sharing agreement
- Presbyterian Church USA
- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers Network is active in most dioceses and co-sponsors the annual National Workshop on Christian Unity.

The Episcopal Church at local, regional, provincial, and global levels is involved in mission efforts with many churches in the USA and around the world. TEC is in partnership with Church World Service.