

RESOLUTIONS

of the

Moravian Church– Northern Province

on

SOCIAL ISSUES

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The Moravian Church-Northern Province

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Preface

This collection contains positions on social issues taken by synods of the Moravian Church–Northern Province, initially published by the Committee on Church and Society at the request of the 1986 Provincial Synod. The collection contains resolutions taken by synods from 1930 through 1998. Every attempt has been made to identify every resolution speaking to social issues. The language of some resolutions has been edited to conform with contemporary usage.

By examining these resolutions, careful readers will see:

- the range of social issues which the church has chosen to address through the actions of its provincial synods;
- the specific positions taken on those social issues; and
- the way positions have evolved and developed over the years.

It is hoped that this collection may be of value as members consider ways to address social issues through education, social service, witness, and advocacy for change.

Abbreviations

JNP—*Journal of the Provincial Synod* (of year indicated)

R&E—*Resolutions and Elections of the Provincial Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church* (of the year indicated)

R— Resolution number as noted in *Journal* or *Resolutions and Elections*

Introduction

When the Church Speaks: What It Means When the Church Addresses Social Issues

If you've never been a part of a Provincial Synod but have taken time to thumb through this collection of resolutions, you may feel like you've stepped into a strange world. The language of some of these documents may seem foreign (at least in comparison to our day-to-day speech), their style may seem formal and arcane, and the whole collection may seem like nothing more than bloodless prose composed by those with convoluted verbal skills.

The purpose of this collection is not, however, to make you feel alienated. Rather, the Committee on Church and Society wants you to know what the church has said on important social issues so you can see the critical connection between your faith and issues that often dominate the news. Faith and life are related; they intersect and interact. Social issues are one of the places where that relationship is clearest. Before delving into the specific content of this collection, take a few moments to reflect on four questions:

- who speaks for the church on social issues?
- how does the church speak on social issues?
- what does it mean when the church speaks on a social issue? and
- what makes the church effective in addressing social issues?

I. Who speaks for the church on social issues?

The first question is easy to answer, at least officially. The Provincial Synod speaks for the church on social issues, as it does on virtually every other issue. Delegates meet in committee and plenary sessions, preparing and debating resolutions on many issues, including social issues. Resolutions passed by the Synod express the will of the church on the matter the resolution addresses. Every four years, Provincial Synod speaks for the church.

The Committee on Church and Society, under the direction of the Provincial Elders' Conference, also speaks for the church on social issues. More precisely, the Provincial Elders' Conference really does the speaking, with the Committee on Church and Society suggesting what might be said.

Informally, we *all* speak for the church—lay members, clergy, staff persons, and elected officers. Most of us don't deliver pronouncements, but we do live and act in human society. From our actions others may infer what the Moravian Church believes and teaches. This is why the church speaks formally on social issues: to offer us guidance in our personal, informal speaking, the speaking we do through our actions and expressed opinions from day to day.

II. How does the church speak on social issues?

The primary way the church speaks is through resolutions of Provincial Synod. By debating and passing resolutions, the Synod directs the church by specifying actions to be taken or by stating its belief or opinion about something.

Where do these resolutions come from? In the strictest sense, they are the report of a Synod committee, discussed and approved by a majority of the voting delegates.

How is Synod motivated to speak on a social issue, to discuss and approve a committee report? Synod actions originate in a variety of ways. Sometimes a single individual who feels strongly about an issue prepares a proposal for Synod consideration. Sometimes a congregational board or a district or provincial committee prepares a proposal or requests that Synod act. Sometimes a Synod committee itself, after discussing issues that members place on its agenda, proposes action for Synod to consider.

However the proposal originates, at Synod it is referred to the appropriate committee (such as the Committee on Church and Society or the Committee on Church Government) for consideration. The committee discusses the proposal, edits it to its liking, and votes on whether to submit it to the whole Synod as a committee report. The report is debated, perhaps amended, and ultimately approved or disapproved by a vote of the Synod. If approved, it becomes a Synod directive, to be carried out as the report itself says.

Synod reports have two parts. The second part, often called the "Resolveds," contains the statement of the action(s) that Synod wants someone in the church to carry out. Usually we focus our attention on these "Resolveds," as these are the parts of the report that tell us what we need to do.

The first part of the report, often called the "Whereases," provides the rationale for the actions mandated in the "Resolveds." Traditionally, this part of the Synod report has received less attention, both from the reporting committee and Synod. The chairperson of Synod sometimes admonishes delegates to "confine your debate to the 'Resolveds.'"

Our bias is in favor of action, in what the church is being required to do, so we pay more attention to the “Resolveds.”

However, the “Whereases” are important because they articulate the theological and factual reasons for the mandated actions. Between Synods, groups like the Committee on Church and Society need to respond to issues that may be timely and important, but that may never have been spoken to by the church. In order to get some idea of how the committee should address these issues, the committee examines how Synod addressed similar concerns. The committee looks at past Synod resolutions, both the “Resolveds” and the “Whereases.” In other words, the committee looks not just at *what* previous Synods felt appropriate, but *why* they felt it appropriate. The committee uses the rationales as bases for setting further policy.

III. What does it mean when the church speaks on a social issue?

This is the most difficult question. When the church speaks, clearly it does not mean that it speaks definitively for everyone who is a member of the church. Nearly everyone who is a member of the church disagrees with something Synod has passed, and there are probably a few who disagree with everything Synod has passed. All these people are still good Moravians. Our motto, “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things love,” as well as basic documents like *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* honor an individual’s freedom of conscience. No, when the church speaks on a social issue it does not bind its members, congregations, clergy, or even its employees.

Rather than binding, the church *informs* by speaking on a social issue. It says, “This issue is so important that we have discussed it and have recommendations which we think ought to be carried out to address it. We urge you to think about it and seriously consider doing what we recommend.” The church can’t make anyone think differently or do anything they don’t want to do, but the church can inform its members what it considers the best position and action to be. The individual, with a conscience informed by study, prayer, and reflection, is still free to make her or his own decision.

When the church chooses to speak, it responds not only to a sense that the issue is important but also that it is timely. The action of a Provincial Synod has a specific context. The church does not pretend to speak for all times and all places, but only out of and to the specific context of the moment. Of course some Synod actions seem to address and articulate critical, universal principles (for example, statements on racial equality); but just because the church speaks rightly and truly for all time on some topics does not mean it will do so on every topic, every time. Our information and understanding grow and evolve; our sensitivity changes; our alertness to the prompting of God’s Spirit varies. And sometimes, gathered as a Synod, we recognize past

inadequacies in our speaking and we change our minds. When the church speaks on social issues, it expresses its best thinking of the moment. Time may prove the need for rethinking and revising stands taken earlier.

What happens when the church says something with which we disagree? We are free, within the liberty of our own informed consciences, to disagree and to speak out. However, as members of the church, we should take its view seriously. Our consciences may be primary, but the disagreement suggests that we ought to reexamine our own opinions with such seriousness that we place the burden of proof on ourselves, not on the church. If we can't justify our own belief so that it overcomes the church's belief, then we ought to accept that the church's position is right. We need to take seriously the thought of the community, which draws upon the insights and perspectives of many, and subject our own thinking to the community's critique.

IV. What makes the church effective in addressing social issues?

The church must have at least five things to be effective in speaking on social issues. It must have trust—its members must trust both the church and each other. We must trust that we all are trying to do the right thing for the common good. If we cannot trust each other, we cannot be effective in our search for the right and true.

Second, the church must be informed. It must, through individuals, boards, and committees, research issues and discern both the facts and the values upon which its positions must rest. This research should include not just the “facts of the matter” but also the traditions of the church, the witness of scripture, the tests of reason, and the prayerful search for the leading of the Spirit.

Third, the church must be responsive in order to be effective—responsive to the facts, to its discernment of the Spirit, to its tradition, to the witness of scripture, to the tests of reasons, and to the needs and suffering of people created in the image of God. It must be ready and willing to respond to the needy, to the marginalized, to the voiceless, to the oppressed. “The least of these” must claim the church's response.

Fourth, the church must be responsible. It must be a good steward of its tangible and intangible resources. When it chooses to speak and act, its effectiveness depends on its willingness to bring every resource to the task responsibly.

Lastly, the church needs to speak and act with careful, strategic reasoning and nuanced clarity. It must not confuse rash judgment with prophetic action. Neither must it mistake the possibility of controversy with its own best interest, nor obfuscate in order to avoid

being held accountable. The church must be as clear as it can about what it believes, about what it hopes to do, and about how it plans to do it.

As you examine these resolutions of the Synods of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America, test both your own beliefs and the effectiveness of the church's witness. Then add your voice and action to our church's efforts to bring about God's will for a just and free society for all.

—Gary L. Harke
The Committee on Church and Society

Ways to Use This Resource

1. Place this resource in the church library as a reference for all to use.
2. Distribute copies to members of the Board of Elders and the Church and Society Committee to use when deciding which social issues to address and how. Suggestions for action offered by Provincial Synods may be the basis for congregational programming planning.
3. Use this resource as a primary source for one or more sessions on the social teachings of the Moravian Church in catechetical instruction programs or new member classes.
4. Use this resource as a textbook for adult forums on the topics the church has addressed through Synod resolutions. For example, a Christian Education Committee might sponsor a forum on human sexuality, with one or more sessions devoted to the church's positions on issues of sexuality. Consult the table of contents and the index to find the appropriate resolutions. Then ask forum participants to do things like:
 - analyze the rationale for the position taken by the church: is it adequate? is it accurate? what would make the reasoning stronger? why do you think these reasons were provided for the position?
 - analyze the position taken by the church: do you agree with it? why or why not? does it agree with positions taken by other religious communions? if you disagree, what would it take to convince you that the church's position is correct?
 - review the actions the Synod suggests for the church: how do these actions help the church to address the issue? does it seem that they would be effective? what has been done by the church to implement these actions? what more remains to be done, and what can the congregation and its members do?
 - step back from the specific text of resolutions and look for the fundamental values upon which the church's position rests: what are these values? are they central or essential values? or are they merely the result of prevailing personal opinions? is the witness the resolutions attempt to present true to your understanding of the gospel?
 - examine their own faith and life: how are you challenged by the church's position? is there a personal "growing edge" that the church's teaching on this issue uncovers for you?
5. Use this resource to prepare future delegates to District and Provincial Synods, especially those who might be willing to serve on Committees on Church and Society at Synod.

ABORTION

Re: Abortion and Capital Punishment

Whereas, our church's statements regarding abortion and capital punishment have not been revisited in some time; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province shall direct the Provincial Elders' Conference to re-examine our statements about abortion and capital punishment, possibly by assigning the issues to the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, with the task of bringing its findings to the 2008 Synods of the Canadian, Eastern and Western Districts and to the 2010 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province; and be it further

RESOLVED: Congregations are encouraged to discuss our church's statements on abortion and capital punishment and, if so desired, pass on suggestions for discussion within the work of the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission.

R&E 2006, p. 18, R. 13-14

Whereas, it must be our goal as a denomination to seek deeper spiritual truths concerning social issues and not merely to be aligned with one side on the issue of abortion, and

Whereas, we respect the inevitability of differences of opinion, and respect the personal faith and commitment which underlies the varieties of Christian interpretations, beliefs, and practices, within and beyond the Moravian Church, and

Whereas, the Moravian statement on abortion has been carefully developed over a period of twenty years by Provincial Synods and comprehensively stated by the 1974 Provincial Synod, and

Whereas, abortion continues to be an issue of serious concern for people of faith, for congregations, and for the Northern Province of the Moravian Church, especially in regard to the Northern Province's membership in the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, and

Whereas, resolutions from District Synods, both supporting and opposing the Province's membership in RCAR, have been submitted to this Synod, and

Whereas, our unity is rooted in Jesus Christ, not in uniformity of beliefs and practices, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, reaffirms the 1974 Provincial Synod statement on abortion; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, recommends the use in congregations and for pastoral care the study paper authorized by the Provincial Elders' Conference entitled "Abortion: A Pastoral Perspective;" and be it further

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall withdraw its membership from the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights and direct the Standing Committee on Church and Society to explore membership in RCAR as a committee and, following consultation with the Provincial Elders' Conference, the committee shall determine its relationship with RCAR.

R&E 1990, p. 46, R. 14-16

Whereas, "the Moravian Church believes in the sacredness of life and the quality of life. We believe that abortion should not be used as a method of birth control nor as a means of controlling population and that abortion should not be taken lightly or without thorough consideration of alternatives and professional counseling:" (1974 Northern Provincial Synod), and

Whereas, the Moravian Church has had a tradition of leaving decisions regarding moral issues that are not clearly defined in the Bible to individual conscience, and

Whereas, a statement addressing the issue of abortion was made by the 1974 Provincial Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church leaving the decision concerning an unwanted pregnancy to individual conscience, and

Whereas, there is a strong movement in the United States to terminate the freedom to choose abortion, and

Whereas, we respect differences in religious beliefs concerning abortion and oppose, in accord with the principle of religious liberty, any legislation which would stipulate a specific religious opinion or belief concerning abortion upon all Americans (1982 Western District Synod), therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church, Northern Province, affirm its belief in the sacredness of life and the quality of life, its belief that abortion should not be used as a method of birth control nor as a means of controlling population, and its belief that abortion should not be taken lightly or without thorough consideration of alternatives and professional counseling, but that the Moravian Church, Northern Province, join with 30 other religious organizations in the Religious Coalition for Abortion

Rights, in order to oppose legislation which would make all abortions illegal.

R&E 1986, pp. 35–36, R. 12

RESOLVED: that this Synod of the Northern Province, respecting the position of our Church regarding abortion as expressed by the 1974 Synod, continue to affirm the sacredness of life and the complex nature of decisions concerning abortion, and as a result record our opposition to a constitutional amendment banning all abortions.

R&E 1982, p. 50, R. 32

Whereas, the Moravian Church believes in the sacredness of life and in the quality of life,
and

Whereas, we believe that abortion should not be used as a method of birth control nor a means of controlling population, and

Whereas, Christian faith calls us to affirm the freedom of persons as well as the sanctity of life, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that abortion should be a matter of responsible personal decision, with continuing counseling provided if desired, and be it further

RESOLVED: that alternatives to abortion be given careful consideration in the perspective of *possibly* bringing mercy to a difficult situation. These alternatives include: (a) adoption, (b) single parenthood, (c) continued pregnancy for a married couple confronted with an unplanned pregnancy, (d) marriage for a single woman, or (e) temporary foster care, and be it further

RESOLVED: that abortion be accepted as an option only where all other possible alternatives will lead to greater destruction of human life and spirit.

Whereas, neither science nor religion has claimed to fully understand the mystery of life or reached a decision as to when the life of an individual begins, and

Whereas, the Bible does not speak directly to the matter of abortion and the Moravian Church has refrained from being dogmatic when a biblical position was not clear, and

Whereas, there are circumstances under which the completion of an unwanted pregnancy may bring physical and/or emotional problems to the child and/or its parent(s), therefore be it

RESOLVED: that members of the Moravian Church view abortion in the perspective of *possibly* bringing mercy to a difficult situation, and be it further

RESOLVED: that this Synod recommend that any person(s) considering abortion as a possible solution seek qualified medical and spiritual counsel, and be it further

RESOLVED: that the individual(s) who chooses an alternative to abortion be offered adequate counseling during pregnancy and following delivery.

Whereas, it is the mission of the church to minister to persons in need, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church encourage its members to accept with empathy persons who are dealing with an unwanted pregnancy, and in accord with convictions assist in all possible tangible ways.

R&E 1974, pp. 55–57, R. 9–15

Whereas, recent changes in laws liberalizing abortion make it imperative that the Moravian Church formulate a statement on the issue of abortion; and

Whereas, the Bible does not speak directly to the issues of abortion and neither condemns or condones the act, and since the Moravian Church has maintained a position of refraining from being dogmatic when a Biblical position is not clear; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod affirm that the decision to interrupt a pregnancy, consistent within the time limit recognized by the medical profession, be the responsibility of the individual(s) involved, based on her interpretation of Christian teaching, and that those who seek such an irreversible alternative do so with considerable thought and adequate medical and spiritual counseling; and

RESOLVED: that abortions should be viewed in the perspective of bringing mercy to a difficult situation where other options may be more destructive; and

Whereas, abortion has been suggested as one means of population control; and

Whereas, this Synod feels that this approach to population control is not in keeping with the above resolutions, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that abortion should not be used as a means of population control.

R&E 1970, pp. 49–50 and ERRATUM, R. 7–9

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Re: 1988–1998 Ecumenical Decade—Churches in Solidarity with Women

Whereas, we are at the mid–point of the World Council of Churches’ 1988–1998 Ecumenical Decade Churches in Solidarity with Women, and

Whereas, the goals of the decade are

empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country, and their church;

affirming through shared leadership and decision making, theology and spirituality the decisive contributions of women in churches and communities;

giving visibility to women's perspectives and action in the work and struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation;

enabling the churches to free themselves from racism, sexism, and classism, and from teachings and practices that discriminate against women; and

encouraging the churches to take actions in solidarity with women; and

Whereas, the Moravian Church, Northern Province, has yet to find an appropriate denominational way to address the concerns and issues of women identified by the international and national Decade committees, and

Whereas, issues such as the inclusion of women in church structures, the impact of poverty upon women and children, violence against women, and inclusive language continue to be of concern to individuals, congregations, and committees within the Moravian Church, and

Whereas, district boards still encounter resistance to women in the call process, and

Whereas, the church is called to model the quality of life God desires for all, be it therefore

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall adopt as goals for the next intersynodal period those of the 1988-1998 Ecumenical Decade Churches in Solidarity with Women, and, under the direction of the Provincial Elders' Conference develop strategies for implementation:

empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country, and their church;

affirming — through shared leadership and decision making, theology and spirituality — the decisive contributions of women in churches and communities;

giving visibility to women's perspectives and action in the work and struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation;

enabling the churches to free themselves from racism, sexism, and classism, and from teachings and practices that discriminate against women; and

encouraging the churches to take actions in solidarity with women; and
be it further

- RESOLVED:** The Board of World Mission shall identify opportunities for members of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, to express solidarity with women in their struggles against discrimination internationally; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** District Executive Boards shall be commended for their efforts to manage the call process without regard for gender, race, age, or national origin and asked to continue those efforts during the next intersynodal period; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** Moravian Theological Seminary shall be commended for including within its curriculum courses which recognize the scholarly and faithful contributions of women to the church, both historical and contemporary; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** The calling of persons to provincial employment shall be done on an equal opportunity basis; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** The Committee on Church and Society, or other appropriate provincial agency, together with district and congregational social ministry committees, during the next intersynodal period shall identify and address issues [concerning women and children in our congregations and communities], such as physical violence against women (domestic and/or street), single parenting, adequate and safe child care, adult day care, support for care givers, adequate and comparable pay for employed women, health care, and displaced homemakers.

R&E 1994, pp. 83–85, R. 8–13

Re: Response to Persons with Learning Differences

- Whereas, there is an awareness that an increasing percentage of the population in local communities are being identified as having a variety of perceptual, processing, attentional, emotional, and physical disabilities which affect the way people learn, and
- Whereas, persons with such disabilities, disorders, and differences often are embarrassed, or frustrated because their unique needs are not being addressed, and are excluded from full participation or choose to exclude themselves from certain educational settings within the church, and
- Whereas, public response to such disabilities, disorders, and differences may inhibit the spiritual growth of these individuals, and
- Whereas, the church is to be committed to minister to all people, providing them with the opportunity for nurturance in the Christian faith, and
- Whereas, a variety of people and material resources are available within the congregations and local communities, such as professional educators

with special education expertise, support groups, and materials for the visually and hearing impaired, and

Whereas, ministry to these individuals presents an opportunity for outreach (e.g., Second Moravian Church, Indianapolis, Indiana, provides space for and works with the Division of Family Services which offers training seminars by qualified professional educators for church and organizational staff in dealing with children who have special behavioral and learning needs), therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall strongly encourage congregations to become more aware of and begin to meet the spiritual needs of persons in their constituency who have learning disabilities, disorders, and differences by identifying and making use of the resources of people and materials available to them locally; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall request the Northern Provincial Elders' Conference to direct the appropriate agency to compile and distribute to congregations bibliography of resources which address the needs of persons with learning disabilities, disorders, and differences.

R&E 1994, pp. 47-48, R. 29-30

Whereas, the 1986 Provincial Synod reaffirmed the commitment of the Moravian Church to calling pastors regardless of gender, race, or ethnic origin, and

Whereas, the 1986 Provincial Synod also directed the Provincial Elders' Conference to prepare a report for the 1990 Provincial Synod documenting efforts and achievements in overcoming racism and sexism in the call process, and

Whereas, reports from the Eastern District Board, Western District Board, and Pacific Southwest District Board were received by the Provincial Elders' Conference and presented to Provincial Synod, and

Whereas, their reports on the efforts of the Districts to overcome racism and sexism in the call process have been reviewed by the Church and Society Committee of this Synod, and

Whereas, the Church and Society Committee has observed the steps taken by the aforementioned District Boards to implement the spirit and intent of the 1986 Provincial Synod legislation, including encouraging congregations to consider and call women and minority pastors, calling and placing women as pastors, and establishing a model for improved multi-ethnic and multi-cultural understanding among congregations; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province, reaffirms its commitment to calling pastors regardless of gender, race, or ethnic origin; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall commend the Eastern District Board, the Western District Board, the Pacific Southwest District Board, and the Canadian District Board for their action taken to encourage calling women and minority pastors; and be it further

RESOLVED: The District Boards of the Province shall be urged to explore and implement additional steps for overcoming racism and sexism in the call process, that they learn from the experiences of one another and from our ecumenical partners.

Whereas, efforts led by the District Boards to overcome racism and sexism need to continue following the acceptance of a call by a woman or minority pastor; therefore be it further

RESOLVED: The District Boards and congregations of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall be urged to continue efforts to overcome racism or sexism following the placement of a woman or minority pastor; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference shall be directed to prepare a report for the 1994 Provincial Synod documenting efforts and achievements to overcome racism and sexism in the call process and following.

R&E 1990, pp. 45-46, R. 9-13

Whereas, God has blessed the Moravian Church with a worldwide unity in Christ, which the Northern and Southern Provinces experience increasingly as inspiring, as demonstrated in the 1985 Southern Mission Conference, volunteer and tourist visits in other provinces, international participants in youth convos and women's conferences, the Mission to North America program, other international visitors in congregations, and international choir tours in both directions, and

Whereas, many new congregations are composed predominantly of members with roots in the Caribbean, Caribbean Moravians increasingly participate in and lead in provincial programs, and we have all grown in sharing joys and communicating disappointments, and

Whereas, a few congregations have made a start in racial inclusiveness, and

Whereas, our North American Provinces confess to insufficient progress in ending cultural and racial discrimination in the placement of pastors and insufficient progress in the placing of female pastors; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, in coordination with District Boards and regional mission societies, shall develop and promote a voluntary program of exchange of pastors (and their families) among congregations in the Northern Province with different geographical or ethnic backgrounds, or where at least one of the congregations has a pastor who is from a different cultural or racial background and/or is a woman; if the first experiences are positive, the Provincial Elders' Conference shall enlarge this program to include lay people in North America and pastors and families from other provinces and the Unity of the Brethren in Texas, through the participation of the Board of World Mission and regional mission societies; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference shall develop a formula for sharing the cost of the voluntary program of exchange proportionately by the local congregations involved; in the case of international exchanges, the Board of World Mission shall be included in the funding formula.

R&E 1990, pp. 44-45, R. 7-8

Whereas, the Bible records that many people of advanced age (e.g., Moses, Sara, Abraham) were called upon by God to fulfill his purpose, and

Whereas, we recognize the value of the experience that comes from many years of serving in the pastorate, and

Whereas, the Moravian Church, Northern Province, is presently experiencing an abundance of congregations needing pastors, and

Whereas, many congregations have a significantly large number of senior members, and

Whereas, a pastor's age should not be a barrier to a new call, therefore be it

RESOLVED: Congregations of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall not discriminate against any pastor on the basis of age; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference and the District Executive Boards of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall discourage age discrimination in any form in the call process.

R&E 1990, p. 50, R. 31-32

Whereas, the United States Federal Government, through its Executive Order 11246, prohibits federal contractors from employment discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion or national origin, and

Whereas, the Executive Order also requires that employers take affirmative action to hire and promote under-represented groups, and

Whereas, Federal guidelines require efforts to make up for the effects of past discrimination against its traditional victims: minorities, women, those of various religions and ethnic groups, handicapped persons, and veterans, and

Whereas, corporations that do business with the Federal Government are required to give evidence of their efforts to comply with the Federal orders, yet churches are not required to comply and the guidelines speak to issues of equality and justice, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod endorse the spirit and goals of affirmative action efforts in ending discriminatory practices.

R&E 1982, p. 53, R. 41

Whereas, the clear implications of Christ's teachings of justice and love are that men and women should be treated equally as persons, and

Whereas, the church has not adequately exercised its responsibility in helping women attain their full potential, and therefore has failed to avail itself of the leadership ability of this segment of our society, and

Whereas, women make up over 50% of the membership of the Moravian Church, and

Whereas, there exists an obvious inadequate representation of women on boards and agencies, and

Whereas, at the Northern Synod in 1970 an amendment providing for the admission of women in the ordained ministry was passed, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod strongly urge that both men and women be appropriately recognized for their ability to contribute to local boards, church governments, and policy, by service thereon, and be it further

RESOLVED: that both men and women share in carrying out the responsibilities in the church and that this Synod urge local congregations to seek qualified women to service on their respective boards in order to make use of the abilities of those women.

Whereas, liberation of women does not mean anything unless it occurs in the context of equality of opportunity for all people, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that all people receive equal treatment regardless of sex or race in recruitment, scholarships, professional education, parish placement, the educational ministry and salary provisions.

R&E 1974, p. 60, R. 32-34

Whereas, the question of the legality of the election and seating of female delegates in the Provincial Synod has been raised, and

Whereas, [the] Committee [on Church Government] cannot find any legislation in any specific form of statement that could forbid the election and seating of such delegates, be it, therefore,

RESOLVED: that congregations and District Synods shall have the power to elect, and District and Provincial Synods shall have the power to seat female delegates.

JNP 1930, p. 272, R. 16

Whereas, some questions have been raised in the minds of certain women delegates to this Synod concerning their welcome to the floor of Synod, and whether the Brethren wish them to participate in the discussions of Synod, be it

RESOLVED: that the President of Synod extend a definite, cordial and unequivocal welcome to all women delegates of this Synod; that the President of Synod indicate formally that all women are encouraged to enter into the discussions on the floor of Synod and in the several committees; and that nothing be done at this Synod which would in any way have the effect of disturbing the cordial and fraternal attitude of all the lay-brethren towards the women delegates at present representing their respective congregations in this Synod.

JNP 1930, p. 293, R. 2

AGING

Re: Concern for the safety of the aged

Whereas, the public awareness of the abuse of children has heightened the concern for the safety of all persons, including in particular, aged persons; and

Whereas, the Moravian Church, Northern Province has a sacred responsibility to protect and to advocate on behalf of aged persons in our congregations and communities; and

Whereas, some persons in the older generations are among the most vulnerable in our population; and

Whereas, clergy and members of our congregations, through their ministries, are often in a privileged position to identify instances of abuse or neglect and to facilitate the protection of and advocacy for aged persons; and

Whereas, the abuse of aged persons takes many forms including physical abuse, neglect, mental abuse, spousal abuse and financial abuse and awareness training is therefore deemed necessary; be it therefore

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province calls upon all congregations to provide a safe environment for all persons, and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province encourages all congregations to make available to its members information and training opportunities concerning the prevention of physical, mental, and financial abuse of aged persons, and to encourage awareness of these issues and work toward their prevention.

R&E 2002, p.52-53, R.11-12

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

Re: Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Outreach

Whereas, the Moravian Church in America (MCA) is in full Communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and seeks means of engaging in mission together, and

Whereas, the Moravian Church in South Africa has been a member of the Lutheran World Federation for over 30 years, and

Whereas, the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa has reached epic proportions, and

Whereas, the current President of the South Africa Province serves on the Board of the Lutheran World Federation as well as on the Board of a local hospital dedicated to HIV/AIDS treatment, and

Whereas, the Board of World Mission and the Moravian Church in America, Northern Province (MCNP) have developed a model for outreach to people with HIV/AIDS, and

Whereas, the desire of our 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province is to be committed to mission outreach; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province encourages the Board of World Mission to expand the work in Tanzania and also to begin an outreach ministry to serve HIV/AIDS patients in South Africa, providing medical supplies, medical teams, and pastoral ministry teams of MCA and ELCA members to assist in ministering to said patients; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province shall provide a grant of \$5,000 to the Board of World Mission as seed money for HIV/AIDS ecumenical outreach in 2007.

This resolution was adopted by the Southern Provincial synod and was been edited for possible consideration in the Northern Province.

R&E 2006, p. 30, R.9-10

RE: Congregational Strategies to Confront HIV and AIDS

Whereas, the global pandemic of HIV and AIDS continues to spread, with around 46 million people estimated to be infected, and

Whereas, whole societies, especially in southern Africa, are experiencing devastation, economic instability, and breakdown of the family structure, with women and children especially vulnerable, and

Whereas, people living with AIDS experience significant stigma that impacts all levels of their lives, and

Whereas, our own society, while having better treatment options, continues to see increases in infection, with youth under the age of 25 representing about 50% of all new HIV infections, and

Whereas, our Lord models compassion for the suffering and restoration to community for the marginalized; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church – Northern Province shall ask each congregation to schedule an AIDS Awareness day to better understand this disease and its impact both locally and globally; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church – Northern Province shall ask each congregation to find a way to support a specific program of AIDS Ministry, focusing specifically on areas of education, prevention, and ministering to caregivers, orphans and those living with HIV; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church – Northern Province shall join with the Southern Province Synod and recognize December 1st as World AIDS Day, and shall proclaim it as a day of commemoration and prayer by our Moravian churches.

R&E 2006, p. 31-32, R. 1-3

RE: Support for South Africa Moravian HIV/AIDS Ministries

Whereas, the Moravian Church North America is part of a global unity; and

Whereas, a formal partnership currently exists between the European Continental (German) Province and the Province of South Africa; and

Whereas, South Africa has one of the highest incidence of HIV infections in the world*; and

Whereas, our brothers and sisters in the Province of South Africa are in the midst of the HIV/AIDS crisis; and

Whereas, the Moravian Church in South Africa is ministering to the individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS, working to prevent further spread of HIV infection and seeking support for Moravian sponsored AIDS orphanages; and

Whereas, the Board of World Mission has named HIV/AIDS as a priority issue; and

Whereas, money from North America would buttress the current support provided through the European Continental Province and increase the abilities of the churches in South Africa in this time of emergency; and

Whereas, there are many opportunities to witness to the love of Jesus Christ as we serve those in dire need among the people of South Africa; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church Northern Province shall covenant to pray regularly for the people of South Africa specifically regarding the AIDS crisis; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Board of World Mission is urged to explore ways in which to partner with the European Continental Province and the Province of South Africa to support or create Moravian HIV/AIDS ministries in South Africa; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Board of World Mission is urged to provide financial assistance to support the South Africa Moravian Church's HIV/AIDS ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Board of World Mission shall inform congregations of opportunities to support legislation before the United States Congress and the Canadian Parliament regarding the HIV/AIDS crisis in South Africa.

*Selected South Africa HIV/AIDS statistics:

- Estimated 1,700 new HIV infections every day
- Nearly twice as many people in South Africa die each day from AIDS than were killed in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States
- Estimated 2 million South African AIDS orphans by 2010

R&E 2002, p. 24–25, R.5–8

Whereas, the HIV/AIDS crisis has reached pandemic proportions, and

Whereas, current statistics from the Center for Disease Control indicate that the groups at greatest risk for infection are now women and children, and

Whereas, the 1986 and 1990 Synods of the Moravian Church, Northern Province responded to the AIDS crisis with resolutions (see *Resolutions of the Moravian Church, Northern Province on Social Issues*, pages 9–11); therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, affirms the resolutions concerning AIDS from the 1986 and 1990 Synods of the Moravian Church, Northern Province and urges clergy, Boards of Elders, or Social Concerns Committees of each congregation to review these resolutions; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province urges the joint board of each congregation to review the “Policy Statement on the Inclusion of People with HIV” published and distributed by the Provincial Elders’ Conference (copy attached) and consider it for adoption; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province encourages clergy, Boards of Elders, or Social Concerns Committees of each congregation to refer to the resources and programs already developed in the congregations of Coopersburg and Lake Mills and as portrayed in the Moravian Video Magazine, Winter, 1994, “Crossing the Boundaries.”

POLICY STATEMENT ON THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH HIV

Our churches, with their Sunday Schools, Worship Programs, and Day School Programs, will certainly come to face the issue of HIV–infected people and whether their affliction needs to be specially addressed. Indeed, recent years have shown numerous health issues, beyond HIV, such as the epidemic of hepatitis B and the resurgence of tuberculosis that also deserve our attention and efforts toward heightened health awareness. Mindful that medical science and knowledge is not

static, yet concerned about unwarranted hysteria and discrimination, we must remain concerned for the health of all. However, we must remember that exclusionary acts toward HIV-infected people are contrary to Christian principles, as well as illegal in certain social settings. The following, therefore, is a proposed policy statement from the Standing Committee on Church and Society of the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church for consideration by your Joint Board.

1. Health and sanitary precautions that should always be used will usually suffice to prevent transmission of HIV and/or hepatitis B. These include:

- (a) Washing hands with soap and warm water before food use.
- (b) Washing hands with soap and warm water after toilet use.
- (c) Preventing or refraining from having hands and fingers placed in one's eyes and mouth.
- (d) Sterilizing all surfaces having food and/or skin contact with basic household bleach or similar cleanser.
- (e) Assuring that all utensils, silverware, plates, cups, etc., are properly washed at correct temperature settings.
- (f) Maintaining good sanitary housekeeping practices that will prevent breeding grounds for rodents and insects.
- (g) Non-sharing of any Communion or kitchen utensils or vessels.
- (h) Non-sharing of same food samples.

2. With the substantial study and history HIV has undergone the past twelve (12) years and the hundreds of thousands of reported cases nationwide, there is not one case that has been reported that can be attributed to casual contact (i.e., shaking hands, hugging, or even kissing). HIV is a disease that must be taken into or forced into one's body, usually by:

- (a) Sexual relations.
- (b) I.V. drug use or contaminated needles and/or if contaminated blood is injected into the blood stream.
- (c) Blood transfusion from contaminated blood.
- (d) Any other conduct where body fluids of one person are forced into the blood system of another.

3. Based upon the above, there is no justification for ostracizing a person with HIV. Indeed, the chance of contracting hepatitis B or other communicable disease is many times greater. It is acknowledged that the ultimate outcome of a positive HIV test carries the additional burden of facing a fatal situation. Indeed, epidemiology data from the past twelve (12) years reveals that even in incidents of accidental needle sticks in a hospital setting, the chance of contracting HIV is one (1) in two hundred

fifty (250). There has never been a case reported that can be attributed to transmission through the air. Thousands of HIV-infected people and even those whose conditions grew into full-blown AIDS, have been cared for by numerous family members and health-care workers without these people contracting the HIV virus except via the limited means of transmission set forth in paragraph 2.

Each church is urged to study and review its practices relating to Communion, food distribution and handling, and sanitation practices within their church setting to determine if they are being vigilant in these areas. At the same time, each church must prepare and be willing to accept the challenge of HIV that will likely come.

“Our Lord Jesus entered into this world’s misery to bear it and to overcome it. We seek to follow Him in serving God’s people. Like the Love of Jesus, this service knows no bounds. Therefore, we pray to the Lord ever anew to point us the way to reach our neighbors, opening our hearts and hands to them in their need.”

– Unity Statement of 1981
September 1992
R&E 1994, pp. 88-90, R. 25-27

Whereas, this Synod resolved in 1986 to provide support and comfort for people with AIDS, as well as opposing discrimination against them (R&E 1986, p. 34, Resolutions 1-8), and

Whereas, said resolution fails to include any reference to people who do not have AIDS, but are HIV infected or perceived to be afflicted with the disease, and

Whereas, the same concerns expressed by the Synod in 1986 should equally apply to those who are HIV infected and to people perceived to be afflicted with the disease, therefore be it

RESOLVED: Individuals and congregations of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall be encouraged to become instruments of the healing power of grace through such means as:

- a. meeting the spiritual needs for faith, hope, forgiveness, reconciliation, human caring, and non-judgmental, unconditional love
 - b. the traditional rites and Sacraments of the Church
 - c. encouraging private and corporate prayer for people with AIDS, the HIV infected, their families, and friends
 - d. volunteer work through AIDS projects and hospice-type programs
- and be it further

RESOLVED: Congregations of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall be supportive of health care professionals and all who are involved in the complex and challenging task of ministering to and caring for the HIV

infected and persons with AIDS, their families, and friends; and be it further

RESOLVED: Individual congregations of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, in cooperation with area ministerial groups and/or local health care professionals, shall be encouraged to coordinate programs of information and update their particular communities on the transmission of AIDS/HIV and the care necessary for those so afflicted; and be it further

RESOLVED: Congregations of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall be encouraged to utilize available resources for information and education on AIDS and its transmission; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall oppose any discrimination against people with AIDS, the HIV infected, or people perceived to be infected; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall direct the Provincial Elders' Conference and pastors to inform congregations of the Northern Province's position opposing discrimination against persons with AIDS, the HIV infected or those perceived to be infected, and shall urge congregations to communicate this position to public officials and agencies; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference and District Executive Boards of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall direct appropriate agencies and/or committees to keep congregations informed on this issue.

R&E 1990, pp.49-50, R. 24-30

Whereas, the outbreak of AIDS has caused widespread suffering, increased victimization of oppressed individuals, and extensive panic among the general population, and

Whereas, panic and fear can, as has been the case in past epidemics, lead to increased isolation, prejudice and discrimination of those so afflicted, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod encourage the members of our congregations to support AIDS patients in concrete and caring ways by contacting local medical agencies and/or AIDS hotline services, and be it further

RESOLVED: that individuals and congregations be encouraged to become instruments of the healing power of grace through such means as:

(a) meeting the spiritual needs for faith, hope, forgiveness, reconciliation, human caring and non-judgmental, unconditional love;

(b) the traditional rites and sacraments of the Church;

(c) encouraging private and corporate prayer for AIDS patients, their families and friends;

(d) support of the National AIDS Vigil of Prayer the weekend of September 5, 6, and 7, 1986;

(e) volunteer work through AIDS projects and hospice-type programs;
and be it further

RESOLVED: that our congregations be supportive of health care professionals and all who are involved in the complex and challenging task of ministering to AIDS patients, their families and friends, and be it further

RESOLVED: that individual congregations, in cooperation with area ministerial groups and/or local health care professionals, be encouraged to coordinate programs of information and update in their particular communities on the transmission of this disease and the care necessary for those so afflicted, and be it further

RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church, Northern Province, oppose any discrimination against people with AIDS.

R&E 1986, p. 34, R. 1-4, 6

CHILD LABOR

Whereas, the child is enshrined in the heart of religion and in the hearts of all men and women of good will, and

Whereas, ever higher standards of protection for children are a mark of Christian civilization, and

Whereas, there are still two million girls and boys 14 through 17 years of age employed in industry and agriculture, this being twice as many as in 1940, and half of whom have left school to become full-time workers, and

Whereas, government reports show that teenagers are twice as liable to crippling injuries as adult workers, and

Whereas, every child has a right to adequate education and a normal opportunity for health and happiness,

RESOLVED: that the Twenty-Seventh Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church in America support the objectives of the National Child Labor Committee to:

a. Eliminate harmful employment and promote educational opportunity for children and youth by educational work with employers and parents.,

b. Extend the child labor provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act to all work that can be covered through the exercise of the interstate commerce power of Congress, including large scale commercialized farms.

c. Enact adequate state laws in order to protect children who cannot be reached through Federal Legislation.

JNP 1951, p. 437, R. 7

CHILD WELFARE

RE: The Safety of Our Children

Whereas, the Moravian Church, Northern Province, has a sacred obligation to provide a safe environment for the nurture of children; and

Whereas, the public awareness of child abuse in religious settings has been heightened; therefore be it

RESOLVED: Child abuse is defined as any act or failure to act that causes non-accidental serious physical injury or any act causing mental injury, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation of a child under the age of eighteen; and

Whereas, the abuse of children destroys their innocence and trust; and

Whereas, the abuse of children in the Church is more devastating because it destroys their trust and faith in God; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall direct congregations and agencies to take action to reduce the risk of child abuse in the Church; and

Whereas, the 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province commends Camps and Conferences for actions taken to reduce child abuse through training and background checks; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall direct congregations and agencies to train employees and volunteers in order to prevent child abuse in the Church; and be it further

RESOLVED: In order to maintain the safety of our children the 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall direct congregations and agencies to institute regular background checks of employees and volunteers who work with children and those deemed appropriate by the local congregation; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourage congregations and agencies to institute such policies and guidelines that conform with local laws and insurance company policies regarding child abuse.

R&E 2002, p.61, R. 2-6

Re: Children's Sabbath Observance

Whereas, the Moravian Church Northern Province has been an endorser of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths for many years, and

Whereas, the Children's Sabbath Observance is this year observing the 15th anniversary of the first National Observance, and

Whereas, the interfaith Children's Sabbath was created to unite and amplify the voice of the faith communities demanding justice for children, and

Whereas, hundreds of thousands of Children's Sabbaths have been celebrated in congregations all across our nations and all across the denominational landscape, and

Whereas, until the time comes when a mighty stream of justice rolls through our land and world to make life fit and safe for every child, we must continue to be a faithful force for children as our children cry for it and our religious teachings demand; be it therefore

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church – Northern Province calls upon every congregation in the province to observe the Prayer Day for Children scheduled for a Sunday in October as a time, this year, to focus even greater attention on our children's health and mental health crisis, to support the need for emergency medical disaster relief services for Katrina's children and all who face future disasters, and to support comprehensive health and mental health coverage for every child including those at risk of entrapment of life circumstances which lead to prison; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church – Northern Province lends its voice to stand tall for the nine million children in the United States (one out of every nine) who do not have health care coverage by calling upon government to play a positive role in promoting policies that improve children's health; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church – Northern Province encourages every congregation of the province to order a “National Observance of Children’s Sabbaths” 2006 (Volume 15) manual and/or CD which provides resources and suggestions to assist in doing outreach and enrollment of children and families in Medicaid and State Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) from the Children’s Defense Fund (www.childrensdefense.org).

R&E 2006, p.33-34, R. 5-7

CHURCH AND STATE

Whereas, we as Christians recognize the fact that we have a responsibility—to civil government and to God—as stated by our Lord Jesus Christ “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s,” and

Whereas, we remember in prayer in our litany the heads of the various branches of government as we pray: “Watch graciously over all governments; Bless with Thy light and wisdom those who bear office in our land, and grant us to lead under them a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty,” therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church affirm its loyalty to our government with its ideals of freedom, justice, and democracy, and that we as a church and as individuals will do all that we can to bring these ideals into realities for all.

R&E 1970, p. 49, R. 6

Whereas, Christians tend to be blind to the social implications of their personal relationship to Jesus Christ, be it

RESOLVED: that Provincial Synod commends to our ministers and lay persons the importance of carrying into their relations with society such practices as the following:

- a. The sacred obligation of voting in primary as well as general elections,
- b. The active support of the forces of righteousness within our respective communities,
- c. The refusal to ask favors of our political servants at the expense of, and to the disadvantage of, fellow citizens,
- d. The assumption of individual responsibility for acquainting ourselves with international issues affecting our country, so as to provide solid support for a vigorous foreign policy, based upon the principles of eternal righteousness,

- e. The fostering of individual awareness of our responsibility for conditions in our society which are obviously wrong, along with the attempt to construct a better society within our community, state and nation.

JNP 1946, p. 330, R. 14

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION, MILITARY DRAFT

RESOLVED: that this Synod reaffirm that the position expressed within our ancient motto, "In essentials, unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity" makes provision for honest differences of opinion within the fellowship of our church, even on divisive national, social and political issues as are reflected by American involvement in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, and selective conscientious objection, and be it further

RESOLVED: that this Synod urge each member, clergy and laity, to reaffirm the right and status of each member to follow the dictates of his or her own conscience and to lend spiritual support, ministerial guidance, and moral compassion to each Christian who arrives at a conviction which was based on sincere Christian motives.

R&E 1970, p. 49, R. 4-5

Whereas, war, the enmities it foments, the wanton distortion of truth it engenders, and the defiance of the righteousness of God it demonstrates are manifestly abhorrent to the Gospel and the Spirit of Christ, and

Whereas, "There is wide agreement with regard to the rights of the conscientious objector," and

Whereas, the Moravian Church has within its membership some in good standing who are conscientiously opposed to participation in war, on the ground that it is incompatible with the mind of Christ, and

Whereas, in any conflict of loyalties Christians must unhesitatingly follow the Christ, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod reaffirms the position taken by the Provincial Synod of 1936, namely, "That Synod records its conviction that Jesus Christ came to be the Savior and Lord both of every person and of every human relation and activity."

RESOLVED: that this Synod declare its conviction of the right of those who in honest obedience to conscience refuse to bear arms or to submit to military training;

RESOLVED: that opportunity be continued for each conscientious objector within the membership of the Moravian Church to file their declarations with the Christian Education Board, in accordance with the provisions determined upon by the Provincial Synod of 1936 in order that, as occasion may warrant, their cases may be laid before the representatives of Government with a view to determining their status.

RESOLVED: that this Synod, in order to implement its concern for the conscientious objectors within the membership of the Moravian Church, authorizes a token payment of five dollars a month toward the support of the National Service Board for Religious Objectors, through the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, which operates camps where conscientious objectors perform their "work of national importance," a part of the expenses of which is borne by various Christian denominations; and

RESOLVED: that this Synod authorizes the editor of *The Moravian*, through its columns, to request funds for this cause, under the supervision of the Provincial Elders' Conference, and that these funds be administered and acknowledged in the customary manner by the Provincial Treasurer.

JNP 1941, pp. 242-243, R. 16-20

RESOLVED: that Synod records its convictions that Jesus Christ came to be the Saviour and Lord both of every person and every human relationship and activity. Therefore in obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod declare its conviction of the right of conscience on the part of the individual to refuse to bear arms, or to submit to military training.

RESOLVED: that the Provincial Board of Christian Education devise ways and means of preserving a record of the members of our congregations holding such convictions concerning warfare.

RESOLVED: that members of our Church applying for such enrollment with the Provincial Board of Christian Education shall have been members in good standing for at least one year previous to such application.

JNP 1936, p. 260, R. 14-17

CRIMINAL JUSTICE and the DEATH PENALTY

Re: [Abortion and] Capital Punishment

Whereas, our church's statements regarding abortion and capital punishment have not been revisited in some time; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province shall direct the Provincial Elders' Conference to re-examine our statements about abortion and capital punishment, possibly by assigning the issues to the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, with the task of bringing its findings to the 2008 Synods of the Canadian, Eastern and Western Districts and to the 2010 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province; and be it further

RESOLVED: Congregations are encouraged to discuss our church's statements on abortion and capital punishment and, if so desired, pass on suggestions for discussion within the work of the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission.

R&E 2006, p. 18, R. 13-14

Whereas, justice/righteousness is a basic concept of Christianity, and

Whereas, prison populations commonly exceed a safe and humane level, and

Whereas, some persons who have been convicted of crimes do not need to be confined to protect themselves or others from physical or property damage, and

Whereas, halfway houses may effectively serve both as an alternative to jailing and a means of reducing periods of incarceration and reintegrating jailed persons into the community, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod urge congregations of the Northern Province to give active public support to the establishment of halfway houses, and be it further

RESOLVED: that congregations of the Northern Province be encouraged to receive such halfway houses into their communities and residents of such institutions into their fellowship, and

Whereas, prison chaplains who bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to inmates also concern themselves with the welfare of inmates' families, innocent victims of the criminal's incarceration, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that congregations of the Northern Province become familiar with the work of prison chaplains and determine ways in which the churches can help.

RESOLVED: that this Synod oppose the death penalty.

R&E 1982, pp. 49-50, R. 27, 28, 30, 31

Whereas, this Synod believes capital punishment is against the spirit of the Moravian Church, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: that the Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America put itself on record as being opposed to capital punishment and that members of the Moravian Church be urged to work for the abolition of the death penalty.

RESOLVED: that in order that society may be protected, this Synod urges members of the Moravian Churches of the Northern Province of America to give support to the continuing improvement of the policies and services which lead to the rehabilitation of prisoners in the correctional institutions of our country.

JNP 1961. p. 288, R. 5-6

DIVERSITY

RE: Diversity in Congregational Life

Whereas, Christ came to minister to all people, and

Whereas, Moravian Churches are located in communities of diverse people, and

Whereas, diversity can include, but not be limited to: economical, cultural, racial, mental and/or physical challenged, and

Whereas, the Moravian Church believes that all people are endowed with spiritual gifts to be shared and not wasted, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The PEC of the Northern Province of 2002–2006 and the delegates of the 2002 Northern Provincial Synod encourage the local churches to seek education towards the understanding of the diverse people within their communities, and be it further

RESOLVED: The PEC of the Northern Province of 2002–2006 and the Eastern, Western, and Canadian District Boards of the Northern Province shall provide educational materials toward that end, and be it further

RESOLVED: The PEC of the Northern Province of 2002–2006 and the delegates of the 2002 Northern Provincial Synod encourage the local churches, when seeking to evangelize, to create diverse church growth, and be it further

RESOLVED: The PEC of the Northern Province of 2002–2006 and the delegates of the 2002 Northern Provincial Synod encourage the local churches to celebrate their diversity through full participation in membership, activities, lay leadership, and possible candidacy for ministry, and be it further

RESOLVED: The PEC of the Northern Province of 2002–2006 and the delegates of the 2002 Northern Provincial Synod encourage the local churches to share their gifts of diversity through exchange with other congregations.

R&E 2002, p.14–15, R.13–17

ENVIRONMENT

RE: Environmental Stewardship

Whereas, the Moravian Church Southern Province enacted like legislation at the 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church Southern Province; and

Whereas, on November 25, 2003 the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church Southern Province adopted a document that originated from the Commission on Church and Society of the Moravian Church, Southern Province titled "Caring for Creation"; and

Whereas, "Caring for Creation" contains statements from "The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living" and "The Ground of the Unity" as well as portions of liturgies from the Moravian Book of Worship calling and reminding people of faith about our collective and individual responsibility to be faithful stewards of all God has entrusted to our care and to seek and attain what is best for all people; and

Whereas, the 2010 Synod of the Moravian Church Southern Province established a "Strategic Direction for the Southern Province" between the years 2012–2014 that included that a "Priority Initiative for Stewardship shall be: We will claim and affirm our stewardship of creation and all God has given us as an essential part of our discipleship with Jesus Christ," therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province affirms what was enacted by the 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Southern Province regarding environmental stewardship, that the "Priority Initiative for Stewardship shall be: We will claim and affirm our stewardship of creation and all God has given us as an essential part of our discipleship with Jesus Christ"; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province urges all congregations to include stewardship of the earth announcements, liturgies and prayers as part of services of worship and opportunities of Christian Education for all ages throughout the year; and be it further

RESOLVED: Stewardship Commissions and Committees and Christian Education Commissions and Committees of each District will work with District and Provincial Program Staff to develop educational materials regarding environmental stewardship, also researching and providing excellent materials from the ecumenical community; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province encourages the Provincial Elders' Conference, District Boards and Churches in States and Provinces where drilling for petrochemicals is actively taking place and vital to the economy of that State or Province to communicate with elected and appointed legislators overseeing the extraction of these petrochemicals encouraging that all such efforts be done in an increasingly clean and safe manner, consistent with what we believe to be vital regarding environmental stewardship, reminding all elected and appointed legislators overseeing the extraction of petrochemicals that all people are to be stewards of creation, evidencing an expressed care for air, water and land for this and all future generations.

R&E 2014, p. 69, R. 12-15

Whereas, we live in an environment with diminishing resources, and

Whereas, environmental concerns are of the utmost importance to the continued existence of life on this planet, and

Whereas, individuals in communities can take an active role in protecting the environment, and

Whereas, *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* states in paragraph #29:

Being aware that our witness is made both by what we do and what we avoid doing, we will endeavor to let our manner of life "be worthy of the gospel of Christ," (Phil.1:27) "not being conformed to this world." (Rom. 12:2) But in our yearning for the redemption of the whole creation, we will seek to meet the needs of the world in self-giving love, and as true yokefellows of Jesus Christ, willingly share in the fellowship of His sufferings, walking in His strength, by whom all things are given us that pertain to life and godliness. (II Peter 1:3); therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, directs the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Northern Province to strongly urge each Moravian congregation:

- a. to inform their members about environmental concerns,
- b. to participate in community conservation projects,

- c. to implement and/or participate in environmental education programs and conservation practices (such as: recycling, use of recycled products, proper disposal of toxic household waste, use of cloth diapers, car pooling, etc.),
- d. to encourage members to make changes in their lifestyle toward simplicity, moderation, and self-control concerning consumption of products made for non-renewable resources.

JNP, 1990, p. 39, R. 13

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Re: Conflict of Interest

Whereas, The world is an increasingly complex place, often influenced by rumor and innuendo, and

Whereas, The church is “in the world, but not of the world,” and

Whereas, The church has often called itself to “a higher standard,” and

Whereas, The affairs of the church often place its pastors, officers, and members in a situation where their personal interests and profits could be influenced in special ways by decisions made by committees, institutions, boards, and ad hoc committees at the Provincial, District, and congregational levels, and

Whereas, It is always preferable that the church avoid complications which can be avoided and that if complications cannot be avoided, a procedure be put in place to reduce the possibility of doubting, and

Whereas, The appearance of conflict of interest may be just as damaging as a real conflict of interest, and

Whereas, The Provincial Elders’ Conference has expressed the need for “Conflict of Interest Guidelines” for pastors, Provincial, District, and Congregational boards, committees, and institutions who do not presently have a “Conflict of Interest Policy”.

Whereas, The Provincial Elders’ Conference has determined the attached “Conflict of Interest Guidelines” is helpful in making the church aware of the many and various potential conflict of interest issues which we face and to which we need to respond, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, affirms the current “Conflict of Interest Guidelines” endorsed by the Provincial Elders’ Conference; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourages pastors, Provincial, District and Congregational boards, committees, and institutions to become aware of potential “Conflict of Interest” issues, to avoid potential conflict of interest issues whenever possible, and to acknowledge inevitable conflicts of interest when unavoidable.

MEMORIAL TO 1994 SYNOD,
MORAVIAN CHURCH, NORTHERN PROVINCE
FROM: EASTERN DISTRICT EXECUTIVE BOARD
RE: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Whereas, The world is an increasingly complex place, often influenced by rumor and innuendo, and

Whereas, The church is “in the world, but not of the world”, and

Whereas, The church has often called itself to “a higher standard”, and

Whereas, The affairs of the church often place its pastors, officers, and members in a situation where their personal interests and profits could be influenced in special ways by decisions made by committees, institutions, boards, and ad hoc committees at the Provincial, District, and congregational levels, and

Whereas, It is always preferable that the church avoid complications which can be avoided and that if complications cannot be avoided, a procedure be put in place to reduce the possibility of doubting, and

Whereas, The appearance of conflict of interest may be just as damaging as a real conflict of interest, and

Whereas, The Provincial Elders’ Conference has endorsed the need for a conflict of interest policy and further sees this policy as reasonable and appropriate; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Northern Provincial Synod set the following standards of conduct for boards, committees, institutions, and *ad hoc* committees, etc. in the Northern Province, its districts, and congregations:

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The appearance of a conflict of interest may be just as damaging to the church as a real conflict. Therefore, it is the policy of the Provincial Elders’ Conference that all persons serving as members of committees, institutions boards, ad hoc committees,

etc. at the Provincial, District, or Congregational levels avoid potential conflicts of interest in any and all circumstances. A potential conflict exists whenever a member of the aforesaid group(s) has an outside interest, direct or indirect, from which he/she might benefit as a result of a decision on a particular matter. This includes, but is not limited to, financial transactions and employment relationships.

USE OF THE CHURCH'S NAME FOR PERSONAL ADVANTAGE:

The name of the church is not to be used as leverage by employees, members of committees, boards, ad hoc committees, institutions, congregations, etc. as leverage to enhance their own opportunities when dealing with others in their political, investment, or retail purchasing activities.

INEVITABLE CONFLICTS:

Since the complexity of life suggests that conflicts or the appearance of conflicts are virtually inevitable, it is appropriate that areas of potential conflict of interest should be fully disclosed to the Committee Chairperson, Pastor, President, or in short the appropriate leader of the group involved.

This means it is unadvisable for family members of a church employee to serve on the committee or board to which that employee is directly responsible. Should such a relationship be a necessity, the family member should absent himself/herself from any and all decisions concerning compensation, discipline, etc. in reference to the employee.

Also, board members, committee members, and decision makers in general should upon their appointment be willing to disclose to the leader of their group their outside interests which might impact decision making. If a person seeks to do business with a congregation or denominational entity, it is important that he/she is not involved in the decision making process and is given no actual or apparent advantage. It is important that the "conflict of interest" become a matter of the record and noted as such. Additional bids from at least two providers be solicited and reviewed. The resulting decision should be recorded in the minutes as a decision made in the absence of the individual involved and that the above provisions were observed.

FIDUCIARY APPOINTMENT:

A pastor or church leader shall be careful about persons for which he/she provides fiduciary responsibilities. These relationships should be entered into only as a last resort and be disclosed clearly in the minutes of the board or committee involved. The appropriateness of this role should be agreed to by other members to whom the pastor or church leader is responsible.

FEES FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:

If there are set fees for pastoral services rendered (i.e. for counseling, marriages, or funeral services), policy should be established which clearly identifies the recipient of

those fees. Such policy would be established by the Joint Board in consultation with the pastor, and subject to review particularly in the event of a change in pastoral leadership.

BENEFICIARY OF WILL OR TRUST:

Pastors or church leaders who become aware that they are beneficiaries of a will or trust from a person who receives services from the church should disclose such a fact in general terms to the members to whom the person(s) is responsible. The reason for this disclosure is to allow for consideration of all the facts in each case to make certain that there are no real conflicts of interest and that a reasonable, disinterested third party could not allege a conflict of interest.

ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT OR USE OF TIME IN OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES:

Full time employees of the church should carefully scrutinize additional employment or activities, including the performance of any services for compensation or as donation, to avoid potential conflicts of interest and excessive demands on the employee's time. Such employment is possible with the agreement of the Joint Board of the congregation or, in the case of denominational employees, the respective District Board or PEC.

R&E 1994, pp. 17-20, R. 2-3

Whereas, the Provincial Elders' Conference created an Investment Policy Committee as a standing committee of the P.E.C. in October 1981, and

Whereas, the Investment Policy Committee fulfilled its duties by developing guidelines for investments and has periodically updated its policy to reflect current political and economic situations, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, affirms the ethical guidelines as adopted by the Provincial Elders' Conference on February 2, 1990, which state the following:

Ethical Investment Guidelines
for the
Moravian Church, Northern Province

Theological Basis:

1. The Church, as both the foretaste of the Kingdom of God and the agent for the establishment of the Kingdom, is called to be a witness in the world to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As "The Ground of the Unity" states, "Together with the universal Christian Church, the *Unitas Fratrum* challenges [humanity] with the message of the love of God, striving to promote the peace of the world and seeking to attain what is best for all...." (*Book of Order*, Moravian Church, Northern Province, ¶10)
2. As the Church, an institution within society, participates in the economic affairs of society, its call to witness in the world includes the call to witness through such

participation. The Church cannot divorce one dimension of its life from the demands of its call and the measurement of the Gospel it proclaims.

3. The Church is called upon to be a good steward of its economic resources, administering them prudently, while at the same time employing them in its witness to the Gospel, furthering the peace of the world and the common welfare. Good stewardship entails both the prudent administration of resources for maximum return and security and the wise investment of resources to further social justice and human dignity.

Policy:

4. The Church shall invest its monies subject to the following general guidelines:
 - a. prudence, implying the maximizing of return and the minimizing of risk, so that the resources of the Church may be preserved as a heritage for future generations and may be expanded for the support of its current ministries;
 - b. ethical responsibility, so the Gospel to which the Church witnesses is not compromised and so that the Church is enabled in its witness in the world.
5. The Church shall refrain from investing in commodities for speculation (such as diamonds, gold, antiques, silver, and art work) and in companies which are substantially engaged in:
 - the promotion and sale of alcoholic beverages or tobacco;
 - the promotion of gambling;
 - the production of nuclear weapons or whose activities depend on arms sales to foreign countries; and
 - the manufacture of products or the use of manufacturing techniques which endanger the environment.
6. With regard to investments already held, the Church shall resist divestment, unless such investments violate (5) above. Divestment contributes little to the long-range solution of the issue it seeks to address and limits the Church's witness. Divestment is an action of last resort and a sign of failure.
7. The Church shall use its current and future investments as an opportunity to witness for social justice and human dignity by engaging corporations in which it has an interest in dialogue on questionable practices and policies, by participating in shareholder actions (as advised by the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility), and by taking other measures deemed appropriate.
8. The Church may seek opportunities for witness through selective investment in companies whose practices or policies it wishes to question or affirm, such as equal opportunity programs or affirmative action programs.

9. The Church shall continue to be particularly sensitive to the issue of corporate involvement in South Africa. (Refer to Resolutions of the 1986 Provincial Synod, pages 41-42).

10. The Church shall be sensitive also to investing in corporations with a history of labor or resource exploitation, with a history of attempts at destabilizing governments, or with a history of socially counter-productive marketing practices.

11. The Church shall recognize that, at times, its witness for social justice and human dignity will not be without risk, and it must be willing to assume such risk as part of the price of its call. Specifically, the Church may invest up to twenty-five percent of its non-pension fund holdings in projects or companies of clear social benefit regardless of rate of return or estimated risk.

Procedure:

12. The implementation of the above principles and policies shall be the responsibility of the Investment Policy Committee. This Committee shall monitor the actions of the Investment Committee in light of these guidelines. The Investment Policy Committee shall serve as an advisory committee to the Provincial Elders' Conference.

13. The Provincial Elders' Conference shall urge other organizations and institutions of the Church, including local congregations, to adopt similar guidelines.

R&E 1990, pp. 51-53, R. 4.

Whereas, the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, has adopted a policy prohibiting new investments in corporations doing business in or with South Africa, and

Whereas, various district synods have taken action to condemn apartheid, and

Whereas, it is both inconsistent and immoral for the Church to benefit from (or seek to benefit from) investments in corporations doing business in or with South Africa and thereby supporting and/or profiting from apartheid, and

Whereas, the divesting of holding in corporations doing business in or with South Africa is an appropriate witness to the integrity of the Church's proclamation of a gospel bringing "good news to the poor" and proclaiming "release to the captives," a gospel showing no partiality (Romans 2:11) and no discrimination (Galatians 3:28), and

Whereas, divestment is one potentially effective and non-violent way to influence the policies and practices of the government of South Africa, through financial and moral pressure directed through corporations to the government, especially when practices in cooperation with other religious and secular institutions which have adopted divestment strategies, and

Whereas, divestment is already a part of the investment management strategy, both in the context of the Province's investment policy and in the context of the

prudent management and stewardship of the Province's assets, and is therefore a logical and feasible option in connection with South African investments, be it therefore

RESOLVED: that this Synod direct the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, to devise, in consultation with the Investment Policy Committee, an appropriate policy for divesting of holdings in corporations doing business in or with South Africa, with such divestment taking place in a considered, phased, and orderly manner; and be it further

RESOLVED: the divestment policy adopted by the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall include the classification of corporations doing business in or with South Africa in terms of the size and nature of their business, their implementation of the Sullivan Principles, and their involvement in the sale or maintenance of military equipment or vehicles, computer systems, or other goods and services which contribute to the maintenance of the apartheid system; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the divestment policy adopted by the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, be communicated to all agencies, entities, and congregations of the Province for their information and adoption, and be it further

RESOLVED: that the divestment policy adopted by the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, be communicated to all corporations in which the Church has holdings and which do business in or with South Africa, and that such corporations be invited to respond to the policy.

R&E 1986, pp. 41-42, R. 45-48

ETHICS, MEDICAL

RE: Bioethics

Whereas, there has been significantly more research into ever expanding areas of biomedical research not previously addressed in the Resolutions of the Provincial Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church of 1986 entitled "Medical Ethics" such as stem cell research and the use of genetically engineered biological agents in warfare; and

Whereas, this 1986 document could not address the then unknown and unforeseen benefits as well as the bioethical concerns that these additional areas

raise, such as the creation of human embryos for the sole purpose of harvesting stem cells and genetic cloning; and

Whereas, there is the potential that any medical therapies resulting from such highly technical and expensive research may not be available to all people because of their inability to pay for such therapies; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: This 2002 Northern Provincial Synod affirms the resolutions of the Provincial Synod of the Northern Province of 1986 entitled “Medical Ethics”; and be it further

RESOLVED: This 2002 Northern Provincial Synod shall create a multidisciplinary Bioethical Taskforce, made up of various professional disciplines to develop informational material for distribution to all congregations at the 2004 District Synods in order to:

- a) educate and inform all members regarding bioethical issues
- b) ensure participation in a process leading to the development by this Bioethics Taskforce of specific guidelines for the experimentation and clinical use of new and emerging technologies; and be it further

RESOLVED: The guidelines submitted by the Bioethics Taskforce shall address the issue of the equitable distribution of the benefits of biotechnology; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Bioethics Taskforce shall present these guidelines to the 2006 Provincial Synod of the Northern Province for approval and publication; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders’ Conference, Northern Province shall request that this Bioethics Taskforce continue monitoring the impact of biomedical experimentation and the applications of the discoveries resulting from such work.

R&E 2002, p. 16, R.20-24

Whereas, we recognize and acknowledge:

- a. that research has furthered our understanding of genetic abnormalities;
- b. that experimentation in gene manipulation and splicing offers hope for corrective measures;

- c. that there are both possibilities and limitations in gene manipulation for the relief of human ills and in our ability to deal with human or natural disasters; and

Whereas, review and prior approval by the International Institutes of Health (NIH) are required only for government-funded experiments involving certain types of gene manipulation and their guidelines are only voluntary for such experiments under other sponsorship, and

Whereas, we recognize that, given the broad implications of genetic engineering, guidance from various professional disciplines in addition to the natural sciences is needed in monitoring experimentation and the application of discoveries, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church, Northern Province, express its gratitude for the emerging technologies of genetic engineering, which offer the promise of the alleviation and ultimate prevention of abnormalities, diseases, and natural disasters, and in order that the development and application of these technologies may proceed in a responsible manner, be it further

RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church, Northern Province, urge the continuation of the NIH guidelines and requirements for governmentally-funded projects in genetic research and the extension of these guidelines to all parties engaged in such research and experimentation, and be it further

RESOLVED: that we encourage members of the Moravian Church, along with other Christians, to affirm the conviction that the sufferer is precious in the sight of God, Who leads us to accept lovingly persons with disabilities or deformities and help them develop the emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of life, and we discourage the hedonistic attitude of demanding instant cures, and be it further

RESOLVED: that we support the development by an interdisciplinary group, of guidelines for experimentation in genetic engineering, and that such guidelines take into consideration:

- a. that the devotion of resources to research and experimentation in this area should be weighed against the need to provide aid for other human needs;

- b. that where resources for research are limited, the utmost care be taken to assure that these resources be used to provide the greatest good for the greatest number;

- c. that the goal for the application of discoveries be to bring relief in existing illnesses, e.g. diabetes, rather than to modify incidental personal characteristics or to experiment on the reproductive cells; and be it further

RESOLVED: that we encourage the development of mechanisms in the public and private sectors that would facilitate the equitable distribution of the benefits of the new genetic technology to all people in this and other lands, and be it further

RESOLVED: that we oppose the compelling of any individuals in any country to undergo genetic experimentation without their knowledge or consent, recognizing that minorities, children, the elderly, the mentally retarded, the poor, the terminally ill, and the incarcerated are particularly vulnerable to such treatment.

R&E 1986, pp. 39-40, R. 32-37

FAMILY PLANNING

Whereas, many couples do not know what attitude to take toward family limitation, be it

RESOLVED: that the Northern Province of the Moravian Church believes it is the right of every married couple to have general knowledge and understanding of family planning made available to it.

JNP 1961, p. 291, R. 17

GAMBLING

Whereas, gambling is perceived to be a morally neutral activity, and

Whereas, there is a perception that gambling addiction is an increasing problem at all levels in our society, and

Whereas, organized gambling is increasingly utilized by local, state, and provincial governments as a means of raising revenue, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province acknowledges that gambling, as a means of realizing **material gain only** by chance or at the expense of others, is not to be encouraged; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province, opposes organized gambling supported by local, state, or provincial governments as a means of generating revenue; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province, does not approve of games of chance sponsored by Moravian congregations or institutions; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province, will be sensitive to the needs and families of gambling addicts and will use all appropriate resources in response.

R&E 1994, p. 86, R. 18-21

GLOBALIZATION

RE: Stewardship and the Power of Garment Purchases

Whereas, April 24, 2014 marked the one year anniversary of the deaths of 1,135 garment workers in the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh; and

Whereas, according to the April 24, 2014 website of “Workers World” although over \$20 billion comes into the economy of Bangladesh from clothing exports, there are 4 million garment workers in 5,000 garment plants in Bangladesh today who are still being paid “starvation wages” and working 15 hour days in dangerous working conditions; and

Whereas, US retailers such as WalMart and The Gap have refused to sign the accord signed by many other retailers and clothing manufacturers demanding safe working conditions and higher wages for garment workers in the plants that produce clothing they sell, WalMart, The Gap and companies that market 28 other brands of clothing made at Rana Plaza factories establishing a separate and weaker non-legally-binding plan with little funding; and

Whereas, Western governments have a responsibility to insist on safe working conditions in factories making garments sold to both western companies or consumers; and

Whereas, we, the delegates of the 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, have a “power of the purse” in how we choose to purchase garments; therefore be it

RESOLVED: We strongly encourage members of the Moravian Church, Northern Province to become better informed through such websites as *shop with meaning.org*, *onegreenplanet.org* and *ethical consumer.org* about the garments we purchase and will make every effort to purchase only garments that are made and sold by companies such as *fairtradeusa.org* and *fairtees.org* that ensure garment workers are working in safe conditions, working reasonable length days, and receiving a living wage, a wage in their setting that will allow them to have the income to purchase the necessities of food, shelter, clothing and health care; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province asks the Provincial Elders' Conference to identify appropriate provincial, district and ecumenical committees and agencies that can encourage and assist congregations in advocacy work, including but not limited to letter writing asking that they strive to better regulate at a national, state and provincial level the importation of garments from foreign nations, insisting that workers in those nations work in well regulated and safe conditions, work reasonable hours, and receive what is considered a living wage in their setting, certainly beyond the substantially low wages that many receive now.

R&E 2014, p. 68, R. 10-11

RE: Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth

Whereas, the World Council of Churches document, *Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth* (AGAPE) states that economic globalization and capitalistic enterprise continue to expand levels of inequity in our world, with increasing over-abundance enjoyed by a small portion of the global community, alongside abject poverty of the majority; and

Whereas, the AGAPE document notes that the thirst for more power, more profits, and more possessions is unsustainable by this world and deprives communities of the ability to meet their own needs in harmony with the environment; and

Whereas, the AGAPE document concludes that the high consumption of fossil fuels and its effects on climate have put at risk people's lives, the diversity of our eco-system and the sustainability of our planet as we know it; and

Whereas, the economy of God offers and sustains abundance for all, promotes sharing, globalized solidarity, the dignity of all persons, the love and care for the integrity of creation, and justice, with a preferential option for the poor; and

Whereas, we are called through God's grace to be transformative communities, resisting and challenging systems of injustice that thwart God's purposes, and standing in solidarity with those who are building just, participatory and sustainable communities of life; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2006 Northern Province Synod shall commend the World Council of Churches document, *Alternative Globalization Addressing People and*

Earth (AGAPE) to the Provincial Elders' Conference for study and possible use as a resource for congregations to work for poverty eradication, justice in international trade relations, responsible lending and unconditional debt cancellation, sustainable and just patterns of extraction and use of natural resources, the rights of countries and peoples to define and manage their own goods, the defense of bio-diversity, water and the atmosphere, equitable land reforms in solidarity with landless agricultural laborers, decent jobs and just wages, and reflection on dominant power structures from a biblical and theological perspective.

R&E 2006, p. 26-27, R. 4

Re: Equal Exchange Interfaith Coffee Program

Whereas, the Moravian Denomination has a strong history supporting mission work within the cultural and socio-economic framework of indigenous peoples world-wide, and

Whereas, the Moravian Church supports mission work in coffee production countries in Central America and Africa, where small farmers who grow our coffee often struggle to make a simple living, often forced to accept low prices and without affordable credit became trapped in cycles of debt. Many lack access to adequate housing, health care, education or even running water and electric, and

Whereas, coffee is the second most heavily traded commodity in the world, and

Whereas, Moravians around the world enjoy the use of coffee as a beverage of fellowship in both social and church settings, and

Whereas, the Equal Exchange is committed to the concept of fairly traded commodities whereby they pay a fair price to the farmer, work with democratic cooperatives, offer affordable credit and support sustainable agriculture and in this way help the local farmers build better lives, and

Whereas, our Christian brothers and sisters of the Lutheran World Relief, the American Friends Service Committee, Brethren Witness, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., and the United Methodist Committee on Relief have publicly taken a stand as interfaith communities to support fairly traded coffee; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province shall publicly endorse the concept of Fair Trade and encourage the use of fairly traded coffee in congregational settings; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province shall support the Equal Exchange Interfaith Coffee Program; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province shall make information available to congregations about fairly traded coffee and the Equal Exchange Interfaith Coffee Program.

R&E 2006, p. 16-17, R. 4-6

HEALTH AND HEALING

Whereas, Moravians, like all Christians, have sought to expand their understanding of the place of faith in health and healing, and

Whereas, the Moravian World Mission Conference of 1994 proposed a detailed call to the church to engage in prayer and a ministry of health and healing, and

Whereas, the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission prepared a packet of materials on health and healing, at the request of the 1995 Synod of the Moravian Church, Southern Province, to assist congregations, as well as individuals, to further expand their understanding of health and healing, and

Whereas, the packet of study materials was distributed to each delegate at the 1998 Northern Provincial Synod, therefore be it

RESOLVED: Delegates from each congregation at the 1998 Northern Provincial Synod shall take the study materials on health and healing to their congregations and encourage congregational use.

R&E 1998, p. 86, R. 23

HUMAN SEXUALITY

RE: Inclusiveness

Whereas, there is division of opinion in the Moravian Church, Northern Province, regarding whether or not it is appropriate to ordain and call gay and lesbian clergy living in covenanted relationships; and

Whereas, regardless of the outcome of the 2014 synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, some, out of deep conviction, may rejoice and others, out of deep conviction, may mourn; and

Whereas, it is a cherished principle for Moravians to be strengthened by the diversity of our fellowship; be it therefore

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, affirms the commitment of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, to be inclusive of differing views regarding whether or not it is appropriate to ordain and call gay and lesbian clergy living in covenanted relationships; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, affirms that all clergy and members of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, are free without penalty to speak, write, and express their perspectives on the appropriateness of ordaining and calling gay and lesbian clergy living in covenanted relationships, provided that such expressions are done in a charitable manner, as is fitting for brothers and sisters in the Lord; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourages the Provincial Elders' Conference, in the interest of living peacefully together as brothers and sisters in Christ, to offer appropriate follow-up gatherings for congregations of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, in a timely manner following the conclusion of the 2014 Provincial Synod.

R&E 2014, p. 18, R. 1-3

RE: The ordination and pastoral service of gay and lesbian individuals, whether single, married, or in covenanted relationships

Whereas, the Moravian Church Northern Province has been prayerfully addressing the topic of sexual orientation and the participation of gay and lesbian persons in the church since the 1974 Synod by passing the following resolutions:

1974

"RESOLVED: (29) that the Moravian Church reaffirm its open welcome to all people by specifically recognizing that the homosexual is also under God's care; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (30) that the Moravian Congregations will extend an invitation to all persons to join us in a common search for wholeness before God and persons; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (31) that as Christians, recognizing our common sinfulness and the miracle of God’s grace, accepting God’s pardon, and together striving to help free each other from bonds of fear, despair and meaninglessness, fitting us for lives of commitment, responsibility, witness, service, and celebration in God’s Kingdom, we will share in this venture as children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ toward wholeness.”

1994

“RESOLVED: (31) All segments of the Moravian Church (provincial, district, regional, congregation, individual) be encouraged to continue in prayer as individuals and as groups for openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit with regard to our understanding of the issue of homosexuality.

“RESOLVED: (32) The 1994 Northern Provincial Synod reaffirms the Homosexuality Resolution of the 1974 Resolutions of the Moravian Church Northern Province on Social Issues...(As noted above)

“RESOLVED: (33) Although the Moravian Church is not agreed on the question of the acceptability of homosexual practice, congregations are urged to make available support systems for people whose lives are affected by homosexual issues and to encourage individuals to seek appropriate training to lead such groups; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (34) ‘Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to support those rights and liberties for homosexual persons. We see a clear issue of simple justice in protecting their rightful claims.’ (from the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1992) Moreover, we condemn acts of violence and coercion against persons who are homosexual or are perceived to be homosexual.

”RESOLVED: (35) The 1994 Northern Provincial Synod affirms the intention of the Provincial Elders’ Conference, Northern Province, to develop balanced educational materials on homosexuality for use in congregations in their quest for understanding on this issue.”

1998

“RESOLVED: (7) The Provincial Synod of 1998 affirms and commends the research, resolve, and courage of the Eastern District Christian Education Commission, the EDCEC Church and Society Committee, the Saturday Forum Planning Committee, and the panel participants for planning and bringing the Saturday Night Forum on homosexuality to Provincial Synod of 1998; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (8) The 1998 Provincial Synod thanks all those who attended and participated in the Forum for their openness and soul-searching courage; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (9) The delegates to the Provincial Synod of 1998 shall encourage the members of their home districts to continue a dialogue on homosexuality and other sensitive issues within the church.”

2002

“RESOLVED: (1): The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall recommend full participation (membership, activities, and lay leadership) in the congregation for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (2): The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall affirm the resolutions of the Synods of 1974 and 1994 concerning homosexual persons; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (3): The Human Sexuality Task Force shall be commended for its efforts and the congregations of the Northern Province shall be urged to distribute this guide to their members and use it in their congregational programming; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (4): Every member of the Moravian Church shall be urged to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide our understanding of the issues pertaining to sexual orientation and direct us all to our unity in Christ.

“RESOLVED: (5) The 2002 Synod of the Northern Province shall recognize that persons who are homosexual can be members of our church because they are children of God and seek to know God’s grace which is freely given to all people who have faith in God; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (6) Homosexual individuals shall be supported and affirmed by being allowed to celebrate their lives as individuals and/or couples

completely within the bounds of the church and under the grace which our Creator imparts to all persons; and be it further

“RESOLVED: (10) The church shall continue to enter into dialogue in a Christian manner with homosexual persons in order to understand their lives and their spiritual walk.”

2010

“RESOLVED: (1) The Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, in partnership with the district boards, shall sponsor (including provisions for dialogue materials and any necessary resource persons) congregational forums in the year 2011 for the purpose of collaborative dialogue and prayer discernment of the Christian service of homosexual persons, and be it further

“RESOLVED: (2) The 2012 Eastern, Western, and Canadian District Synods are directed to establish time with the synod process for non-legislative, collaborative dialogue and prayerful discernment regarding the Christian service of homosexual persons, and be it further

“RESOLVED: (3) The Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, in consultation with the Bishops of the Northern Province and the District Boards, shall provide a summary report and corresponding legislation regarding the Christian service of homosexual persons for consideration by the 2014 Synod...” and

Whereas, in response to the resolutions approved at the 2010 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province, and in light of the long history of prior resolutions,

- the Provincial Elders' Conference named the Human Sexuality Task Force and charged it with planning and leading “Holy Conversations” in regions and congregations across the province,
- the Human Sexuality Task Force sponsored 30 regional sessions of Holy Conversations, involving 1,002 persons in all areas of the province,
- Holy Conversations were also held at the Western, Canadian, and Eastern District Synods of 2012, with opportunities for feedback and reporting to the Provincial Elders' Conference,
- many congregations held one or more additional Holy Conversations and considered other recommended materials for the purpose of prayerful discernment and dialogue,

- an online survey was made available to all in the province who wished to provide input to the Provincial Elders' Conference,
- a meeting, held in Chaska, MN on April 26–28, 2013, to honor the synod call for consultation, gathered together all members of the Provincial Elders' Conference, members of all three District Executive Boards, all Northern Province bishops capable of traveling, and all members of the Human Sexuality Task Force, and
- this April 2013 gathering, led by an outside facilitator, offered an opportunity to hear and consider a variety of voices and perspectives from around the province and among the leadership, which provided input to the Provincial Elders' Conference to craft legislation as called for by the 2010 Synod;

be it therefore

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province expresses its gratitude to members of the Human Sexuality Task Force for the hard work of spirit-filled conversations and leadership in crafting and implementing the Holy Conversations over the course of three years. This Synod also expresses its appreciation to all members of the Moravian Church Northern Province who courageously participated in any of the Holy Conversations, offered feedback, and prayed about and for this process; and

Whereas, the Moravian Church Northern Province has been in prayer and conversation about this matter since 1974 and more intentionally so since 2010; and

Whereas, the provincial elders have been in prayer and conversation about this matter, mindful of:

- *Our Moravian theology*
 - All persons are made in the image of God (*"Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness...'"* Genesis 1:26) and are blessed and beloved sons and daughters.
 - By the movement of the Holy Spirit God calls into ministry those whom God chooses, regardless of status or life situation (*"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."* Galatians 3:27, 28).

- *Our Moravian understanding of essentials*
 - Our well-known and beloved motto, “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things love” informs our faith and our relationship with others. For many of us it lacks an historical context, which leads to uncertainty about what is essential and what is non-essential.
 - From the earliest days of the Unitas Fratrum (Agreement of Rychnov 1464) [Rudolf Rican, *History of the Unity of the Brethren* (Bethlehem, PA: Moravian Church, Northern Province, 1992), 35] the church defined three categories of our faith and life together: Essentials, Ministerials, and Incidentals. The distinction between Essentials, Ministerials, and Incidentals was refined by Moravian theologians such as Luke of Prague and Jan Blahoslav, and these categories were incorporated into Moravian catechisms, confessions of faith, and hymnals. (Rican, 405–418. See also Craig Atwood, *Theology of the Czech Brethren* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2009), 215–242)
 - Essentials are of two kinds: gifts of God and the human response to God’s grace. The first three Essentials are God’s gifts: God creates, Jesus Christ redeems, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies. The second three Essentials are the human response to God’s grace: Faith, Love, and Hope, and there is no true Christianity without Faith, Love, and Hope.
 - Ministerials are sacred tools given by Christ to lead people to what is Essential and are sacred only when they are used to lead people to Faith, Love, and Hope. The Unitas Fratrum classified the following as Ministerials: first and foremost the Bible, the Sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion) and Rites of the church (confirmation, marriage, confession, and funerals); the ordained ministry; church discipline; and doctrine (creeds, confessions of faith, and catechisms).
 - Incidentals reflect local preference, traditions, tastes, culture, needs, and customs.
- *Our Moravian understanding of Scripture*
 - The Holy Bible leads us to the essentials; it is not an essential in and of itself and we trust God, through the

Holy Spirit, to continue to lead us into truth, within the limits of our knowledge and our understanding of scripture.

- The Ground of the Unity states: “The Triune God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only source of our life and salvation; and this scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith of the Unitas Fratrum and therefore shapes our life.” (Ground of the Unity, par. 4)
- “As Moravians, proclaiming Christ and Him crucified as our confession of faith, ... we do not believe that Jesus points us to Scripture so that we can find the answers there, but rather that Scripture points us to Jesus so that we can find the answers in him.” (*Guiding Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 4–5; Prepared by the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission – November 2, 2011; Amended and Adopted by the Southern Province Provincial Elders’ Conference – March 5, 2012; Amended and Adopted by the Northern Province Provincial Elders’ Conference – April 12, 2012)
- “It is not scripture and our conformity to a particular interpretation of it that unites us, but rather Christ, our Chief Elder, who holds us together by keeping us all close to him.” (*Guiding Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 5)
- *Our Province’s relationship with the Worldwide Moravian Unity*
 - We value the relationship among all the provinces of the Unity as a precious gift.
 - When speaking about homosexuality, the 2002 Unity Synod resolved that “this issue does not rise to the doctrinal equivalent of the New Testament confession, ‘Jesus is Lord’ but it is a biblical, theological and pastoral issue on which the church must dialogue.”
 - The 2010 Unity Board resolved “that the issue of homosexuality can be discussed in the Unity Provinces, taking the Ground of the Unity and the cultural and legal implications into consideration and that this issue is not belonging to the essentials of the faith and the church.” (Unity Board resolutions 2010)
 - The Northern Province complied with the request of the Unity Board of 2010 to refrain from any legislation until after the Unity Board meeting in May 2014.
- *Our Province’s rigorous ordination review process*

- There is a careful process for evaluating candidates for service and ordination that includes District Candidacy Review Committees, a criminal background check and a certified career assessment report, a theological treatise (*credo*), completion of academic requirements, ongoing assessment by the Ordination Review Committee, and final recommendation to the Provincial Elders' Conference.
- *The Northern Province bishops' letter to the church*
 - "The Bishops of the Northern Province have been involved with and continue to be in prayer about the ongoing conversations and possible legislation for the 2014 Synod regarding the ordination of gay and lesbian persons who are in a committed relationship. We very carefully, prayerfully, and passionately discussed the issue at our recent meeting and we now humbly offer this response to the church that we serve. While we all agree that it is time for the Northern Province to make a decision on the issue and to move boldly forward in mission, we do not agree on what that decision should be or even on how it should be made. With this in mind, we feel it important that we ask our brothers and sisters in Christ to approach the continuing conversations and possible decisions with care, prayer, and grace. We are of one voice in saying that we love the Savior and we love our church. We are of one accord in saying that even though we do not agree on all parts of the issue, none of us will think any less of each other or the church that we love and serve if the decision is not what we would have wanted. We agree we are called to serve the entire church and we will continue to do this with conviction. You can trust that we will continue to be available to serve and to be in prayer for congregations, clergy, and the entire Moravian Unity. We affirm the privilege and right each of us has to speak publicly to this issue as we feel led, speaking solely for ourselves and not for the Bishops collectively. Fundamentally, we agreed to never leave the table around which we are called to worship God and to pray for and encourage one another in Jesus' name." (Written December 16-17, 2012, and disseminated to the church in January 2013); and

Whereas, the church has satisfied the mandate of the 2010 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, be it therefore

RESOLVED: Individuals, regardless of sexual orientation and whether single, married, or in a covenanted relationship, who have satisfactorily met all the educational requirements, have completed the Ministerial Candidacy Review and Ordination Review Process, and have been approved for ordination by the Provincial Elders' Conference, are eligible for ordination upon receipt and acceptance of a call; and

Whereas, all clergy are expected to abide by the Standards of Responsible Behavior (as cited in the *Book of Order* ¶202e2), which states that "Ordained ministers, while single, are called to a life of celibacy (sexual abstinence); those who are married are called to a life of sexual fidelity to their spouse." In some locations, same-sex marriage is legal and in others it is not; be it therefore

RESOLVED: The *Book of Order* ¶202e2 shall be amended to read "Ordained ministers, while single, are called to a life of celibacy (sexual abstinence); those who are legally married are called to a life of sexual fidelity to their spouse/partner; those who cannot be legally married and who desire to make a lifelong commitment must be in a covenanted relationship before God which requires continuous loyalty of the individuals toward each other and calls them to a life of sexual fidelity to their partner;" and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference will create for use in the Moravian Church Northern Province a rite for solemnizing a covenanted relationship, and will continue to maintain records regarding the relationship status of its ordained ministers; and

Whereas, the *Book of Order* ¶211 states, "It is a principle of the Moravian Church that a pastor cannot be forced upon a congregation against its will. No minister can become the pastor of a congregation without the consent of a two-thirds vote of the entire membership of the Joint Board of Elders and Trustees or unified church board," be it therefore

RESOLVED: In the call process, District Presidents and/or those meeting with Joint Boards will fully disclose the relationship status, as known and where appropriate, of those being presented for call or appointment; and

Whereas, the 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, acknowledges that Moravians of good faith hold widely differing opinions on the ordination and pastoral service of gay and lesbian individuals, whether single, married, or in covenanted relationships, be it therefore

RESOLVED: As the body of Christ, and as individual members of that body, we live within the wide embrace of God's love and grace and thus are empowered to allow space for differing positions within the Moravian Church, Northern Province. As fellow servants with the bishops,* we will strive to remain at the table around which we are called to worship God and to pray for and encourage one another in Jesus' name. (*Statement of Bishops of the Northern Province December 16–17, 2012)

R&E 2014, p. 18, R. 4–9

RE: The Church and Sexual Orientation

Whereas, we affirm and applaud the Vision Statement, adopted by the 2002 Northern Provincial Synod: *The Moravian Church – Northern Province is a vital agent of reconciliation in a world yearning for the good news of Jesus Christ. We are an interconnected body of dynamic and growing churches embracing the diversity of God's creation. Our mission is listening, discerning and responding to the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of people in the places in which we minister...* and seek to respond to that Vision; and

Whereas, it is important for the Moravian Church to respect the teaching of the Bible and demonstrate the love of Christ to all, regardless of sexual orientation; and

Whereas, the struggle to be faithful to the witness of scripture, remain open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and be sensitive to the needs of all of God's children in the Church continues to challenge us; and

Whereas, the Synods of the Northern Province in 1974 and 1994 affirmed the concern of the Moravian Church in accepting and ministering to homosexual persons; and

Whereas, the Northern Provincial Synod of 1994 also acknowledged that the Moravian Church is not agreed on the question of the acceptability of homosexual practice; and

Whereas, the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, after four years of study and discussion was unable to reach a consensus on the acceptability of ordaining homosexual persons; and

Whereas, at the present time the Moravian Church is not agreed upon the interpretation of the Biblical passages which teach about sexual orientation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall recommend full participation (membership, activities, and lay leadership) in the congregation for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall affirm the resolutions of the Synods of 1974 and 1994 concerning homosexual persons, and be it further

RESOLVED: The Human Sexuality Task Force shall be commended for its efforts and the congregations of the Northern Province shall be urged to distribute this guide to their members and use it in their congregational programming; and be it further

RESOLVED: Every member of the Moravian Church shall be urged to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide our understanding of the issues pertaining to sexual orientation and direct us all to our unity in Christ.

R&E 2002, p.12-13, R.1-4

RE: Recognition of Homosexual Members of the Moravian Church Northern Province

Whereas, Scripture affirms the inclusion of all persons in the community of faith; including those once believed to be sexual outcasts, the unclean, and others as set forth in Isaiah 56:1-8; and

Whereas, Scripture affirms that all who hold the Sabbath and choose what is pleasing to God will be given within the household of faith; a name better than that of sons and daughters, and never be cut off from God as set forth in Isaiah 56:1-8; and

Whereas, God's house may truly be a house of prayer for all people; and

Whereas, the Holy Scripture illuminates the heart and guides the soul; providing in both Old Testament and New Testament examples of God's acceptance of the outcast and the inclusiveness of God's outreach, i.e., Ruth the proscribed Moabite – Deut. 23:3 – an ancestor of David; the inclusion of proscribed eunuchs – Lev. 21:18-20, Acts 8; Jesus' inclusion of tax collectors,

lepers, foreigners, harlots, sinners, the Samaritan woman in John 4: 7–15;
and

Whereas, the spiritual journey of homosexual Christians is a valid journey of faith, and
the same journey of walking with the Lord as is the faith journey of all
baptized believers; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Northern Province shall recognize that persons who
are homosexual can be members of our church because they are children
of God and seek to know God's grace which is freely given to all people
who have faith in God; and be it further

RESOLVED: Homosexual individuals shall be supported and affirmed by being allowed
to celebrate their lives as individuals and/or couples completely within
the bounds of the church and under the grace which our Creator imparts
to all persons; and be it further

RESOLVED: The church shall continue to enter into dialogue in a Christian manner with
homosexual persons in order to understand their lives and their spiritual
walk.

R&E 2002, p.13–14, R.5, 6, 10

Whereas, after prayerful consideration and discussion of the issue concerning
homosexuality and the church; and

Whereas, in light of the resolutions passed in the 1974 and 1994 Provincial Synods
concerning homosexuality, there is a continuing "need in our
congregations for a safe, open, loving, and redemptive environment in
which all people might enter into dialogue about homosexuality;" and

Whereas, families and individuals frequently need help and support as they deal with the
sexual orientation of loved ones and societal rejection; and

Whereas, there continues to be a need for the development and distribution of balanced
educational materials to facilitate a greater understanding of the issue;
therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1998 Provincial Synod of the Northern Province shall reaffirm the
"Eleventh and Final Report of the Committee on Educational Ministries
and Congregational Nurture of the 1994 Provincial Synod of the Northern
Province, Re: Homosexuality and Reconciliation".

R & E 1998, p. 47–48, R. 10

Whereas, throughout its history the Moravian Church has displayed courage to deal with difficult and potentially divisive issues regarding faith and practice (e.g. Pacifism during the Revolutionary War and the Ordination of Women), and

Whereas, the struggle to find common ground on the issue of homosexuality continues to challenge the courage and faithfulness of the Moravian Church, and

Whereas, the Moravian Church has historically found that concerted prayer is of great value in helping to resolve seemingly intractable problems, therefore be it

RESOLVED: All segments of the Moravian Church (provincial, district, regional, congregational, individual) be encouraged to continue in prayer as individuals and as groups for openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit with regard to our understanding of the issue of homosexuality.

Whereas, the issue of homosexuality is increasingly before many Christian denominations, and

Whereas, there is a need to acknowledge discomfort, anxiety, fear, and lack of understanding concerning homosexuality, and

Whereas, such acknowledgment is a part of the Christian process of reconciliation, and

Whereas, the 1974 Northern Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church affirmed the interest of the Moravian Church in accepting and ministering to homosexual persons, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Northern Provincial Synod reaffirms the Homosexuality Resolution of the 1974 Resolutions of the Moravian Church Northern Province on Social Issues, pp. 24–25,

“RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church reaffirm its open welcome to all people by specifically recognizing that the homosexual is also under God’s care, and be it further

“RESOLVED: that Moravian congregations will extend an invitation to all persons to join us in a common search for wholeness before God and persons, and be it further

“RESOLVED: that as Christians, recognizing our common sinfulness and the miracle of God’s grace, accepting God’s pardon, and together striving to help free each other from bonds of fear, despair, and meaninglessness, fitting us for lives of commitment, responsibility, witness, service, and celebration in God’s Kingdom, we will share in this venture as children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ toward wholeness.”

Whereas, the Church is called to minister where there is societal rejection, and

Whereas, families frequently experience difficulties in accepting homosexuality of a member, in some cases even disowning that family member, and

Whereas, families and individuals frequently need help and support as they deal with the sexual orientation of loved ones and societal rejection, therefore be it

RESOLVED: Although the Moravian Church is not agreed on the question of the acceptability of homosexual practice, congregations are urged to make available support systems for people whose lives are affected by homosexual issues and to encourage individuals to seek appropriate training to lead such groups; and be it further

RESOLVED: “Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to support those rights and liberties for homosexual persons. We see a clear issue of simple justice in protecting their rightful claims.” (from **The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church**, 1992). Moreover, we condemn acts of violence and coercion against persons who are homosexual or are perceived to be homosexual; and

Whereas, there is a need in our congregations for a safe, open, loving, and redemptive environment in which all people might enter into dialogue about homosexuality, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Northern Provincial Synod affirms the intention of the Provincial Elders’ Conference, Northern Province, to develop balanced educational materials on homosexuality for use in congregations in their quest for understanding on this issue.

R&E 1994, pp. 48-50, R. 31-35

Whereas, the good news of salvation by faith in Christ’s life, death and resurrection is God’s gift to all people, and

Whereas, this salvation is most often mediated through the church, the body of Christ, within the context of this redeeming community, and

Whereas, the American Psychiatric Association has stated that it is now known that the homosexual is not responsible for his/her particular sexual orientation. This orientation is a result of a development before he/she is consciously aware of what was taking place. The APA further states that the homosexual cannot be categorized as a mentally ill person for his/her homosexuality, and

Whereas, the Christian Church has the responsibility of reexamining its own traditional sexual stance in the light of more recent interpretation and scientific evidence for the benefit of both youth and adults, and

Whereas, the basic policies of the Moravian Church drawn from the Ground of Unity and Brotherly Agreement are as follows:

“The Moravian Church will oppose discrimination based on race, culture or any other barrier and its own life will demonstrate that we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

This includes open membership in our own congregations and working toward open structures and situations in society.”

Whereas, the homosexual has too often felt excluded from and persecuted by society, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church reaffirm its open welcome to all people by specifically recognizing that the homosexual is also under God’s care, and be it further

RESOLVED: that Moravian congregations will extend an invitation to all persons to join us in a common search for wholeness before God and persons, and be it further

RESOLVED: that as Christians, recognizing our common sinfulness and the miracle of God’s grace, accepting God’s pardon, and together striving to help free each other from bonds of fear, despair, and meaninglessness, fitting us for lives of commitment, responsibility, witness, service, and celebration in God’s Kingdom, we will share in this venture as children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ toward wholeness.

R&E 1974, pp.59–60, R. 29–31

HUMAN ORGAN DONATION

Whereas, human organ donations are a means of Christian witness, and

Whereas, to be an instrument in the extension of life affirms our belief in the sacredness of life, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Standing Committee on Social Concerns, if established, or the DEM shall distribute information to our congregations related to human organ donations which shall include:

- (a) the procedure involved in becoming human organ donors with consideration of individual state and provincial laws
- (b) information stressing the importance of sending regularly updated copies of proper authorization to appropriate local authorities (i.e. next of kin, pastor, hospital, doctor, funeral director, police, etc.).

R&E 1986, p. 37, R. 19

IMMIGRATION, SANCTUARY AND ASYLUM

RE: Discussion on Immigration

Whereas, foreigners living in our lands are children of God who need to be shown Christian love and compassion, and

Whereas, the current debate on immigration is a multilayered and complex issue of faith that provokes emotional responses, and

Whereas, this issue affects all those living in the United States and Canada, not only those who live along a border, and

Whereas, disproportionate distribution of resources in global economy contributes to conditions that prompt individuals to leave their homeland and culture and seek a better life elsewhere, and

Whereas, the Bible tells us not to mistreat or oppress foreigners living in our lands (Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:33; 23:35; Deut. 23:7; 24:14, 17; 27:19; Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Eze. 22:7, 29; Zec. 7:10). Indeed, not only not to mistreat foreigners living in our lands, but also to care for them (Lev. 19:10; 19:34; 23:22; Deut. 10:19; 24:19–21; 26:12–13; Eze. 47:23) because God loves the foreigner living in our lands (Deut. 10:18; Psa. 146:9), and

Whereas, as disciples of Jesus, we live under his command to love one another as Jesus himself loves us (John 13:15), and

Whereas, there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28), and

Whereas, many of our Moravian ancestors felt what it was like to be immigrants; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2006 Moravian Church – Northern Province Synod shall encourage each congregation, board, and agency to hold discussions for the purpose of sharing information on the issue of immigration; and be it further

RESOLVED: The discussions for the purpose of sharing information on the issue of immigration shall be used to teach the Biblical concepts of hospitality as it relates to the issue of immigration; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church – Northern Province shall ask the Canadian, Eastern, and Western District Boards to research and discuss the complex issues surrounding the question of immigration, both legal and illegal, and to issue appropriate proposals for action at their respective Synods of 2008.

R&E 2006, p. 17–18, R. 7–9

Whereas, the Old and New Testaments have clearly directed us to show compassion to those suffering oppression and persecution, and

Whereas, in accordance with the precepts of the Moravian Covenant for Christian Living, “though giving our loyalty to the state of which we are citizens, we do recognize a higher loyalty to God and conscience: (IV,c), and

Whereas, the Renewed Moravian Church began as refugees receiving sanctuary and many latter-day North American Moravians sought sanctuary in America, and

Whereas, the United States Government, through the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), denies legal refuge and asylum status to citizens of Guatemala and El Salvador whose governments the United States Government supports, and

Whereas, the U.S. INS policy and practice is linked to a foreign policy of supporting certain oppressive military governments to the point of maintaining that there are no political refugees from that part of the world, and

Whereas, the U.S. foreign policy regarding this matter seems to be direct violation of the U.S. Code Refugee Act of 1980, and

Whereas, the United Nations High Commission of Refugees has recognized that persons fleeing El Salvador and Guatemala are bona fide political refugees, yet fewer than 2% are being granted that status by INS, and

Whereas, refugees are fleeing to the United States to escape the persecution, torture, and murder of their civil war-torn homelands, and deportation of those seeking asylum often means disappearance or death upon their return by their own governments, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the PEC of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourage the Government of the United States to abide by the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 which ensures that those fleeing non-communist and communist countries will be given the same consideration, and be it further

RESOLVED: that the PEC of the Northern Province, go on record as supporting those who, acting out of their faith and witness, provide sanctuary and asylum to those fleeing from persecution in their native lands.

R&E 1986, pp.36-37, R. 13, 15

LIVING WILL—RIGHT TO DIE

Whereas, God has conquered death through Christ, and

Whereas, this belief is a central affirmation to the faith of a Christian, and is declared through our worship as the Church, the living body of Christ, and

Whereas, the resulting resurrection faith of the Christian ought to exemplify a lack of fear in the face of death, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that members of the Moravian Church reaffirm God's message to man about death as spoken by Christ: "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26) and be it further

RESOLVED: that in handling the subject of the right to die with dignity without heroic life-prolonging measures, faith in Christ's victory shall be the setting in which one speaks of death, and through which we find its ultimate meaning; not as creators of life, but as creatures who believe in the eternal love of our creator.

Whereas, science is developing ever-increasing means to prolong life, and

Whereas, neither science nor religion have fully understood the mystery of when the physical life of an individual ends, and

Whereas, individuals should have the right to predetermine what will happen to them when their death becomes imminent, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod approve of the practice of allowing an individual to die with dignity.

Whereas, it would be helpful to family and attending physician(s) to know the wishes of individuals facing death, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that members of Moravian congregations be encouraged to study documents such as a "Living Will" regarding care when their own death will become imminent and prepare in written form their wishes; and be it further

RESOLVED: that since there are certain diseases which are either deteriorating and/or cause intractable pain, and which will undoubtedly have no known cure at any given period in scientific discoveries, members of the Moravian Church do not condemn those who choose the right to die with dignity without heroic life-prolonging measures or those who are supportive of their decision; and be it further

RESOLVED: that since the physically, mentally, and/or emotionally handicapped persons do receive definite satisfactions from life, this Synod disapproves of "mercy killing" as an appropriate means for dealing with any problems that may surround handicapped persons.

R&E 1974, pp. 54-55, R. 1-6

MEDIA AND VALUES

Whereas, we recognize the unique and critical issues facing youth today in which they are assaulted by printed and electronic media, and

Whereas, we as a church family recognize the responsibility to formulate and/or clarify values, and

Whereas, we recognize the need to foster greater self-esteem to enable youth to resist negative pressures which may come from peers and the media, and

Whereas, the challenge is too expensive and widespread for one congregation or denomination to tackle alone, be it therefore

RESOLVED: The Department of Publications and Communications shall facilitate the production and use of media spots, for insertion in secular media, expressing the Christian message. Ecumenical cooperation is encouraged in every facet of this project.

R&E 1994, p. 87, R. 22

Whereas, "Children are a gift from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3) and need nurturing, and Paul reminds us that we are "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19); and

Whereas, in contemporary North American society the influential role of all forms of media cannot be denied; and material presented in media may be not only blatantly offensive but also subtly subversive of the Christian faith and Christian ethic, and

Whereas, persons of all ages suffer from the erosion of standards of decency and undermining of moral sensitivity in media, and

Whereas, an informed and discriminating public is better equipped to protect itself from exploitation, particularly in, but not restricted to, the areas of advertising and entertainment in media, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Northern Province of the Moravian Church encourages congregations to take advantage of the materials and expertise available from the Department of Educational Ministries (or other appropriate provincial agency) in order to assist congregations in developing skills of recognition and evaluation with regard to negative influences in media; and be it further

RESOLVED: Districts of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, are encouraged to offer training opportunities concerning the use of materials dealing with media and values.

R&E 1994, pp. 87-88, R. 23-24

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND FAMILY

Whereas, many in the church have sought change in the statements in **The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living** regarding marriage to express more clearly a concern for those caught in troubled marriages and divorce; therefore be it

RESOLVED: **The Moravian Covenant For Christian Living**, The Witness of the Christian Home, A. Marriage, which now reads

1. We regard it as a sacred obligation to hold to the ideal of Christian marriage given by our Lord in his teaching. We consider it essential, therefore, that all persons contemplating marriage should receive premarital counseling and that our young people should be instructed, beginning in adolescence, in the meaning and obligation of true Christian marriage; this instruction to be given through the Church and the home.

2. We regard Christian marriage as an indissoluble union, which requires the lifelong loyalty of the man and the woman towards each other. Because any breaking of the marriage bond involves sin against God and causes human suffering, it is the duty of husband and wife to meet all frictions, offenses and disagreements with a forgiving spirit that persistently works for reconciliation. Furthermore, if at any time the stability of the marriage is threatened, they are to seek the counsel of their pastors or of other spiritual leaders in the church as soon as possible and before any other action is taken.

Be revised and enlarged to read

1. We regard it as a sacred obligation to hold to the ideal of Christian marriage given by our Lord in his teaching. We consider it essential, therefore, that all persons contemplating marriage should receive premarital counseling and that our young people should be instructed, beginning in adolescence, in the meaning and obligation of true Christian marriage; this instruction to be given through the Church and the home.

2. We regard Christian marriage as a lifelong covenant before God which requires the continuous loyalty of the man and the woman toward each other. Any breaking of the marriage bond is a result of sin and causes human suffering; therefore it is the duty of husband and wife to meet all frictions, offenses, and disagreements with a humble, forgiving spirit that persistently works for reconciliation. If at any time the stability of their marriage is threatened, they are to seek the counsel of their pastor or of other spiritual leaders in the Church as soon as possible and before any other action is taken.

3. As ambassadors of Christ called to be agents of reconciliation, we recognize that persons of sincere faith and with good counsel may still decide or be forced to divorce. We believe it our Christian responsibility to pray for, support, and encourage those who have divorced, the children of the divorced, and all who are wounded by divorce. And we will faithfully minister with them toward the goal of healing, wholeness, repentance, forgiveness, and the new life made possible through the sacrificial love of our Savior.

R&E 1998, p.81–82, R. 17

Whereas, the 1996 Western District Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province considered references to marriage and divorce in the **Moravian Covenant for Christian Living** to be outdated and hurtful to persons who have experienced divorce and remarriage, and

Whereas, the 1996 Western District Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province has provided language that focuses on reconciliation in the **Moravian Covenant for Christian Living**, and

Whereas, the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, seeking to provide consistency in the **Book of Order** of both Southern and Northern Provinces while responding to the concern of the 1996 Western District Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province has provided new language for the **Book of Order**, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The **Book of Order**, sections 1072 and 1073 on divorce reading:

“¶1072 (a) Jesus taught as a principle of the Christian life that marriage is an indissoluble union of man and wife in loyalty and love (Matt. 5:32, 19:9, Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18). As in the case of all the principles which He enunciated, Jesus knew that men, through sin, continually tend to fall short of this absolute standard.

(b) since any breaking of the marriage–bond involves both sin against God and human suffering, it is the duty of husband and wife to meet all frictions, offenses, and disagreements with a forgiving spirit that persistently works for reconciliation. Furthermore, if at any time the stability of their marriage is threatened, they are to seek the counsel of their pastor or of other spiritual leaders in the Church as soon as possible and before any other action is taken.

(c) Where divorce actually occurs, the Church, recognizing its own involvement, should seek to lead all persons concerned to repentance and forgiveness. If it proves impossible to reestablish the marriage, the Church should continue to minister to each member of the broken family.

(d) If a divorced member, duly repentant for his/her responsibility in the failure of the former marriage, requests remarriage, the Church is to be mindful of the example of Jesus, who placed the welfare of persons above legal strictures. In considering such requests, the Church must always guard, on the one hand, against a soft indulgence, which is all too easily mistaken for compassion, and on the other, against a moralistic rigidity which may cause us to forget that God's ultimate purpose for humanity is to forgive, to heal, to restore, and to renew; not to castigate, judge, and condemn.

¶1073. When a pastor is asked to officiate at the marriage of a divorced person, the pastor shall arrange for an unhurried conference with the parties involved in the proposed marriage, at which conference, or during more than one, the pastor shall be satisfied that

(a) The party proposing to marry the divorced person knows the circumstances of the divorce and accepts them.

(b) There is evidence of personal penitence, and a willingness to forgive the former partner.

(c) Obligations to those involved in the former marriage, especially toward children of the marriage, shall be fulfilled.

(d) Growth in understanding of the Christian concept of marriage is taking place.

(e) There appears to be a willingness on the part of the divorced person to make an effort to overcome the limitations or failures which contributed to the breakup of the former marriage, and a sincere desire, on the part of both parties, to root the new marriage in a dependence upon Christ and in faithful participation in the life and work of the Church.

(f) In the parish ministry the approval of the Board of Elders shall be received prior to the marriage of every divorced person; (all other clergy shall receive prior approval from the Provincial Elders' Conference).

(g) If a pastor feels serious doubts during conference(s) with the couple as to whether or not the ceremony should be performed, the pastor may (a) suggest, or call for time to seek advice from another pastor, the Board of Elders' or from Provincial Elders' Conference, or (b) decline, in the spirit of Christian love, to perform the ceremony. If this is done, one or both of the parties involved may, if they desire, appeal to the Provincial Elders' Conference."

be removed and the following be substituted:

MARRIAGE/DIVORCE/REMARRIAGE

“The Moravian Church, Northern and Southern Provinces, regards it as a sacred obligation to hold to the ideal of Christian marriage given by our Lord in his teaching. That is, Christian marriage is a life long covenant before God which requires the continuous loyalty of the man and the woman towards each other (Matthew 5:32, 19:9, Mark 10:11–12, Luke 16:18, I John 1:9)

Congregations and pastors shall endeavor to teach the meaning and sacred obligations of Christian marriage, and are specifically charged with responsibility for:

- a. Creating in the congregation and its organizational life an atmosphere in which the Christian home and family will receive regular and continuing emphasis.
- b. Creating among the youth of the congregation and among the parents, the opportunities for considering the meaning and obligations of Christian marriage.
- c. Providing counsel regarding the meaning and obligation of Christian marriage for every couple contemplating marriage.

Because marriage is intended to be a lifelong covenant, it is the responsibility of husband and wife to meet frictions, offenses and disagreements with a forgiving spirit that persistently works for reconciliation. If at any time, the stability of their marriage is threatened, they are to seek the counsel of their pastor or other spiritual leaders in the church as soon as possible and before any other action is taken.

The church acknowledges the painful reality of divorce, and desires both to respond with grace to divorced persons and to affirm our commitment to the ideal of Christian marriage as a permanent lifelong union between husband and wife. Following the example and teaching of our Lord, we acknowledge the responsibility to deal compassionately and redemptively with human frailty and sin in every area of life including failure in the marriage state.

Where divorce occurs, it is the responsibility of the church, recognizing its own involvement, to lead all persons concerned to repentance and forgiveness. It is the responsibility of the church to continue to minister to each member of the broken family. It is the responsibility of members of that family to fulfill their obligations from the former relationship, e.g. to the children, whether or not remarriage occurs. The church will faithfully minister with them towards the goal of healing, wholeness, and the new life made possible through the sacrificial love of our Savior.”

When divorced persons come to the church seeking remarriage, it is the responsibility of the church to assist them in understanding their new marriage covenant before God.

and be it further

RESOLVED: The **Book of Order** shall be renumbered accordingly.

R&E 1998, p. 82–85, R.18, 19

Whereas, the *Book of Order*, ¶1073(f) requires that pastors who wish to marry couples in which one or both parties have been divorced secure permission from their Board of Elders, and

Whereas, this requirement breaks the confidential nature of premarital counseling, and

Whereas, the *Book of Order*, ¶1072(e) requires in the case of couples in which one or both partners have been divorced that a pastor not consider “...any request for re–marriage unless at least one of the partners is a professing Christian who will continue to seek an active relationship with the Church of Jesus Christ,” and

Whereas, the *Book of Order* does not make a similar requirement of pastors regarding couples in which neither of the partners has been previously divorced, and

Whereas, this constitutes unequal treatment of couples coming to the Church for marriage, be it therefore

RESOLVED: ¶1072(e) and ¶1073(f) of the *Book of Order* of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall be suspended during the next intersynodal period; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church shall direct the Provincial Elders’ Conference to arrange for an appropriate group, such as the Faith and Order Commission, to study the teaching about the covenant of marriage in the *Book of Order* and make recommendations for the revision thereof, including assurance of equitable treatment of all who come to the Church seeking marriage.

R&E 1994, p. 75, R. 21–22

Whereas, the Bible clearly teaches that marriage is a life–long relationship between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4–6), and

Whereas, the Bible clearly teaches that sexual relations may only be righteously and honorably expressed within the marriage relationship (Exodus 20:14, Hebrews 13:4), and

Whereas, the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* specifically holds ...to the ideal of **Christian marriage given by our Lord in his teaching...**(¶21), and enjoins us to accept this principle as a sacred obligation, and

Whereas, the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum* expressly directs as a **sacred obligation** that members of the Unitas Fratrum hold to an...ideal of **Christian marriage as pure as it is given by our Lord in his teaching...**(¶657), and

Whereas, our members are pressured by the present day culture of North America to compromise Christian teaching on marriage, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province acknowledges the painful reality of divorce and the desire to respond graciously to divorced persons, while reaffirming our commitment to the ideal of “Christian marriage as an indissoluble union which requires the lifelong loyalty of the man and woman towards each other.” (Moravian Covenant ¶22); and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall reaffirm the appropriateness of sexual relations only within the marriage relationship; and be it further

RESOLVED: Congregations shall purpose to teach our children the meaning and obligation of the true Christian marriage; and be it further

RESOLVED: The leadership of our congregations shall be encouraged and enjoined to uphold the teaching of Scripture and the Church concerning marriage.

R&E 1994, pp. 77-78, R. 26-29

Re: **Domestic Violence**

Whereas, the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* states in ¶28 that in our witness to the world “we will not hate, despise, slander or otherwise injure anyone. We will ever strive to manifest love towards all people, to treat them in a kind and friendly manner, and in our dealings with them to prove ourselves upright, honest, and conscientious, as becomes children of God,” and

Whereas, our families should be included in our witness as well as the world, and

Whereas, according to statistics provided by the Christian Education Commission of the Eastern District:

- (a) every day thousands of acts of domestic violence occur (including verbal, psychological, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse), cutting across all ethnic, class, and age groups;

(b) one-half of all couples experience at least one violent incident, and in one quarter of those, violence is a common occurrence; and

Whereas, there is reluctance and fear to report domestic violence, and

Whereas, many communities offer a safe place for battered persons, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province adopt the following position statement on domestic violence:

Domestic violence may be verbal, psychological, physical, sexual, and/or emotional. Domestic violence includes spouse or partner abuse, child abuse, marital rape and abuse of the elderly. Victims of domestic violence live in daily fear for their safety and their lives. Victims rarely know when they will be assaulted or what behaviors or remarks might precipitate violence. Domestic violence is found in every race, class, profession, and occupation, age, geographic and religious group.

Faith communities need to find appropriate ways to respond and to proclaim that domestic violence is not acceptable. The Moravian Church, Northern Province recognizes that domestic violence is a problem of epidemic proportions and directs congregations to respond through education, direct ministry, and public policy advocacy.

and be it further

RESOLVED: The Committee on Church and Society of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall assist district, regional, and congregational social concerns committees in providing workshops for the training of clergy and laity in issues of domestic violence; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Board of Elders or Social Concerns Committee of each congregation of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall seek ways to develop new and/or support existing ministries for persons affected by domestic violence; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Board of Elders or Social Concerns Committee of each congregation of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall seek ways to develop new and/or existing ministries for those who have committed acts of domestic violence or who struggle with this temptation; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Board of Elders or Social Concerns Committee of each congregation of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall provide information concerning educational opportunities to familiarize members and the wider community with the issues of domestic violence.

R&E 1994, pp. 79-80, R. 1-4

Whereas, it has been our good fortune to have received a letter from the bishops of the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church concerning the family, and

Whereas, Section 206, paragraph (b) of *The Book of Order* states that one of the functions of the office of bishop is to provide "...spiritual guidance to the church at-large. In this connection the opinion of Bishops shall customarily be sought and given due consideration and weight in matters of doctrine and practice," be it therefore

RESOLVED: The 1994 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, expresses its gratitude to the bishops of the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church for their pastoral letter concerning the family and urges the distribution of the pastoral letter to all congregations of the Province; and be it further

RESOLVED: The bishops of the Northern and Southern Provinces shall be encouraged to continue to meet and offer spiritual guidance to the congregations of the North American Moravian Church.

PASTORAL LETTER
of The Bishops of the
Northern and Southern Provinces
of the Moravian Church

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Chief Elder, from the bishops of the American Moravian Church, Southern and Northern Provinces.

As bishops of the Moravian Church we recognize the pain of families. The Church faces a crucial need to provide supportive communities of faith. Though we do not have all the answers to the issues of our time, in responsibility to Jesus Christ, our Lord, we desire to express our concern and provide encouragement, a vision of God's intention for families, and the possibilities of a richer family life.

We are concerned about the needs of single families, families in crisis, broken marriages, clashing values, physical and sexual abuse, child neglect, substance and alcohol abuse, issues of power and control, adults caring for older parents, families living with those with AIDS or with long-term disabilities, all of which challenge the core and fiber of individual family units. All of the difficulties families face are made more difficult to solve by the loss of the support of extended families. When families are in crisis, the congregation is in crisis and when congregations are in crisis, the denomination is in crisis. As followers of Christ we live in two worlds. We live in the world in which we find ourselves, with its good and its ills, but we also belong to another world. Christ recognized this when He said of His disciples: "They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take

them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.” (see John 17) The evil one in Jesus’ day was regarded as the ruler of this world, with values different from God’s.

Whatever the problems of the world, this world is where we must for a time live and exercise our responsibilities. It is also God’s gift to us and the place for our personal, spiritual, and moral development. Christians in the New Testament wrestled with how a Christian was to live within the world. The most profound answer in the New Testament is to be found in I Peter in which Peter comes to terms with Jesus’ call to a ministry of service and suffering for others, something Peter and other disciples rejected during Jesus’ ministry (see Mark 8:27–34; 10:42–45). In I Peter, Peter says that Christians must be for their world and suffer for it to bring persons to God (see I Peter 2–3, especially 2:21 and 3:13–18).

Yet Christians really belong to another world which is God’s. They are exiles and aliens within their society (I Peter 1:1, 2:11), acting in harmony with the God to whom they pray (1:17), “born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance...kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (I Peter 1:3–5). They derive their values from God through they must live in a world which holds different values. This second world to which Christians belong provides them with the resources for life in this world.

Christ, as Son of God, brings to us God’s values and gives the gift of choice that we may choose those values by which we would live. Life lived from an awareness of God’s world is a life lived in relationship with God (in the Spirit) and its values are: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Gal. 5:22)

The church is the extended family of the Christian, of which one becomes a member by Baptism and by which the values of God’s world are supported, faith shared, and the resources of individual families are supplemented. It is a community where we pray for one another and bear one another’s burdens. It is a community where the love and care of the Spirit (God’s presence) are available and vision, hope, and fulfillment may be realized. From the Moravian perspective, as an international Church, we are brothers and sisters with others throughout the world, an international family.

In Baptism, the rite of joining the Christian family; in Holy Communion, the meal of the family of God; in the rite of marriage through which persons commit themselves to individual families; we are reminded of who we are and God’s values which we hold. In all of these the congregation commits itself to ongoing responsibility. Life is seldom ideal, and thus reminders of who we are and that to which we commit ourselves are important.

Discussion of the Moravian Church’s standards and hope for families is to be found in foundational documents, such as the Moravian Covenant for Christian Living and the Church Order of the Unity. Attention is also called to materials on family life provided

by the Christian education agencies of each Province. Some of the cardinal statements of the Church Order of the Unity are:

¶656 It is...a duty and a privilege among all members of the Church to uphold the highest ideals of Christian marriage and family life, and to avoid anything that would bring dishonour upon it.

¶657 The Unitas Fratrum regards it as a sacred obligation to hold an ideal of Christian marriage as pure as it is given by our Lord in His teaching, viz. that Christian marriage is an indissoluble union and requires the lifelong loyalty of the man and the woman towards each other in thought and deed.

¶659 The Unitas Fratrum, honouring the example and injunction of our Lord, acknowledges the responsibility of dealing compassionately and redemptively with human frailty and sin in every area of life, including failure in the marriage state.

¶660 Therefore in every case where action is taken in regard to divorced persons, the Unitas Fratrum urges upon its pastors and congregations the need to make every effort to avoid both a rigid legalism and an irresponsible abuse in the discharge of this sacred responsibility.

In closing we encourage every Moravian to examine and accept those values which have power to be helpful in daily living. A review of vows taken in the past will be a reminder of what we have once pledged in baptism, confirmation, and in marriage.

Lo, the hosts of evil around us
Scorn Thy Christ, assail His ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
Free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
For the living of these days. *(Moravian Hymnal 410)*

Wilbur Behrend	Burton J. Rights
Arthur J. Freeman	Warren A. Sautebin
Paul A. Graf	Edwin A. Sawyer
Percival R. Henkelman	Allen W. Schattschneider
George G. Higgins	Stanley F. Thomas
James C. Hughes	Robert A. Iobst
Edwin W. Kortz	Milo A. Loppnow

August 5, 1994 Bethlehem, PA

R&E 1994, pp. 80-83, R. 5-6

PEACE AND JUSTICE

RE: Spiritual Solidarity with Sisters and Brothers in Honduras

Whereas, for more than 60 years the Moravian Church in North America has had a special relationship with the Moravian Church in Honduras as one of our

partner provinces and through the sending of missionaries and mission teams to walk alongside our Honduran sisters and brothers; and

Whereas, Honduras has experienced a rise in gang violence – it now has the highest homicide rate per capita in the world with 6,200 killings, or 82.1 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 2010 alone (UN report, 10/2011); and

Whereas, this gang violence is directly connected to the trafficking of illegal drugs that are eventually sold in North America; and

Whereas, the pastors and churches and people of faith in Honduras are unable to speak out against the gangs and the illegal drug trade without the risk of retaliation that threatens their personal safety; and

Whereas, we in the Northern Province have the freedom to speak out against the drug-related violence that threatens the quality of life of the people in Honduras; and

Whereas, we have the responsibility to discourage complacency by raising the awareness of the struggles that others face; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province calls upon its congregations and agencies, with the help of the Board of World Mission, to raise awareness and engage in educational activities on how the sale and consumption of illegal drugs in North America results in violence and exacerbates human rights violations that threaten not only the quality of life, but life itself, for our sisters and brothers in Honduras; and be it further

RESOLVED: Since pastors in Honduras cannot speak out against gangs and violence without risk to their personal safety, the 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province urges pastors and leaders in churches throughout the Northern Province to speak out from their pulpits to give voice to the Hondurans' plight; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province calls upon the members of its congregations to realize that awareness and education concerning the consumption of illegal drugs must begin "at home," and move outward into neighborhoods and communities; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province encourages its congregations and agencies, in a spirit of solidarity, to hold the people of Honduras and our global partners in prayer; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourages its members in various settings to call on our nations' governmental leaders to assess our foreign policies and drug policies to address situations of human rights violations, illegal drug trafficking and violence that impact the quality of life for our sisters and brothers in Honduras.

R&E 2014, p. 54, R. 11-15

RE: Stewardship of Peace

Whereas, the two nations represented at this 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province have found themselves in a virtual state of "permanent war" since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001, and

Whereas, this 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province recognizes the plurality of opinion when it comes to a decision to enter into a "just war", and

Whereas, the response from the mainstream religious community, and specifically the Moravian Church, Northern Province, has been generally tepid regarding its collective expression of concern during these recent years of war and conflict, and

Whereas, our nations will continue to be involved in decisions regarding this virtual state of "permanent war" for years to come, and

Whereas, we follow Jesus as the Prince of Peace and Lord of all of life, and

Whereas, throughout the gospels Jesus clearly advocates non-violence at all levels, and

Whereas, many have reminded us of the call for Christians to live lives of peace, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer who wrote, "The followers of Jesus have been called to peace. In doing so they overcome evil with good and establish the peace of God in the midst of a world of war and hate." (The Cost of Discipleship, Touchstone, 1959, pages 112-113), therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province will ask the Provincial Elders' Conference to identify appropriate provincial, district,

and ecumenical committees and agencies that can encourage and assist congregations in advocacy work, including but not limited to letter writing, asking each leader to carefully and prayerfully consider the biblical demands of all choices regarding armed conflict and war, consider the words of Jesus seen by many as the Prince of Peace, and enter into armed conflict and war as an absolute last resort to resolve such conflict and strive for a secure lasting peace, using every other tool at their disposal such as diplomacy and extensions of humanitarian aid.

R&E 2014. p. 65, R. 5

RE: Churches for Middle East Peace

Whereas, the Moravian Church has had a presence in ministry and mission in the region of Palestine and Israel for approximately 125 years and operates the Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center, located near Ramallah, and

Whereas, in Psalm 122:6–7 there is a call to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers,’” and

Whereas, the 2002 Unity Synod called for a letter to leaders in Palestine and Israel that included the following text:

We urge both sides to end violence and enter into negotiations as soon as possible in order to achieve justice and peace for all people in that area, by working towards a viable two state solution, which guarantees the principles of pluralism, good governance, and respect for human rights.

We on our side will continue to pray for that goal, and we shall encourage our churches and congregations to strengthen the existing bonds with the people in Palestine and Israel by exploring various expressions of solidarity with the people in that area.

and

Whereas, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is a coalition of 21 public policy offices of national churches and agencies -- Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant -- which seeks to help its members advocate in a knowledgeable, timely and effective way their concerns about justice and peace for all people and countries in the region, and

Whereas, the purpose of CMEP is to give witness to principles of peace and justice in the Middle East on behalf of its religious constituencies, recognizing and embodying the policy statements of those various bodies. Generally, CMEP will advocate positions that:

- 1) realize the vision of a region where two viable states, Israel and Palestine, live side-by-side within secure and recognized borders,
- 2) promote the sharing of an undivided Jerusalem by the two peoples -- Israelis and Palestinians -- and by the three religious communities that call it sacred,
- 3) encourage negotiated, just, and peaceful resolutions to conflicts in the region,
- 4) promote the right of people to live in peace and security, free of fears of harassment, oppression, and violence,
- 5) encourage the demilitarization of conflicts and help to establish the Middle East as a region free of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons,
- 6) foster respect for human rights based on full observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights covenants of the United Nations, and the Geneva Conventions,
- 7) encourage equitable development and humanitarian assistance to the region by the United States and other nations,
- 8) promote the rights, and meet the humanitarian needs, of refugees and displaced persons in the region,
- 9) support the United Nations in playing an important role in seeking a just resolution of problems and the maintenance of a region without conflict,
- 10) recognize the religious importance of the region to Jews, Christians, and Muslims and protect the religious freedom of all, and

Whereas, Churches for Middle East Peace has the following expectations of Associate Members: a) agreement with CMEP's mission statement, b) annual financial contribution of \$1000 is requested and c) support for CMEP education and advocacy work as able; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church in America, Northern Province shall join the Southern Province in becoming a single associate member of Churches for Middle East Peace, sharing equally in annual contribution, as a way of providing information for members to be advocates for peace, justice, and security for all people in the region of Israel and Palestine.

This resolution has been adopted by the synod of the Southern Province and has been forwarded to us for consideration of a single associate membership.

R&E 2006, p.14–16, R. 3

RE: Post September 11, 2001

Whereas, in the wake of terrorist activities subsequent to the events of September 11, 2001, persons of the Islamic faith and those appearing to be of Middle Eastern descent are often held in suspicion and targeted unfairly; and

Whereas, during His earthly ministry, Christ demonstrated God’s love to Samaritans, Romans, and others from unpopular religious and cultural backgrounds, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2002 Northern Province Synod implores the churches of the Moravian Church, Northern Province to reflect the Love of God and practice tolerance and respect in our relations with our Muslim brothers and sisters and those appearing to be of Middle Eastern descent, and

Whereas, the Word of God which tells us that “perfect love casts out fear” (I John 4:18); be it further

RESOLVED: The 2002 Northern Province Synod implores the members of the Moravian Church, Northern Province to rise above the atmosphere of fear that pervades our world, and live our lives in the hope and love that faith in Jesus Christ inspires.

R&E 2002, p.15, R.18–19

Re: Jubilee 2000 Campaign

Whereas, in Leviticus 25.8–55 and Deuteronomy 15.1–11 the Bible calls for a year of Jubilee, when slaves are set free and debts are forgiven, and

Whereas, the approaching millennium provides the world a particularly significant time for such a Jubilee, and

Whereas, many impoverished nations, carry such high levels of debt that economic development is stifled and scarce resources are diverted from health care, education, roads, the environment and other socially beneficial uses in order to make debt service payments (Tanzania, for example, spends 22 percent of its export earnings to service its \$7.3 billion international debt; Nicaragua spends 36 percent of its export earnings to service its \$9.3 billion international debt), and

Whereas, much of this debt is the result of ill-conceived development, flawed policies that creditors required of recipient nations in exchange for assistance as well as shortsighted decisions of their own leaders, and

Whereas, much of the borrowing benefited only elites in receiving nations, whereas the burden of repaying the debt falls on the most impoverished members of society, and

Whereas, the Jubilee 2000 Campaign is a coalition of people and organizations of faith and moral conviction calling for (1) definitive cancellation of the crushing international debt in situations where countries burdened with high levels of human need and environmental distress are unable to meet the basic needs of their people or achieve a level of sustainable development that ensures a decent quality of life, (2) definitive debt cancellation that benefits ordinary people and facilitates their participation in the process of determining the scope, timing and conditions of debt relief, as well as the future direction and priorities of their national and local economies, (3) definitive debt cancellation that is not conditioned on policy reforms that perpetuate or deepen poverty or environmental degradation, and (4) acknowledgment of responsibility by both lenders and borrowers, and action to recover resources that were diverted to corrupt regimes, institutions and individuals, and (5) establishment of a transparent and participatory process to develop mechanisms to monitor international monetary flows and prevent recurring destructive cycles of indebtedness, and

Whereas, our mission partners in the developing world have asked Moravians in the developed world to advocate for more beneficial and just economic policies on their behalf with governments and international financial institutions, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Board of World Mission shall make available to the churches of the Northern Province educational materials concerning the scope and impact of debt on developing nations, especially those in partnership with Northern Province Moravians, and be it further

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province shall affirm the Jubilee 2000 Campaign, which is mobilizing Christians and other people of faith to become advocates for debt forgiveness and other biblically-rooted efforts to help impoverished nations, and be it further

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church, Northern Province shall encourage individuals and congregations to become involved in advocacy for the Jubilee 2000 campaign and to act on the implications of this advocacy both locally and internationally.

R&E 1998, pp. 44-45, R. 1-3

Re: Ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Whereas, Provincial Synods of the Moravian Church–Northern Province in 1982 and 1986 endorsed efforts to promote peace and nuclear disarmament, including “an immediate world–wide freeze on the development and deployment of nuclear weapons in which the United States and Canada should take the initiative”; and

Whereas, on May 11, 1998 India began a series of five underground nuclear tests, with Pakistan responding three days later with nuclear tests of its own; and

Whereas, the United States, along with other nuclear powers, condemned India and Pakistan’s actions and urged them to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); and

Whereas, the United States to date has not yet ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); and

Whereas, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) would ban all nuclear test explosions and establish a far–reaching verification regime with on–site inspections, thus laying a foundation on which additional nuclear weapons control agreements could be built; and

Whereas, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was approved overwhelmingly by the UN General Assembly in 1996 and signed by nearly 150 nations, including the United States; and

Whereas, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) will enter into force when ratified by the 44 nuclear or nuclear–potential states, with 13 nations, including Britain and France having ratified the treaty to date; and

Whereas, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) will make it much harder for the countries with advanced nuclear weapons, including Russia and China, to produce new and more threatening types of nuclear warheads, while simultaneously making it more difficult for other nations seeking nuclear arms—like Iran and Iraq—from making advanced nuclear warheads; and

Whereas, former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States Generals John Shalikashvili, Colin Powell, and David Jones and Admiral William Crowe have all endorsed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); and

Whereas, a September 1997 poll by the Mellman Group indicated that 70 percent of Americans supported the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) with only 13 percent opposed; be it therefore

RESOLVED: The 1998 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province calls upon the United States Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1998 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province requests the president of the Provincial Elders’ Conference to write the

leaders of the United States Senate urging a prompt scheduling of a floor debate and vote on ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1998 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province urges delegates to the 1998 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province who are citizens of the United States to write their senators urging them to vote in favor of the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

R&E 1998, pp. 45–47, R. 4–6

Whereas, the Provincial Synod of 1982 established the first Sunday in August (as being near to August 6 and 9, the anniversaries of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) as a Prayer Day for World Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, and

Whereas, annual resources for the observance of this Prayer Day have been distributed through the Department of Educational Ministries or through the Standing Committee on Church and Society, and

Whereas, there has been appreciation for the opportunity to observe a prayer day dealing with matters of grave international concern, providing an opportunity for Christian witness for peace and justice, and

Whereas, the interfaith Peace with Justice Week observance falls in the month of October, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The third Sunday in October shall be declared as a Prayer Day for Peace with Justice and Freedom in the Moravian Church, Northern Province; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Standing Committee on Church and Society of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, in cooperation with the Department of Educational Ministries, shall provide resources to enable the creative observance of both the Prayer Day for World Peace and Nuclear Disarmament and the Prayer Day for Peace with Justice and Freedom.

R&E 1990, pp. 48–49, R. 21–22

Whereas, the Moravian Church has historically and consistently taken a stand for peace, and

Whereas, the 1982 Provincial Synod called for nuclear non–proliferation, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod endorse the *Citizens' Declaration on World-wide Nuclear Disarmament*.

R&E 1986, p. 38, R. 28

Re: Nuclear Non-Proliferation and World Peace

Whereas, the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum* (1981) paragraph 666 states:

“In obedience to the Command of Christ it is the solemn obligation of the Church to work for the continuance and keeping of world peace. The Moravian Church, through its international character, is placed in a particularly favorable position to use its influence to this end. Its constant aim should be to encourage and help to establish world peace in the name of Jesus Christ who Himself is the source of true peace and reconciliation.” and

Whereas, the *Moravian Covenant* states:

“For the sake of the peace which we have with God, we earnestly desire to live peaceably with all people and to seek the peace of the places where we dwell.” and

Whereas, the 1951 Provincial Synod adopted the following statement (JNP 1951, pp 441–442, R. 23):

“Man in the moment of his greatest scientific achievement faces the possibility of total self-destruction. To many, war seems the only answer. We believe that another way, grounded in the will of God, is open. In this hour of confusion and turmoil, the church is called to speak a distinctive and steadying word, drawn not from the judgments of the secular world, but from its gospel.

“The insistent and absolute call of Christ is to His Cross. It is a call to repentance and commitment—repentance for our involvement in war and commitment to the power of reconciling love.

“We, therefore, appeal to the Church of Christ throughout the world to break with war—to repent of war-making now.

“We, appeal to the American churches to take the initiative in this crucial witness. We appeal to individual Christians to refuse to make or to use weapons of destruction, and to devote their energies to the removal of the social, economic and moral causes of depression, dictatorship, and war.

“We advocate that individual Christians and the Church, support the use of methods of reconciliation and non-violent action, such as Ghandi has demonstrated in our time.

“Let the Church own no Lord but Christ, no power but the Cross, no hope but in the God who bears the destiny of all in His hands.” and Whereas the development and deployment of sophisticated weaponry by various nations, including the United States, is producing a new arms race and posing an ever-increasing threat to world peace, and

Whereas we believe that the wholesale destruction threatened by such weaponry makes their possession and planned use an offense against God and humanity and denies the Christian understanding of the right stewardship of God's creation, there be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod declare the education for and development of an effective program in peacemaking to be a high priority, and be it further

RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church, Northern Province, declare its support for those who seek, by education and other appropriate means, to influence those people and agencies who shape nuclear policy to refrain from the development and deployment of nuclear weapons, and be it further

RESOLVED: that the first Sunday in August (being near to August 6 and 9, the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) be declared a Prayer Day for World Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, and be it further;

RESOLVED: that the Moravian Church, Northern Province, enter into and support cooperative programs with other churches, religious groups, and ecumenical agencies which seek to promote peace and nuclear disarmament, and be it further

RESOLVED: that this Synod strongly encourage Moravians to protest to the highest government officials the continued expansion of the military budget, and be it further

RESOLVED: that this Synod, as an expression of its commitment to work for peace following adjournment, place itself on record as calling for an immediate worldwide freeze on the development and deployment of nuclear weapons in which the United States and Canada should take the initiative.

R&E 1982, pp. 48-49, R. 19, 22-26

Whereas, we know that there will be problems facing the society of nations continually, and that it is therefore obviously necessary that we have an instrument for settling the disputes between nations, and

Whereas, the United Nations, though often faced with difficulties and failures, has demonstrated over the past 21 years its usefulness in the evolution of world peace, law and order, and

Whereas, the development of the United Nations into a more effective organization for the achievement and maintenance of peace is one of humanity's most urgent tasks, and

Whereas, we believe that the support and use of the United Nations should be a vital part of American foreign policy, and

Whereas, the weaknesses and shortcomings that have become evident in the structure of the United Nations and in the relationship to it on the part of the

United States ought to be corrected so that it might become the kind of instrument that our 20th century world needs, be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America go on record as favoring a gradual, cooperative and multilateral effort toward the removal of the Veto Power and all other restricting laws which prevent the United Nations and the World Court from functioning fully.

JNP 1966, p. 395, R. 1

Whereas, the very existence of humanity here on this earth rests largely upon the degree to which the peace between nations can be kept, and

Whereas, the present administration of our national government has made a determined effort to establish peace among nations and has indicated that its purpose is to do all in its power to make that peace a permanent one, be it

RESOLVED: that a communication go forth from this twenty-eighth synod commending the administration for its efforts in this area and urging that these efforts be not only continued but accelerated.

JNP 1956, p. 337, R. 20

Whereas, the advent of our Lord was heralded with the message of "Peace on Earth and Good Will to All," and

Whereas, our Saviour proclaimed that he came to bring peace and urged his disciples should be messengers of peace, and

Whereas, the Moravian World Peace Committee has done extensive work in the promotion of world peace in the intersynodal period,

RESOLVED: that the twenty-eighth Provincial Synod expresses its appreciation to the Moravian World Peace Committee for this work so well done, and be it further

RESOLVED: it is the feeling of Synod that this work should be encouraged and fostered, if possible, even on an area basis,

RESOLVED: that Synod recommends that the program of furthering world peace be fostered by the Provincial Elders' Conference through a committee of its selection.

JNP 1956, pp. 237-238, R. 21-23

Whereas, the "Conference on Church and War" held at Detroit in May 1950 adopted a statement known as "an Affirmation and Appeal" and

Whereas, we believe in this statement and accept its message be it

RESOLVED: that the following summary of “An Affirmation and Appeal” be adopted and given the widest possible circulation:

“Humanity in the moment of its greatest scientific achievement faces the possibility of total self-destruction. To many, war seems the only answer. We believe that another way, grounded in the will of God, is open. In this hour of confusion and turmoil, the church is called to speak a distinctive and steadying word, drawn not from the judgments of the secular world, but from its gospel.

“The insistent and absolute call of Christ is to His Cross. It is a call to repentance and commitment—repentance for our involvement in war and commitment to the power of reconciling love.

“We, therefore, appeal to the Church of Christ throughout the world to break with war—to repent of warmaking now.

“We appeal to the American churches to take the initiative in this crucial witness. We appeal to individual Christians to refuse to make or to use weapons of destruction, and to devote their energies to the removal of the social, economic and moral causes of depression, dictatorship and war.

“We advocate that individual Christians, and the Church, support the use of the methods of reconciliation and non-violent action, such as Gandhi has demonstrated in our time.

“Let the Church own no Lord but Christ, no power but the Cross, no hope but in the God Who bears the destiny of all in His hands.”

JNP 1951, pp. 441–442, R. 23

RESOLVED: that the Provincial Elders’ Conference appoint an intersynodal committee, which is to lead our church in cooperating with the peace efforts of other churches and like-minded groups;

RESOLVED: that this committee be charged with educating the membership of our church as to the causes of war and as to methods of overcoming war;

RESOLVED: that the widest publicity possible be given this resolution through the press.

JNP 1946, p. 329, R. 4–6

PORNOGRAPHY

Whereas, various denominational leaders and bishops have recognized the devastating effects of pornography on our society and have publicly expressed opposition to pornography, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod encourage concerned members of the Moravian Church to continue to actively oppose pornography.

R&E 1986, p. 42, R. 50

POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Whereas, Jesus said, “I tell you whenever you did this for one of the least important of these, you did it for me” (Matthew 25), and

Whereas, the Provincial Synod of 1990 directed “congregations and/or members [to] seek out or initiate cooperative efforts in their local communities” to serve the poor and homeless, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Provincial Synod of 1994 commends the local congregations and their members for their ministry to the poor and homeless during the recent intersynodal period; and

Whereas, the Provincial Synod of 1986 urged the continued support and encouragement of efforts to help the poor and homeless through local congregation participation in programs directed towards this population, be it further

RESOLVED: The 1994 Provincial Synod reaffirms the action of the 1986 Synod by directing the Provincial Elders’ Conference to support, encourage, and stimulate by any and all means possible the continued involvement of congregations currently ministering to the poor and homeless; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders’ Conference shall support, encourage, and stimulate greater participation by local congregations in existing (ecumenical or secular) ministries to the poor and homeless, and challenge congregations which are not actively ministering to the poor and homeless; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders’ Conference shall work with local congregations to identify existing ecumenical or secular ministries to the poor and homeless and opportunities for advocacy.

R&E 1994, pp. 85-86, R. 14-17

Whereas, life and ministry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ mandates our Christian responsibility to the poor and homeless, and

Whereas, human beings have a basic need for decent and affordable housing, and

Whereas, the number of low-cost housing units available is not sufficient to meet the demand, and the demand for such units is growing; therefore be it

RESOLVED: Congregations and/or members shall seek out or initiate cooperative efforts in their local communities to create additional affordable housing, such as the Nehemiah Project in Brooklyn, Community Homes in Fargo, Habitat for Humanity, and transitional housing programs; and be it further

RESOLVED: Congregations and/or members shall initiate or join in advocacy activities for affordable housing and shall encourage through education the acceptance of low and moderate income housing in local communities; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Standing Committee on Church and Society shall provide information on affordable housing as a Christian mission.

R&E 1990, p. 48, R. 17-19

Whereas, significant concern has been expressed by numerous Moravians about the availability of affordable housing for senior citizens, and

Whereas, concern has been expressed that various Moravian Homes for the Aged are not meeting this need due to financial barriers for admission; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference shall appoint a Task Force to study the feasibility of instituting affordable housing projects within the Northern Province that would address the needs of Moravian Senior Citizens with low or moderate income, and report to the District Boards in time sufficient to inform the 1992 District Synods.

R&E 1990, p. 48, R. 20

Whereas, Jesus said "I tell you whenever you did this for one of the least important of these, you did it for me" (Matt. 25), and

Whereas, The Provincial Synod of 1982 recognized the need and committed resources to work with the homeless people of New York City, and

Whereas, the plight of the homeless is a growing problem requiring the efforts of the Moravian Church at local, district, and provincial levels, and

Whereas, the year 1987 has been proclaimed the "Year of the Homeless" by the United Nations, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod continue to support and encourage efforts to help the homeless by urging local congregations to participate in programs directed towards the homeless.

R&E 1986, p. 40, R. 40

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Whereas, public education has become a major concern in North America, and

Whereas, the Moravian Church has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to education, and

Whereas, the Moravian Church, through its heritage, through the educators it numbers among its members, and through the energy and commitment all its members may bring to the public policy arena, can make a contribution to the struggle for equity and excellence in public education, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this Synod call upon our congregations to participate as partners with our public schools, through such actions as

- identifying and recognizing educators,
- supporting teaching as a Christian vocation,
- recruiting qualified persons to serve on school boards and committees and as volunteers and aides,
- sponsoring seminars and forums for the discussion of issues,
- developing stronger family and parent cooperation, and
- initiating more responsible community participation,

and be it further

RESOLVED: that the Department of Educational Ministries be encouraged to make available to congregations and church leaders resources on public education.

R&E 1986, pp. 11-12, R. 3-4

Whereas, our public school system is in jeopardy, if various financial aids are given to parochial schools, be it

RESOLVED: that this 29th Synod affirms that public tax funds should be used only for public school purposes through all grades up through twelve.

JNP 1961, p. 292, R. 20

RACE RELATIONS/RACISM

RE: Racial Reconciliation

Whereas, "the Moravian Covenant for Christian Living teaches that Moravians oppose any discrimination based on color, gender, race, creed, or land of origin" ["A Moravian Church Statement on Racism," *Racism and the Church*, Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, Moravian Church in America, 1998, p. 2], and

Whereas, Colonial American Moravians in the Northern states condoned slavery and themselves owned slaves, and we acknowledge slavery as the low point of Moravians in North America, and

Whereas, it is impossible "to be reconciled to God without being reconciled to your neighbor." [Spencer Perkins and Chris Rice, *More Than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel*, rev. ed., Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000, p. 10], and

Whereas, the Moravian Church has recognized the need to "yoke black and white congregations"; to promote "more black/white interaction"; to "include blacks in leadership, on boards and committees, writing for *The Moravian*, and *Daily Texts*, etc."; to "learn to celebrate diversity"; and to "sensitize white congregations to black culture," [*Racism and the Church*, p. 1], and

Whereas, Churches Uniting In Christ, to which the Moravian Church–Northern Province has petitioned for membership, has as one of its main purposes "the dismantling of racism within the structure of the church," having established a racial reconciliation program to bring together members of predominantly white and predominantly African American congregations, and

Whereas, our sisters and brothers of the Southern Province have adopted a resolution apologizing for slavery and committing themselves to working toward the dismantling of racism within their province; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Northern Province shall join with their sisters and brothers of the Southern Province in expressing its regret and apologizes to the African American community for the past participation of the Moravian Church in the institution of slavery; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Northern Province shall endorse a mandate to the Provincial Elders' Conference to work diligently to develop programs and efforts which will move in the direction of the elimination of institutional racism, and the fostering of diversity in churches of the Northern Province.

This resolution has been adopted by the Southern Provincial synod and has been edited for possible consideration in the Northern Province.

R&E 2006, p.13–14, R.1–2

RE: Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC)

Whereas, the Moravian Church has always displayed an ecumenical spirit, seeking relations with brothers and sisters in Christ, through local cooperation, councils of churches, curriculum preparation, and other means; and

Whereas, we have concluded dialogue with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, leading to full communion with the ELCA; and

Whereas, we are engaged in dialogues with Presbyterians and others in the Reformed tradition and with the Episcopal Church; and

Whereas, we have been participating in Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) as partners in mission and dialogue, but not as full members (Member communions are African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Christian Church [Disciples of Christ], Episcopal Church, International Council of Community Churches, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church); and

Whereas, CUIC has been a group of communions seeking to join together in closer mission and ministry, with special emphasis on mutual recognition and reconciliation of ministries, and on facing racism through closer relations of predominantly white communions with historically African American communions; and

Whereas, CUIC membership would provide opportunities for closer relations with persons and congregations of color beyond our Moravian Church; and

Whereas, CUIC membership would enlarge the number of bodies with whom we could have easier interchange of ordained leadership; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Moravian Church Northern Province shall request the Coordinating Council of Churches Uniting In Christ to receive the province as a full member.

R&E 2006, p. 40–41, R.1

Re: Churches Uniting in Christ

Whereas, the Moravian Church Northern Province Vision Statement 2002–2006 declares that

- 1) (we are a) “vital agent of reconciliation in a world yearning for the good news of Jesus Christ”
- 2) “we are an interconnected body of dynamic and growing churches embracing the diversity of all God’s creation”

- 3) (we) “remain open to new models for leadership and ministry so that the church is poised to reach out and respond to the issues facing God’s world;” and

Whereas, the Moravian Church has a long history of building ecumenical relationships;
and

Whereas, Churches Uniting in Christ is a covenantal relationship of the following denominations:

- African Methodist Episcopal
- African Methodist Episcopal Zion
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Christian Methodist Episcopal
- Episcopal Church U.S.A.
- International Council of Community Churches
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- United Church of Christ
- United Methodist Church,

committed to:

- Growing in faith together
- Worshiping God together
- Combating racism together
- Proclaiming gospel together
- Pursuing wholeness together
- Being church together; and

Whereas, the visible marks of membership in Churches Uniting in Christ are described at <http://www.eden.edu/cuic/unity/marksofunity.htm> (attached); therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall authorize the Provincial Elders’ Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province to seek to become a Partner in Mission and Dialogue with Churches Uniting in Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall request that the Provincial Elders’ Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province seek the input of the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission regarding the theological implications of participation in Churches Uniting in Christ and make a recommendation to the 2006 Provincial

Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province regarding continuing relationship.

R&E 2002, p. 43–44, R. 14–15

Whereas, scripture states that Christ has come to break down the walls of division among us (Ephesians 2:14), and

Whereas, scripture also teaches that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34), and

Whereas, racism is sin because it contradicts the teaching of Jesus and violates the known will of God, and

Whereas, a theological statement on racism has been developed by the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission and given approval by the Provincial Elders of the Northern and Southern Provinces meeting jointly on January 31, 1998; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 38th Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province shall affirm the attached theological statement on racism as an official position of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, and

Whereas, a packet of study materials has been developed for congregational use that introduces the statement on racism and provides an opportunity for a variety of educational and liturgical approaches to the statement, and

Whereas, the packet of study materials was distributed to each delegate at the 1998 Northern Provincial Synod, therefore be it

RESOLVED Delegates from each congregation at the 1998 Northern Provincial Synod shall take the study materials on racism to their congregations and encourage congregational use.

R&E 1998, pp.78–80, R. 12–13

Whereas, the national and greater world community is still experiencing extreme tension and unrest because of segregation by races, and

Whereas, the 1956 Third Partial Report of the Committee on Fraternal Relations and Social Action, Resolutions (3), (4), (5), (6), (7) and (8) (all passed unanimously), found on pages 212 and 213 of the Journal of said Synod, lucidly and effectively states the position and spirit of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America, therefore be it

RESOLVED: a. this Synod reaffirm the position and spirit of our Church as stated in said resolutions above, and that
b. the Provincial Elders' Conference enthusiastically urge every pastor in the Northern Province to present the resolutions above during Brotherhood Month (February, 1962),

c. that this Synod encourage the elders and pastors of our congregations to arrange for a pulpit exchange and/or some other brotherhood event with a local congregation having a non-white pastor during Brotherhood Month each year,

d. that this Synod encourage each of our congregations to support to the best of their ability the work of our Councils of Churches with migrants.

JNP 1961, pp. 290-291, R. 15

Whereas, public attention is being focused on integration among races in our country,
and

Whereas, we as Christians have a specific concern in every area of human relations, and

Whereas, some statement of our province's position in this matter can be helpful to our pastors and laypersons alike, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America reaffirm the historic position of the Moravian Church in regard to race relations, namely, that all persons are God's creatures for whom He gave His Son to die on the cross as the propitiation for their sins,

RESOLVED: that as ambassadors of Christ, and bearers of the Christian Gospel, it is the duty of all followers of our Lord to treat all persons as brothers and sisters, and to promote Christian relations among them,

RESOLVED: that in the light of the recent decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, we as a church pledge ourselves to encourage our members to continue to give due obedience and respect to the laws of our land, as touching integration in our schools, housing and job opportunities, and to work toward a Christian solution of any problems arising therefrom,

RESOLVED: that we call upon our pastors and members to treat all persons with the love and respect due them, and to publicize the fact that membership in all our congregations is always open to all without regard to their color, race or land of origin, and to promote Christian ideals in every relation of life.

RESOLVED: that we commend those congregations which, having been confronted with specific problems in this area, have already taken the lead in moving toward integration,

RESOLVED: that we release to the press a statement of the action taken by this synod on this matter,

RESOLVED: that we continue to hold fast our great motto: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity."

JNP 1956, pp. 334-335, R. 2-8

RURAL MINISTRY

Whereas, Jesus said: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” and

Whereas, the purpose of the Church is not found in the numbers of members, but through ministering to the needs of people, and

Whereas, the people of rural North America are facing struggles, forcing some people to leave rural areas, and

Whereas, our Moravian Church has a strong tradition of mission to the needs of people, and

Whereas, there are a number of rural Moravian congregations which provide important services as they preach the Word of God, offer consolation and hope, guide the faith of members, and minister to their community, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Northern Province offer encouragement and pledge needed support to rural congregations so that both members and pastors can see their role as Christians in communities where conditions are changing, and be it further

RESOLVED: that this Synod urge Moravian Theological Seminary to prepare students and pastors to accept the challenge of rural service as a mission of the church.

R&E 1986, pp. 13-14, R. 12-13

SAFE SANCTUARIES

RE: The Stewardship of Gun Safety

Whereas, we follow Jesus as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and Lord of all of life (Rev. 19:16); and

Whereas, throughout the New Testament we clearly read an advocating for peace and non-violence (Matthew 5:9, Matthew 5:44, Matthew 26:52, Luke 6:27-29, Romans 12:20-21); and

Whereas, we live in a society that evidences many and varied forms of violence; and

Whereas, according to the Public Broadcasting Service, 1,384,171 victims of gun violence died between 1968-2011 (more deaths than all U.S. wars combined); and, according to the Center for Disease Control, approximately 38,000 victims of gun violence have died per year in the U.S. since 2010 ;and, since the shootings at Newtown, Connecticut, there have been 74 school shootings; and

Whereas, many states within the United States allow individual citizens (other than law enforcement, military and security personnel) to legally carry guns, especially hand guns, by securing a concealed weapons permit; and
Whereas, a significant number of members and other active participants of Moravian congregations, Northern Province have legally secured a concealed weapons permit; and

Whereas, most, if not all, Moravian congregations of the Moravian Church, Northern Province disallow on their church campus aspects of what is legal within our civil society including smoking, drinking alcohol, and gambling/games of chance on the church campus; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 2014 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province legislates that all Moravian churches in all states of the Northern Province require that each building in the common area of the church campus be “gun free”, a requirement that all people, even those who have a legal concealed gun permit (other than law enforcement, military and security personnel) will not carry their weapon in any building in the church campus unless otherwise approved by the local church board..

R&E 2014, p. 65, R. 4

SEX EDUCATION

Whereas, the Department of Educational Ministries has available age-appropriate sex education materials for each congregation of the Northern Province requesting same; and

Whereas, those persons, clergy or lay, who will have responsibility for providing instruction in sex education within the local church may not be sufficiently trained to be comfortable teaching this material; be it

RESOLVED: The Department of Educational Ministries shall be available upon request to conduct seminars in all areas of the Northern Province to train pastors and lay educators in the use of age-appropriate sex education materials; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, in light of the urgent and continuing need for sex education, invites all congregations of the Northern Province to take advantage of the Department of Educational Ministries’ age-appropriate sex education resources and training as they plan their Christian education programs.

R&E 1990, p. 34, R. 3-4

SOCIAL MINISTRY

Re: Africa: Seeds of Hope Act (H.R. 3636; S. 2283)

Whereas, the needs in sub-Saharan Africa continue to grow, with the number of people with inadequate access to food having doubled over the past 25 years to 215 million; and

Whereas, the people of Africa have the resources to feed themselves and become economically strong, possessing the ideas and determination necessary to improve their own conditions: and

Whereas, because up to 80 percent of Africa's domestic food supply is produced by small farmers, primarily women, investments in small farmers and rural entrepreneurs (especially women) could make a crucial difference to millions of people on the continent; and

Whereas, the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act, introduced in both the House of Representatives (H.R. 3636) and the Senate (S. 2283) would address issues of

- rural finance (through funding microcredit opportunities, the development of credit and finance systems to serve farmers' cooperatives and other producer-marketing associations, and restoring U.S. funding to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD));
- agricultural research and extension, with particular focus on small farmers, women, and sustainable farming; and
- food security, aimed at increasing agricultural production, increasing small farmers' access to the market, and expanding agricultural trade and investment (with the intention of improving child nutrition and increasing the income of rural people throughout Africa); and

Whereas, Bread for the World, the national Christian movement that seeks justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying national decision makers, has made the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act its primary focus for 1998, calling upon congregations across the United States to urge Congress to increase support for agriculture and rural development in Africa; and

Whereas, the Board of World Mission of the Moravian Church in America, together with other mission groups and development non-governmental organizations, has endorsed the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act; be it therefore

RESOLVED: The 1998 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church-Northern Province urges the delegates to the 1998 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church-Northern Province who are citizens of the United States to write their senators and representatives urging them to co-sponsor the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act (H.R. 3636, S. 2283) (if they are not yet co-sponsors) and

vote for final passage when the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act (H.R. 3636, S. 2283) reaches the Senate and House for action; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1998 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province requests the president of the Provincial Elders’ Conference to write the leaders of the United States Senate and House of Representatives urging a prompt scheduling of a floor debate and vote on the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act (H.R. 3636, S. 2283); and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1998 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province commends the Board of World Mission for its endorsement of the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act and calls upon the Congress of the United States to pass the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act (H.R. 3636, S. 2283) in a timely manner; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1998 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province urges congregations of the Moravian Church–Northern Province to become congregational members of Bread for the World and participate in its efforts to secure passage of the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act.

R&E 1998, pp.48–49, R. 11–14

Whereas, our Lord has instructed us to help those with not only spiritual, but also physical needs, and

Whereas, there are organizations such as Church World Service, CROP, Heifer Project, Agricultural Missions, Habitat for Humanity, et al., which are operating to provide such ministry, and

Whereas, our ministry can often be more effective when working with such organizations, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Board of World Mission is asked to make the names and purposes of organizations meeting physical needs, available to members of the congregations of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, who are encouraged to support them; and be it further

RESOLVED: The members of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, are encouraged to support public policy advocacy groups (such as Bread for the World, INTERFAITH/IMPACT, CARE, etc.) which encourage our federal legislators to provide appropriate humanitarian aid to those in need, and be in further

RESOLVED: The members of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall be encouraged to take part in work projects as requested by other Provinces of the Moravian Church through the Board of World Mission.

R&E 1994, p. 63, R. 10–12

Whereas, Jesus Christ calls us to ministry in the world, to service and witness in the crossroads of church and society: "...to announce good news to the poor, to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; to let the broken victims go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" [Luke 4:18-19(REB)], and

Whereas, the Synod of 1986, in response to a proposal from the Provincial Elders' Conference, established the Standing Committee on Church and Society, and

Whereas, the Standing Committee on Church and Society was appointed and funded by the Provincial Elders' Conference during the 1986-1990 intersynodal period, and

Whereas, the Standing Committee on Church and Society has provided a forum for examining social issues, for responding to the concerns of church members, congregations and agencies, for carrying out the directives of the Synod and the Provincial Elders' Conference, and for encouraging and enabling the social justice witness of district committees, congregations and individuals, and

Whereas, there is a continuing need for a provincial entity to coordinate the Province's response to social issues, carry out the directives of Synod, and insure the representation of diverse constituencies in developing policy on social concerns; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall direct the Provincial Elders' Conference to continue the Standing Committee on Church and Society during the next intersynodal period, appointing no fewer than seven members representative of diverse geographic regions and constituencies (such as those of race, ethnicity, gender, and political and theological perspectives), and be it further

RESOLVED: The newly-appointed Standing Committee on Church and Society function during the 1990-94 intersynodal period under the following mission statement:

The Committee on Church and Society serves to empower the social witness of the Province (whether expressed through actions of provincial or district officers or agencies, of congregations, or of individuals or ad hoc groups of individuals) by:

1. Providing educational resources on social ministry in general or on specific social issues, as directed by Synod, the P.E.C., or by the committee itself;
2. Advising the P.E.C., District Boards, Provincial and District Agencies, and others, as requested on social issues;

3. Facilitating communication and networking among groups and individuals concerned with or acting on social issues;
4. Coordinating advocacy on behalf of official denominational positions, training persons in advocacy skills;
5. Researching and drafting position papers or Synod resolutions, and performing other tasks to facilitate Synod's consideration of social issues;
6. Coordinating relationships between the Province and ecumenical or interfaith agencies or organizations dealing with social issues; and
7. Assisting district program commissions and congregations in establishing Church and Society Committees and in carrying out social ministry.

and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference (or its Management Team) shall designate one of those persons under call as Provincial Program Staff to serve as staff to the Committee on Church and Society.

Whereas, the Committee on Church and Society is appointed by the Provincial Elders' Conference and is accountable to the Provincial Elders' Conference; be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference shall arrange, through the budgeting process under its management, for the funding of the Committee on Church and Society, including funding for committee meetings, administrative expenses, and program developed by the committee and approved by the Provincial Elders' Conference.

Whereas, the World Council of Churches, in response to a request of the Sixth Assembly (meeting in 1983 in Vancouver, Canada) issued a call to the churches of the world to engage "in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to justice, peace and the integrity of creation" in a Christian response to the forces and trends that jeopardize life in the world;" and

Whereas, many of the churches of the world, including Provinces of the Moravian Unity, have responded to that call and are in a process of study, reflection and action of the theme "Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation;" and

Whereas, effective education and witness in the arena of social ministry depend, in part, on having clear, specific objectives focused on a limited number of issues; be it therefore

RESOLVED: The Committee on Church and Society calls the Moravian Church, Northern Province, its congregations and members into social ministry on the theme "Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation," focusing its efforts

during the intersynodal period (1990–1994) on issues related to that theme; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Committee on Church and Society encourages congregational and regional Church and Society Committees to work with ecumenical/interfaith social ministry agencies on issues of local, regional, national, and global importance.

JNP, 1990, pp. 43–44, R. 1–6

Whereas, the 1982 Synod of the Northern Province affirmed “...that we are called by God to be stewards and servants in bringing about (God’s) plan to establish justice, righteousness, peace (and) reconciliation...” therefore be it

RESOLVED: that this synod reaffirm the principles contained in the “Framework for Addressing Social Issues” as endorsed by the Northern Province Synod of 1982.

R&E 1986, pp. 37–38, R. 20

RESOLVED: that this Synod adopt the statement which follows as one possible framework for addressing issues of church and society, and be it further

RESOLVED: that this Synod also call attention to the foundation statements on church and society in the Book of Order, Paragraphs 7–11, and the *Moravian Covenant*, especially Section V, “Our Witness in the World”, and be it further

RESOLVED: that these statements be commended to congregations for possible use in preaching, liturgy, study and planning.

WE AFFIRM:

that “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and all who dwell in it.” (Psalm 24:1); God is not only Creator but also Owner, and Creator and Owner of not only the natural world but also its people, all of them;

that we are created in His image, only a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 8:5); that this is the source of our self-worth, our identity; and that we are not dependent on our perfect knowledge and wisdom nor on superiority over other people for our own worth;

that we are called by God to be stewards and servants in bringing about His plan to establish justice, righteousness, peace, reconciliation; that we are citizens of two worlds, aliens and exiles in this present world (Hebrews 11:13 and Peter 2:11); and

that we are one with all our brothers and sisters in that none is without sin and all are dependent solely on God’s grace; we fancy ourselves superior

intellectually, economically, racially, spiritually, and morally but these differences disappear when we stand together before the incomprehensible love and glory of God.

WE CONFESS:

that “all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6);

that frequently we seek to build ourselves up by having stronger than others, by winning arguments, and by having right answers; and

that in truth we all “see in a glass darkly,” that is fact sometimes “I just might be wrong,” and

that in discussing some important issues we find it hard to demonstrate Christian love that is patient and kind, not jealous, conceited, or proud;

that we tend to be condemning and self-righteous when looking at the behavior of others;

that these attitudes give rise to fear and distrust;

that we lose opportunities for support and healing when we deny or hide from each other problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, violence in the home, juvenile delinquency, and incest;

that we frequently extend love and caring selectively, rejecting in ways that are blatant or subtle such persons as those of another race, belief, sex, social or economic status; those who are old, young, divorced, widowed, single parents, handicapped, or homosexual;

that we often fail to let “Christ our crucified, risen and ascended Redeemer remain our confession of faith” (Liturgy for Lent, Hymnal, p. 53) by trusting in:

- nuclear weapons and defense systems
- homes, cars, clothing, and other possessions easily consumed “by rust and moth” (Matthew 6:19)
- positions of power, status, and prestige
- civil government to enforce morality and solve our social and ethical problems.

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

to confess before God our personal and corporate responsibility for the sin and sickness of our society;

to seek the will of God for creation as revealed in the scriptures, and respond to the call of God to participate in accomplishing that will;

to live in such a way that we glorify God in all we are and do.

R&E 1982, pp. 43-44, R. 1-3.

Whereas, developments in social problems occur so rapidly that it is almost impossible to anticipate what particular issue will face us in the near future, and

Whereas, as issue that is urgent today may be passe next week, and

Whereas, it becomes all the more important that there be an active committee on Social Issues in each local congregation ready to consider and act upon these matters whenever they arise, be it

RESOLVED: that Synod in the Provincial Elders' Conference the responsibility for dealing with social issues, and be it further

RESOLVED: that synod urge the Board of Elders of each congregation to appoint a Committee on Social Issues for study and action, and be it further

RESOLVED: that Provincial Elders' Conference work in cooperation the local church Committee on Social Issues.

JNP 1966, pp. 395-396, R. 3-5.

RESOLVED: that the 1961 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, in America condemn every irresponsible attack, from whatever quarter, on the free institutions of our society.

That we speak, especially to those attacks upon our Churches and Councils of Churches, which are in a guise of righteousness, but contain half-truths and falsehoods.

That we advise the members of our Churches, and all fair minded citizens, to be wary of those irresponsible organizations and societies that use smear, innuendo, and falsehood, in the name of patriotism and in the name of Christ, and which question the loyalty of respected governmental leaders and Christian church members who do not hold their views.

That we urge those holding membership in the Moravian Church and all fair minded persons to avoid membership in such irresponsible groups following undemocratic and unchristian methods of action in the name of patriotism and Christianity.

JNP 1961, pp. 287-288, R. 4

RESOLVED: that Synod declares its conviction that Christian submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ includes making his spirit and his will dominant, both in business, in interracial and in international attitudes, and in placing love and service above the desire for private gain.

JNP 1936, pp. 260-261, R. 20

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Whereas, alcoholism and other substance abuse are the third leading cause of death in the United States and the leading cause of death of persons age 16–25, and

Whereas, at least one of four children lives in a home with active alcoholism or other substance abuse, and

Whereas, alcoholism and all forms of substance abuse are a family and community illness, affecting the physical, mental, and spiritual health of those afflicted as well as their families, friends, and church, and

Whereas, alcoholism and other substance abuse are significant factors leading to abuse, violence, and other serious family dysfunctions, and

Whereas, alcoholism and other substance abuse, although hidden, are significant causes for the need of pastoral counseling, and

Whereas, denial is the biggest block to recovery and keeps the issue from clearly surfacing in the church, and

Whereas, the church is in a unique position to be able to minister to all persons in a family affected by alcoholism and other substance abuse, although it has often felt ill-equipped to deal with it, and

Whereas, the basis of recovery is spiritual and that is what the church is about; therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province shall place the issue of alcoholism and other substance abuse as a significant concern for ministry within the life of the church; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall request the Provincial Elders' Conference to explore feasible avenues for ministries to addicted persons and their families, such as:

a. instructing the districts to provide programs for pastors and lay persons that would provide workshops, information, and support for all age groups within the congregation in the area of alcoholism and other substance abuse,

b. encouraging the development of local Congregational Assistance Programs like those modeled by Area Councils on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, providing education and referral services, intervention and support in ministry to addicted persons and their families in local congregations;

and be it further

RESOLVED: The 1990 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall ask Moravian Theological Seminary to consider expanding its curriculum regarding alcoholism and other substance abuse; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall direct the District Boards to develop a Pastoral Assistance Program to support and assist addicted pastors and their immediate families in issues of alcoholism and other substance addictions through education, referral, and intervention.

R&E 1990, p. 35, R. 5-8

Whereas, in the past few years there has been an explosive escalation of the use of alcohol, medications, and "street" drugs such as crack, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana, and

Whereas, every community is affected by the misuse of alcohol, medications, and street drugs, we as Christians need to be more aware of the effects of abuse on individuals, families and communities, and

Whereas, lifestyles portrayed through the mass media, showing the use of drugs and alcohol as a normal part of daily life, is potentially physically and morally destructive, therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the Standing Committee on Social Concerns, if established, or the DEM, in conjunction with the Provincial Women's Board, form a program of education and ministry to help both the victims of substance abuse and the victimizers, make it available to all congregations, and be it further

RESOLVED: that local congregations establish official, visible relationships with other denominations and community organizations which are taking action against the abuse of alcohol, medications, and street drugs.

R&E 1986, p. 38, R. 26-27

Whereas, there is a growing recognition of the increasing demoralization attendant upon the use of alcoholic beverages, and

Whereas, both the moderate and the intemperate use of alcoholic beverages involve the user and society in all manner of serious individual and social problems, and

Whereas, the moderate use of alcohol, though not always an apparent detriment to society, in its cumulative effect, supports an industry which thrives on demoralization and human misery, be it

RESOLVED: that Synod reaffirms the stand of the Moravian Church which advocates the practice of abstinence in the life of the individual Christian believer,

RESOLVED: that Synod urges upon its ministers and laypersons the necessity of vigorous and continuous efforts in teaching by precept and example, in accordance with sound moral and scientific knowledge, the effects of the use of alcohol,

RESOLVED: that Synod commends the individual minister the opportunity for leading victims of alcoholism into personal fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church, and into paths of fruitful Christian service,

RESOLVED: that a copy of this be sent to Alcoholics Anonymous and the church press.

JNP 1946, p. 331, R. 21-24

RESOLVED: that Synod reaffirms its opposition to the traffic in alcoholic liquors, both legal and illegal, and views with alarm the present situation with reference to the liquor traffic and its resultant evils.

JNP 1936, p. 260, R. 18

Whereas, there is a worldwide propaganda and an offensive and ruinous advertising of the use of cigarettes, and

Whereas, our youth, both boys and girls, are influenced thereby to use tobacco to their physical and moral ruin;

RESOLVED: that this Synod, with many other denominations and societies, puts itself on record in denouncing that practice; and pleads with our ministers in particular, for the sake of example, to abstain from such use.

JNP 1930, p. 292, R.7

URBAN MINISTRY

Whereas, there has been a population shift that is redefining urban and suburban boundaries, and

Whereas, the city is the largest area of growth in population, and

Whereas, there are serious social problems inherent in the inner city, resulting in great human need, and

Whereas, we have been admonished by scripture to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked, and

Whereas, historically, the Moravian Church has had compassion for human need and responded effectively to that need, therefore be it

RESOLVED: The 1994 Northern Provincial Synod recommends that the Provincial Elders' Conference/District Boards encourage all congregations to increase their awareness of opportunities for ministry in urban and inner city areas and

become involved in those ministries. Means for coordinating such ministries should be devised by the Provincial Elders' Conference/District Boards.

R&E 1994, p. 52, R. 2

WORLD POVERTY

Whereas, Jesus said, *“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me”* (Matt 25. 35–36, 40), and

Whereas, our province has challenged us to follow the great Commission by living out the great Commandment to love one another as Christ himself loves us, and

Whereas, the Epistle of James challenges us with teaching, *“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead”* (James 2. 14–18), and

Whereas, half the world– three billion people– now lives on less than \$2 per day and one billion on less than \$1 per day, and

Whereas, these figures and statistics don't begin to illustrate the real, immediate and personal catastrophe of extreme poverty, and

Whereas, the economic priorities of the most affluent nations seem to de-value the importance of poverty, and

Whereas, the Millenium Development Goals agreed to by 147 nations address the issues of the eradication of poverty:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

7. Ensure environment sustainability
8. Create a global partnership for development with targets for aid, trade and debt relief; therefore be it

RESOLVED: This 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church – Northern province recommends that the Provincial Elders’ Conference continue to establish yearly budgets that earmark a minimum of a tithe (ten percent) of gross provincial income for humanitarian aid projects that seek to share Christ through the agencies of aid and empowerment throughout the world; and be it further

RESOLVED: The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church –Northern Province recommends that the congregations of the Northern Province show support of the Millennial Development Goals through prayer, learning, taking action, giving gifts of time–talent–treasure, and advocacy through political action.

R&E 2006, p.19–20, R. 15–16