

Full Compilation of Partial Reports
Committee on Church and Society

Committee # 1 (bright lemon)

First Partial Report
Committee on Church and Society

Re: Immigration

Whereas, the acceptance, treatment, and care of immigrants and refugees continues to be a serious issue in both the United States and Canada; and

Whereas, The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province stated: “foreigners living in our lands are children of God who need to be shown Christian love and compassion,” and “the Bible tells us not to mistreat or oppress foreigners living in our lands (Lev. 19:33-34; Zec. 7:10; Matt. 25:35; John 13:15) and “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, our spiritual ancestors became illegal migrants as they left Moravia and came to Herrnhut because of their faith; and

Whereas, the 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province encouraged “each congregation, board, and agency to hold discussion for the purpose of sharing information on the issue of immigration” and “to teach the Biblical concepts of hospitality as it relates to the issue of immigration”; and called for Districts to consider and act on these issues; therefore be it

RESOLVED (1) The Moravian Church Northern Province stands united in Jesus and his boundless love for all children, and their families, particularly those who, like Jesus, experienced homelessness, vulnerability, and unjust treatment by the powers of government, secular and religious; and be it further

RESOLVED (2) The Moravian Church Northern Province calls for the humane treatment of any person coming across our borders, legally or illegally; and be it further

RESOLVED (3) The Moravian Church Northern Province calls for steps to be taken immediately to reunite families that have been separated at the border.

Marian Boyle Rohloff, chair
Paul Peucker, secretary
June 22, 2018

Committee # 1 (bright lemon)

Second Partial Report
Committee on Church and Society

Re: Reducing Violence and Promoting Responsible Weapon Ownership

Whereas, we believe that the perfect love of Jesus Christ casts out the fear that reigns in human hearts and sows violence (1 John 4:18); and

Whereas, we affirm the words of the Moravian Covenant for Christian Living (section V, par. A): “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 approve ourselves upright, honest, and conscientious, as becomes children of God.”; and

Whereas, as citizens of free, democratic nations we have the capacity and responsibility to advocate with our leaders for measures that will reduce violence in all its forms and protect potential victims; and

Whereas, we must allow our Christianity to drive our sense of civic responsibility; be it therefore

RESOLVED: (4) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, rejects violence as a problem-solving method and rejects the idea that the only way to reduce violence is with more violence; and be it further

RESOLVED: (5) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, asks the PEC to provide congregations with appropriate tools on non-violence and restorative justice from our ecumenical partners and/or other sources, and encourages congregations to become familiar with non-violent and restorative justice practices and to develop non-violent problem-solving skills; and be it further

RESOLVED: (6) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference and encourages the congregations to call on civil authorities to take immediate effective action to reduce violence and the opportunities for violence among the populace, and to provide for and fund adequate mental health facilities where those who are judged to be a danger to themselves and/or others may receive prompt care.

Whereas, we recognize that there are legitimate reasons for private ownership of deadly weapons, including firearms, for purposes of safety, sport, entertainment,

historic collecting and re-enacting, and provision of food for family and community; and

Whereas, many members of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, own and use weapons for such legitimate purposes; be it therefore

RESOLVED: (7) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, calls on its members to act at all times with the highest standards of safety in storage, transport, handling, and use of such weapons, and to encourage others to adhere to the same standards; and be it further

RESOLVED: (8) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourages all members to act in accordance with our motto (*in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things love*), refusing to allow differences of opinion on the rightness or wrongness of private ownership of weapons to distract us from the common goal of reducing violence, and the resulting injuries and deaths, in our society.

Marian Boyle Rohloff, chairperson
Paul Peucker, secretary
June 22, 2018

Committee # 1 (bright lemon)

Third Partial Report
Committee on Church and Society

Re: Care and Concern for Women and Girls

Whereas, Holy Scripture reveals that all of humankind are made in the image of God, blessed by God, and declared “good” by God (Genesis 1:26-31); and

Whereas, Jesus’ ministry included giving women a voice and treating women with dignity and respect in a world in which they had no voice (Luke 8:1-3, John 4:25-29); and

Whereas, the Moravian Church in the eighteenth century had a tradition of giving women positions of authority and using female terminology referring to the Holy Spirit as mother; and

Whereas, The Moravian Church Ground of the Unity states: “We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of ethnic origin, sex or social standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ” (Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum, Part I, #7); and

Whereas, The 1994 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province called upon the Provincial Elders’ Conference to find ways to “[empower] women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country, and their church; [affirm] women through shared leadership and decision making, theology and spirituality — the decisive contributions of women in churches and communities; [give] visibility to women’s perspectives and action in the work and struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation; [enable] the churches to free themselves from racism, sexism, and classism, and from teachings and practices that discriminate against women; and [encourage] the churches to take actions in solidarity with women;” therefore be it

RESOLVED: (9) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province affirms the dignity and rights of women and girls everywhere; and be it further

RESOLVED: (10) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province commits to confront and eliminate any means of discrimination against women and girls throughout all of society; and be it further

RESOLVED: (11) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference to encourage and support congregations and other related entities working to address issues specific to the care and concern of women and girls; and be it further

RESOLVED: (12) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province directs the Provincial Elders' Conference to partner with congregations, the Board of World Mission, the Unity Women's Desk, the Eastern District Church In Society Ministry Team, and other relevant entities to continue to offer a ministry of healing and empowerment for women, girls, and all who love them everywhere; and be it further

RESOLVED: (13) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province calls upon all members to be strengthened by faith in Jesus Christ to overcome fear and become informed about gender inequality and gender-related violence and its impact on all human lives; confess the sin of injustice and inequality; speak and act in love for all people; and work in every aspect of life to eliminate institutional, systemic, and personal gender bias.

Marian Boyle Rohloff, chairperson
Paul Peucker, secretary
June 23, 2018

Committee # 1 (bright lemon)

Fourth Partial Report
Committee on Church and Society

Re: Elimination of Racism: Institutional, Systemic, and Personal

- Whereas, The Ground of the Unity states: “The Unitas Fratrum recognizes no distinction between those who are one in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to testify that God in Jesus Christ brings His people out of ‘every race, kindred and tongue’ into one body, pardons sinners beneath the cross and brings them together. We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of race or standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ.”¹ and
- Whereas, “The Moravian Church consisted from the beginning of people of many ethnical backgrounds, and is known for respecting and embracing ethnic and cultural diversity. In the very core of Moravian understanding of humanity, the God-given equality of all people is fundamental.”²; and
- Whereas, The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living teaches that Moravians oppose any discrimination based on color, gender, race, creed, or land of origin³; and
- Whereas, the 1998 Synods of the Moravian Church Northern and Southern Provinces approved A Statement on Racism and the Church developed by the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, declaring that racism is a sin “...because it contradicts the teaching of Jesus and violates the known will of God.”⁴; and
- Whereas, the Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province has in 2006 passed the following resolution:
“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.”; and
- Whereas, institutional and systemic racism continues to devastate the lives of people of color; therefore be it

¹ Synod of the Unitas Fratrum 1995, *The Ground of the Unity, A Doctrinal Statement*, p. 6

² Letter to the Worldwide Unity, January 15, 2018, from Rev. Dr. Cortroy Jarvis, President of the Unity Board, and Rev. Dr. Jorgen Boytler, Unity Board Administrator.

³ Northern Province Synod, 1982, *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* (Bethlehem: Interprovincial Board of Publications and Communications, 1982) Section, V, p. 32.

⁴ “A Moravian Church Statement on Racism and the Church, Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, Moravian Church in America, 1998, p. 2

RESOLVED: (14) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province affirms the historic position of the Moravian Church as stated in the letter to the worldwide Unity from the Unity Board dated January 15, 2018, that: “In the very core of Moravian understanding of humanity, the God-given equality of all people is fundamental;” and condemns in the strongest terms racism and discrimination in all its forms; and be it further

RESOLVED: (15) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province reaffirms the attached “A Statement on Racism and the Church” approved by the 1998 Synods of the Southern and Northern Provinces; and

Whereas, “A Statement on Racism and the Church” directs the church as follows:
“Thus the church shall practice racial inclusion in every area of its congregational and denominational life, and individual Christians and congregations shall work actively to identify and eliminate the patterns of discrimination both within the church and within society at large.”
Therefore, be it

RESOLVED: (16) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province calls upon the Provincial Elders’ Conference to require all pastors, licensed ministers and candidates for ordination to receive anti-racism training; and be it further

RESOLVED: (17) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province calls upon the Provincial Elders’ Conference to guide all congregations to offer anti-racism training for their members through resources in their communities, or resources prepared and/or recommended by the Moravian Church Northern Province; and be it further,

RESOLVED: (18) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province commends to all congregations the incorporation of resources from the National Council of Churches into their congregational life, including the recent ecumenical publication, “United Against Racism – Churches for Change;” and be it further

RESOLVED: (19) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province offers its support, encouragement, and prayers to clergy as they proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for all people, name and denounce the sin of racism, and lead congregations in efforts to understand, dismantle, and eliminate racism; and be it further

RESOLVED: (20) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church Northern Province calls upon all members to be strengthened by faith in Jesus Christ to overcome fear and become informed about racism and its impact on all human lives; confess the sin of racism; speak and act in love for all people; and work in

every aspect of life to eliminate institutional, systemic, and personal racism.

Marian Boyle Rohloff, chair
Paul Peucker, secretary
June 23, 2018

A Statement on Racism and the Church¹

Racism has been defined as an institutionalized socioeconomic system or a pattern of behavior “which divides people into groups identified by characteristics of origin or color for the purpose of establishing and perpetuating, on the basis of those characteristics, the subordinate status and the denigration and exploitation of one group to the benefit of the other.”²

The church must declare that racism is sin. The Moravian Catechism describes sin as disobedience to the known will of God.³ God’s will is made known to us in Jesus’ teaching that we are to love God and love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mark 12:29-31). Racism then is sin, because it contradicts the teaching of Jesus and violates the known will of God.

The sin of racism is also evidenced in its violation of God’s call for the members of Christ’s church to be reconciled to God and one another and to be engaged in a ministry of reconciliation in the world (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). Contrarily, racism separates and perpetuates divisions, thus denying the unity of the church proclaimed in Holy Scripture: “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. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:27-30). Through its struggle with the issue of including outsiders, the early Christian church discovered that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34) and that Christians are called upon to do likewise (James 2:1).

The *Ground of the Unity* states, “The Unitas Fratrum recognizes no distinction between those who are one in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to testify that God in Jesus Christ brings His people out of ‘every race, kindred and tongue’ into one body, pardons sinners beneath the cross and brings them together. We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of race or standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ.”⁴ Further, the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* teaches that Moravians oppose any discrimination based on color, gender, race, creed, or land of origin.⁵ The Moravian Church, despite sound biblical teaching and clear statements of belief, has, from time to time, demonstrated the values of the surrounding world and thus has denied the very affirmation it professes. It has been affected by the very racism that is contrary to our beliefs.

As evidence, we identify:

- An absence of racial diversity in some areas of the workplace and the classroom;
- The disproportionate number of black and biracial churches that have been arson victims;
- The segregation apparent in our church’s worship life and congregational life in general, and the tendency of congregations and Provincial Elders’ Conferences to extend calls only to pastors of the same race as the congregation;
- The absence of widespread dialogue on the issue and the resulting congregational inaction to overcome the effects of racism in our society in housing, health care, and equitable salaries; and
- The inability of the majority to hear the expression of frustration, pain, and anger on the part of minority peoples or even to recognize the hostility growing out of their experiences in our society.

The church of Jesus is called to be salt and light:

- To set an example and show the way for a society which cries out for racial healing;
- To match our fine statements with worthy deeds;
- To confess the sinfulness of our failure to practice what we preach about discrimination;
- To examine our personal and corporate life and repent; and,
- Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to turn from our racism and take a new direction in keeping with the teachings of God in Christ Jesus.

Thus the church shall practice racial inclusion in every area of its congregational and denominational life; and individual Christians and congregations shall work actively to identify and eliminate the patterns of discrimination both within the church and within society at large.

¹ This statement was developed by the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, approved by the Provincial Elders' Conferences of the Northern and Southern Provinces on January 31, 1998, and approved as part of a Resolution to the 1998 Southern Province and Northern Province Synods.

² Arthur Freeman, "The Cross and Racism," paper presented to the World Faith and Order Conference, January 27, 1992, p. 1.

³ Provincial Synods of Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces, 1956. "Catechism of the Moravian Church in America for the Instruction of Candidates for Confirmation and Church Membership," reprint (Bethlehem: Interprovincial Board of Publications and Communications, 1994), p. 18.

⁴ Synod of the Unitas Fratrum 1995, *The Ground of the Unity, A Doctrinal Statement*, p. 6.

⁵ Northern Province Synod, 1982, *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* (Bethlehem: Interprovincial Board of Publications and Communications, 1982), Section V, p. 32.

Committee # 1 (bright lemon)

Fifth Partial Report
Committee on Church and Society

Re: Inclusion of Persons of All Gender Identities

Whereas, Holy Scripture reveals that all of humankind are made in the image of God, blessed by God, and declared “good” by God (Genesis 1:26-31); and

Whereas, The Moravian Church Ground of the Unity states: “We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of ethnic origin, sex or social standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ” (Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum, Part I, #7); and

Whereas, the predominant stance on sexuality in our society shows preference for cisgender persons whose personal sense of gender identity and/or gender role corresponds with their assigned sex at birth; and

Whereas, those who identify as other than cisgender have too often felt excluded from and persecuted by society; and

Whereas, Jesus’ ministry exemplified love for those who found themselves on the margins of society; and

Whereas, The Moravian Church, Northern Province, in following Christ, has a long history of affirming those on the margins of society (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, homosexual persons); be it therefore

RESOLVED: (21) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, affirms the dignity and rights of persons of all gender identities; and be it further

RESOLVED: (22) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, reaffirms its open welcome to all people by specifically recognizing that persons of all gender identities are also under God’s care; and be it further

RESOLVED: (23) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, shall recognize that persons of all gender identities 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: (24) Persons of all gender identities shall be supported and affirmed by being allowed to celebrate their lives as individuals, couples, and families within the bounds of the church and under the grace which our Creator imparts to all persons; and be it further

RESOLVED: (25) The church shall continue to enter into dialogue in a loving manner with persons of all gender identities in order to understand their lives and their spiritual walk; and be it further

RESOLVED: (26) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourages pastors and church leaders to engage in training and education related to the understanding of and care for persons of all gender identities.

Marian Boyle Rohloff, chairperson
Paul Peucker, secretary
June 23, 2018

Committee # 1 (bright lemon)

Sixth Partial Report
Committee on Church and Society

Re: Awareness of Violence Against Women

Whereas, global estimates published by the World Health Organization on its website indicate, “about 1 in 3 (35%) of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.” Depending on the studies used in determining the number of women who are victims of domestic abuse, at least 1 in 4 women are victims of domestic violence in the United States of America each year (National Coalition against Domestic Violence – website); and,

Whereas, according to the USAID website, “In 2013, USAID helped to fund the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), a nationwide survey ... from all provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The DHS found that more than 57 percent of women in the DRC experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives”; and,

Whereas, many of our church members are unaware of the prevalence of this violence against women and children in our world; and,

Whereas, violence against women takes many forms (physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual), not all of which produce physical signs; and,

Whereas, four Unity Women’s Consultations have affirmed that violence against women is considered the major issue of women in most of our Provinces, Mission Provinces, and Mission Areas (Reports of the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Unity Women’s Consultations of the Moravian Church); and,

Whereas, the Unity Synod approved in full the Resolution #16 from the Fourth Unity Women’s Conference that is now a part of the most recent Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum (COUF), chapter 6, #843, which recommends that all provinces of the Unitas Fratrum (the “Unity”) raise awareness of the problem, the establishment of resources for victims of violence, form study groups to provide discussions and support to victims of such violence, pressuring governments to pass legislation penalizing violence against women and children, and addressing excessive violence in the media; therefore be it

RESOLVED (27) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference to designate one Sunday each year to

bring attention to this world-wide problem of violence against women; and be it further

RESOLVED (28) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourages our congregations to seek ways to assist victims of domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and children in our congregations, to participate in community programs that address this issue; and be it further

RESOLVED (29) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourages the Provincial Elders' Conference to require continuing education for our pastors and directors of Christian Education in identifying the signs of abuse and in how to handle cases of abuse within their congregations, pursuant to a resource on violence against women to be released this fall by the Unity Women's Desk, at the request of, and on the approval of, the Unity Board; and be it further

RESOLVED (30) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, directs the Provincial Elders' Conference to implement the following COUF mandates:

Violence against Women in 2016 COUF:

#843 It was resolved that Unity Synod:

- a) Recommends to all Provinces of the Unitas Fratrum to raise the awareness of the congregations and members in regards to this problem and its effects, through sermons, education programs, and personal interactions;
- b) Recommends to all Provinces of the Unitas Fratrum to establish and support existing education and resource centers and shelters to benefit the victims of such violence;
- c) Mandates all Provinces of the Unitas Fratrum to form support and study groups to provide contexts for discussions, counselling and support to victims and perpetrators of violence;
- d) Mandates all Provinces of the Unitas Fratrum to address themselves to violence in the media in their respective areas by bringing to bear pressure on their respective governments to pass legislation which will have the effect of controlling the volume of violence in movies and on television.
- e) Mandates all Provinces of the Unitas Fratrum to bring to bear pressure on their respective governments to pass legislation penalizing violence against women and children;
- f) Mandates all Provinces of the Unitas Fratrum to educate its congregations and members of their rights under existing legislation.

#865. Education

It was resolved that:

- a) The Unity directs the Provinces to adopt a policy that mandates training in pastoral care and includes training to recognize and appropriately address violence against women and children;
- b) Pastors who have completed their training be given regular refresher training courses by means of retreats, conferences, seminars as are appropriate to equip them to give pastoral care to victims and families of violence.

And

Whereas, the predominantly male language used for God can be painful, limiting, and challenging for women who have been victims of violence; therefore be it

RESOLVED (31) Clergy and congregations are encouraged to invite individuals to expand the images of God they use beyond those that are male.

Marian Boyle Rohloff, chairperson
Paul Peucker, secretary
June 23, 2018

Committee # 1 (bright lemon)

Seventh Partial and Final Report
Committee on Church and Society

Re: Promoting Moravian Resources on Social Issues

Whereas, our Provincial Elders Conference has stood with our ecumenical partners on important issues in our society; and

Whereas, our faith in Christ must guide our civic responsibility, therefore be it

RESOLVED: (32) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, encourages the Provincial Elders' Conference to share in continued dialogue with our ecumenical partners on important issues in our society and utilize our prophetic voice grounded in Scripture and Moravian values.

Whereas, it is vital for the Moravian Church to seek understanding and communicate its positions on important social issues so we can best serve and care for those who are most vulnerable. ("Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:4-5); and

Whereas, The Moravian Church offers a collection of *Resolutions on Social Issues*, (found on the web portal <https://portal.mcnp.org> of the Moravian Church, Northern Province) which contains positions on social issues taken by Synods of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, such as abortion, domestic violence, human sexuality, immigration, racism, etc.; therefore be it

RESOLVED: (33) The 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church, Northern Province, commends the use of the most recent edition of *Resolutions on Social Issues* for use in congregations for direction, study, prayer, discussion and action.

Marian Boyle Rohloff, chairperson
Paul Peucker, secretary

June 23, 2018