

Church and Society (#2 Bright Lemon)

Second Partial Report
of the Church and Society Committee

Re: Rev. Dr. Charles Martin'sⁱ 1917 Eastern District Synod Resolution

WHEREAS, in 1917 the Rev. Dr. Charles Martin presented a memorial to the Eastern District Synod (appendum I) regarding the wrongs of slavery in our country and the indifference of the Moravian Church to the suffering of black persons, calling the Synod to:

- “express its indignation against the horror of Wacoⁱⁱ, the inhumanity and savagery of Memphisⁱⁱⁱ, the shameful, brutality, and fiendishness of the East St. Louis riots^{iv} and the race riots of Chester, PA^v;”
- “recommend to the Church in America the adoption of some constructive plans, educational, social and ecclesiastical efforts which may help to ward off those bloody racial conflicts that recurrently outrage the Christian conscience of the nation;” and
- “urge upon the Government legislation making lynching of every kind and form a Federal crime;” to assist the black person in his/her demand for social justice; to fight against segregation; to apply whole-hearted efforts to secure the rights granted by the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Martin memorial was approved by the 1917 Eastern District Synod, and noted in the minutes, with the resolves also noted in a later section under the heading, “Racial Conflicts,” but the church did not follow up with any statements, plans, or actions; and

WHEREAS, our Holy Scriptures claim that all persons are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and continue to call us to justice as a public expression of “love thy neighbor”, as seen among the prophets (Is 48:6, Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8) including Jesus’ own mission statement in Luke 4:18-19 that he was anointed “to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor,” referencing the year of Jubilee that allowed for an economic, cultural, and environmental leveling and reset within society; and

WHEREAS, the Northern and Southern Province Synods of 1998 affirmed an Interprovincial Faith and Order “Statement on Racism and the Church” (appendum II); and the 2018 Northern Province Synod reaffirmed this decision, as an official position of the two provinces of the Moravian Church in America, which aligned our provinces with the 1957 Ground of