

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION

RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONAL USE

THIS BOOKLET CONTAINS:

Statement on Racism and the Church
Moravians and Slavery (a brief summary)

2018 Synod Resolution 19

2006 Synod Resolution 24



THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE
THE MORAVIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

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CONTINUING THE JOURNEY OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION

The 2018 Southern Province Synod approved a Resolution titled, “Continuing the Journey of Racial Reconciliation.” Our Synod decided to:

- * Reaffirm the 1998 *Statement on Racism and the Church* as the official position of the Moravian Church, Southern Province.
- * Direct the Provincial Elders’ Conference to “publish and commend it to our congregations, fellowships, boards and agencies for study, discussion and implementation in the life and ministry of the church.”
- * Ask the Moravian Team for Reconciliation (Racial, Cultural and Ethnic) to “develop resources, materials, experiences and programs to assist congregations and the Province in engaging the tasks to which the *Statement* calls the church.”
- * Ask congregations, through their church board(s), to report to the PEC on an annual basis until the next Synod, how they are using and implementing the *Statement* and the resources developed by the Moravian Team for Reconciliation (Racial, Cultural, and Ethnic).

We ask that you:

- * Provide copies of this booklet to members of the church board(s) or steering committee. This material, and additional resources will be available at <https://www.moravian.org/southern/category/resources/>
- * Begin to talk about ways you will share the *Statement* with church members, and to take up the important work to which it calls each of us.
- * Pray for the work of the Moravian Team for Reconciliation as it renews its mission and ministry.
- * Be ready to hear from and respond to the Team as it works in the coming months on resources, materials, experiences, and programs.

Sincerely,

Don Belle

Betsy Bombick

Greta Boyd

Carol Foltz

David Guthrie

John Jackman

Judy Knopf

Barbara Morris

Brenda Peoples

Neil Routh

A STATEMENT ON RACISM AND THE CHURCH

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.”¹

The church must declare that racism is sin.

The church must declare that racism is sin. The Moravian Catechism describes sin as disobedience to the known will of God.² 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.

Racism separates and perpetuates divisions, thus denying the unity of the church.

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 nor Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male nor 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).

We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of race or standing.

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.”³ Further, the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* teaches that Moravians oppose any discrimination based on color, gender, race, creed, or land of origin.⁴

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.

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The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living teaches that Moravians oppose any discrimination based on color, gender, race, creed, or land of origin.

A STATEMENT ON RACISM AND THE CHURCH (Continued)

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.

Adopted by the 1998 Synod • Reaffirmed by the 2018 Synod

The church shall practice racial inclusion in every area of its congregational and denominational life

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

2 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.

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

4 The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living (Bethlehem: Interprovincial Board of Publications and Communications, 1982), Section V, p. 32.

MORAVIANS AND SLAVERY: A BRIEF SUMMARY

- * CONTRARY TO THE GOSPEL, our own values, and what some other Christian churches did at the time, the Moravian Church, Southern Province, and its members participated in the shameful institution of slavery. This participation began in 1769, and continued until the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865 -- some 96 years.
- * In the 1700s, as the Wachovia tract developed, land was cleared and the towns of Bethabara, Bethania and Salem were built. Moravians turned to the expedient of renting slaves from neighbors to supplement the workforce. Church leaders decided against individual members owning slaves. In 1769, a slave named Sam, who had been in Bethabara a number of years, was purchased by the church. This appears to be the first purchase of a slave by the Moravian Church in North Carolina.
- * Visitors often admire the architecture of Salem, or the industries and crafts which made it a successful colonial town. The truth that needs also to be told is that these were made possible due to the enslavement and labor of African-Americans.
- * Individual Moravians were discouraged from owning slaves well into the 1800s. In 1814 the householders in Salem determined that keeping owned slaves in the town should not be permitted. In 1820 the congregation council extended this regulation to include slave labor in trades in the town. However, several residents of Salem did own slaves, who were housed on the nearby farm (now known as Happy Hill). By the 1840s the town regulations were largely ignored, the council was at a loss as to how to enforce them, and they were abandoned.
- * One survey of the extent of slavery indicates that, at its height, there were approximately 160 enslaved men, women and children in Salem.
- * At first, slaves who joined the Moravian Church were accepted as integral parts of the community. They lived, worked and worshiped among other members, received communion, gave the kiss of peace, and were buried in church graveyards. Slaves

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MORAVIANS AND SLAVERY (Continued)

were also educated in Moravian schools. There are examples of English being used (rather than German) for slave memoirs and funeral services so that these could be understood. In 1771, the first baptism in the new sanctuary (Saal) in Salem was of the slave, Sam, who had been purchased in 1769.

- ✱ Any mention of inclusion in no way excuses the fact that most African Americans in Wachovia were slaves and were treated accordingly. By the 1780s Moravians began to mirror the separatist attitudes of their neighboring citizens. Beginning in the early 1800s, separate worship services for slaves began to be conducted in places such as Hope, Friedberg, and Bethania. In 1816, church leaders in Salem decided to bury enslaved members of the community in what was called the “parish graveyard” in the south end of town. By 1819, this began to be called “the Negro graveyard.” In 1859, a second graveyard was established on a small tract beyond the public Salem Cemetery.
- ✱ In 1822, the Female Missionary Society petitioned church leaders in Salem to develop a congregation for African Americans (what is now the St. Philips congregation), with its own building located on the south end of Church Street, at the parish graveyard. Even then, church leaders and members saw no contradiction between meeting the spiritual needs of those who were brothers and sisters in Christ, and yet remained in servitude. Worship services were conducted by white ministers. A Sunday school began in 1827, but was discontinued in 1831, when it became a crime in North Carolina to teach slaves to read or write. The brick church which stands today in Salem was completed in 1861. Another separate congregation for slaves was begun Bethania in the 1840s, had its own church building by 1850, and continued into the 1870s.
- ✱ May 21, 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation was formally announced to African Americans in Salem at the brick church. Slavery among the Moravians was ended. Separate worship serviced continued in Salem. White residents resisted selling or renting land to, or the construction of homes by former

slaves in the area of Salem. However, an African American school was established in 1869. In the 1870s, town leaders approved selling lots to former slaves in an area south of Salem first known as Liberia, and then Happy Hill.

- * The St. Philips congregation continued at the brick church in Salem, then in the community center in Happy Hill, then its own building in Happy Hill (1959), and since 1969, on Bon Air Avenue. In the late 1800s and early 20th century, key African-American lay leadership was provided by Lewis Hege. George Hall was appointed lay pastor in 1946. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s brought increasing steps for fuller inclusion of the St. Philips congregation in the life and activities of the Southern Province. St. Philips is currently a member of the Salem Congregation -- a group of churches which engage in common work and witness, share the God's Acre in Salem, and conduct the annual Easter sunrise service.
- * In 1998, the Southern Province adopted a statement on "Racism and the Church," which declared:

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 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.

- * We told ourselves the painful story of our involvement in slavery in the official 250th anniversary history of our Province (2003). In 2006, our Synod formally apologized for its participation in the institution of slavery, and a Moravian Team for Racial Reconciliation was formed and continues its work today.

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MORAVIANS AND SLAVERY (Continued)

- * Our 2018 Provincial Synod, reaffirmed this work and called the church to live what we profess:

“The Unitas Fratrum [Moravian Church] 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.” (Ground of the Unity, paragraph 7)

- * As our Synod affirmed: “it is apparent that the work of naming and dismantling racism in our society continues to be an urgent need, and that further confession, repentance and reconciling work among ourselves and in our witness to our community is also needed.”

Edited and adapted from Neither Slave nor Free: Moravians, Slavery, and a Church that Endures © 1998, Moravian Archives.

RESOLUTION 19 (2018)

Subject: Continuing the Journey of Reconciliation

From: Spiritual Growth Committee

Topic Area: Spiritual Growth

WHEREAS the Synod of 1998 affirmed an Interprovincial Faith and Order *Statement on Racism and the Church* as an official position of the Moravian Church, Southern Province; and,

WHEREAS the Synod of 2006 resolved “the Southern Province expresses its regret and apologizes to the African American community for the past participation of the Moravian Church in the institution of slavery,” and endorsed “a mandate to the Provincial Elders’ Conference to expand their efforts in respect to racial reconciliation, the elimination of institutional racism, and the fostering of diversity in churches of the Southern Province; and

WHEREAS, a Moravian Team for Racial Reconciliation was formed, worked between 2006 and 2012 to further these goals, and was reconvened in 2018 by the Provincial Elders’ Conference; and

WHEREAS, since the adoption of the *Statement* in 1998, it is apparent that the work of naming and dismantling racism in our society continues to be an urgent need, and that further confession, repentance and reconciling work among ourselves and in our witness to our community is also needed, and,

WHEREAS, the sin of racism is not limited to one “race, kindred, or tongue,” the sin of slavery and its legacy continues in many forms, and our need for reconciliation extends across all cultures and ethnicities, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Synod of 2018 reaffirms the *Statement on Racism and the Church* as the official position of the Moravian Church, Southern Province, and directs the Provincial Elders’ Conference to publish and commend it to our congregations, fellowships, boards and agencies for study, discussion and implementation in the life and ministry of the church; and,

RESOLVED, That the Synod of 2018 calls the Southern Province to live what we profess:

“The Unitas Fratrum recognizes no distinction between those who are one in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to tes-

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RESOLUTION 19 (Continued)

tify 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.” (*Ground of the Unity*, paragraph 7); and,

RESOLVED, That this Synod supports the renewed work of the Moravian Team for Racial Reconciliation, and requests that this Team be reformed as the Moravian Team for Racial, Cultural and Ethnic Reconciliation, and develop resources, materials, experiences and programs to assist congregations and the Province in engaging the tasks to which the *Statement* calls the church; and,

RESOLVED, That congregations, through their church board(s), will report to the Provincial Elders’ Conference on an annual basis until the next Synod how they are using and implementing the *Statement on Racism and the Church*, and are utilizing the resources developed by the Moravian Team for Racial, Cultural and Ethnic Reconciliation; and,

RESOLVED, That in the next inter-synodal period, the PEC will initiate intentional conversation with one or more churches or denominations of diverse racial, cultural and ethnic membership to explore cooperation in mission and service and to “bear public witness and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ;” and,

RESOLVED, That during the inter-synodal period 2018-2022, up to \$2,000 per year (a total of \$8,000) be available through the Provincial budgeting process to support the work of the Moravian Team for Racial, Cultural and Ethnic Reconciliation, under the oversight of the Provincial Elders’ Conference, which shall bring a report of activities to the Synod of 2022.

Adopted at the 2018 Synod of the Moravian Church in America,
Southern Province.

RESOLUTION 24 (2006)

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];

WHEREAS, the Moravian Church has recognized “the segregation apparent in our church’s worship life in general, and the tendency of congregations and Provincial Elder’s Conferences to extend calls only to pastors of the same race as the congregation” [“A Moravian Church Statement on Racism”, p. 2];

WHEREAS, “Given the far-flung reach of the Moravian Church and its diverse heritages, from the vantage point of our present century one can hardly understand how Moravians in North Carolina in the 18th and first half of the 19th centuries could have genuine concern for the spiritual welfare of the African Americans around them, and yet accept and participate in the institution of slavery. The acceptance of slavery and the adopting of more ‘American’ ideas about African Americans is the low point in the story of the Moravians in the South.” [C. Daniel Crews, Neither Slave nor Free: Moravians, Slavery, and a Church That Endures, Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Archives, 1998, p. 1-2];

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];

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

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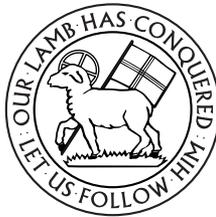
RESOLUTION 24 (Continued)

WHEREAS, the Board of Christian Education of the Southern Province, through the Commission on Church and Society, has established a racial reconciliation program to bring together members of predominantly white and predominantly African American congregations; has affiliated with, and participates in leadership of, the Institute for Dismantling Racism in Winston-Salem; and is in the process of establishing a team to deal with the matter of institutional racism under the guidance of Crossroads Ministry, an anti-racism program; therefore, be it.

RESOLVED, That the 2006 Synod of the Southern Province expresses its regret and apologizes to the African American community for the past participation of the Moravian Church in the institution of slavery; and

RESOLVED, That the 2006 Synod endorses a mandate to the Provincial Elders' Conference to expand, their efforts in respect to racial reconciliation, the elimination of institutional racism, and the fostering of diversity in churches of the Southern Province.

Adopted at the 2006 synod of the Moravian Church in America,
Southern Province



THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE
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MORAVIAN TEAM FOR RECONCILIATION
(RACIAL, CULTURAL, AND ETHNIC)
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