

Lutheran/Moravian Coordinating Committee Meeting
ELCA Church-wide Office
Chicago, Illinois
June 22-23, 2004

Michael Trice – Associate Director for the Department for Ecumenical Affairs – joined the Committee. The session began with devotions by Ron Rinn. Those in attendance were: Ms. Judith Garber, Rev. Ron Rinn, Rev. Patricia Garner, Michael Trice, and Mr. Bob Hunter, the facilitator.

The Committee members did some “catching up” with one another with current life circumstances as an introduction to Michael Trice, after which the Minutes from the May 13-14, 2003 meeting in Bethlehem, PA., were reviewed. Reverend Otto Dreydoppel joined the Committee, his plane having run late.

The Agenda for this meeting was reviewed and additional items were added: sharing personnel, the make-up of the Committee and other open ended concerns such as mission starts, and the human sexuality issues before both bodies. The Agenda was adopted and Bob Hunter distributed various documents for information pertinent to our work: Standards of Responsible Behavior for Ordained Ministers of the Moravian Church (Southern Province), ELM IV a brochure on the gathering of Episcopalians, Lutherans and Moravians on February 19, 2004 in Burlington, North Carolina, and the Agenda of a meeting for Conversations of Ecumenical Representative with Leaders of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, held at the Lutheran Center in Chicago on April 15, 2004.

Otto Dreydoppel led a discussion on the sexuality issues facing the Church reviewing what has taken place in the Northern Province of the Moravian Church over the course of time. The entire Committee shared observations and concerns about this issue in both church bodies.

The Canadian District of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church and the ELCA possibilities were reviewed. Up to this point it has been Americans talking about this but now the Canadians have picked up the conversation according to Otto. The Committee crafted **Resolution on the relationship between the ELCA and the Affiliated Provinces of the Moravian Church, Resolution (1)**, which is attached to these minutes concerning the discussion between the Canadian District and the Lutheran Church in Canada. The Resolution was proposed by Otto Dreydoppel and seconded by Judy Garber. The contact person for the Northern District is Steve Gohdes and the Lutheran Church in Canada contact person is the assistant to the Bishop, Paul Johnson.

The possibilities for cooperative efforts between the Alaska Province and the ELCA were discussed, with great insight provided by Otto who served in the Alaska Province. It was determined that rather than strive for an “Agreement” we should undertake cooperative efforts “on the ground” in the form of mission teams comprised of Moravians and Lutherans. The **Resolution on the relationship between the ELCA and the Affiliated Provinces of the Moravian Church (2)**, attached to these Minutes outlines the proposal. **Resolution (2), proposed by Judy Garber and seconded by Patty Garner, was approved unanimously.**

The Jamaica Project (reported in the Minutes from the May 2003 meeting) was briefly discussed and it was determined that our initiative there would not be what we anticipated therefore we have dropped the endeavor. Patty Garner had made the contact but it did not seem a possibility for our stated mission and mandate.

Eastern West Indies and the Caribbean Synod of the ELCA possibilities were discussed. There has been little progress made in a conversation about full communion there as leadership changes have taken place which were not conducive for sustained contact. But when The Reverend Margarita Martinez was installed as Bishop of the Caribbean Synod the President of the Eastern West Indies Province took part in

the service. The committee finds this a positive sign of a foundation to build upon. **Resolution on the relationship between the ELCA and the Affiliated Provinces of the Moravian Church, Resolution (3)**, attached to these Minutes are the result of our discussion. Resolution (3), proposed by Patty Garner and Seconded by Judy Garber, was approved unanimously.

NEW IDEAS AND POSSIBILITIES: the following were lifted up for consideration

- 1.) Sharing personnel—Bishop David Strobel of the Northeast Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA could provide a valuable resource and model for how this works in his Synod, as could the Eastern District of the Northern Province President, Gary Straughan.
- 2.) Sharing speakers interdenominationally. Otto mentioned the Stewardship Convocation of the Eastern District of the Northern Province where ELCA Pastor Mark Moller-Gunderson was the speaker last year. Surely there are other “cross-over” possibilities to be explored. Otto has agreed to be the contact person in the Northern Province, Bob Hunter in the Southern Province and Michael Trice for the ELCA.
- 3.) Invitations to various gatherings—We should be inviting one another to such events as **Synodical Convocations for clergy and Associates, as well as to the Provincial Ministry Retreat held by the Moravians**. In September of 2003 Ron Rinn attended the Moravian Ministry Retreat for the Southern Province and was warmly welcomed.
- 4.) Fostering resources like Taize experiences and **Gemeinschaft**. This type of sharing is a way to introduce ecumenism on a practical/experiential level and provide additional ecumenical resources to one another.

Michael handed out various documents from past meetings and also a news service release on Interfaith Relations. Patty Garner also handed out Saving Our Shepherds for review this evening as we take it up tomorrow morning. The meeting was adjourned for supper.

**Day 2
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Patty Garner opened the session with guided devotions after which Bob Hunter reviewed our Agenda for the day. Patty presented her work to date on the *Gemeinschaft* program for seminaries and the conversations she has had with Pastor John Lagen at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary regarding the S.O.S. Program.

History of S.O.S.: A Program of Spiritual Care and Nurture for Ministers – In 2002, the Southern Province of the MCA formed ‘resolution #18’ regarding the healthful wellbeing of clergy. Similarly, the Board of Pensions’ *Health and Wellness Initiative* from the ELCA seeks to address issues of healthful living and overall spiritual wellness. Both the Moravian resolution and the ELCA initiative have inspired a program entitled S.O.S.: A program of Spiritual Care and Nurture for Ministers. The committee reviewed this S.O.S document in progress. There are at least five essential and important components of the program to note:

a). A Daily Rite, a Weekly Group Meeting, Development of a Call Story/*Lebenslauf*, an Annual Retreat, and a Sabbatical Leave. These components can be viewed in the attached material handed out by Patty Garner. Some leading questions with regard to S.O.S., and as discussed by the coordinating

committee, were:

- *How is the program to be introduced?*
- *Will the program be in final form?*
- *Will this program be obligator, highly recommended, or voluntary for clergy and other full time church workers?*

Furthermore, since this program appears to be geographically orientated, locally owned (Synod and Province), regionally limited (North Carolina), and ecumenically grounded in spiritual formation for the nurture of rostered leaders, Patty and Ron Rinn will contact North Carolina Synod Bishop Leonard Bolick about the possibility of initially testing and implementing this program in North Carolina.

Because this issue of "burn out and spiritual fatigue" is as concern for both our church bodies, possible partners of cross-fertilization for this program are:

ELCA – The Division for Ministry, the Board of Pensions, the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, the North Carolina Synod, the Division for Theological Education, and the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.

Moravian Church (MCA) – The Northern and Southern Provinces, Moravian Seminary, and the Provincial Elders Conference Commission on Ordained Ministry in the Southern Province.

Finally, the S.O.S. Program is being composed by Pastor Garner with intended ecumenical usage. The coordinating committee's enduring hope and goal is to pave the way for this resource to become available to denominational affiliations beyond both Lutheran and Moravian.

With regard to S.O.S., and after considerable discussion, the coordinating committee drafted the **Resolution on Spiritual Care for Ordained Pastors**, or resolution #4. This resolution is attached to these Minutes.

The Committee members recessed for lunch and were joined by Melanie Gibbons, Support Staff for the Department for Ecumenical Affairs. Following lunch and a tour of the Lutheran Churchwide office, the Committee resumed work on crafting the resolutions.

Expressions of Historical Sharing:

ELCA – Randy Lee, Director of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs, joined the group and brought us to date on the ecumenical landscape and concerns for the ELCA: The Lutheran-Roman Catholic Round X Dialogue has now reached agreements on several issues; the Lutheran-Disciples of Christ Dialogue now involves the United Church of Christ since we are also partners with the UCC and it seemed appropriate; the Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue continues with the Methodist's most recent church-wide gathering addressing the issue of Eucharist and interim Eucharist sharing. The ELCA and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod dialogue is challenging. We will know more after the LCMS meets in convention next month, July 2004. The Historic Black Denominations (e.g., the AME church) dialogue has not recently advanced very far. The Episcopal group was at the Lutheran Churchwide office last week (June 2004) and in November the Reformed Committee will meet in Cleveland.

In other discussion the Committee learned that the Department for Ecumenical Affairs has had to cut by 20% contributions to the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson is the President of the Lutheran World Federation.

Lee caught the Committee up on the current study of the blessing of same sex unions and ordination of practicing gay and lesbian persons to be delivered at the 2005 Church Wide Assembly. This study, *Journeying Together Faithfully*, precedes the social statement study to be presented at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. It appears that the Study document, *Journeying Together Faithfully*, is being used more widely than was first suspected.

The restructuring of the ELCA is still on-going with several steps yet to go before the Churchwide Assembly in Orlando in 2005, August 8-14. Mennonites and Lutherans are in dialogue and that conversation is being shifted from North America to the international scene.

MCA – Otto Dreydoppel reported on the Moravian efforts on ecumenical relationships: the Provincial Presidents have agreed with the efforts to expand involvement in both the World Council and the National Council of Churches; Moravian Unity is more closely structured as a global church than is the Lutheran World Federation. President Bob Sawyer of the Southern Province is Vice-Chair of the “Moravian Unity” [the global presence of Moravians in the world]. Bi-lateral dialogues for the Moravians continue with the Reformed Churches, UCC and Disciples of Christ. Otto is also involved with the Moravian-Episcopal dialogue and this seems to be moving forward. There is some consternation for some Moravians with the consecration of a gay Bishop in the Episcopal church, but that should not derail the conversations toward further ecumenical sharing.

Finally, the membership of the coordinating committee was itself discussed. What is woefully lacking is representation from both the Caribbean Synod (ELCA) and the Eastern West Indies Province (MCA). The committee has requested Michael Trice to speak with Bishop Hanson in order to discuss with Bishop Margarita Martinez (Bishop, Caribbean Synod) for the purposes of an appointment to the Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee. With respect to the Moravian interest, the Northern and Southern Provinces must invite a member of the Eastern West Indies Province to become a member of the coordinating committee. Michael Trice will follow-up for the ELCA and Bob Hunter will follow up with the MCA. Please see **Resolution on the relationship between the ELCA and the Affiliated Provinces of the Moravian Church, Resolution (3)**, to this end.

The next meeting will be held in Winston-Salem, North Carolina beginning at 6:00 p.m. with supper on Tuesday, November 30 and ending on December 1. The Moravian members of the committee have made an invitation [to all members] to stay for supper the evening of the 1st for the special Candle Tea at Home Moravian Church. This privilege from the Moravian members reveals the closeness of both committee members and the enduring hope for all our efforts as this ecumenical work continues.