

Lutheran - Moravian Coordinating Committee Minutes

February 14 and 15, 2002
Winston-Salem, NC

Session One
Thursday, February 14, 2002

Convener Bob Hunter welcomed the Committee to the new Archie Davis Archives Building and Ron Rinn offered the prayer. Those in attendance were: Otto Dreydoppel, Judith Garber (new member), Patricia Garner, Bob Hunter, Ron Rinn, A. Craig Settlage and Darlis Swan.

After a review of the Agenda and some additions, the Minutes from the April 2001 meeting were approved.

A report was given by Craig Settlage provided by Lowell Almen, Secretary of the ELCA. Currently we have not had any exchange of clergy between the Moravian Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, however there are 11 Presbyterians, 18 United Church of Christ, 11 Episcopalian and two Reformed Church in America clergy serving in ELCA congregations. Twenty-one ELCA ordained ministers are serving in ecumenical settings. Of those serving in Presbyterian ministries, four are in congregations and seven are in non-congregational settings. Three are serving in the United Church of Christ, and seven are serving in Episcopal settings.

Ron Rinn commented that the Moravians in the Southern Province are now requiring people from other traditions to spend a semester at Moravian Seminary in order to become enculturated in the Moravian tradition.

Bob Hunter reported on the ELM II event in Burlington, NC where 40 people were in attendance for the Episcopal, Lutheran and Moravian gathering with Loren B. Mead presenting.

Patty Garner reported that she and Pastor Pierson Shaw, ELCA, put together a survey for needs from Lutheran and Moravian congregations to assess how we have been working together. Most people indicated they would like some spiritual care offerings, but not many responded to the survey. The North Carolina Synod of the ELCA has posted this survey on its web site.

Craig Settlage spoke of the Health and Wellness research conducted on rostered leaders by the ELCA and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The report will be published and will be shared with the Moravian Church.

Darlis Swan asked the group to review our Charter and our mission. At a recent meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs in Chicago, the question was raised as to what we and other groups like us are doing to fulfill our purpose and move along in the process of more active exchange and cooperation between the full communion partners. Our role may be in a state of flux, and we should review what we might contribute to the process of full partnership on a variety of fronts. The following possibilities were discussed:

1. mission development,
2. spiritual refreshment for clergy and other rostered leaders, and
3. spiritual formation at the seminary level. Darlis Swan described a proposal for a consultation for the churchwide/national staff of the ELCA and its full communion partners to discuss reception/implementation of full communion. The committee agreed this would be helpful. Judith Garber stressed that a stated focus or goal needs to be clear and not simply provide a venue for getting to know other Christians.

Otto Dreydoppel reported that the Moravian-Episcopal full communion dialogue team, of which he is a member, is still at the talking stage but is getting more serious with the current "sticking point" identified as

the historic episcopate. The Episcopal partners will write a paper on Moravian and Episcopal understanding of the Office of Bishop as a way to advance the dialogue.

General discussion took place around Otto's report, and some new insights were gained concerning the role of Bishops in the Moravian church and Lutheran appreciation for the Moravian understanding of the role of Consecrated bishops as being bishops for the whole church, not simply for a local judicatory.

Craig Settlage reported that the Lutheran/Reformed/Episcopal partnerships are unfolding in a cooperative manner. We have a joint web site with these partners and the United Methodist Church as well, even though there is no adopted agreement with them at this time. He reported that the Presbyterians and Episcopalians will be participating with the Lutherans on the Health and Wellness initiative. A question for our consideration and mutual dialogue is, "Why do ordained ministers leave their office?"

Darlis Swan spoke of the Lutheran-Reformed Consultation for Seminary Professors in Geneva sponsored by the churches in the Lutheran-Reformed full communion agreement in the USA and then moved on to ask about what seminaries are doing in the area of ecumenism in their teaching and curriculum. There is a challenge to get ecumenical matters into Seminary teaching schedules and agendas. "Turf" issues about full communion agreements abound.

Craig Settlage reported that for the ELCA, the Churchwide Assembly vote for the "Exceptions for Ordination" bylaw is not causing much difficulty. Episcopalians and Lutherans are working with a diaconal ministries model, and a coordinating committee is in place. Until we are no longer consciously asking each expression of the church(es) "Have you thought of the ecumenical implications," we will still have need for coordinating committees such as this one.

Darlis Swan mentioned the Retreat she was on several weeks ago with the rest of the staff of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs and how it has implications for our committee. The retreat helped to strengthen relationships among staff members and bring Biblical texts to bear on the ecumenical vision and future work of the department.

Patty Garner lead the group through a spiritual experience with scripture, reflection, sharing and prayer.

After a break the group reconvened with a report and discussion on Lutheran-Moravian possibilities for the Caribbean.

Darlis Swan spoke to Bishop Margarita Martinez of the Caribbean Synod at the Churchwide Assembly in August 2001. She invited the Bishop to visit with her when the Bishop was in Chicago, and she and Craig Settlage had a meeting with Bishop Martinez in October. Martinez invited Bishop Kingsley Lewis from the Eastern West Indies Province to be part of her installation service and he took part. In a letter to Lewis thanking him for being in the service, Bishop Martinez formally asked him to help her to go forward with a dialogue between the Caribbean Synod and the Eastern West Indies Province. At this point the ELCA should help get the Dialogue started and encourage the Bishop to go forward.

Otto said that Bishop Kingsley Lewis was the right person to ask in the process, but now Reverend Roslyn Hamlin is in that office as President of the Eastern West Indies Provincial Conference. Otto and Patty will contact Reverend Hamlin and Kingsley Lewis.

Since our last meeting, nothing has transpired on the Canada situation. Bob Hunter will contact Burke Johnson in the Northern Province and Darlis will contact the Ecumenical Affairs Officer in Canada for the Lutherans.

For tomorrow's meeting, we will address:

1. the future of this committee,
2. plans for mission possibilities,
3. care for clergy, and
4. introducing ecumenical relations into seminary curricula. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm with plans to reconvene at 8:30 am on Friday.

Session Two

Friday, February 15, 2002

Our session began with prayer by Bob Hunter. Patty Garner introduced the topic of a spiritual retreat for clergy with a review. She suggested that the retreat would be for a week and that the format would follow the gemeinschaft model for spiritual formation. She would like to meet with Pastor John Largen at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC to discuss ways to implement a retreat. In the North Carolina Synod there are a variety of opportunities available for different audiences involving several denominations, and the Synod advertises the offerings in the monthly mailing to clergy titled, "The Synod Servant." Craig mentioned that the ELCA now requires that diaconal ministers have a Spiritual Director.

It was suggested that a spiritual retreat might make linkage between one's ordination and spiritual renewal. Currently the Moravians have a gathering called Covenanting Day which has some component of spiritual renewal. The ELCA is committed to "life long learning" with the First Call Theological Education for the newly ordained and consecrated as well as an encouraged two weeks each year for continuing education for rostered persons.

A Health and Wellness emphasis was initiated with a survey of clergy in the ELCA and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and the information gathered could be shared with both Moravian Provinces. A wide-ranging discussion on a host of related topics such as: self care, spiritual formation, time management and spiritual retreats took place. A possibility would be to check into exploring a Lilly Grant to provide spiritual retreats and renewal for clergy. Our goal, as a committee, is to increase the spiritual and physical health of our clergy and rostered lay persons. Bob Hunter, Patricia Garner and Ron Rinn will work together locally to look at matching needs with resources and check out how to go about a Lilly Grant. Components of the concept would include: Moravians and Lutherans working and meeting together over a number of days addressing perceived spiritual needs and relational needs of the participants and discussing how meeting those needs would support the congregations and institutions served by the participants. It was suggested that Craig Settlege and Dr. Harvey Huntley, Jr. of the ELCA Region Nine be invited to the work team. Additionally ELCA research could be provided to undergird the proposal along with resources from ELCA Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. Most likely the Lilly Foundation will be asking, "What is the value of doing this jointly rather than individually?"

The committee moved on to mutual mission possibilities. Our full communion agreement mandates that we explore ways to further the mission of Christ to the world and find ways to make that happen. Currently Trinity Moravian Church is engaged in a Hispanic ministry as a "training center" for developing resources for mission. The North Carolina Synod has an Hispanic ministries task force exploring similar resources headed by Edna Campos of Asheville. For the Moravians, Bob Rierson, David Wickman and Larry Christianson are appropriate resource people as well as Gail Walker of the Board of World Missions/Education Director from the Southern Province. Gail should be invited to our next meeting to help us explore possibilities. The 20/20 Project of the Southern Province is seeking to develop 20 mission churches in the next 20 years. "How can the Lutherans be involved in this?" is an appropriate question. In the ELCA, Rev. Richard A. Magnus, the Director of the Division of Outreach could be involved in the discussion.

The challenge before us is: "What difference has our Agreement made in advancing the mission and ministry of Christ to the world?" This committee needs to pose the question "Can we jointly develop a new ministry or mission?" Connections can be made with church bodies as Patty pointed out that there is a group developing curricula jointly with other denominations, but there is no Lutheran currently involved. In regard to joint mission efforts, Darlis Swan noted that Churches Uniting in Christ, an ecumenical entity involving nine member denominations which was inaugurated in January 2002, has full communion as its goal. The ELCA is a "partner in mission and dialogue" in CUIC which means that they will participate in a dialogue on ministry and a task force to combat racism. If the Moravian Church becomes a "partner" also, this would provide another opportunity for Lutherans and Moravians to witness to their full communion relationship.

In the area of Women's ministries what connection could be made between the Provincial Woman's Board and Women of the ELCA? The Triennial convention of the WELCA is in July in Philadelphia (July 8-13th), and the Moravians could be invited to attend in some official capacity. Cathy Braasch is the WELCA contact (Executive Director); Tommie Gambill is the Southern Province contact (President); and Jan Hartke is the Northern Province contact person (Administrator).

The Health, Benefits and Pensions plans were explored between Lutherans and Moravians with the result that Moravians will remain as they are but are now exploring closer connection and conversation between the two Provinces.

Men's ministries were discussed with emphasis on how linkage can be made between groups. The ELCA has a Men's Ministry but the Moravians do not. Both bodies engage in relief efforts, and more communication should be sought in this area to see how we might work together. Also the topic of enculturation into the Moravian church for non-Moravians was discussed with the possibility of having some joint leadership gatherings from time to time. On the topic of seminary curricula, several persons were identified who might be helpful in mutual education: Dr. Susan McArver, a Salem College graduate, is Assistant Professor for Educational Ministry and Church History at LTSS, and there is existing programming between Philadelphia Seminary and Moravian Seminary in the area of cultural interpretation. Otto will explore this topic further and bring a proposal to our next meeting.

The question we should always be asking is, "How can we work more closely with our ecumenical partners?" Darlis Swan suggested that we be involved in a Consultation in Chicago with churchwide program staff and all the ecumenical partners. There are some staff from the Southern Province who might be involved, but there are no complementary positions in the Northern Province. Members of this Coordinating Committee most likely will be invited.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer. Our next meeting is October 22nd through the 24th in Winston-Salem, North Carolina beginning at 1:00 on the 22nd.

Ron Rinn, recorder