

Communiqué Lutheran - Moravian Coordinating Committee

February 14-15, 2002

The Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee met in Winston-Salem, North Carolina February 14-15, 2002. Sessions were held at the Archie K. Davis Center, the new home of the Moravian Archives and the Moravian Music Foundation.

Moravian representatives present were: Pr. Otto Dreydoppel (instructor at Moravian Theological Seminary), Pr. Patricia Garner (pastor of Trinity Moravian Church in Winston-Salem), and Mr. Robert Hunter (assistant to the president of the Southern Provincial Elders Conference).

Lutheran representatives present were: Ms. Judith Garber (member of Christ Lutheran Church, York, Pennsylvania and vice-chair of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Council), Pr. Ronald Rinn (pastor of Augsburg Lutheran Church in Winston-Salem), and Pr. Darlis Swan (associate director of the ELCA's Department for Ecumenical Affairs). Ms. Garber replaces Pr. Martha Sheaffer, who resigned from the Committee because of changes in her responsibilities as chaplain of Luthercare in Lititz, Pennsylvania. Pr. Craig Settlege, associate executive director of the of the ELCA's Division for Ministry, served as a resource person.

The Committee identified four areas of ongoing concern: mutuality in mission, care of pastors, theological education, and fostering Lutheran-Moravian cooperation in other Lutheran church bodies and other provinces of the Moravian Unity. In addition, the Committee will continue to serve as a mediator, encourager, and reporter for the continuing implementation of our full communion agreement, that is, for Lutheran-Moravian cooperation in local congregations and regional judicatories.

Members of the Committee discussed ways in which the ELCA and the MCA can collaborate in church planting, world mission, disaster relief, stewardship and evangelism, and similar activities.

Much of the meeting time was given over to a "spiritual retreat" based on the Moravian Gemeinschaft program and directed by Pr. Garner. This could serve as a model for a spiritual care program shared by Moravian and Lutheran clergy and other rostered persons. A Spiritual Health and Wellness subcommittee (Garner, Hunter, Rinn) will develop this using a document on health and wellness to be produced by the ELCA Division for Ministry.

The committee celebrated that during the past year, services of installation of Lutheran bishops, including Presiding Bishop Hanson, have included laying on of hands by Moravian bishops. So far, there have been no formal exchanges of clergy between the MCA and the ELCA (several instances of interim and informal sharing of personnel have been noted), but it will become increasingly desirable for Lutheran and Moravian clergy to know the theology, practice, and folkways of the full-communion partner denomination. One way to effect this might be to introduce instruction in the Lutheran tradition at Moravian Theological Seminary and in the Moravian tradition at the Lutheran seminaries. Pr. Dreydoppel will discuss this with his colleagues, both Moravian and Lutheran, and bring a proposal to the next meeting.

The ELCA includes congregations in the Virgin Islands which are within the geography of the Eastern West Indies Province of the Moravian Church and congregations in Alaska which are part of the Alaska Province. Likewise, the Northern Province includes Moravian congregations in Canada which are within the geography of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The Committee received a report that Bishop Kingsley Lewis of the EWI participated in the installation of Bishop Margarita Martinez in the ELCA Caribbean Synod. Based on this beginning, the Committee will assist as possible and appropriate in discussions between the Caribbean Synod and the EWI Province.

The Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee will meet in Winston-Salem October 22-24, 2002.

The Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee
26 February 2002