

MORAVIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, SOUTHERN PROVINCE

Provincial Elders' Conference

459 South Church Street - Winston-Salem, NC 27101-5314 (336) 725-5811 - (888) 725-5811 - fax: (336) 723-1029 - pec@mcsp.org

May 24, 2019

The Rt. Rev. Armando Rusindo The Moravian Church in Cuba (Cuba Unity Mission Province) Dear Brother Rusindo, Thank you for your email of May 21 informing me of the invitation you have received and accepted to participate in the June 1 meeting of the Concerned Moravians group here in Winston-Salem. We do understand you will be in Winston-Salem for the Mission **Awareness Dinner** to celebrate our partnership through the Board of World Mission, the work of the Armando **Rusindo** Mission Foundation and recent mission trips to Cuba. We welcome and look **forward** to your coming for that purpose. The Provincial Elders' Conference (PEC) respectfully asks that you decline the invitation of the Concerned Moravians group and do not participate in any of their meetings. You shared your personal view that the decisions of the 2018 Southern Province Synod are "out of order" in the world-wide Moravian Unity. Whether or not this is the case is something that the Unity Board or Unity Synod determine, and not a bishop. The Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum does state that *"the office and function of a Bishop is valid throughout the Unity as a whole."* (COUF #687). However, the activity of bishops between the various provinces is managed in an orderly way. Bishops sometimes visit another province of the Unity for a particular purpose. These visits are at the invitation or with the agreement of the Provincial Board of that **province**, and with the affirmation of the PEC in the province where the bishop resides. The Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum states: *"Bishops serve under the authority of the Provincial Board and Synod of the Province in which they reside. Once decisions have been reached by a provincial board or synod, Bishops are not to interfere with such decisions."* (COUF #687). The Concerned Moravians group has challenged the decisions of our 2018 Synod and of our PEC, and this is an ongoing disagreement which we are working to resolve. Your participation in the June 1 meeting would be disruptive to our province. It would interfere with the decision of our provincial synod, and the decisions and continuing work of our PEC. It would also interfere in the ministry of the seven bishops of the Unity who reside in our Province as they fulfill their duties as described in COUF.

The Rev. David Guthrie, President. The Rev. Dr. Nola Knouse, Vice President - Mrs. Peggy Carter - The Rev. Jeff Coppage
Mr. Tommy Cole - Mr. Keith Kapp. The Rev. Judy Knopf -The Rev. Dr. David Marcus, Jr. Assistant to the President

Imagine how you and the PEC in the Cuba Province would feel if there were a disagreement in your Province and -- without being invited by your PEC, and without you being aware or consulted as the bishop in Cuba - a bishop from another province came and supported the position of a particular group that was part of the disagreement. Please accept my apology for being so direct. However, the PEC has not invited you, and we do not agree with your participation in the June 1 meeting. Our reasons are based on the understanding of the role and function of bishops our world-wide Unity. You may want to consult with other bishops about this matter, and we encourage YOU to do so. We respect and value your ministry as a bishop of the Unity. We also ask that you respect our role as the Provincial Elders' Conference in this province, and the ministry of the bishops here. Please respond to this letter so that we know about your plans. We look forward to your being here in North Carolina for the Mission Awareness Dinner. Sincerely,

und Gatua

David Guthrie