

Czech Province of Moravian Church, January 23rd, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This letter is our reaction to the message of Brother Bishop Armando Rusindo named „When Principles are Abandoned”, sent out last October in connection with September’s Unity Board meeting. In his message, Brother Bishop reacts to the fact that the Unity Board did not deal with the situation and development in the American Northern Province relating to the decision of its 2014 Synod which enabled solemnization of same-sex marriages and ordination of practicing homosexuals, even though the Unity Board was explicitly commissioned to do so by the 2016 Unity Synod.

Firstly, we want to thank very much for the message of Brother Bishop Armando Rusindo. At the same time, we want to express our full support to this message. It reminds us of the seriousness of the situation we find ourselves in. The protection of marriage concerns our very faithfulness to our beloved Lord and Lamb, which belongs to Him from the church – His Bride.

The representative of our province, Brother Bishop Petr Krásný, informed us of the course of the Unity Board meeting. He admitted that he did not react sufficiently during the meeting and did not remind the necessity to discuss the respective US2016.44 resolution adopted by the Unity Synod by a decisive majority (in favour 48; opposed 11; abstaining 1).

We realise that the course of the 2018 Unity Board meeting was influenced by the hurricane and the transport from Winston-Salem to Bethlehem, which presented a further challenge to the coordinators as well as the members of the meeting. We can understand that this irregularity may have caused that the Unity Board omitted the task arising from the US2016.44 resolution. In any case, we are convinced that this is an important task that is not to be neglected – especially considering that the American Northern Province has not yet amended its resolution from 2014 as far as we are aware.

As we are aware of the gravity of the situation, we propose that a committee be established to investigate the whole matter and tasked to submit a report to the 2020 Unity Board meeting, so that the Unity Board may take a qualified position on the matter. As proposers of the model of synodal resolution US2016.44, we express our willingness to actively participate in this committee, if there is an interest for us to participate.

We would like to remark that it is very important to respect all resolutions of the Unity Synod. Should the Unity Synod resolution not be respected in the case of a single province violating the Church order (COUF), who shall prevent further provinces from joining in similar violations of the COUF?

We understand that this is not a simple task for the Unity Board, as a conflict of the decision of a Provincial Synod with the wording of the COUF and a Unity Synod Resolution is involved. We are grateful that the proposed agenda of the following Unity Committee on Theology meeting includes

the topic of “Ecclesiastical relationship between Unity Synod and Provinces, especially when tensions exist between the Unity Synod and Provincial Synods”. However, there is still a need to deal with the task. In our opinion, should the primary motive not to resolve this issue would be an effort to “keep the unity”, we warn that such inaction historically never led to unity, but rather to breakup.

Finally, we want to call upon the entire Unity to follow the Lamb in the very issue of protecting marriage. We remind to all Provinces, congregations, pastors, Boards of Elders and individual members the binding force of COUF article #819: „*Christian Marriage in the Moravian Church is between a man and a woman*”. We remark that the significance of this article is emphasised by the declarations of the Bishops’ conferences of 2007 and 2014.

Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him!

Yours Faithfully,

Provincial Board of Czech Province
Theological Committee of Czech Province

To: all concerned.