



Concerned Moravians' Mission Statement

It is our mission, as Concerned Moravians, to follow Christ as our Chief Elder, support the unity of the worldwide Moravian Church, return the Southern Province to full compliance with the church Order of the Unitas Fratrum, uphold Scripture as the sole standard of our doctrine and faith, and to love and serve all for whom Christ gave His life.

Concerned Moravians (CM), a 1000-plus member grassroots group, led by laypersons, was birthed out of surprise and shock of Resolution 14 that came out of the Southern Province's Synod 2018. The group's efforts were fueled by what appeared to be an intentional shroud of secrecy precipitated by the Provincial Elder's Conference (PEC). Synod delegates and pastors who attended the April 22, 2018 event in Black Mountain NC were told by the PEC and other leaders at Synod not to communicate anything about what had happened until a prepared statement could be developed by the PEC.

Three weeks later as news was being leaked, on May 11, 2018, a sensational headline appeared in the *Winston Salem Journal* (journalnow.com) titled "Moravian Synod Will Let Gay Clergy Marry". Many loyal church members found out for the first time (thru a newspaper, not from their leadership) about the decision of accepting same-sex marriage and ordination of practicing homosexuals that had been made and may be forced upon them (based on the decision of their respective board or church council). The writer of that article attempted to interview leadership from the Southern Province, but they had no comment.

The CM leadership realized through much research and reading of the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum* (COUF), the Moravian Church's constitution, that the referendum was unconstitutional. They also realized that the Unity Board (UB), the worldwide leaders and the highest authority of the Moravian Church, was the only governing body that had authority to reverse a Synod decision. As a matter of fact, the UB and the Unity Synod of 2016 had already created a statement that THEY were to address this issue, not the provinces! They resolved through Resolution 44 "that the Unity Synod 2016 declares to the American Northern Province that the actions of its June 2014 Synod concerning the marriage of same gender couples and the ordination of homosexual people is not in accordance with the Synod 2016's understanding of COUF, the Moravian Covenant for Christian Living, and Scripture; and be it further resolved that the Unity Synod 2016 commissions the Unity Board to observe the development in America Northern Province, to take necessary measures".

The CM had been told by several leaders in the Church that with 300 signatures there was a procedure that could be used to call for a special meeting to change a decision. Because they knew only the UB had the authority to make such a change, they felt it prudent to circumnavigate the PEC. Therefore their petition, signed by almost one thousand (1000!) concerned Moravians was addressed to the UB, not the PEC.

The PEC, wanting to know about the movement, invited the CM leadership to meet with them. It appeared to be a meeting that would be fruitful towards a reversal of the decision or at least a delaying of any implementation of the policy. But...they were met with reality when told by the PEC that their petition wasn't even legitimate because the signatures weren't with the documents (they weren't there because the petition was addressed to the UB, not the PEC). It proved to be nothing other than a delay tactic.

On Labor Day, Sept 3, the petition was emailed to all members of the UB (except those living in Tanzania for political reasons). This initiated the UB inviting the CM leadership to meet with them during a meeting scheduled for Fall '18. Due to a hurricane hitting North Carolina the meeting was moved to Bethlehem PA. As a result, the CM leadership was only able to meet with Jorgen Boytler, the administrator of the UB, a few weeks later. He basically said, "Fix the mess yourselves and call upon the UB only after exhausting all other options". The CM went to work as they tried to engage more lay leadership and pastors to continue working to orchestrate a way to overturn the decisions of the Synod and restore the true essence of unity to their beloved Moravian Church. A final appeal letter was sent to the PEC on November 8, 2018 asking for Unity involvement (with signatures).

On January 3, 2019 the PEC advised the CM that they would take no action on our petition to the UB. Responses and actions of the PEC continued to be seemingly negative towards taking any action to fix the problems caused by their *forcing* the unconstitutional referendum through Synod. The CM has even determined that there were many flaws in the voting process at Synod and that the leadership violated the script by not adhering to *Robert's Rules of Order*. Article VIII, Rule 47 states "No motion is in order that conflicts with the....assembly's constitution or by-laws; and if such a motion is adopted, even by a unanimous vote, it is null and void. No rule that conflicts with a rule of higher order is of any authority".

As most of the members of the CM consider their involvement to be that of divine appointment, they continue to persevere with lots of energy. The leadership group meets regularly to discuss concerns, share newly discovered information, and plan for the next actions to move forward. As they advance with their cause, they have met with several members of the UB, engaged and communicated with leaders around the world, hosted 5 informational worship sessions (with an average attendance of over 150), provided constant contact with CM members thru email, and stood strong with directives that God has given them in His Holy Word.

The CM maintains a website to share information (www.concernedmoravians.org). May God be with the Moravian Church. It needs to lean on God's Word and pray for another Herrnhut experience of revival.