

September 19, 2023

Rev. Dr. Jorgen Boytler:

Ref: Letter to Sallie Greenfield and John Dyer – Cape Town September 4, 2023

First if I may introduce ourselves. We are Johnnie and Judy Tayloe, members of the Moravian Church Southern Province. Our membership in the Moravian Church has been over 45 years. During this time, we have served as church board members, Sunday School teachers, Youth leaders, usher, members of men and women's fellowship and women's circle. Judy has served as Vice-chair of Church Board and acolyte.

Our reason for writing to you and the other members of the board, is to express our personal concerns regarding the letter you wrote to Sallie Greenfield and John Dyer which contained several disturbing items.

You stated: "The Concerned Moravians (CM) is a group of individuals, some of whom are members of the Moravian Church, but not a recognized group within a Unity Province."

Following the SP Synod of April 2018, several of us (members of the Moravian Church) became concerned with the direction of the Church. As we started meeting with other members of the Moravian Church, we decided to submit a petition to the SP Provincial Elders Conference (PEC) and the Unity Board stating we felt that the SP was not following the COUF. As this petition was shared with members of the Moravian Church in the Southern Province, more than 900 signatures were received from over 30 churches. Again – members of the Moravian Church Southern Province. So, from your statement above it seems that you are saying that these members of the Moravian Church are not recognized within the Southern Province. Is the reason they are not recognized, because they are Moravians Concerned about the direction of the Moravian Church?

The following was our efforts to reach out to the SP PEC and Unity following the 2018 SP Synod when members of the Moravian Church became concerned about the direction of the Church. (All of the following can be found on the Concerned Moravians Website ([www.concernedmoravians.org](http://www.concernedmoravians.org)):

1. September 3, 2018 – Petition Letter was sent to Southern Province PEC and to the Unity
2. November 8, 2018 – Final Appeal to PEC asking for Unity Involvement.
3. January 3, 2019 – Letter of Rejection from Southern Province PEC to the petition.
4. May 15, 2019 – Mailing to Unity Board and Bishops regarding no action by Southern Province PEC

To make it very clear regarding "Concerned Moravians": From the outset following the Synod of 2018, the individuals that have been a part of this movement are members of the Moravian Church. They were and still are concerned about the following:

- Effort to change the Bible.
- Not following the COUF.
- Shortage of clergy to serve in churches.
- Financial situation in the church.
- Membership decline.
- Seminary teachings.

The legal name, Concerned Moravians Auxiliary, was not established until November 2019. This was formed for the sole purpose of **Legally** handling monies as required by the United States Internal Revenue Service contributed by members of the Moravian Church to help with costs. Concerned Moravians Auxiliary does not have membership enrollment requirements and one can still be a Concerned Moravian (member of the Moravian Church) and not required to do anything with Concerned Moravians Auxiliary.

One of the concerns listed above is the financial situation of the Moravian Church. I think it is important for you to understand that the monies provided to the individual churches, each province and then to the Unity, comes from the members of each church. As you try to separate the Concerned Moravians members, please remember that these same people provide funding in each church.

Why are we concerned about the financial situation? The following was transcribed from Rev. Betsy Miller's speech to the Northern Province 2023:

“So, in the midst of new energy, there are sobering realities as well surprise newsflash. Our membership is shrinking and as a consequence our congregations' capacity to support the districts and Province through a common ministries' commitment is diminishing. Collectively all our congregations are behind in denominational support in an amount that equals the provincial annual budgeted income. We say that again, we are behind as much as our budget is every year. That's not good news and I know that for the most part congregation you're not withholding the money out of spite. Your income at the local level is also shrinking and you have to pay the pastor, do VBS, fix the leaking roof, do all that you sense God calling you to do along with trying to support the Province and the districts. We get it and we try to support you in that. And yet the PEC is then forced to make difficult decisions based on an absence of the income that we would need to do what we sense God calling us to do. I'm sure the Finance Committee will have a few things to say about that. As we proceed through this time, so we have funds that function as endowment and they have grown sadly through the sale of closed congregations. And they have diminished sadly through investment returns we need to increasingly draw on that endowment fund to support current ministries. And like any home budget or congregational budget we know that that is not sustainable in the long term”.

A document from Rev. Dr. Neil Routh was sent to all SP congregations requesting it to be included in the August 27, 2023, church bulletins regarding the upcoming Unity Synod. We find it very telling:

“There are, as you might imagine, significant variations of membership and finances across the Unity. Moravians in Africa make up more than 75% of all Moravians in the world and includes 18 Provinces. Provinces in the North America and Europe make up 5% of the membership and contribute two-thirds of the budget. . . . . Some Provinces, like some of our congregations, find it very difficult to fully meet their share. How shall we as a synod respond? How can we continue to do what we believe God is calling us to do if we do not have sufficient funding?”

Our last point. You stated the following in your letter: “Over the years since 2018, the leadership of the Moravian Church Northern Province has reached out to the group intending to engage in a dialogue with CM, but to no avail.”

My wife and I monitor all emails, US Mail, contacts made through the CM website and phone calls.

- First, we have never received any such request from anyone in the Northern Province except Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller requesting to be removed from the email distribution list, that she was not a Concerned Moravian, and she did not believe as we do.
- As far as the Southern Province is concerned, Rev. David Guthrie asked if a small group could meet with the SP PEC in August of 2018. This meeting took place, and the group was advised that the PEC understood our concerns and would get back with the group. No communications from the SP PEC to the group was received until January 3, 2019, which was a letter of rejection. Since January of 2019, the SP PEC has never reached out to the group. We would be interested in you providing who and when anyone has ever reached out to us.

Regards,

Johnnie and Judy Tayloe

Cc:

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