

Office of the Unity Board Administrator



Antigua, 30th of September 2024

Message to the Unity, ultimo September 2024.

The Unity Board of the Worldwide Moravian Church convened for the regular Unity Board meeting 2024 in the Caribbean Island, Antigua, Eastern West Indies Province (EWI).

The theme of the Unity Board meeting was: *The Moravian Unity, Steadfast in Growth: Upholding Identity, Embracing New and Established Work Amidst Persecution and Changing Landscapes.* The Worldwide Moravian Church is a growing church. In particular, it was noted that Christians in new Mission Areas show a desire to establish Moravian Churches in various countries. In some parts of the world, the Christian Churches, including Moravian Churches face challenges due to difficult political and religious restraints. The world is changing, and Moravians face the changing landscapes of unrest, economic factors and at times lack of freedom of religion and unjust economic realities. However, we also rejoice in the fact that in many parts of the world, the Moravian Church enjoy the freedom of religion and worship.

At the Unity Board meeting, a large majority of the members of the Unity Board were present, although a few members missed the meeting, mainly due to visa issues.

The Unity President and the Unity Board Administrator offered reports on the ongoing work in the Moravian Unity, as did also all the provinces and other entities of the Unity. This included 25 Unity Provinces, 8 Mission Provinces and some 12 Mission Areas along with more 10 Prospective Mission Areas. It was a valuable experience for the Unity Board to receive the reports, because they contained useful information on the work done on Unity level and in the provinces. The reports contribute to building unity among the provinces and the Unity at large.

Several resolutions from the Unity Synod 2023 were dealt with, including new Mission Areas of the Unity, Practical Creation Care, support from Moravian Church Foundation (MCF) to the Unity, Unity statistics including the concept of membership. The Unity Synod Resolution concerning *Unitas Fratrum Apologetic Efforts for its Complicity in the Institution of Slavery* was dealt with in great respect for the topic. It is the mind of the Unity Board to engage in research work, revealing insights in the institution of slavery within the Moravian Church. This endeavor must include independent scholars from both sides of the Atlantic including external as well as Moravian scholars. It is felt particularly important that the narrative in a 21st century understanding is established by contributions from both the Caribbean and the

European/North American perspective as well as the African. Along with other Unity Synod Resolutions, the Unity Board had valuable in-depth conversations on these topics.

Reports from Unity Undertakings and Unity committees were shared and discussed. The Unity Committees include the Unity Committee on Theology (UCOT), the Unity Mission and Development Board (UMDB), the Unity Youth Committee (UYC), the Women's' Desk (UWD) along with the Moravian Unity Cultural Heritage Foundation (MUCHF). As directed by the Unity Synod 2023, a Unity Archives Committee (UAC) was formed. The report of the Unity Women's Desk prompted a fruitful discussion concerning the role of women and men in the Moravian Church. This topic will be dealt with by relevant entities in the Unity. A report from MCF was received with gratitude for the ungoing support from MCF to the Unity. The support is invaluable for the Worldwide Unity.

The report of the Unity Youth Committee was received with gratitude. The Unity Board was encouraged by the work of the youth of the Unity.

The Unity Board was informed about the very difficult situation at Star Mountain (SMRC), due to the conflict in Israel, which also has a strong impact on the West Bank. However, the SMRC staff is determined to continue with the operation of Star Mountain, whereby the institution is a witness of service to disadvantaged people amidst the turmoil of the present situation.

The financial situation of the Unity with some emphasis on arrears, which for some provinces have been accumulated over the years, was discussed. A covenant expressing the shared desire to reducing and finishing the arrears of Provinces to the Unity was agreed upon, including an agreement to write off debts incurred in the period from 2014-2016. Moreover, it was agreed that full annual payment of Provincial Unity Contributions of some provinces will mean writing off 20% of older arrears. It was a challenging discussion, but it revealed a common desire among the provinces to seek solutions in mutual solidarity. It was underlined that the norm still is that all provinces pay their Unity contributions according to the annual budget.

The representatives of the Region were named in regional meetings. They are:

African Region: Br. Erord Simae, Tanzania Rukwa Province

American Region: Br. Neil Routh, American South Province.

Caribbean and Latin American Region: Br. Algernon Lewis, Eastern West Indies Province.

European Region: Sr. Roberta Hoey, British Province.

Sr. Roberta Hoey was elected President of the Unity Board, while Br. Algernon Lewis was elected Vice President of the Unity Board.

The Unity Board gives thanks to our Chief Elder for a Unity Board meeting held in a true spirit of love and understanding. To God be the glory.



Br. Jørgen Bøytler, Unity Board Administrator.