The Role of the Worldwide Moravian Unity

A discussion paper for congregational use

Preface

The 43rd Unity Synod of the worldwide Moravian Church (Unitas Fratrum) passed a resolution recommending the dissemination and study of a paper on the role of the worldwide Moravian Unity by all Provinces. The resolution reads:

Resolution US2016.56: Discussion Paper on the role of the Worldwide Moravian Unity

Be it resolved that the committee has studied the discussion paper with interest and recommends that the paper be disseminated to the Provinces, Unity Committees and Unity Desks for further study and discussion and that the reports of the study and discussion be submitted to the Unity Committee on Theology (UCOT), and be it further

Resolved that the UCOT shares the results of the discussions, after further refinement, with the Unity Board.

At UCOT's request, we are providing all congregations in the Northern Province with this study guide, *A Discussion Paper on the Role of the Worldwide Moravian Unity*. We request that all congregations review this document in group settings, contemplate the discussion questions, and provide a report to the Provincial Elders' Conference highlighting your thoughts on the paper and the role of the worldwide Unity. Your feedback will be compiled and shared with UCOT.

If possible, please complete your review of this material by December 2017.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Provincial Elders' Conference
Moravian Church in America
Northern Province

MORAVIAN CHURCH UNITAS FRATRUM

43rd UNITY SYNOD, 2016

A Discussion Paper on the Role of the Worldwide Moravian Unity

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prepared for Unity Synod 2016
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Introduction

The Unitas Fratrum is a church assembled of people living in many parts of the world. This Unity finds purpose in being part of the body of Christ, desiring to live as a witness to God's activity in the world. The Unitas Fratrum cherishes its unity as a valuable treasure entrusted to it by the Lord. It stands for the oneness of all humankind granted through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ. [1] Living as a Unity is possible when mutual accountability is found among individuals, groups, and provinces within the church. As the Unity is an assembly of people held together in a common history and tradition, it is dependent on a shared sense of corporate responsibility.

Moravians in each province often use the pronoun "we" when referring to the Unity. This often unconscious use of a very personal expression shows what Unity is all about. We are a group of people sharing an identity and understanding as brothers and sisters within the Unity. We identify ourselves with the group. A common feeling is that the Unity will cease to exist should we no longer refer to the Unity as "we." It is with great hope and humility that the Unity Committee on Theology offers this paper, daring to give a description of the Role of the Unity. By its nature, this description is a work in progress

Our motto, Our Lamb has conquered. Let us follow Him, our guiding principle, In essentials unity, in non-essentials, liberty, and in all things love, and our foundational statements such as the Ground of the Unity and the Moravian Covenant for Christian Living are not known or utilized in all provinces. The Ground of the Unity written in 1957 has provided a constitutional basis for being one church, and the Unity is presently "envisioned as partnership in Christ between equal but diverse provinces." [2] We are held together loosely by shared traditions, a mutually-agreed upon history, cooperative relationships, a

shared legislative gathering (Unity Synod), shared administrative structures (Unity Board, Unity Business Administrator), and a common order of ministry. Yet, our provinces are independent and culturally diverse.

Many Moravians find the Unity difficult to explain. Recent writings, lectures, commission agendas, as well as shared work, such as the Common Curriculum Project, confirm that our worldwide Moravian Church is searching to explain our identity and why we matter – if we matter. [3] This paper adds to that discussion. It will be argued here that the Unity is crucial to the partnership between our autonomous provinces, mission provinces and mission areas, as well as to the Christian Church as a whole, and as a witness to the secular world. There is practical, missional, and biblical basis for struggling to continue to be a Unity in the face of our theological, political, and cultural diversity.

One way to envision this complicated partnership we call the Unity is to picture a family made up of adult siblings whose parents have passed on. The siblings now act as the holders of the family's traditions and shared history. Some siblings may cooperate better with other siblings, and some siblings will remember the family history, traditions, and core values quite differently from their brothers and sisters. The siblings have scattered geographically and married spouses who bring their own traditions and family values. Yet, these siblings do not deny they are a family; they agree they have a shared story, and there is shared pain when one steps away from the family. Moravian forerunners and pioneers, such as Hus, Comenius, and Zinzendorf have gone to God. It is up to our generation to figure out who we are as this Unity "family" today. We must hold our Unity together for our mission provinces and mission areas who seek to be

a part of it. We must hold it together for the well-being of the provinces we call brother and sister. We must hold it together for the Christian church and the secular world that are looking for a workable, albeit complicated, model of unity in diversity. Lastly, we must figure out if "we" is truly representative of "us."

Discussion Questions

- When and where were you received into the fellowship of the Worldwide Moravian Church? What is the story of your entrance into the Unity?

- What is the context in which you currently live out your faith?

- When was a time when your faith was enriched as a result of being a member of the Worldwide Moravian Church?

- If the Unitas Fratrum ceased to exist, who would miss us?

Section 1: A Biblical/Theological Model for the Unity

Theology leads us to grapple with God's relation to the world and with our faith, practice, and experience with God. Because our beliefs transform our experiences and are transformed by our experiences, theology is an ongoing process needing to be engaged by people in different times and places. Contextual theology has always being embraced by Moravians and to a certain extent is the cause for our being one of the first Protestant churches, as John Hus and others were against some of the dogmatic teachings and practices of the established church. This view continues to manifest itself in the way we treat different doctrines held by various Christian traditions.

The matter of unity has always been central to Moravian identity and is demonstrated not only in the name which was chosen for the church but also in the teaching and practice of the church. The need to refocus on what it means to be a Unity and the forms that unity should take has become increasing evident. The Unity has become culturally diverse to an unprecedented degree, and this diversity has resulted in a number of challenges.

In seeking to develop a theology of unity we must first recognize that unity by itself is not inherently a virtue. The story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) features a people who were united in language, but more importantly in purpose. Their goal was contrary to the will of God but the text relates the fact that because of their unity, they would be able to achieve anything they set their minds to. When talking about unity as a church, we should therefore remind ourselves that the unity we seek must lead us toward the will of God, where by it will have practical value for the church. A tension therefore develops between being united and being divided. If unity is not always good, it means there are times when division is desirable and/or even necessary.

Paul in his first letter to the church in Corinth, chapter 11 verse 17ff, gives directives in relation to the Lord's Supper. There was division with which he was not pleased, but Paul, in verse 19, acknowledged that there has to be divisions in the church because not everyone is going to be approved of God. In other words, as Christians, we should not for the sake of unity accept those things which are against the will of God.

Moravian Theology

A theology which claims to be Moravian has to be generally Biblical and specifically Christo-centric. The Triune God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only source of our life and salvation. This scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith of the Unity, and therefore shapes our life. We recognize the Word of the Cross as the center of Holy Scripture and of all preaching of the Gospel. Our primary mission and reason for being is to bear witness to this joyful message.[4]

While holding to the intrinsic authority of the Bible, the need to interpret and reinterpret has been a hallmark of Moravian Theology. This openness has earned the church the title of "Pioneers in Ecumenism," and among other expressions, has in the course of our history caused the Moravian Church to seek new areas of mission and ministry instead of going where other churches have already been established. The recognition that our understanding is limited has resulted in an openness to dialogue within the church, with other Christian denominations, and with people of other faiths. The non-dogmatic stance of our church does not only cause us to embrace different forms of practices (such as Adult and Infant Baptism), and to avoid absolute statements on mysteries (such as whether or not the consecrated bread at Holy Communion is the "actual" Body of Christ), but has caused us

to put great emphasis on what we are absolutely convinced about, Jesus is Lord. [5]

Centrality of the Confession: Jesus is Lord

The confession "Jesus is Lord" is the only absolute to which we hold dearly as a church. The teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels and embodied in the early Church, are indispensible to any theology bearing the Moravian stamp. In seeking perspectives of unity from the biblical witness of the early Church we might ask: What did unity mean for Jesus? In what ways was unity demonstrated and fostered in the New Testament church? What was the value of unity then? How can unity be demonstrated and fostered in the Moravian church today? What is the value of unity for us now?

Types of Unity

Different types of unity can be discerned in the scriptures. In Jesus' prayer for his present and future disciples (John 17) three different types of unity are mentioned. The first type of unity is the unity of the Father and Son, which is the basis of the confession, *Jesus is Lord*, and a key to the doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus was not praying for the unity between Him and the Father to be maintained or strengthened. What was necessary was for His disciples to grasp and hold fast to the concept that Jesus was indeed God. What Jesus prayed was neither for His benefit nor for the benefit of the Father. It was a statement of fact that the disciples should understand Jesus and the Father are one. This theology amplified in the doctrine of the Trinity is used by Jesus as the basis and example of the unity His followers should have. Just as the Father and Son are united, so too should Christians be united with Christ and each other. The second type of unity is that between Jesus and Christians. This unity is something we should aim towards, but it cannot be achieved in isolation. It is dependent on the third type of unity, the unity between and among Christians. The three types of unity are: Father-Son, Son-Christian, and Christian-Christian. The role of the Unity weighs heavily on this third type of unity, the unity between and among Christians.

Our Relationship with Christ and Unity

It is the will of Christ that we be united (John 17:21). A mark of discipleship is obedience to our Lord (*If you love me you will obey my commandments.* John 14:15) Unity matters first and foremost because we cannot truly be united with Christ if we are not united with each other. Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus mainly because of the disunity that was present in the church. The gifts that God had given were being used by Christians as evidence that they were better than others. Paul pointed out that the gifts causing divisions were actually given for the benefit of the whole church, so all would be ultimately united with God. All the gifts were given "to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and fully grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-13) As Christians, it is necessary for us to practice unity and to use our gifts as God intended in order to grow in our relationship with Christ. The author of 1 John emphasizes this point when he states as a prerequisite for having God living in us is having love for each other (4:12).

Mission Grounded in Unity

Unity is indispensible to fulfilling our purpose as a church. The Moravian church has always been a missionary church; taking seriously the Great Commission to make disciples of all people. Unity is also indispensible for witness to the world. Jesus says our unity will be evidence to the world that he was sent by God. He prayed that we would be one as he and the Father are one "so that the world may know that you sent me and will understand that you love them as much as you love me." John 17:23

It is not by coincidence that the Word tells us that the disciples of Christ were united on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2). The Holy Spirit came for the purpose of using the disciples as witnesses, thus the reason for the gift of speaking in unlearned languages on that day. Many people representing various countries and language groups were in Jerusalem for this special festival and were witnessed to about Jesus Christ. The state of being united and the coming of the Holy Spirit is therefore a fulfillment of Jesus' statement that unity will cause the disciples to be His witnesses. The call to mission has not been rescinded; it remains the reason for our being as a church. The demonstration of unity is paramount to the success of the mission.

Biblical Models of Unity

The way we demonstrate unity today is a task for all of us to share, and it is useful to examine different Biblical models which can act as a basis for our present actions. Various Biblical texts identify some of the ways unity was demonstrated in the daily living of early Christians; in dealing with doctrinal differences; and dealing with disputes.

Daily living

The practice of calling each other brother and sister is a practice we (and some other Christian groups) have adopted from the New Testament. In Matthew 23:8, Jesus tells His disciples that they should not let anyone call them Rabbi and goes on to say that they are all equal brothers and sisters. Calling each other brother and sister is a means of demonstrating our common kinship. We are all children of God, therefore social, racial, cultural, and other barriers should not be the determining factor in how we relate to each other. When Paul states in Galatians 3:28, that there is no more Jew or Greek**,** male or female, bond or free, he was talking about the dissolving of social, cultural, ethnic, religious, and gender barriers. The differences remain. Males are still males and females are still females, but these differences are not what define our relationships. Jesus is the common bond in our diversity. In 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, Paul uses the analogy of a body as a vivid imagery of how, in spite of our differences, we are a part of a whole.

One of the pictures we get of the early Church is that of believers selling their possessions and having everything in common (Acts 2:44-46). While this practice may have somehow hinged on the theological presumption by some that Christ would return in their lifetime, it does not take away from the sacrifice it must have taken for some members of the different communities to take this drastic action. The story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) shows that not all were willing to share in this way, but enough were for it to be a successful means of catering for the needs of those who were not well off. The fact that the members of the church were described as being "one in heart and soul" (Acts 4:32) shows that having things in common was as a result of a deep sense of unity.

Doctrinal differences

Doctrinal differences significantly contribute to presence of many factions within the Church. Paul addressed many different beliefs held by Christians in different churches. He was non-compromising in relation to the core message of the gospel (Galatians 1:8ff), but as it pertained to matters which did not affect one's salvation, he was very liberal and even accommodating. In his first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul wrote about matters including the eating of food offered to idols. Apparently, some Christians had

no scruples about eating food offered to idols while others felt that doing this would directly impact their salvation. Paul states what he would do in this situation, "If what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall. (1 Corinthians 8:13).

Dealing with Disputes

The early church was not perfect, and disputes were inevitable. Jesus' directives as to how disputes should be dealt with can be found in Matthew 18:15-17. Disputes between brothers and sisters were not to be treated as private matters, if they could not be resolved by those directly involved. Witnesses from the church were to be included in a matter that could not be resolved by the parties involved, and the entire church became involved if the called witnesses did not cause the situation to improve. The point of the teaching is that the problem of one or two is the problem of the entire body. As such the body should devise ways to address these problems.

The Way Forward

There are a number of different ways in which we can be united and increase the opportunities for unity. Dialogue may be the most basic of ways in which we can continue the process of increasing unity. The importance of interreligious dialogue has been well argued by various theologians, and the Moravian Church is a member of groups such as the World Council of Churches where dialogue with others is seen as indispensable. Where we seem to have fallen short is the lack of effort given to theological dialogue within the Moravian church itself. This dialogue does not have to be only formal but can take the form of increased opportunities for cultural exchanges. We need to know about how Moravians live in different parts of the world and what Moravian identity means to them, even more so than we need to know

about the Muslim, as important as that is.

Even as we learn more about each other, and acknowledge our unique identities and cultures, we have common Moravian roots that should be celebrated. Greater emphasis can be placed on educating members in relation to those practices and customs, memorial days, symbols, the role of ministry, ecumenical understanding, and liturgy that are uniquely Moravian. The formation of the common curriculum is a partial answer to this need.

The Moravian Church has a rich history centered on mission and service to others. We understand the mistakes of the past in relation to how the gospel was spread. (enslavement, colonialism, failure to educate church leaders, failure to stand up for justice, etc.) These mistakes should not prevent us from jointly working towards the further spreading of the gospel in different ways and places. Individually it may seem daunting to tackle some of the global issues that are of concern to us. Global initiatives can help to unite us as a body as we accomplish things together that we could not do as individual provinces. (for example, the Unity Women's Desk, the Unity Youth Desk, and the Unity Mission and Development Board)

Maybe the most defining way in which our unity can be cemented is in the area of Church governance. Our form of governance can be described as a hybrid of Episcopal and Presbyterian. Although we can trace an unbroken succession of bishops we do not place emphasis on this fact nor do we seek to operate in the hierarchical manner that marks the Episcopal governance model. Although there are the offices of Deacon, Presbyter, and Bishop these are seen as areas of responsibility and not of rank. How we practice leadership should be reexamined, not just to see how effective it currently is, but also to be faithful to the theological task of constantly measuring our practices against that of the biblical witness. We hold to this governance model even though it is counter to most cultures.

Whatever means we use to aim for unity, the

responsibility ultimately falls on each member of the church for this unity to be genuine and lasting. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul highlights the perception of self that we should have as Christians. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3) In Ephesians, Paul encourages his audience to "be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2) Christians displaying these virtues cannot help but be united. The impetus for the lifestyle Paul encouraged his fellow Christians to live is Christ. When Paul speaks about making allowance for the fault of others, and forgiving persons who offended them, he gives them the reason for doing so: "Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony." (Colossians 3:13-14) It is in Christ, through Christ, and because of Christ that we should be united.

Discussion Questions

- What paragraph or paragraphs in this section are most helpful in providing a biblical or theological model for the Unity?

- What additional biblical references can provide a model for the Worldwide Moravian Church?

- What role does the Bible play in your personal faith? What role does the Bible have in the life of your Province?

- What effect does our Christo-centric tradition have on our understanding of the role of scripture?

- In what ways do current Provincial and Unity leadership models work toward unity? In what ways might they obstruct unity?

- How does biblical models of unity in the Moravian Church correspond with or differ from models of unity and society in your cultural context?

Section 2: A New Era – The Globalised Unity

The history of the Moravian Church is normally divided into two main-parts: The Ancient Moravian Church and the Renewed Moravian Church. It makes sense, because the Ancient Moravian Church existed in a defined period, from 1457 to approximately 1630. Nearly a century later, the Renewed Moravian Church was formed in the new settlement of Herrnhut, with August 13, 1727 as the official date of its founding. We call the time between the disappearance of the Ancient Moravian Church and the reappearance of the church "the time of the Hidden Seed."

The idea of a third period of the Moravian Church, namely from the middle of the 20th Century, when the Mission Provinces became Unity Provinces, is hereby suggested. During this period, the Moravian Church begins with two Moravian province regions consisting of the European and the North American provinces with a central leadership in Europe, and it develops into a church consisting of more (and more) provinces, most of them now in the former mission-fields. This is a paradigm shift; it is when the Moravian Church moves from being a Western church doing mission overseas to being a globalised church with a growing constituency in the Global South and a stagnating group of members in the North. This is a time when the church in some areas develops into a majority church and experiences a new development of not only theological orientation, but also leadership, membership, and self-understanding. Time will show what the consequences are. The reasons for introducing the term "The Globalised Moravian Church" include the following:

1. The inadequacy of the term "The Renewed Moravian Church," which it surely was and is, describes as a term, what happened to the Moravian Church in the 18th Century, but does not communicate the immense change of the church in the 20th Century.

This change is closely, but not only, related to the development in Tanzania.

2. The democratization or distribution of decision-making authority of the Moravian Church happened through the independence granted to the provinces in the South. It has changed shape from being a minority church into, at least in some parts of the world, a majority church. Since 1732, the Moravian Church has been present in other cultures, in different parts of the world, and was in that sense global, but not globalised. Until the middle of the 20th Century, the mission areas were in a client-patron relationship6 to the European and American Provinces. That is different in the Globalised Moravian Church. The Unity Provinces in the Global South have the same degree of independence as those in the North.

3. The process is not primarily a renewal of the church,7 but a cultural and ecclesiological leap into the globalised reality. This ontological change is caused by the changes in the world generally, the modern Protestant mission movement, and the general understanding of church and mission in a number of countries in Global South. It means theological changes and to a majority of the members of the church, if not a change, then at least an adjustment of theological identity.

4. Ecclesiology in the Globalised Moravian Church is plural, and in this process, some of ecclesiologies have less distinct traditional Moravian elements.

History of Unity

Incidentally, the Moravian Church is a majority church,[8] in some cultural settings foreign to the setting in which the theology and traditions

originally developed. Since 1732, the Moravian Church has worked in different cultures, but until the mid-20th Century, the pattern was pretty much that mission was a one-way traffic of missionaries, money, theology, and traditions from north to south. The traffic of money has admittedly continued until this day, but as the flood of co-workers dries up, the Moravian Provinces in the South take the liberty to be critical towards theological standpoints, ways of life, and priorities of the Northern churches. New methods of evangelisation and leadership are currently developing in the South. A new era in the Moravian Church is now a full-blown reality. Four or five provinces with just over 5 % of the Moravian population are fighting to keep pace with the pressure of secularization, atheism, materialism, post-postmodernism, and with the lack of interest in historical churches in the wealthy Western world. Mainly south of the Equator, approximately 15 provinces with more than 90 % of all Moravians represent more Moravians than ever seen before in history. A church originated in Europe has developed into a global church, with more than nine out of ten members living outside Europe and North America. The Moravian Church is divided worldwide into the four regions, the African, the North American, the Caribbean, and the European Regions.
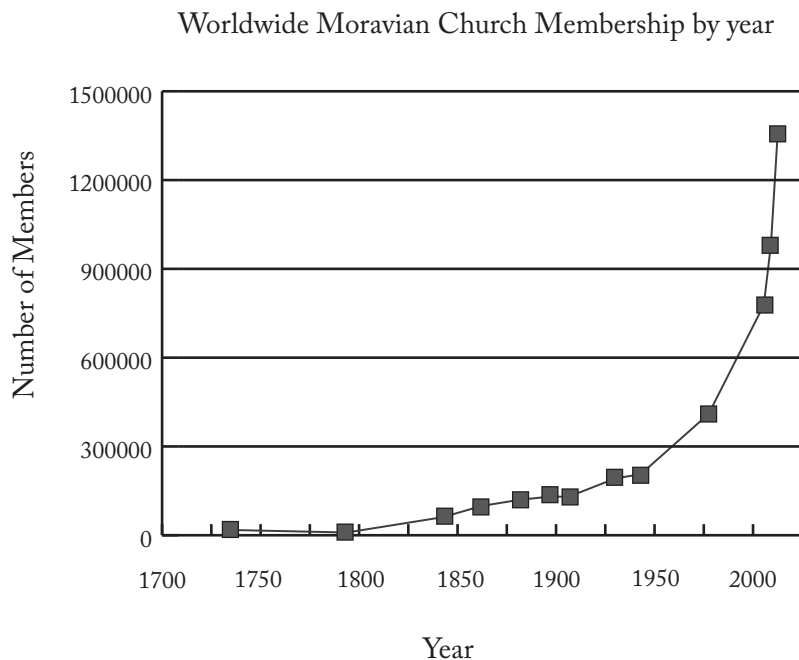
The Moravian Church of today is less distinctive theologically compared to other churches; the Moravian Church is simply more mainstream. In Tanzania, the Moravian Church is not decisively different from other historical churches, and it shows the same kind of development as the other churches. It has experienced rapid growth in numbers. It plays a role in shaping society. It is also less than enthusiastic about certain theological developments in the European and North American part of the church, while clearly affirming that the Moravian Church of today still bears distinctive marks of the development in preceding centuries.

It is possible to find a number of statistics revealing the number of Moravian members in the so-called "Homelands," which would be Europe and the United States, and statistics concerning the Moravian members in the areas outside the Western world, where the Moravian mission work took place. Comparing this information results in the following overview:

Figure 2:
Members in Europe/US and outside Europe/US at different points in time

	Members in Europe and USA	Part of total membership (%)	Members outside Europe and USA	Part of total membership (%)	Total members	Diaspora (Members outside original homeland)
1731	21,000	100	0	0	21,000	
1760			7,000			
1792					15,000	
1834			46,000			
1848					64,000	
1850			68,600			
1860	20,206	21	75,000	79	97,000	
1870	23,689					
1882	30,000		90,000		120,000	
1885	31,315		81,553			70,000?
1900	38,000	28	96,000	72	134,000	90,000?
1906	42,000	29	101,000	71	143,000	100,000?
1914	45,983		108,379			
1929	58,689		138,318			
1943	56,000	26	162,000	74	218,000	
1945	60,767		175,514			
1960	81,730					
1977	89,000	21	338,000	79	427,000	
2007	78,000	10	719,000	90	797,000	
2013	63,200	4.7	1,292,970	95.3	1,356,170	

Putting that information together, gives the following illustration:

Worldwide Moravian Church Membership by year

The number of members in 20th Century Moravian mission areas is growing at an increasing pace. At the same time, since the late 20th Century, the number of European and North American members has been falling. Until about 1940, the increase in Europe, North America, and the other areas is almost similar, but then the development in the Global South explodes, and approximately every 30 years the number doubles. At the end of 2013, the Moravian Church could count 1.3 million members with less than seventy thousand in Europe and North America, below 5% of the total. If this tendency persists, about one and a half million Moravians will be present in the Global South by 2040. In this respect, the Moravian Church is not entirely different from many other churches.

Two reasons for the overall Christian growth in Africa is the increasing secularisation of the Western world as well as a somewhat surprising development. According to the West African Theologian Lamin Sanneh, churches remained the only reliable structure left after the breakdown of state institutions in the postcolonial Africa.[10]

While the overall numerical growth of the Worldwide Moravian Church is mostly due to our growth in African, we seem to have gained momentum on the continent a couple of decades earlier than the dismantling of colonialism. Thus our earlier growth in Africa suggests that this changing political context was not as much of a factor in our case. The development in the number of members in the global Moravian Church should come as no surprise. The strong identity as a church in mission since the start would support growth in the areas of mission activity. The ecumenical identity of the Moravian Church in Europe in particular will at least dampen, if not prevent, a potential numerical growth in Europe, because the Moravians would not ask people to join the Moravian Church, but to join any church close to them. The notion of Zinzendorf, that the Moravian Church is but a "fragmentary, visible manifestation of Christ's universal invisible Gemeine" [11] continues to live in this understanding, at least in Europe and North America. Thus the goal is not to ensure numerical growth of the Moravian Church, but only to maintain the Moravian Church as an ecclesiological entity as long as necessary. This notion does not carry the same weight in the Global South, where the ecumenical understanding of the church is weaker, and the numerical growth is stronger.

The Moravian case indicates that at least two different dynamics meet. The ecumenical identity of the church combined with the secularised culture in the West meet in the European Moravian Church of the early 21st Century and the result is a dwindling church. At the same time, the church in Africa grows in numbers like most other African churches and the ecumenical understanding is at least partly lost and replaced

by a more mainstream protestant ecclesiology and understanding of church. If this is correct, the "classic" Moravian ecclesiology will remain in the history books, or in a more positive tone, the Moravian ecclesiology changes during history, but admittedly, loses distinct qualities.
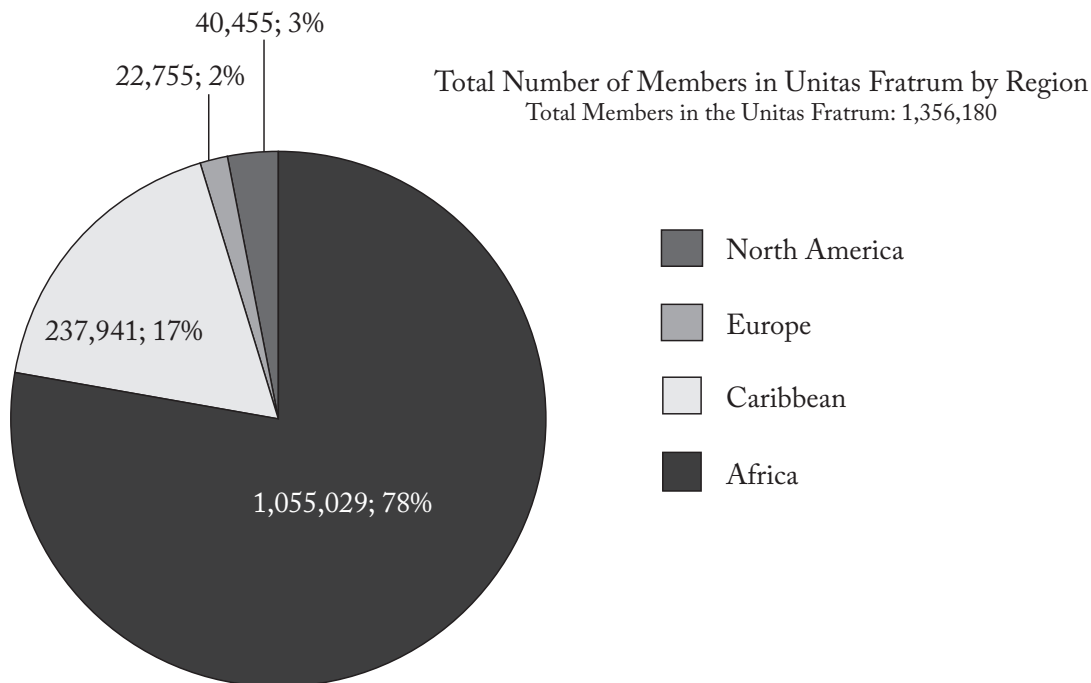
What is the Unity Now?

The Worldwide Moravian Unity currently consists of Unity Provinces, Mission Provinces and Mission Areas. In the coming years, the increase of new provinces is expected to slow down. However, the number of Mission Areas and prospective Mission Areas is increasing at the moment, especially in the African Region and in the Caribbean Region.

The number of Moravians around the world at the end of 2014 draws our attention. Regarding statistics, the Moravian Church has not overly focused on number of members, mainly due to ecumenical fabric of the church and our understanding of ecclesiology and *ekklelsia*. In many respects, it is difficult to compare the

statistical information of the different regions, countries, and provinces due to differences in counting methods, in membership registration, in regularity of making census, in infrastructure, etc. It is also next to impossible to verify figures, since they are not counted by independent agencies. Additionally, the nature of membership differs from place to place. Yet, in spite of these difficulties in counting, the following figures present, to quite an extent, a true picture.

- The African Region has a little over 1 million Moravians (78%)
- The American Region has approximately 40,000 Moravians, (3%)
- The Caribbean Region has little under 230,000 Moravians (17%), while
- The European Region counts less than 25,000 members (2%).

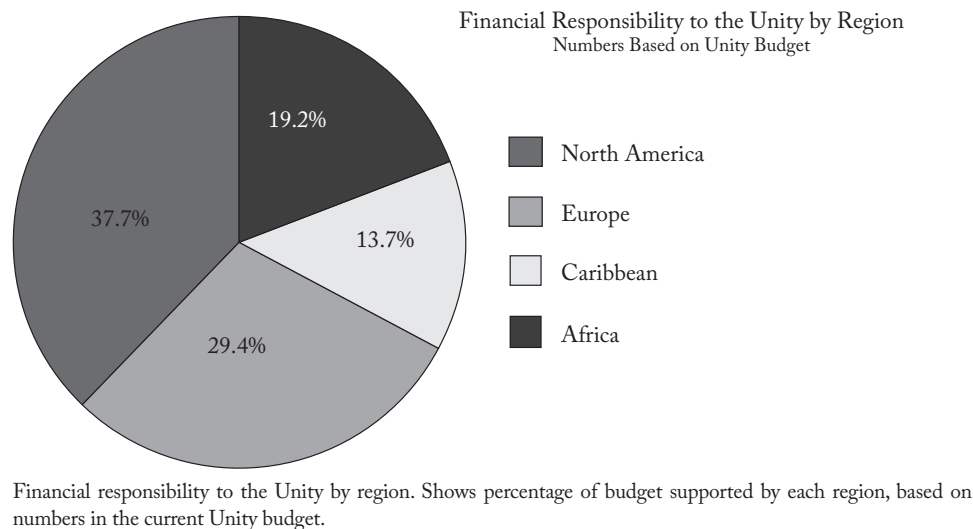The actual numbers are shown in the following chart:

Total Number of Members in Unitas Fratrum by Region
Total Members in the Unitas Fratrum: 1,356,180

40,455; 3%
22,755; 2%
237,941; 17%
1,055,029; 78%

North America
Europe
Caribbean
Africa

Total number of members in the Unitas Fratrum by region, and the percentage of the church made up by each region. These are the actual figures.

Financial responsibility (Unity Budget)

The financial responsibility of the Unity Budget should also be considered. The Unity Budget is agreed on by Unity Synod, and the Unity is currently working according to the budget approved Unity Synod in 2009.[12] The African Region supports just under 20% of the budget. The North American Region supports slightly under 40%. The Caribbean Region supports almost 14% of the budget, and the European, almost 30%.

In order to have a balanced description of the state of the Unity in terms of membership, sharing of financial burden, and voting power, it is important to consider how much all Moravians together earn annually. In order to analyse this, we assume that Moravians are average citizens, wherever they live, so the Moravians in a particular country will earn annually what the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is for that country.[13] GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. Of course not all Moravians are producers, but neither do we have any way of estimating how many are producers and how many are not, nor do we have any figures to determine the differences of balance between producers and non-producers in the particular provinces. Therefore we assume that this balance is the same in all the countries having Moravians

These numbers can be used to estimate the percentage of each region's members' income base within the greater Unity.

Financial Responsibility to the Unity by Region
Numbers Based on Unity Budget

- North America
- Europe
- Caribbean
- Africa

Financial responsibility to the Unity by region. Shows percentage of budget supported by each region, based on numbers in the current Unity budget.

Unitas Fratrum Members Total Income
Numbers Based on GDP per capita end 2013
Source: World Bank, current USD

- North America
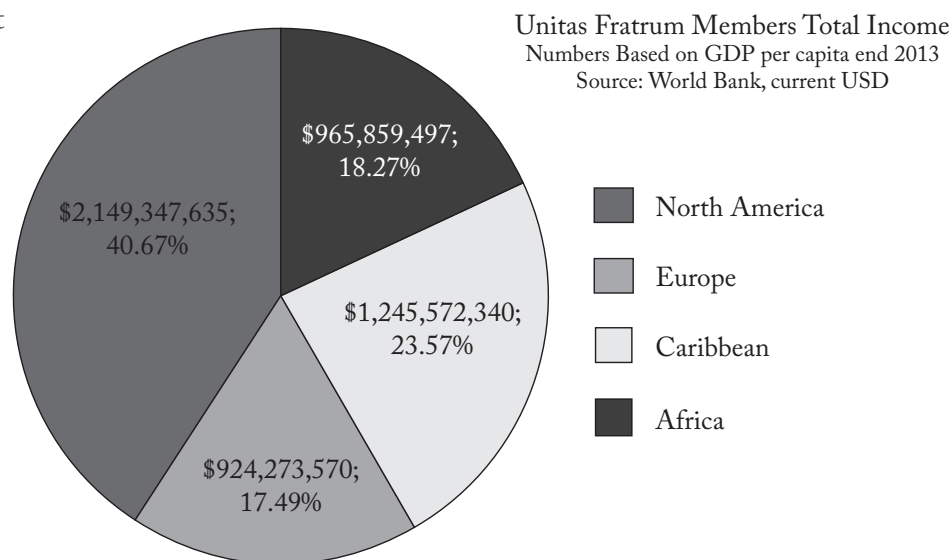- Europe
- Caribbean
- Africa

Figure 5. Unitas Fratrum members' total income. Based on GDP per capita end 2013.

It is estimated that African Moravians own just under 20% of all Moravians' annual earning. North American Moravians earn just over 40%. Caribbean Moravians earn a little under 25%. And European Moravians earn a little under 20%. Moravians in the African Region, the Caribbean Region, and the European Region each earn roughly 20% of all Moravians' annual income, while the North American Moravians earn about 40%.

	Africa	North America*	Caribbean	Europe*
Contribution toward Unity budget (%)	19.2	37.7	13.7	29.4
Income based on GDP (%)	18.3	40.7	23.6	17.5
Percentage of total worldwide Moravian membership (%)	77.8	3.0	17.5	1.7
Suggested Unity Synod influence [(membership percentage + Unity budget percentage)/2]	48.5	20.4	15.6	15.6
Current influence at Unity Synod (number of votes)	29	10	20	10
Current influence at Unity Synod (%)	42	15	29	15

Mission organizations contribution not included

Current and suggested contribution to Unity budget by each region of the Moravian Church.

Perhaps it is time to investigate how the number of members per region and the financial burden carried by each region corresponds with the voting power at Unity Synod. The assumption is made that the number of votes at Unity Synod illustrates the influence and "power" a region (or for that matter a province) possesses in the worldwide Unity. Once this relation is established, we have part of, but not all, the background needed for determining the extent unity can exist in the diversity of the worldwide Unity. We'll also have a greater understanding of the challenges facing our unity. In order to determine how the influence in the worldwide Unity Synod has any bearing on international economic realities, we note how much the GDP-based income for each region is.

A challenge within the worldwide Unity is that parts of the church are situated in the more affluent parts of the world, while other brothers and sisters reside in less affluent parts of the world and in developing countries. There is moreover a tendency to have Moravian Provinces with less members in the more wealthy parts of the world, while many of the provinces, rich in members, live in parts of the world with lower income and even poverty.

It could be argued that the influence in the worldwide Unity should somehow reflect the number of members. However, since the Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum [COUF] states[14] that Mission Provinces shall have one delegate and Unity Provinces shall have 3 delegates at Unity Synod, and since COUF makes no mention of the number of members in the Provinces, it seems that there is not a representation per capita, but per province, diluting the importance of number of members.

Secondly, the realpolitik of the world is that money means influence. If this premise is accepted, Unity Synod may need to determine how much the economic input in the Unity from a region should weigh in relation to the membership. Perhaps 50% of the influence can come from how much a region contributes to the Unity budget and 50% of the influence can be based on number of members. This means a change of principle of governing influence, since the number of members now gains some importance.

As shown in the graph, the African Region carries 19.2 % of the Unity Budget and has 77.8 % of all members. Adding the two and dividing by 2 means the African Region should have 48.5% of the votes at Unity Synod. The figures of the other regions are the American 37.7% and 3.0%, Unity Synod influence should be 20.4%, The Caribbean should be 15.6% and the European should be 15.6%.

Interestingly, we see that the African Region should have 5-7% more votes, the North American Region 5% more, the European Region 5% more, while the Caribbean Region should give up almost half of their votes, or, which would probably be more adequate, the Caribbean Region should increase its contribution to the Unity budget with about 5-10% of the total.

Many other models could be suggested. The influence of the number of members could be increased or decreased. The weight of financial support of the worldwide Unity could be increased or decreased. It could be possible to change the number of delegates from each province, etc. It is evident that one challenge to the worldwide Unity is how to distribute the decision-making influence in a balanced way among the Provinces.

We have seen a church growing out of a rather local 15th Century setting in Bohemia and Moravia in Central Europe to become an international, globalised 21st Century Church.

As we have seen, the rapid growth of the church in terms of numbers has picked up speed within the past half century. This rate of growth is somewhat contrary to our life in Bohemia, when the Moravian Church emerged as a congregation living apart in peace and piety. It is quite foreign to our experience during the 18th Century which was grounded in Zinzendorf's philadelphic ideas and the idea of being *ecclesiola in ecclesia.* It is counter to our declared missiological principle of seeing the First Fruits of a mission work and then leaving, a principle of the vibrant mission movement launched in Germany. This unprecedented growth has created a paradigm shift as we not only see vigorous numerical growth, but also give strong attention to such growth.

The Moravian Church Growth

The Church Growth movement within evangelical Christianity aims to develop methods to grow churches. The church growth movement began with the publication of Donald McGavran's book *The Bridges of God.* McGavran was a third-generation Christian missionary to India, where his observations of *How Churches Grow* (the title of another of his books) went beyond typical theological discussion to discern sociological factors that affected receptivity to the Christian Gospel among non-Christian peoples. In 1965, he organized the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, which was the institutional home base for Church Growth studies until after his death.

Although some Moravian theologians have attended courses at Fuller and although many, but possibly not all Moravians will find themselves at ease in a Fuller theological setting, the Church Growth movement has not been an official, Unity-wide topic to be dealt with in the governing bodies of the Church. Yet, the phenomenon of Church Growth is clearly seen in the Moravian Church, since the Moravian Church is growing. Church growth is possible within a broad spectrum of life, once the church takes a holistic responsibility in life and society. To some extent, this is what happened in the Tanzanian Moravian Church.

It is possible to point out a number of possible reasons for the church growth in the fastest growing Moravian provinces, apart from the sociological one, namely the fact that the churches remained the only reliable structure after the breakdown of state institutions in the postcolonial Africa. There are ecclesiological, political, missiological, economical, and many Moravians would point out, spiritual reasons for the growth. Some of these reasons are:

1. The European Moravian Mission Societies played a strong role in a number of important areas of church life in Tanzania. They founded Moravian schools, hospitals, bible schools; the Gospel went hand in hand with social action.

2. The East African Moravian Provinces gained "independence," and became Unity Provinces in the 1960s, almost simultaneously with the political independence of the country. The political enthusiasm for independence went hand in hand with the wish to see an independent church that was not European governed, which, although being in principle non-political, still provided a solid basis in the changing times after independence. The colonial church had to change and become an African church; otherwise, it would have been difficult or even impossible to act in the post-colonial political climate. Political development and church development went together. At the same time, the church as a stabilising factor in the changing society did not harm the development of the church.

3. The wish to give the mission areas in the Moravian Church independence is rooted in the Moravian Theology of Mission. Zinzendorf was aware of the fact that a group of indigenous people would only become a church if they had responsibility of their church. The basic idea of the First Fruits has remained as a background for indigenisation of the church. From early on in the 20th Century, missionaries were openly arguing for working towards independent Moravian Provinces in Tanganyika.

4. The role the social situation in Tanzania plays should not escape our attention. In Tanzania, the average human lifespan is short, the mortality among children is high, hunger and malnutrition are not uncommon, and a number of diseases flourish, including malaria, tuberculoses, and in the last decades AIDS. In addition, Tanzanian citizens live on a GDP per capita of 700 USD,[15] that is less than 2 dollars per day. North Americans and Europeans earn about 70 times as much, just over $50,000 per year. The church is growing in some of the poorest countries in the world. Religious awareness in Tanzania is high; spirituality is part of the worldview of most people. In this environment, the Gospel, the message of a loving God, who through his Son Jesus Christ takes care and is concerned with human beings, is something to which many people obviously pay attention. Therefore, when the Gospel and a diaconical effort together form the witness of the Moravian Church, it is no wonder that the church grows.

5. However, there are more than socio-political reasons for the growth. Indeed, in the past couple of decades the growth has not slowed down. Moravians will therefore in any case have the faith and courage to see it as a work of the Lord. The Moravian Christianity in Tanzania has quite a few features in common with Moravian and pietistic spirituality, as was common since the beginning of the history of the Renewed Moravian Church until late into the 20th Century in Europe.

Whether the church growth will continue is yet to be seen. Generally, the strongest growth takes place in the new areas. In areas where the church has been present for a century, the growth is slowing down, even stopping. Many of the above reasons for the growth still largely exist in East Africa. However, socio-economic development is coming. The economy of Tanzania is projected to grow by around 7% in 2014 and 2015[16], and one could argue that this might reduce the growth rate. However, the African Development Bank Group reports that "the main development

challenge is that Tanzania's growth is not sufficiently broad-based and poverty levels still remain high. Despite high growth averaging 7% over the past decade, the recent household budget survey results indicate that 28.2% of Tanzanians are poor, and poverty remains more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas."[17] As most Tanzanian Moravians reside in rural areas, we might still see continuous growth overall in the Tanzanian Moravian Church.

On the other hand, an increasing number of members leave the Moravian Church and go into Pentecostal churches. It is therefore also a question to what extent the Tanzanian Moravian Church manages to react to the changes in culture, including the evolving religious discourse in Tanzania. New issues having impact on the culture include urbanisation, globalisation, a higher degree of education, and increasing differences between rich and poor. Political unrest, religious polarisation, and a process best described as secularisation, might be round the next corner, and would make the future less predictable.

Discussion Questions

- The Unitas Fratrum is both an institution and a movement. What are the benefits of institutionalism?   In what ways does our institution impede our movement?

- In what ways do our joint traditions of ecumenism and evangelism challenge the unity of our church? What opportunities emerge from embracing a heritage that is both ecumenical and evangelical?

- The Worldwide Moravian Unity is one church, consisting of a number of provinces. What will it take to continue insisting on being one church, represented in different cultures and having diverse backgrounds and worldviews?

- Do we support the notion of being one global church, not a federation of independent Moravian Churches?

- What are some of the advantages to assigning Unity Synod representation on the basis of membership and resources as proposed in this section? What would be some disadvantages?

- What is the most accurate means of estimating the number of members in a Province?

- What other models of representation might be suggested?

Part 3: The Developing Identity of a Globalised Unity

Moravian Identity

When attempting to describe a particular Moravian identity, one would immediately turn around and look back into history. The space here does not permit an in depth description of Moravian identity, let alone all facets of Moravian theology. Yet, we will venture to mention a few prominent indicators of what is traditionally seen as important Moravian identity markers.

1. One might look for a systematic theology of the Moravian Church. However, it is a question if such a thing exists. In addition, if one is looking for a systematic theology per se let alone a "Moravian Creed," it will be in vain.[18] Spangenberg states in the preface of "An Exposition of Christian Doctrine"[19] that it is not a confession or a creed, but an expression of the Moravian insight in the Gospel. The Augsburg Confession is the confession of the Moravian Church, says Spangenberg. What in the understanding of Zinzendorf comes closest to a creed is "Ein und Zwanzig Diskurse über die Augsburgshe Confession," but this is not a creed [20]According to Moravian Bishop Art Freeman, Zinzendorf had the view that one cannot write a systematic theology anyway, the only Christian system is Christ.

    However, it does not mean that a Moravian theology is absent. Only, Christianity is not conceptional or creedal but relational. Neither does it mean that creeds are unknown to Moravians. Since Zinzendorf was close to the Lutheran Church, the Augsburg Confession played an increasingly important role. The document "The Ground of the Unity" plays an important role in some parts of the Unity, while in other parts, it is next to unknown.

The Moravians consider it a doctrinal statement, but not a creed. On the contrary, COUF mentions "the creeds (that) in particular gained special importance." Two other documents are important to mention: The first is "A Brotherly Agreement" of 1527 and the second is "The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living, formerly known as The Brotherly Agreement of the Moravian Church," revised several times. The former expresses the spiritual life of the early Herrnhut community and the latter is a modernized version.

2. It is however evident that more than a systematic theology, the life as a Christian is the focus of the Moravians.

3. The role of Scripture in the Moravian Church calls for attention. According to the Moravian Church, the Scripture is what the Triune God has used as a vehicle for His revelation; the Holy Scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith of the Unitas Fratrum.[21] The Moravian Church considers the "Word of the Cross" the centre of Scripture; the theology is Christo-centric. The image of the fruit and the shell[22] (or husk) captures some of the understanding, not leading the Moravian Church into a Biblicist view of the Bible, not excluding historic criticism, yet maintaining a firm belief that the Scripture contains what is needed information for salvation.

4. The concept of the Heart Religion, which is relational and devotional in its own right. The experience of faith and life is foundational and when so, can be an experience shared by Moravians,

independently of their cultural context. The historical and cultural contexts will shape the conceptional, liturgical, and institutional expressions of the visible Church. The Ancient Moravian Church offers in its theological understanding a model for understanding the relation between relational/devotional and conceptional by dividing theological and ecclesial matters into essentials, ministerials, and incidentals. The Moravian Church in different parts of the world share a number of liturgical and institutional expressions, a fact that could support the argument that it is the same Church, and on the contrary, when differences are observed, it would question the unity of the Church. However, although the relational and devotional apprehension of Christianity is the fundamental understanding in Moravian theology, the conceptional, liturgical, and institutional expressions are the framework in which the Moravian Church is settled, and they developed in accordance with the Heart Religion.

5. When describing important issues in Zinzendorf's theology, the impact of mysticism must be included. The role of mysticism in the life and thinking of Zinzendorf changed during his life, but he was constantly under the influence of several currents of mysticism of his time. According to Dietrich Meyer, [23] Zinzendorf's mysticism was coloured by his belief in the eminent importance of grace. He stated that his mysticism was Christ's mysticism; only through Christ can human beings come to know His father. Zinzendorf meant that a vision must be an intellectual vision, grasped by the soul and not necessarily in the mind.

6. Pietism as a movement is parallel to the Enlightenment and partly a child of it, as it put in focus the individual personality, certainly including the religious feelings[24], and rebelled against the church as institution and worldly power. The individual personality was the carrier of truth, not the church as an institution. Zinzendorf had been brought up in the core of the Hallensic Pietism and for that reason Pietism strongly influenced Zinzendorf's thinking. However, he developed in the early 1730s a critical attitude to the Hallensic pietism. Zinzendorf gradually came to a rejection of the pietistic striving for holiness, as in accordance with Luther, he focused on the centrality of grace. Turning away from legalism and the pietistic struggle for salvation and sanctification, Zinzendorf, and together with him the developing Moravian Church, found confidence in God's grace and forgiveness and emphasised the joy of salvation. The Moravians got the label "the cheerful Pietists," indicating that the pious ways and the importance of the individual as a Christian remained intact, but without any rigid Pietistic legalism. Within the Moravian Church the "teaching of universal justification,"[25] became a watermark of Zinzendorf's theology. It developed into the concept of Heart Religion,[26] and positioned the Herrnhutism[27] in relation to pietism.

7. Music and poetry were important to Zinzendorf and a musical tradition developed within the Moravian Church.

These, and perhaps other theological key issues and understandings in the renewed, but possibly not yet globalised Moravian Church, have been important factors in forming the identity of the present day Moravian Church. To what extent those factors have an impact in the globalised Moravian Church is a question. Certainly in

many parts of the Unity, Systematic Theology does not play a strong role, while moral issues, often congruent with the cultural standards, are on the agenda of the church. The understanding of Scripture is in many parts of the Unity rather conservative, if not even fundamentalist, not unlike what is found in evangelical and Pentecostal theologies around the world. The Heart Religion is not often mentioned, while the derived notion: *In essentials unity, in non essentials liberty, in all things love*, in some parts of the present day Unity finds much resonance. In other parts of the Church, it is not said very often, but the understanding is that the definition of the essentials is broad, meaning that many things belong to the essentials, for example, worship style, gender issues, sexuality, the role of ministry to mention a few. So when many things are considered essentials, then the area of non-essentials will be reduced and thus will the liberty of opinion be reduced.

Zinzendorf's mysticism is hard to come across in the present day Moravian Church, while pietism is very common in the sense that many Moravians across the board can be described as pietists in a 21st Century distillation: Often the ideal is a pious life, prayer playing an important role, singing as well, but then also in many cases a charismatic or Pentecostal influence is seen. One of the stronger movements within the present day Unity seems to be a neo-pietistic charismatic spirituality with roots back to the 13th of August experience and the spirituality of the 18th Century Moravians, but also to the early 20th Century pietistic Mission movement, and very much to the late 20th Century Pentecostalism[28] found in literally all parts of the world. Music traditions dating back two centuries exists alongside modern rhythmic music, Gospel music, and other forms of contemporary music styles within the Unity.

The Challenge of Unity in Diversity
It is not too hard to find challenges to the Unity within the diversity of the Worldwide Moravian

Church. It is neither true nor correct to just focus on a discrepancy only between the smaller Moravian Provinces in the North and the more populated Southern Hemisphere Moravian Provinces. In each cultural context, church development is influenced by the many culturally rooted factors. Some of these challenges are:

1. As previously mentioned, the structure of the Unity needs to be reviewed, including representations of Provinces on Unity Board, Unity Synod, and in committees. This review might indeed consider a proposal to move toward proportional representation that reflects a combination of membership and resource strength.

2. The challenge of being a Worldwide Unity, one church consisting of many provinces, has various aspects:

   - Identity: How to form a common identity being a member of one worldwide church when living in different parts of the world

   - An administrative and structural issue: How can 20+ Provinces, each governed by a synod and a church constitution be identified as one Church governed by a Unity Synod and the Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum? What is the authority of Unity Board and Unity Synod?

   - The worldwide church is blessed not to be a legal entity, yet the Unity is challenged to act with corporate responsibility and mutual accountability based on scriptural principles

   - Theology: How to deal with theological issues that are controversial?

   - Anthropology and sociology: How to deal with human issues, defined differently in different cultures

   - Traditions: Often traditions developed over centuries in particular parts of the

Unity, are understood as the one and only way to be Moravian, while new or adjusted traditions are understood as not being Moravian.

3. The growth of the church in some parts of the world and stagnation in other parts of the world

4. The functioning of the structurally based entities within the Unity, including how the regions function, which presents a challenge for some regions. The size and composition of the regions, for example, the African Region is large, counting many members, many provinces, huge geographical areas, and suffering from lack of resources.

5. The uneven distribution of resources across the Unity, being one church consisting of some affluent brothers and sisters in Christ and of other sisters and brothers less affluent. It brings tension to the notion of the Church being the Body of Christ, and when one member suffers, the whole body suffers. That means challenges as to how to share resources. Can the sharing of resources realistically be more than some provinces offering a very small part of its wealth to provinces in other parts of the world? A well-known discussion across the world can be labeled "Redistribution of Wealth." This is a vivid discussion in the Roman Catholic Church and in a number of other churches concerning redistribution of wealth. This discussion often leads to economic debates, like private ownership versus corporate ownership, versus group ownership, state ownership etc. It would be more than appropriate, if the Worldwide Moravian Unity would engage in a fraternal conversation concerning redistribution of wealth, but it would take courage to engage in that discussion.

6. Conflicts within Provinces can be devastating, whether the conflicts are rooted in genuine theological differences, in personal issues, or in other matters.

7. Different world-views: Moravians living on 5 different continents in more than 30 countries have very different worldviews.[29]

8. Theological issues, many already mentioned: Understanding of Scripture; "tradition" versus "renewal"; charismatic movement; same gender issues; liberal, conservative, liberation - various shades of theologies, understanding of baptism, understanding of Holy Communion to mention some. Others theological issues would be spirituality, political theologies, especially liberation theology, the more recent ecological theology, etc.

9. Defining what belongs to the essentials and what belongs to the non-essentials.

10. Understanding of the role of ministry, including the bishop's office.

11. Mission theology in relation to mission strategy.

In spite of these challenges or because of them, the Moravian church is asking itself why this Unity matters. One could say it matters because Unity is a biblical imperative. One could also say it matters because practically and missionally we can do more as a Unity than we can as individual provinces.

How Can the Unity Function for the Health of the Church and the Secular World?

Practically and missionally, the Moravian Church can do more as a Unity than as independent provinces. In the late 17th century Zinzendorf encouraged the Radical Pietist ideal of Philadelphianism. For Zinzendorf this ideology promoted "the belief that devout Christians of diverse denominational backgrounds were called to accept each other as brothers and sisters in Christ despite their confessional differences." [30] This ideology is what underlies our commitment

to ecumenism, but it also serves us when faced with theological and ecclesiological differences with the Unity-- between two or more provinces or internally within a province.

Modeling how to be united in love despite confessional differences offers a witness of Christian health to the greater church and secular world. Promotion and education surrounding the guiding principle, "In essentials, unity, in non-essentials, liberty and in all things, love," also serves a missional purpose—a Christian witness of unity in diversity. It matters little that this principle did not originate with us. It does matter, however, that is not known in all our provinces. The production and dissemination of a common Moravian curriculum will serve to continue discussion on what these essentials may be and how it is that we do all things in love. With more voices around the table of the Unity Board, and most recently the Unity Mission Development Board, this should be lively and health-inspiring discussion. Practically and missionally, the discussion of the essentials of the Christian faith will be of aid to the Christian and secular world. How that discussion takes place in love will offer the greatest lesson.

How Can the Unity Benefit the Individual Congregation?

Most Moravians are aware that the world is globalized. We are connected by technology in a way that cannot be undone. Travel has become easier, and what happens "far away" matters more to us socially, financially, and ethically. In 1957, we decided to become an international church. Presently we are beginning to realize what that means. It complicates things. It means that representation of the Unity must now also be international in a way that represents the composition of the entire worldwide church and does not favor the dominant or most powerful voices. Talking around one table calls for clear boundaries, expectations, and agreed upon points of connection. Increased communication between provinces, increased mission and

travel, increased sharing of resources, human and financial, will aid us into what is already a globalized reality. The consideration of a short-term ministerial exchange program by the Unity Board is encouraging.

How does this help the individual congregation? It puts that congregation in the midst of a shared story that is bigger and more real than they knew before. It forces the congregation to realize that they have "kin" in places different than their own. This increases their worldview and forces them to assess their use of resources in more of a global way. More lay people may be asked to travel and be part of commissions or missional work in which they are at a table with Moravians in very different social and cultural contexts.

Understanding and benefiting from the reality of the Unity at the level of the individual congregation will only be achieved if there can be a shared commitment to the work of intentional communication between our provinces and the provinces with individual congregations. This will take patience, persistence, and shared resources. But there is time, and now may be the time. In the era of the globalised Unity, we have a witness ahead of us that is biblical, practical and missional.

Closing Thought

Exploring the role of our Unity places us on the next page of a continuing story that is five and half centuries long. As the story goes, we were born 550 years ago at Kunvald, when a small group of men and women returned to the fundamental teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Sermon on the Mount. 270 years later a new chapter, if not a new volume, was begun in Herrnhut, when we became more intentional about nurturing our relationship with the Risen Christ. Over the last 70 years, the pages of the story have increased exponentially, as we have focused on the Savior's ethical teachings and living presence while amplifying the work of the Cross in the Global South. As cultural and

theological diversities in a Globalised Moravian Church continue to raise the question of whether we are truly a Unity or rather a collection of 20+ Provinces, our hope to be a Unity resides in our common relationship with Christ, the Chief Elder of his church, the Author of our faith, and the Life of his Unity.

Discussion Questions

- Reflect on a Province other than your home Province. What gifts does this Province have that would either benefit your Province or increase the life of the Worldwide Moravian Church?

- From the perspective of your Province, what is the greatest challenge to our unity as a world-wide church?

- What characteristics of Heart Religion might appeal people living in a secularized world?

- Where in your Province have you experienced the tension that often exists between unity and biblical justice? What have you learned from living in this tension?

- What are some ways that the Unity might engage in conversations regarding redistribution of wealth?

- What are the defined "essentials" in your home province?

- What actions might Unity Synod consider to encourage greater unity within the Worldwide Moravian Church?

Endnotes

1   From Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum

2   *ITD*, Vogt, Issue 4: May 2005, pg. 7.

3   *ITD*, Moses Lectures 2012 and 2014, agenda of UCOT, formation of a Common Moravian Curriculum

4   from *The Ground of the Unity*

5   From *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living*

6   This vocabulary is polemic, not normally used in this connection, but serves to clarify the fact that important decisions were taken in Europe and America.

7   The statement does not exclude the possibility of one or several spiritual renewals within the Moravian Church as part of the process, but catalysts of the process include other factors as described.

8   A majority church is a church that might have the majority of the population of the society as members, or a church considerably larger than other churches in an area, though the majority in the population is not necessarily Christian. The majority church will often have an impact on different spectres of life, political and social. A minority church is a small church in a context with or without a Christian majority. Its impact in society is often limited, and it can even be in opposition to important parts of the society.

9   Background information and references to the figures can be found in Jørgen Bøytler: E*cclesiology and Culture in the Moravian Church*, Aarhus 2009

10   (Sanneh 2003:14).

11   (Vogt 2001:19)

12   See, US2009, Resolution 39, COUF 2009, p. 143f.

13   Source: World Bank, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD , seen on 07.09.2014

14   COUF #265,a-b

15   http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.C, seen on 17.09.2014

16   http://www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/tanzania/tanzania-economic-outlook/

17   ibid

18   A modification to this statement is proper: The Easter Morning liturgy is under strong influence from the creeds, and we can well understand it as a creed in its own right. Many Moravians do so (Freemann 1998, p.9). Zinzendorf saw the Easter Morning celebration in connection to the Orthodox Church. Originally, the creedal part had a Christological focus, but was later extended to a Trinitarian creed (Handbuch 1990, p. 53). *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* states that "A Moravian confession of faith is to be found in the Easter Dawn Liturgy" (Moravian Covenant, p. 6). The liturgy is in substance mainly Luther's Shorter Catechism,

modified over the years. It can therefore be maintained that no specific Moravian Creed is available, but a desire to present such a one, or at least being able to express a creed of the Moravian Church, can to some degree be recognised.

19   " (Spangenberg 1959, Preface of Author, p. IV))

20   (Freeman 1998:6ff).

21   (COUF 1995:14) Church Order is quoting "The Ground of Unity.

22   According to Freeman, Plitt has quoted Zinzendorf from the Herrnhut Diary, who quotes August H. Francke, saying: "In the book which one calls the Bible the whole fruit is together with the shell, as it originated in various times, and as men wrote it, of whom several would never have dreamed that I would sometime be called God's Word." (Freeman 1998:127)

23   (Freeman 1998:58ff)

24   Speners "Pia desideria," 1675 marks the outset of pietism.

25   First, found in the late 16th Century by Samuel Huber.

26   The individuals having "Christ in his/her Heart" belonged to the Heart Religion and were in principle found in within all denominations.

27   "Herrnhutism" and "Herrnhutian" is used here deliberately in a direct translation from German (and Danish), although the use of these words is not common in the English language, they would rather be "Moravianism" and "Moravian." The word Herrnhutism indicates the sum of what originated from Herrnhut, and is a concept, especially in continental Europe.

28   The largest and fastest-growing segment of Christianity today is Pentecostalism. It's estimated that the movement has 500 million adherents worldwide. While the modern-expression of Pentecostal Christianity began in America in the early 20th century, by the beginning of the 21st century, the movement gained significant strength in Africa, Asia, and South America as well.

29   One of the better definitions of world-view says: A worldview is a theory of the world, used for living in the world. A world view is a mental model of reality - a framework of ideas & attitudes about the world, ourselves, and life, a comprehensive system of beliefs - with answers for a wide range of questions. http://www.asa3.org/ASA/education/views/ , seen on 20.09.2014