

# Ministry Groups/Committees and Charge for the Synod of 2006

## **1) Evangelism and Church Growth Ministry Group**

*The Ground of the Unity* of the Unitas Fratrum, Section I, Part 1, number 1, in part, states: “The Unitas Fratrum is ... aware of its being called in faith to serve humanity by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It recognizes this call to be the source of its being and the inspiration of its services.” *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* from the section titled: “The Ground of Our Witness” states: “We are called into a Christian fellowship by the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the eternal purpose of God the Father by the Holy Spirit, and as members of Christ’s Body, the Church, to serve all people by proclaiming the Gospel and witnessing to our faith by word and deed. *The Moravian Way of Evangelism* (Chapter 1, page 1) defines Evangelism as: “Communicating the good news about Jesus Christ, who he is and what he has done, to all kinds of people and inviting them to trust him as Savior and follow him as Lord within the fellowship of his Church”. The faithful, we are told, are to produce fruit that abides. Are we, in fact, producing fruit that abides and are we being true to our call as professing Christians and as the Church in evangelizing ‘the world’ in the contemporary Moravian Church?

**CHARGE:** Consider ways/possibilities the Synod of 2006 may assist and or advise our boards, agencies and congregations toward a more deeply committed response to our call to evangelize the communities where we serve and produce fruit that abides in a manor that will bring glory and honor to our Savior and grow the light of his Church in a dark and needy world.

## **2) Provincial Development Ministry Group**

The essence of the definition of the term ‘development’ is to realize potentials and to aid in growth (to make more available and active). In the Great Commission of our Lord, we have been charged to be all we can be, individually and corporately, in fulfilling his Commission. Significant to “being all we can be” are matters which should be continually developed including communication, polity, unity and community building, just to name a few, within and among our province. The matter is not to determine how we have or have not been doing ‘things’ in the past, but more importantly how we can better develop each area of ministry we share to be all we can be for our Savior.

**CHARGE:** Consider ways/possibilities the Synod of 2006 may assist and encourage our boards, agencies and congregations toward a greater effort of realizing our potentials thereby making ourselves and ministries more available and active throughout the Southern Province, with the goal of improving communications, polity, unity and community building and how might we, Provincially, better organize ourselves to better respond to the ministries we share?

## **3) Theology and Culture Ministry Group**

Christian Theology seeks to understand the God revealed in Scripture and to provide a Christian understanding of reality. Christian Theology seeks to understand God’s creation, particularly human beings and their condition, and God’s redemptive work in relation to humankind. This understanding of Christian Theology offers guidance and direction for the Christian life and ministry and certainly the life and ministry of the Church. The Moravian Church is quite clear regarding her theology as is so stated in *The Ground of the Unity – Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*, Section 1, Part 1, paragraph 2ff. The possibilities of our Church expressing her theology in every part of life and life experiences are unending albeit often difficult. We are called to be the best we can be for our Savior in responding to the Great

Commission, the call and responsibility given to professing Christians to theologically address matters of faith, tolerance, justice (for women and minority groups), etc. from a contemporary perspective yet founded solely on the teaching of Scripture.

**CHARGE:** Consider the area of theological expression (how we communicate that which we believe) and perhaps suggest possibilities and opportunities the Southern Province may perhaps consider when expressing the theological foundation (statement of belief) of our Church, so as to include not only Moravians but cross-culturally with special emphasis regarding those who are affiliated with non-Christian groups and/or no religious affiliation at all.

#### **4) Clergy and Educator Development Ministry Group**

It is imperative our Ministers and Educators not only be properly trained in Church Theology and Ministry. It is equally important that they be offered opportunities for continuing education, professional development, independent study, etc., receiving financial aid whenever and wherever possible in order to claim these kinds of opportunities. We need but to recall the words of the Apostle to Timothy to better understand this need. A vital part of the health and welfare of our church professionals is opportunity for sabbatical leave, respite and ‘experience,’ which nurture in ways different from continuing education. This is currently a program our church does not extend to our church professionals.

**CHARGE:** Consider possibilities of extending to our church professionals opportunities for extended continuing education, sabbatical leaves for respite and education purposes, and how we might better support our professional staff particularly our women in ministry. How might this Synod of 2006 assist our Provincial leaders, boards and agencies in better education of our congregations as to this need on behalf of our church professionals? How might we assist our congregations in preparing for and planning such opportunities and events?

#### **5) Discipleship and Education Ministry Group**

The essence of the definition of Christian Discipleship centers in the thought of a disciple being one who is a companion of Christ, who believes in Christ and his teachings and who assists in disseminating the teachings of Christ. Education, therefore, is a method of disseminating the teachings of Christ. This has traditionally been carried out via Sunday school, Bible studies, fellowship opportunities, small groups, retreats, etc. Discipleship and education are of vital importance in the church’s response to the Great Commission of Christ.

**CHARGE:** In a world that is becoming more and more pluralistic, our church must become more creative and original in considering and developing responses to discipleship and education which will perhaps share the message of Christ in a more contemporary yet effective way all the while equipping church members to become more effective disciples. What, then, are the topics which must be considered and what might be the methods of dissemination as we strive to share and exemplify the teachings of Christ in a generation that is flooded with misinformation and pressured, more than ever, to follow the ways of the world and what are ways we all can better learn how to teach discipleship in our churches?

#### **6) Stewardship Ministry Group**

The word ‘stewardship’ comes from the Greek word *oikonomia*, which is translated, “the administration of duties and/or goods in one’s care. It implies the concept of ‘steward’ and ‘overseer.’ There are many

Scripture references to this effect, including Luke 16, Matthew 20 and Luke 12. 1 Timothy is quite clear in teaching that the requirement of stewards of God is faithfulness, which refers directly to the administration of the duties and/or goods in one's care based on directions. Of course, we speak here of the directions or instructions Christ placed upon his followers regarding the whole matter of stewardship. *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living*, Section II, Paragraph A, Lines 10, 11 and 12 speak directly to our church's understanding of the Biblical directive to the Church regarding Stewardship.

**CHARGE:** The world demands more and more of our time and resources each day. Two-income families are certainly the norm today with many of those persons working a part-time job to make ends meet. The concerns of our hearts represent who we truly are. The Moravian Church has been called a 'church of the heart.' Stewardship is a response of the heart of the faithful; the committed. Has the Biblical concept of Stewardship lost its meaning in today's society; in the teachings of our church about Stewardship? What might our Church consider to implant a new understanding of Stewardship and the demands placed upon the 'steward;' the overseer? How might we better foster faithfulness and commitment in giving to our God portions of all we have been given to care for, i.e. to manage temporarily? How might we better teach Stewardship in our congregations to encourage total member participation?

## **7) Ecumenism Ministry Group**

*The Ground of the Unity (Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum)* Section I, Part I, Paragraph 4 reads: "The Triune God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only source of our life and salvation; and this Scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith, of the Unitas Fratrum and therefore shapes our life."

The understanding, interpretation and application of the Holy Scriptures is becoming more varied in today's society. Considering the implications of the Evangelistic, Traditional and Contemporary religious movements (not to mention the plethora of ancient and new faiths, considered non-Christian) in our society and world, ministry based on the Christian call of Scripture is becoming more and more difficult. To be responsible in responding to the Great Commission, it is imperative that the Moravian Church be informed and involved in cultural and ecumenical multiplicities and effective problem solving of the mandates of Scripture.

**CHARGE:** Investigate how the Moravian Church, Southern Province, may become more involved in these areas in the communities where our congregations serve and how we might best represent our faith and our Chief Elder in local and national issues. Consider the possibility of a report to the Synod of 2006, which may perhaps include possibilities of Provincial ministry, which may be utilized by our congregations in communities where they serve.

## **8) Youth Ministry Group**

As congregations and as a Church, the Baptismal service of our Church requires that we assist in raising our children in the "fear and admonition of the Lord." Much time, effort and finances have been allocated toward this effort; yet, we seem to be experiencing a time when our young people seem less committed to the youth programs offered by our church (congregationally speaking). This Scriptural responsibility requires that our Church regularly consider the overall Youth Ministry of the Province and to continually seek ways and opportunities to involve more of our youth (defined as through college age) in order that we might assist in preparing them for the adult life of choices and decisions.

**CHARGE:** How might we better include our youth and their participation in worship and ministry in the local church? Are we meeting the needs of our college students via campus ministries? How might we better organize and implement more groups of youth for community involvement in short-term mission projects? How do we better help develop and grow commitment to youth ministry by adult leaders and youth participants throughout our province?

### **9) Social Concerns Ministry Group**

The Gospel is the proclamation and demonstration of God's redemptive activity in Jesus Christ to a world enslaved by sin. Redemption is not only personal but social as well. The challenge is to translate love and justice into meaningful strategies for church ministry in order that proclamation actually becomes demonstration.

*The Ground of the Unity (church Order of the Unitas Fratrum)*, Section I, Part I, Paragraph 9 states: "Our Lord Jesus entered into this world's misery to bear it and to overcome it. We seek to follow Him in serving His brothers and sisters. Like the love of Jesus, this service knows no bounds. Therefore we pray the Lord ever anew to point us the way to reach our neighbors, opening our hearts and hands to them in their need."

**CHARGE:** Do we effectively demonstrate love and justice in matters of homelessness, hunger, oppression, and justice in communities where our churches serve? How might we better interpret and apply the Gospel message of Social Ministry and the Unity's interpretation of the Church's call to matters of love and justice in today's society. How might our congregations involve more people in Social Ministry? Would it be of value to offer a province-wide conference on Social Ministry during the next inter-Synodal period? How might our congregations seek and reach out to enlarge their Social Concerns ministry?

### **10) World Missions Ministry Group**

The idea of World Missions has been loosely defined as "cross-cultural communication of the Christian faith" as it relates to world evangelism. Through Bishop Jan Amos Comenius' influence on Count von Zinzendorf, a powerful transformation occurred in Herrnhut and the Moravians developed and implemented a dynamic missionary movement: communicating and living the Christian faith, cross-culturally.

*The Ground of the Unity (church Order of the Unitas Fratrum)*, Section I, Part I, Paragraph 10 reads: "Jesus Christ maintains in love and faithfulness His commitment to this fallen world. Therefore we must remain concerned for this world. We may not withdraw from it through indifference, pride or fear. Together with the universal Christian Church, the Unitas Fratrum challenges humanity with the message of the love of God, striving to attain what is best for all. For the sake of this world, the Unitas Fratrum hopes for and looks to the day when the victory of Christ will be manifest over sin and death and the new world will appear."

Truly, the Great Commission of our Lord demands, daily, our never ceasing prayers for evangelizing the world and the role we, as a church, must fulfill to this end.

**CHARGE:** Consider possibilities for increased Mission Education in local congregations and assist the Board of World Missions in defining our Church's worldwide response toward 'cross-culturally communicating of the Christian faith. How might our Church increase inter-generational interest and participation in World Mission efforts?

## **11) Financial Ministry Group**

*The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living*, Section II, Part A, Paragraph 11 states: “We will support, according to our ability, the financial needs of the local congregation, the District, the Province, and the Unity. We will consider the support of the benevolent causes of the Moravian Church, both at home and abroad, as a privilege, an opportunity, and a responsibility.”

The work of the Provincial Financial Board of our Church is detailed and copious, to say the least. Truly, the members of this Board serve as Provincial Stewards of the financial assets of the Province. Provincial ministries and ‘funded’ via annual financial assessments of the congregations based on membership and current annual budgets. Some congregations have great difficulty meeting their financial assessment while other congregations do not. Certain of our members have indicated that the annual provincial financial assessment, over the years, has impacted a growing percentage of church budgets. We live in a time when, for lack of a better term, the Church faces greater ‘competition’ from the world for the time, talent, and resources of our members. Participation in Church ministry and contributing to the treasure of the church is directly related to the added pressures of the world, work schedules, salaries, part-time employment (coupled full-time employment) and the availability of employment in a given community including medial salaries.

**CHARGE:** Should the Synod of 2006 consider alternative methods of annual congregations contributions toward the financial support of Interprovincial Ministries (BWM, IBOC, Seminary, etc.) Provincial Boards and Agencies, and other Ministries of the Southern Province and if so, how might this be accomplished? How might the Synod of 2006 understand and recognize the hardships the annual congregational financial contributions sometimes place upon some congregations? How might our congregations assist one another in relieving the stress and pressure annual contributions sometimes create in congregations? Share discussions with the Provincial Financial Board and seek their input and participation in considering the overall charge.

## **12) Visioning Ministry Group**

Appreciative Inquiry is a theory for organizational development that posits the idea that organizations/groups move in the direction of their images of the future. With the future in mind, Appreciative Inquiry promotes doing more of what works as opposed to doing less of what is not working. This ministry group will be concerned with the responsibility of discerning the Spirit’s leading for our Province as it views the future as a ministry to be embraced.

Concerning this ministry the Apostle Paul wrote: “Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8).

**CHARGE:** Imagine what the shared ministries of the Southern Province might look like in the coming Synodal period and beyond as you “dream” both for the local congregation and for the Southern Province as a whole. The goal of the Visioning Ministry Group is to stimulate the thinking and imagination of Moravians in the Southern Province through a planning process that focuses upon the honorable, the pure, the pleasing and the commendable.

## **13) Government Committee**

Any proposed matters related to church government and structure, the *Book of Order*, and the Rules and Regulations are referred to this committee. The changes are submitted to synod and must be read and voted on two times, one time on each of separate days, and need to be passed by receiving a majority of three-fourths of the votes cast at each reading.

#### **14) Finance Committee**

Pension and other clergy benefits; fund raising policy; any resolutions that require funding on a provincial basis or by the local congregation in the total amount of \$2500 or greater is referred to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee presents all such legislation at the same time before any single item is voted on in a plenary session, with the total possible cost to the province and individual churches being indicated. Any amendment to legislation requiring funding which causes a net change of \$2,500 or more in any item is referred back to the Finance Committee prior to being voted upon.

#### **Nominations Committee**

**(Duties completed prior to synod except for balloting and reporting results of balloting at synod.)**