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UNITY BOARD
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THE UNITAS FRATRUM
THE UNITY BOARD MEETING
BARBADOS, MAY 18-24, 2007

MESSAGE TO THE PROVINCES OF THE UNITY

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We the members of the Unity Board of the Moravian Church, Unitas Fratrum, meeting in the beautiful Caribbean Island of Barbados greet you in the name of Jesus our Chief Elder. We have chosen for our theme: Discerning God's Mission Through Our Unity.

We expressed our appreciation to our immediate past President, Br. Robert Sawyer (Southern Province, U.S.A.) for the leadership he gave to the Unity during his tenure as President. Sr. Angelene Swart (South Africa Province), Vice President of the Unity Board was elected as President in November 2006. Our meeting elected Br. Paul Gardner (Jamaica Province) as Vice-President. We have been inspired by Br. Sam Gray's daily Bible Studies throughout the meeting. We enjoyed the generous hospitality of our host the Barbados Conference of the Eastern West Indies Province. It has been a joy to share in worship in the congregations and to have fellowship with members and their families.

As we meet we are cognizant of the fact that we are gathered in a year of special anniversaries. It is the 550th Anniversary of the Unitas Fratrum, the 275th anniversary of Moravian Missions, and the 200th anniversary of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. It is indeed a moment of special significance and as a Unity we recognize the need to recommit ourselves to be faithful to the Mission of our Lord. We must continue to treasure the legacies of our church and forge ahead to be relevant in the various contexts within which we are exercising ministry. It means that we should be faithful stewards as we build bridges of harmony and peace across the world; across cultures and peoples. The Abolition of the trading in Africans reminds us that we must recommit ourselves to uphold the dignity and worth of **all** human beings who are created in the image of God.

The reports that we received from the Provinces provided us with an opportunity to celebrate the wonderful things that God is doing in the Provinces of the Unity. The area of new work being undertaken represents the church's commitment to continue to do mission both within and without our respective Provinces. We had to grapple with the challenges being experienced by many of our provinces and empathize with our sisters and brothers as they seek to discern God's will in the face of many challenges.

The Czech and the Honduras Provinces continue to be a concern of the Unity. We ask you to commit these Provinces of the Unity to our Lord as we pray for real unity in this our 550th year of witness. The fellowship that these provinces enjoyed has been fractured and we remain resolute in our attempt to search for restoration of such fellowship to all parties within the Unity. As we work towards this realization, we must recommit ourselves to the principles of the Unity; affirming and embracing this unity of the church in its diversities. We must remain a single church of mutual accountability to the Unity Synod and the Unity Board.

We accepted the Moravian Church in Congo and the Moravian Church in Zambia as Affiliated Provinces. The Moravian Church in Northern Tanzania, Moravian Church in Eastern Tanzania and Zanzibar and the Moravian Church in Malawi as Mission Provinces. The South-Eastern section of Kenya was accepted as a new Mission Area under the supervision of Western Tanzanian Province and the San Juan de Lurigancho area of Lima, Peru was accepted as a Mission Area under the supervision of the American Board of World Mission. Our decisions will be taken to The Unity Synod for ratification.

Sisters and brothers, we are conscious of the nature of the world in which we are exercising the ministry of the Church. We ask each Province to be discerning of the time and the context within which such ministry is being exercised. We urge you, therefore, to commit to prayers the work of our Church in all the Provinces of the Unity.

May God grant us success in our work and in our attempt to heal relationships within the Unity.

Yours in His grace,

Angelene Swart
President, Unity Board