

Moravian Moment #128...

What are the functions of Unity Synod?

The members of the Unity Synod are representatives of the Church as a whole. They vote according to their own conviction and are not bound by detailed instructions from their Provinces or organization, however, it would be advisable for delegates to be guided by their Provinces.

As we contemplate the role of our Church in the Mission of God, we need to bring to the fore the areas where there are Affiliate Provinces, that is they are not Independent Provinces. The Labrador Province (1771) consisting of the Moravian Church in Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada; The Guyana Province (1878) and the Costa Rica Province (1980) are the three that do not fully control their own affairs. Because of the divergence in circumstances and development, some Provinces must of necessity look to other Provinces or to the Unity as a whole for assistance with workers and money, and for encouragement and advice. Such Provinces are considered to be in affiliation with the supporting Province. This support is given and received in a spirit of mutual love and concern, and is an essential feature of the fellowship of the Moravian Church. In spite of this essential feature, all Provinces are challenged to become self sufficient in every way possible, to eliminate the idea of dependency. The Church must seek to grow in every way possible, spiritually, financially, numerically, and at the same time, it must be able to supply its own Staff and Leadership.

What then is the importance of Unity Synod? It represents the Moravian Church in all matters which concern the Unity of the Church. It decides on the official statements of the general principles of the Moravian Church in regard to constitution, doctrine, congregation life and the ministry and spread of the Gospel. It upholds and furthers the fellowship of several Provinces as parts of the Moravian Church. It determines the boundaries of the several Provinces of the Unity and their respective spheres of work and the guiding principles of the same. It fosters a common responsibility in regard to the problems of contemporary life and to further a spirit of mutual understanding and peace among the nations and races. To elect Bishops on the proposal of any Province, should the occasion arise. To elect the Directors of the Moravian Church Foundation, as provided for in its Charter. To act as the final Court of Appeal in all matters belonging to its sphere of action. In short, Unity Synod acts like the glue that binds the Moravian Provinces together.

Every member of our Church is called upon to pray that we will truly discern God's Mission through our Unity. Synodals should rise with a clear vision of where God desire this Moravian Church to be. The Church can do nothing less than to follow God's command.

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