



"And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested." 1 Chronicles 4 : 9 -10."

The Information

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VISION STATEMENT

A Church - Transformed,
United, Victorious in Christ

MISSION STATEMENT

By the grace of God, we seek to be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ; without distinction, we use all that we possess to call all peoples to the truth of the Gospel through worship, evangelism, discipleship and service

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Time For Action

The 29th Provincial Synod of the Eastern West Indies Province concluded its meeting on Friday July 17, 2009 in St. Kitts. The entire Synod will go down as a wonderful testimony of God's love, grace and mercy. The synod spoke volumes of the awesomeness of our God. Every session was filled with the unseen presence of a mighty God. The Superintendent, Staff, the Synod Planning Committee, the Leadership within each of the Congregations and the entire membership must be highly commended for the organizational skills, the commitment and dedication to duty, their availability and their willingness to be used by God in such a decisive way. The facilities made available at the Bird Rock Hotel to facilitate the smooth running of the Synod were magnificent. Commendation must also go to the Frigate Bay Hotel for accommodating some of our Synodals.

The Synod was truly grateful for the Bus Drivers and transportation provided which was always on time. The Secretariat, the Ushers, the Tuck Shop, the facility of the Ferry which transported Synodals to Nevis, which was complimentary, was truly an out working or demonstration of our theme: **Blessed to Bless.**

Thank you St. Kitts, Thank you God, Thank you Zion, Thank you Keys, Thank you Bethesda, Thank you Estridge, Thank you Bethel. In addition, we say thank you to the Leadership of Synod, to our Chaplain, All the Delegates and Observers including the Fraternal and Advisory Delegates. Special thanks to the members of the out going PEC for the wonderful job that was done.

At the end of the Synod, a total of 19 Resolutions and 2 Recommendations were passed. The question is what next? We need to get into action. The Resolutions were passed because there is a necessity for action in these areas. The entire Church needs to be Galvanized into the implementation of the Resolutions to propel it forward. Resolution #8 of the 25th Synod which was held in Antigua in 1999, speaks to the establishment of an Implementation Committee. It reads thus:

Whereas at the Synod a number of resolutions are passed; and

Whereas too many of these Resolutions remain unimplemented during the inter-synodal period; and

Whereas the establishment of a Conference Implementation Committee may better facilitate the process of implementing Resolutions during the inter-synodal period;

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PEC NEWS

Retreat Presentation: "Blessed to Bless": The Transforming power of a Blessing

By: Dr. Wycherley V. Gumbs

At the 29th Provincial Synod in St. Kitts July 10, 2009

In the United States Virgin Islands, one of our members responds to a telephone call with these words: "Good morning, I am blessed!" The first occasion I received such a greeting it temporarily disarmed me, then it became a transforming moment as I recognized that indeed I too am blessed.

"Blessed" emerges out of the believer's relationship with God who liberally pours blessings upon him or her for ministry. In the Hebrew Scriptures, called the Old Testament by Christians, to be blessed is never a static state, or a personal achievement. It is vicarious and reciprocal. In Abram's encounter with God, he was told, "I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing...and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen.12.2-3). It is clear from this passage that Abram had no ground for boasting about the blessing bestowed on him; neither can we.

Probably the best example of a transforming power of a blessing comes from the story of Jabez, as recorded in 1Chronicles. Here is the reading:

Jabez was honored more than his brothers, and his mother named him Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm and hurt." and God

granted him his request (1Chronicles 4.9-10).

Some brief observations. First, the forty three verses of chapter four are mainly about the descendants of Judah and Simeon. Second, it appears that the writers were deliberate in including those two verses which on the surface are insignificant, but on further investigation they highlight a pattern in the scriptures of noting the centrality of the faith experience which God rewards.

What do we learn from these verses? Firstly, the steadfastness of Jabez's mother is highly commendable. In a time when a handicapped child was considered a curse on the family and the individual, she bore the social ostracism with fortitude. Secondly, because of his handicap, Jabez also faced social ostracism. He had two choices, turn inward and be consumed by pity or self hate, or accept the reality of his handicap and make a positive contribution to society. He chose the latter.

Throughout the scriptures, there are examples of persons who faced their handicaps/limitations and made vital contributions to the society. Moses, born of Hebrew parents in Egypt, intervened in a fight between an Egyptian and a Hebrew. The Egyptian was killed. Subsequently, he sought to dissuade two Hebrews from fighting. To his dismay, one of them accused him of killing an Egyptian. Moses, knowing the law of retribution existing in Egypt for the killing of an Egyptian, fled from Egypt and settled in Midian. While attending the flock (Exodus 3), he became aware of the presence of God and heard the call to go back to Egypt. He sought escape from that assignment. He faced three obstacles: cultural, legal and personal; namely, he belonged to an ethnic group called

the Hebrews which were a minority in Egypt, he was a criminal, and he was handicapped by an awful stutter. To his final objection, God provided his brother Aaron as his spokesman. To appear before the Pharaoh with a spokesman was not only humiliating for Moses, but his handicap had the potential to frustrate the movement which he sought to lead. As we are aware, it was the stuttering Moses whom God used to lead his people out of Egypt. He possessed the attributes necessary for the task, namely; vision, dedication to the mission and the dependence on God. **It is not our handicaps which determine the effectiveness of ministry; it is the extent to which we allow God to use us.**

Our Lord himself faced handicaps which could have impeded his ministry. There were questions surrounding his paternal side of the family; others noted that Mary was of humble birth; his return from Egypt with its cultural baggage; and being raised in Nazareth, a town with no strong historical notoriety etc. The question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" typified the attitude towards the inhabitants of the town. Yet, purpose driven, with a sense of the divine imperative upon him, Jesus of Nazareth became the most influential person in history.

Most of the Christian churches and the public in general, have sung hymns and songs written by Fanny Crosby (1820-1895). Her married name was Frances Jane van Alstyne. Some of the popular hymns written by her are: There were ninety and nine," "Blessed Assurance," "Draw me nearer," "To God be the glory," "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour," among others.

At the age of six weeks, she was blinded by a doctor's improper medical treatment. During a doctor's visit, some one said, "Poor blind Fanny Crosby."

She heard the remark which could have caused her to recoil in self pity, or respond negatively to the comment made. Her response was radically different. "The world might pass me by, but Jesus will never pass me by," she said. She turned a negative into a positive. Out of that experience, she wrote the hymn, "Pass, me not, O gentle Saviour." What is even more remarkable, she wrote over 8,000 hymns in her blindness. **Her handicap was not a hindrance to God's purpose.**

Before we comment on the content of Job's prayer, we shall comment on **the nature of prayer**. To pray is to acknowledge that we have a need or needs, and God is able to answer in a manner which no human being can.

I need Thee every hour,
Most gracious Lord.

Prayer also is humbling, and it demands surrender. When we pray, therefore, we place ourselves at God's disposal. This is an aspect of prayer that the individual Christian and the church have not emphasized enough. We have become obsessed with our needs being fulfilled to the detriment of obedience to God's will and way. Our primary should always be, "Lord, what will you have me to do?"

In the prayer, Jabez did not name the blessing. Such an act would be arrogant, self-serving and requiring God to fit his agenda and expectations. He said in all humility, "Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border..." He was saying, 'God, use me, as you see fit.' But that was not the end; he was also saying, 'Lord, in using me expand my influence for good and for Your glory. His prayer should

prompt us to pray:

Make me a channel of blessing to-day,
Make me a channel of blessing, I pray.

Jabez continued in prayer by saying: "that your hand might be with me and you would keep me from harm..." He recognized what we too must never lose sight of, namely, **the greater our influence as we minister, the greater the need for God's guiding and protecting hand**. Additionally, we need God's guiding and protecting hand so that we may not be derailed by public acclaim, the machinations of the Evil One, or the 'principalities and powers,' which often present themselves as 'angels of light.' It was that guiding hand which kept Jesus in the forty days in the wilderness and enabled him to say, "Get you behind me Satan." Finally, he prayed that 'evil would not hurt him.' Hurt in this context is much more than physical pain. Jabez was pleading that nothing, absolutely nothing would corrupt or bring into disrepute the sacred calling given to him. In simple terms, he was saying, "Lord, grant me one last favour- that my blessings do not become a curse to those whom I have blessed or influenced. What a difference it would make in our ministry if all of us were deeply conscious of our high calling as Disciples of Christ and the effects it has on others.

As we conclude this first section of our study, we are reminded that like the personalities we have studied, all of us have handicaps of one form or the other. In general, however, all humans are handicapped by the power of sin. But 'thanks be to God', through Christ's sacrifice and the resurrection, sin has 'no more control over us.'

APPLICATION

The Individual

(Lessons from the life of Jabez)

In responding to the call of Jesus Christ to follow him, every Christian is 'called, chosen and purpose driven'. Indeed, that is the nature of discipleship. Our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ, becomes a driving force constraining us to share our blessings within the Christian family and to minister to those outside of it.

Along with our blessings, there are handicaps or obstacles which have the potential to limit our spiritual growth and our effectiveness as gift-givers. Some of these are emotional, cultural, and spiritual and they are expressed through fear of failure, comparison to others, ego-centeredness and the perennial retort by many Christians when asked to be involved in ministry, say, "I can't!" However, from the varied experiences of those individuals we discussed earlier, from the witness of the scriptures, the examples of believers who have experienced God's transforming power, and from personal experience, we can testify that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ at work in us, gives us the power to minister to God's glory, in spite of our handicaps.

Finally, whatever our handicaps or limitations, each of us must come to that place in our Christian discipleship, when we say like the prophet Isaiah, "Here I am, send me!" It is that committal of all that we have and are that enables God to use us as 'broken vessels' for his glory.

The Mission Driven Congregation

The Christian brings to the congregation his/her 'blessings' or gifts for ministry and service. When a congregation defines its mission in the context of the Great Commission, the following happens.

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First, there is a largeness of vision, which flows into a dynamic mission, or purpose and there are committed workers to carry out the mission. This we recall was the situation which existed in the book of Nehemiah. A large portion of the population, chiefly the able-bodied were taken into exile. Nehemiah, one of the exiles, heard the disturbing news that the people who were left in Judah were in despair. The walls of Jerusalem were broken-down, and the leaders were corrupt and ineffective. Nehemiah made a commitment to return to rebuild the walls. He shared his vision with the priests, leaders, and then the people. They bought the vision, accepted the challenge of the mission and they rebuilt the walls in the face of violent opposition. The conclusion for us is compelling. In our endeavours to build structures for ministry, or to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, obstacles may loom large. One of these obstacles which often rears its ugly head, is that of finances to begin and complete the venture. That is a 'red-herring' or better the adversary's favourite weapon to derail our best intentions. When such is raised, remember this formula: **a well defined vision, followed by a dynamic mission and a committed army of volunteers, money will follow.**

A Final Word

As we come to the close of this retreat, it is timely to give a gentle reminder to Moravians, especially those who are gathered here today. Every Church or Communion has been given its place in the history of the Church. One of the gifts given to the Moravians is its ecumenical witness regionally and internationally. With the growing internal pressures to look after your own affairs, do not yield to the temptation to evade your historic witness. May the prayer of our Lord, "that they all may be one,"

be the guiding principle in your relationship to other Christian Churches.

(Dr. Gumbs is Superintendent of the Methodist Church in St. Kitts)

Condolence

Bro. David Roberts passed into the nearer presence of his Lord and Saviour on July 22, 2009. David Roberts was the Father of the Rev. Andrew Roberts.

The Funeral Service of David Roberts took place on Friday July 31, 2009 at the Montgomery Moravian Church in Tobago.

Let us continue to lift up the family in our prayers.



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Be it Resolved that the Implementation Committee comprise primarily the Delegates of each Conference.

Be it further Resolved that the Implementation Committee work in consultation with the Executive Board in considering the Resolutions appropriate to its context.

Be it still further Resolved that the Superintendent of each Conference be mandated to bring into effect this Implementation Committee in his/her Conference.

It is time for action. As a Church, we have the freedom to act or to remain dormant, however, freedom carries with it responsibility. Freedom is the power to do what you should. There is therefore the clarion call to all members of Staff, Synod Delegates and the rest of the

Church to **gird their Loins and join the battle**, for righteousness, holiness and the enlargement of

God's Kingdom. There is no time for procrastination. It is time for action.

At the death of Moses, God chose a man to lead his people, but He sensed was terrified of the tasks ahead and so God assured in with these words:

²Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses...(Joshua 1:1-3).

The land is ours. God has given it unto us. However, the enemy will not play dead and allow us to possess it in peace. We have to claim it by faith in spite of the giants or obstacles before. They are there to test our resolve. These are not times for the faint hearted. They are for those who will stand as bold as a lion in the midst of life threatening danger. The Ephesian Christians were transported from Fear to Faith in their walk with God, when Paul intervened and declared these words: ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

¹¹Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. **(Ephesians 6: 10-12).**

It's your time. It's my time. It's time for action for God expects nothing less.

Unity Synod 2009

The Worldwide Moravian Church will meet for its 26th Unity Synod from July 27 – August 07 in London. The theme for the Synod is: ***"Discerning God's Mission through our Unity."***

The EWI Province is being represented by:

- Rev. Winelle Kirton Roberts
- Sis. Jeanette Smith-Barry
- Rev. Dr. Cortroy Jarvis

In addition, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Lewis will represent the Bishops at the Synod.

Please remember the Synod and our representatives in prayer, that God's will be done.

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A total of 72 persons are attending the Unity Synod in London including Observers. Regrettably, a number of Delegates were not granted Visas to travel and enter Britain and so are absent from this very important Synod. The entire Suriname delegation did not receive visas and were left stranded in Holland after they were told that in order to obtain visas, they had to travel from Suriname to Holland only to be told by the British Embassy that they would not be able to get an appointment until after the conclusion of Synod. In addition, a number of Delegates from Tanzania were denied visas as well. The

British Delegation were visibly embarrassed at the turn of events and through Bro. Robert Hopcroft, Chairman of the PEC, apologized profusely. The Synod was unanimous in its decision to send a letter appealing to the British Government even at the late stage, to allow the Delegates to enter and be a part of the Synod. Recognizing that Unity Synod takes place once every 7 years, it was the hope that something positive would come of the appeal.

The President of Synod is Bro. Abel Appel of South Africa. The 4 Vice Presidents for the Synod were chosen by the different regions, they are: Bro. James Hicks—North American Region, Sis. Jackie Morton—European Region, Sis. Winelle Kirton-Roberts —Caribbean Region and Bro. Alikisa Cheyo —African Region. The Chaplain is Sis. Angelene Swart from South Africa. The President of the Moravian Unity is Bro. Paul Gardner of Jamaica.

There are representatives from throughout the Moravian world and there is a sense of anticipation of great things to happen out of this assembly of our Church in spite of the challenges. Indeed, there continues to be the challenge of a divided Church in the Czech Republic and Honduras. In these two areas, there two strands of the Moravian Church, Traditional and Charismatic. At this time they are still miles apart from each other in spite of a number of initiatives on the part of the wider Moravian Unity to bring them together to heal the wounds which appear to be very deep. The world wide Moravian Church is been challenged to make this a matter of daily prayer, that there will be unity, healing and peace amongst our brothers and sisters in these countries where our Church exists.

The British Province must be commended for the wonderful organization on the ground. The accommodation is superb and the venue is conducive for work. It is indeed, a joy and privilege Sis. Winelle, Sis. Jeanette and Bro. Jarvis to represent the Province. Thank you EWIP from all of us.



Birthday Greetings for the month of August is extended to:

Bro. Romeo Challenger	12
Sis. Winelle Kirton-Roberts	20
Bro. Reuben Vessup	22
Sis. Anique Elmes-Matthew	22
Bro. Conrad Spencer	29
Sis. Angela Frederick	30



Anniversary Greetings for the month of August is extended to:

Bro. Winston & Sis. Bernadine Chase	12
Bro. Matthew & Sis. Jasmin Crooks	13
Bro. Selvin & Sis. June McMillan	20
Bro. Leon & Sis. Mabel Matthias	28
Bro. Dion & Sis. Eulencine Christopher	29