



The Information



"Always in our Life"

"Never in my life" is an expression of surprise or wonder in the face of the unusual or unexpected. Such a moment of exclamation may result from both positive and negative experiences or events that overtake us on the journey of life. For example, one may have been surprised by changes in one's employment, family, marriage, friendships or fortunes in life, and all one can say in review is "never in my life did I think, believe or imagine such and such would happen to me." The unusual and the unexpected come rushing into our lives in such a way that we are plunged into the rip-tide of wonder and amazement, whether it is to our joy or chagrin.

The Season of Advent reminds us of an eternal moment of wonder and amazement: the arrival of Christ, the Saviour of the world. We have only to think of the various passages of Scripture that speak of God's activity in preparing the world for the Christ Event. Such revelations filled the persons confronted with wonder and awe. Think of Zechariah, the Priest who was dumbfounded at the promise of a child (Luke 1:5ff). He was serving in the temple when he was told of the birth of John the Baptist. He was filled with such disbelief that he could be a father in his old age that I imagine him saying "never in my life." Then, there is the Virgin Mary - a young woman engaged to be married. The angel announced that she will become pregnant and give birth to "the Son of the Most High." Imagine her perplexity. Yet through the mist of her own thoughts and wonderings - (How could this be?) she yields: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to your word." Then, there is Joseph who could not understand why and how his wife to be could be pregnant. In a dream, God reveals the truth of the unusual as part of the divine redemptive plan. Rising from sleep, Joseph obediently commits to caring for Mary as his betrothed. The wonder continues as we think about Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth.

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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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Can you sense the wonder and awe in the salutation of Mary and the baby's kicking? Elizabeth exclaimed, "When I heard your greetings the babe (John the Baptist) leaped in my womb!" What a story! And yet, it gets better. Mary, nearing the time of delivery, is compelled to take a long journey with Joseph, her husband.

Mary arrives in Bethlehem where she gives birth in a cattle shed because there was no room in the inn. Wonder of wonder! Then, who can forget the glory displayed in the heavens as sleepy shepherds were astounded by the choir of angels singing. Oh, and let's not forget the wise men who had been tracking and interpreting the signs in the movement of the stars; then to follow that lone star which led them to the Christ child. They brought him gifts, most suited to his life and work as the one mediator between God and man. What wonder and awe in the details of the beautiful story of the Incarnation - The arrival of God in flesh for the sake of fallen humanity.

So, here we are! It is the Season of Advent, and we are again summoned by the details of the Story of Christ's coming into the world. Summoned to reflect, to repent, to prepare, and to advance in service and grow in grace. To be sure, we are challenged to open ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit as He discloses the deep things of God as we study and journey with the Christ who comes afresh to us each day.

Advent fills us with joyful wonder and amazing hope because God came to us in the vulnerability of human life. God's arrival in Jesus Christ is the assurance that all of life is gift: that life is a gift from God and life is the gift of God. As such, we are privileged to share this most precious gift. Most importantly, we are led to more than a perplexing wonder or amazement. Yes, we are led to wonderful daily experiences of faith, demonstrating concrete confidence in Jesus, the Christ, as Immanuel - God with us. This truth of God's personal presence with us moves us beyond the exclamation "never in my life" to the daily affirmation of the wonder that because he lives and shall come again, "He is always in our life". So then it is alright to exclaim and proclaim in this Advent Season that Christ is the only true God and the one who is "always in our life." If we do, then at his Second Advent, we will have no need to say, "never in my life did I think, believe or imagine that Christ would forsake me or disown me. Rather as we have received Him, He shall receive us. But for grace...! A Blessed Advent Season to all!

**Hymn of the Month
for December, 2013
Mikie Roberts (Rev.) Chair,
Provincial Hymnal Committee.**

For the past three months the hymns have focused on three separate seasons within the Church. In October we focussed on the mission of the Church as we observed missions throughout the Province. For the month of November we brought into the spotlight the theme of Thanksgiving as many congregations celebrated their harvests in-gathering. For this month of December, our hymn of the month addresses the Advent/Christmas seasons.



The hymn of the month for December is **Love came down at Christmas**. This hymn first appeared as a 19th century poem written by Christina Rossetti. In our current hymnal it is #63 and is sung to the traditional Irish melody **GARTAN**. The hymn is very simple and direct in declaring the message of the Advent/Christmas season. It is its simplicity that makes it very attractive as the hymn reminds us of the essence of the Christian Gospel – God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). The message of this hymn points us to the truth that the Advent/Christmas seasons calls us to give attention to the wonder of God's love being made manifest in the person of Jesus Christ. Below is the text for this hymn that has been appointed for the month of December:

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.



A REPORT on the 10th Assembly of the WORLD COUNCIL of CHURCHES (WCC) **by Rev. Dr. Errol Connor**

In this report, I want to give information that provide a basic understanding and appreciation of the journey, place and the work of the World Council of Churches (WCC). I am working with the assumption that there are few persons who have little knowledge of the work and witness of the WCC. So, even as I report on the 10th Assembly, I hope the reader will come away better informed.

MY JOURNEY

The journey from St. Thomas to South Korea took about 30 hours; 20 hours of that was flight time. I departed St Thomas on Sunday October 27th and journeyed to New York. From New York, I took a 14 hours non-stop flight to Seoul. From Seoul, I took a 45 minutes flight to Busan, the city in which the 10th General Assembly would be held. The journey took me across the International Date Line. It created a time difference of thirteen hours between The Caribbean and Busan. It was mid-morning Tuesday October 29th when I arrived in Busan but it was Monday night October 28th at home. For the next 10 days, I woke up to say, "good evening" and went to bed saying, "good morning" to folks at home. This was an experience shared by many who had travelled from outside of Europe and Asia to Busan. We all had to make time adjustments when thinking of or talking with our loved ones.

WE MEET IN KOREA

Busan is an exciting and well developed city. It has a population of more than four million. It is the second largest city in South Korea. According to WCC report, "The invitation to meet in Busan, South Korea came through the joint initiative of WCC member churches, evangelical churches and pentecostal churches. The church has grown rapidly in Korea, where nearly 25 % of the population is Christian. However, Korea remains a politically divided peninsula. The hope for re-unification is strong among many Koreans." The decision to hold the Assembly in the Republic of Korea was a first in Northeast Asia in the 65 years history of the WCC.

A HISTORICAL WINDOW

For more than half a century, the WCC has been promoting church unity by providing a forum that affirms and celebrates the fellowship of Christians and allows the church to speak with a unified and prophetic voice on social issues. The inaugural assembly that established the WCC was held in Amsterdam in 1948. Then in intervals of about 7 years, the assembly was held in Evanston (USA) 1954,

New Dehli (India) in 1961, Uppsala, (Sweden) in 1968, Nairobi (Kenya) in 1975, Vancouver (Canada) in 1983, Canberra (Australia) in 1991, Harare (Zimbabwe) in 1998, Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2006, and Busan in 2013.

It is of historic significance that The Rev. Dr. Philip Potter, a Methodist minister, an ecumenical giant, and a Caribbean scholar (born in Dominica) was unable to attend the 10th Assembly due to health reasons. According to a contribution made by Theodore Gill, "Dr. Potter is 92 years old. He was a youth delegate to the inaugural assembly in 1948. He has attended every assembly since then. He served as the third WCC General Secretary, 1974-1984. Gill described Dr Potter as a voice for youth and a voice for inclusion.

DIVERSE and RICH OFFERINGS

The current General Secretary of the WCC is Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit. He indicated that the 10th Assembly was the most diverse gathering of Christians in the history of the ecumenical movement. More than 5000 participants from more than 300 member churches, and from more than 140 countries gathered at the Bexco Conference Center in Busan. More than 800 of these participants were assembly delegates with both a voice and a vote in the decision-making process. This august gathering was grounded by the theme and prayer of the 10th Assembly: "Lord of Life Lead Us To Justice and Peace."

Summoned by the theme, we met daily for prayer, worship, Bible study, ecumenical conversations (around 21 different topics), six thematic plenaries, and the business plenaries where decisions were made about the programmes, policies, polity and public issue statements. There was also time provided for Confessional (denominational) meetings. Additionally, there was the *Madang*, the Korean word which means courtyard. This was a space in the Conference facility for encounter and sharing; a meeting place for special events and performances; an exhibition hall for the exchange of gifts and experiences; a place to gather the church leadership and representatives together for workshops and for discussion around issues of justice and peace. The Assembly offerings were ecumenically rich and diverse as were the cultures and the church traditions represented by the more than 5000 participants. Though diverse, discussions and decisions were rooted in the unifying focus of the theme and simple prayer - *Lord of life lead us to justice and peace.*

ASSEMBLY ISSUES

Among the issues to be addressed at this assembly were:

- 1) the politicization of religion,
- 2) the rights of religious minorities and stateless people
- 3) the peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula.
- 4) just peace.

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These matters will be addressed and summarised in the next issue of the INFORMATION.

However, if you desire more information you can explore the same by visiting the WCC website: wcc2013.info. Let me close this first part of my report by referring to the consensus models that guided the process of decision making, and the nomination and election of the WCC leadership: The 8 Presidents and the 150 members of the central committee.

CONSENSUS MODEL

The WCC uses a consensus model to conduct its business. In Plenary decisions are arrived at, after a period of debate, by raising one of two cards: the orange card indicated agreement; the blue card indicated objection and/or a need for further discussion on the matter. After prayerful listening and thoughtful engagement, with the achievement of a full or sufficient unanimity, the matter is decided up or down. However, prior to plenary sessions much work is done by delegates in the appointed committees. Therefore, the business plenary session served to refine and finalize the work of the committed by a process of consensus building.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE and PRESIDENTS

I was appointed to serve as a member of the Nominations Committee. This committee was required to nominate the president and the central committee members using some very specific criteria such as quota, regional representation, youth, gender, indigenous peoples, disability and size. The task was to provide:

- 1.) a list of 150 persons to form the Central Committee that would assist in carrying forward the work of the WCC, and
- 2.) a list of 8 presidents to represent the 8 regions into which member churches are divided.

Based on recommendations from regional delegations and the criteria, and after more than 20 hours of work, the committee made its submissions. At the end of the day the the WCC president for Latin America and the Caribbean is Rev. Gloria Nohemy Ulloa Alvarado. (Presbyterian, Columbia). Representing the Caribbean on the Central Committee are Rev. Dr. Paul Gardner (Moravian - Jamaica), Rev. Karl Johnson (Baptist - Jamaica) and Mrs. Elenor I Lawrence (Anglican, layperson-Barbados). Among the Latin Americans on the central committee we have Rev. Cora Antonio (Moravian - Nicaragua). One of the first decisions made by the new Central Committee was to elect as Moderator of the WCC the first woman and the first African in the person of the Rev. Dr. Agnes Abuom. You can read more about her in an article taken from the WCC website and included on page 6 of this newsletter. To be continued.....



Excerpts from the WCC—World Council of Churches 10th Assembly Web Page

Join the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

*By the tender mercy of our
God,*

*the dawn from on high will
break upon us,*

*to give light to those who sit in
darkness and in the shadow of
death, to guide our feet into the way
of peace.*

Luke 1:78-79

Dear Sisters and Brothers, we greet you in the name of Christ.

1. We gathered in the Republic of Korea at the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (30 October – 8 November 2013). Coming from 345 member churches of the fellowship and from partner organizations in the ecumenical movement, we joined in prayer, shared stories from our local communities and took to heart strong messages of agony and hope. We are thankful for the many engaging statements released. Our common pilgrimage traced the theme “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.”
2. In the city of Busan, we journeyed together on a road of transformation – we pray that as we are being transformed ourselves, God will make us instruments of peace. Many of us travelled to other parts of Korea where we witnessed the open wounds of a society torn by conflict and division. How necessary is justice for peace; reconciliation for healing; and a change of heart for the world to be made whole! We were encouraged by the active and committed churches we encountered; their work bears bountiful fruit.
3. We share our experience of the search for unity in Korea as a sign of hope in the world. This is not the only land where people live divided, in poverty and richness, happiness and violence, welfare and war. We are not allowed to close our eyes to harsh realities or to rest our hands from God’s transforming work. As a fellowship, the World Council of Churches stands in solidarity with the people and the churches in the Korean peninsula, and with all who strive for justice and peace.

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4. God our Creator is the source of all life. In the love of Jesus Christ and by the mercy of the Holy Spirit we, as a communion of the children of God, move together towards the fulfillment of the Kingdom. Seeking grace from God we are called, in our diversity, to be just stewards of God's Creation. This is the vision of the New Heaven and Earth, where Christ will "fill all in all" (Eph 1.23).
5. We live in a time of global crises. Economic, ecological, socio-political and spiritual challenges confront us. In darkness and in the shadow of death, in suffering and persecution, how precious is the gift of hope from the Risen Lord! By the flame of the Spirit in our hearts, we pray to Christ to brighten the world: for his light to turn our whole beings to caring for the whole of creation and to affirm that all people are created in God's image. Listening to voices that often come from the margins, let us all share lessons of hope and perseverance. Let us recommit ourselves to work for liberation and to act in solidarity. May the illuminating Word of God guide us on our journey.
6. We intend to move together. Challenged by our experiences in Busan, we challenge all people of good will to engage their God-given gifts in transforming actions.

This Assembly calls you to join us in pilgrimage.

May the churches be communities of healing and compassion, and may we seed the Good News so that justice will grow and God's deep peace rest on the world.

*Blessed are they who observe justice,
who do righteousness at all times!*

Psalm 106:3

God of life, lead us to justice and peace!

We intend to move together

"Join the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace" is the title of the Message of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, was convened on 30 October and drew to a close on 8 November 2013. An assembly, the highest governing body of the WCC, is held once every seven to eight years to endorse policies, review projects and point the future direction of the organization.

an assembly, adopted beforehand by the WCC central committee. The theme of the Busan assembly was this brief prayer: "God of life, lead us to justice and peace."

The original WCC assembly at Amsterdam in 1948 sent a message to the churches and the world that included the phrase "We intend to move together." The Message of 2013 affirms, in the context of the churches' invitation to the pilgrimage of justice and peace, "We intend to move together."

Describing their time in Busan and other parts of the country, participants in the 10th Assembly offered this affirmation:

"We share our experience of the search for unity in Korea as a sign of hope in the world. This is not the only land where people live divided, in poverty and richness, happiness and violence, welfare and war. We are not allowed to close our eyes to harsh realities or to rest our hands from God's transforming work. As a fellowship, the World Council of Churches stands in solidarity with the people and the churches in the Korean peninsula, and with all who strive for justice and peace."



First woman and African moderator elected to the WCC Central Committee



In one of their first decisions as the Central Committee for the World Council of Churches, the newly installed 150-member committee made history Friday by electing Dr Agnes Abuom of Nairobi, from the Anglican Church of Kenya, as the moderator of the highest WCC governing body.

Abuom, who was elected unanimously to the position, is the first woman and the first African in the position in the 65-year history of the WCC.

Two vice-moderators were elected, United Methodist Church Bishop Mary Ann Swenson from the USA and Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

“My open prayer is that we shall move forward together, in the next years, despite our diversities that have the potential to divide us,” Abuom said shortly after her election, “...and that the WCC will continue to remain an instrument for providing a safe space for all who can come and share their hopes, aspirations and visions, and prophetic voice.”

Abuom said the prophetic voice is vital for “ecumenism in the 21st century and the church in our world today.”

As the first woman moderator of the worldwide body, Abuom says the model of consensus discernment “resonates very well with feminine decision-making processes,” consultative and careful listening and seeking to understand the other person’s perspective.

Abuom has served on the WCC Executive Committee, representing the Anglican Church of Kenya. She is also a development consultant serving both Kenyan and international organizations coordinating social action programmes for religious and civil society across Africa.

Abuom was the Africa president for the WCC from 1999 to 2006. She has been associated with the All Africa Conference of Churches and WCC member churches in Africa. She is a co-president of the Religions for Peace and the National Council of Churches of Kenya.

Abuom’s areas of work include economic justice, peace and reconciliation.

Gennadios, who will serve his second term as the WCC

Central Committee vice-moderator, is a professor of theology. He served as vice-moderator of the WCC's Faith and Order Commission from 1998 to 2006. He was a staff member of the WCC's Faith and Order secretariat in Geneva from 1983 to 1993. He is involved in a number of bilateral dialogues involving the Orthodox, the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches among others.

In addition to being vice-moderator of the WCC Central Committee, Gennadios has served as a member of the presidium and of the governing board of the Conference of European Churches.

Swenson, who will also serve as the WCC Central Committee vice moderator, was ordained to the ministry by the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC) in 1973. Swenson also served as senior pastor of First United Methodist Church, Wenatchee, Washington from 1989 to 1992. While a pastor in Wenatchee, she also served as president of both the Board of Directors of the Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence Center, and on the Board of Directors of the North Central Washington AIDS Coalition from 1989 to 1992.

Swenson was elected to the episcopacy of the United Methodist Church by the 1992 Western Jurisdictional Conference. She now serves as president of the church's General Commission on Christian Unity and Inter-religious Concerns (GCCUIC).



Scintillating Performances at Gospel on Steel III

THERE was standing room only at the Montgomery Steel Ensemble's 'Gospel On Steel III' concert last Sunday. Held at the Montgomery Moravian Church, the



show captivated the audience from start to finish.

The evening began with a performance of the National Anthem by the group before an opening

prayer by Rev Dr. Derick Forrester and welcome remarks from Rev. Nevin Lewis.

Taking to the stage, the Montgomery Steel Ensemble played 'In Your Hands', 'Every Praise', 'O Happy Day' and 'Lord I Lift Your Name On High'. It was quickly followed by performances from Just Vessels. Members of this group include the Assistant Secretary of the Division of Infrastructure and Public Utilities (DIPU), Handel Beckles and his brother Farley Beckles.

Past Digicel Rising Star winner, Donald Job continued the momentum with his gifted voice, and by the time the duo of Xavier Strings took to the stage with their violins, only the coolness of the air conditioning unit kept the temperature from rising.

There were also performances by saxophonist Ricardo Seales and radio host Melissa 'Precious' Brouwn-Lee of 98.1 FM. Popular pannist and homeboy, Harrison 'Pepe' MacMillan showed his tremendous skill and talent on the national instrument.

All the guest artistes returned to the stage to perform collaborative pieces with the Montgomery Steel Ensemble. Members of Rhythmic Vibrations also thrilled the crowds with their singing, dancing and colourful costumes.

The show ended with a grand finale from the steel ensemble, performing such classics as 'My God Is Awesome', 'Royal Telephone', 'Walking Up The King's Highway' and 'My God Is An Awesome God'. A recording of the concert will soon be available on CD.

The Montgomery Steel Ensemble was formed in 1999 by a group of young people at the church.

The group's inaugural concert was in 2011, featuring Rev Nicole Balloosingh-Holder. Last year Christian musician, Christopher "Tambu" Herbert took centre stage.



Book of Order 2012

Copies of the New Book of Order are now available and can be purchased from the Provincial Headquarters for EC\$20.00 or US\$8.00 or BDS\$16.00 or TT\$48.00.

The Book of Order has been revised and updated with all the new resolutions from the 30th Provincial Synod held in St. Thomas in 2012.



PEC MEETINGS

The scheduled meetings for the PEC in 2014 are as follows:

January 29 – 30 in Antigua
April 24 – 26 in St. Kitts
July 03 – 06 in Trinidad
October 02 – 04 in St. Thomas

In addition, the Superintendents Conference for 2014 will take place in Antigua from January 31 – February 01, 2014.



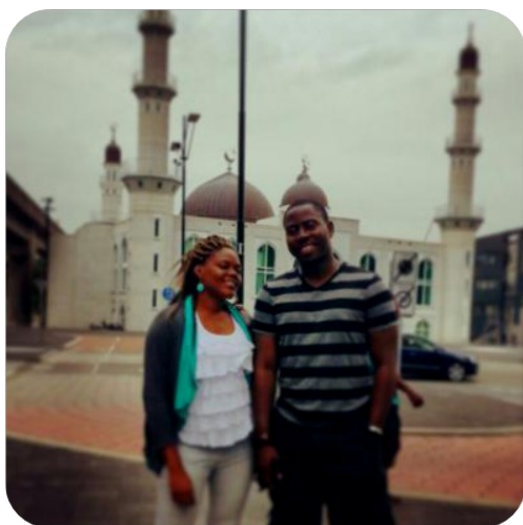
Cana 150th Anniversary Banquet

The Cana Moravian Church, Swetes Village, Antigua will climax its 150th Anniversary year long celebration with an Anniversary Banquet. This banquet will be held Saturday 28th December 2013 at the Grand Royal Antigua Beach Resort. Tickets are yet available at a cost of \$175.00.

Your support and prayerful commitment would be greatly appreciated."



Report from Mj Byron and Pastor Onita Samuel EWIP Youth Representatives at Unity Youth Heritage Tour 2013 - *Germany – Czech Republic – Netherlands-*



The Moravian Church Unity Youth Heritage Tour 2013 under the theme “**Mission Possible**” saw Youth coming from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and the United States of America. From these regions, 23 representatives and 4 committee members ranging from ages 17 to 35 hailed from the following Provinces:

British Province
Eastern West Indies Province
European Province
Jamaica Province
Malawi Province
South African Province
Northern Province of the United States
Southern Province of the United States
Tanzania Eastern Province
Tanzania Lake Tanganyika Province
Tanzania Southern Province
Tanzania South West Province

MJ and I arrived in Berlin, Germany on Saturday August 10th, 2013. Immediately we were thrust into European life as we hopped from bus to train then on foot with bags pulling through the streets finally arriving at a Moravian Church in Berlin, where we met the other Youth Representatives. Missing upon our arrival were our friends from Tanzania, who joined us a day later due to flight delays, and our South African Sister who unfortunately had to join us a week later.

Not knowing what to expect next, we then boarded a bus, and after over four hours of driving, we arrived in Herrnhut, Germany that very night. We spent the first week at the Family Inn (*Familienferienstätte*), a business owned by the Moravian Church. For the next couple of days, food was a major adjustment in Germany. Pork and potatoes were the main orders of the day; almost everything was made from or had pork in it. Whether we ate at the Inn or shared in a Barbecue at places we visited, pork was the preferred meat. Unfortunately for MJ and me, we do not eat pork, and reluctantly, cheese and bread became part of us. If you know German bread and cheese it is not something one should consume a lot. When we got to Czech Republic and Netherlands, the food was more diverse! Thanks to the Surinamese, we made up for the days we hardly ate in Germany.

Structure of Churches

Many of the interior of the churches were painted white with an altar, no pulpit. We learnt that Zinzendorf believed that white represented Purity and that colour, paintings and murals were distractions. Traditionally the seating arrangement in the church was organised in the following order facing the Altar, women sat on the left and men sat on the right

Single Married Widow Widow Married Single



There was no time for daily rest, except when travelling for hours on the bus since each day was packed with activities. Although the tour was mainly geared towards historically and physically tracing the path Moravians took, the tour indirectly surpassed that view. As devotions were held each morning and evening creatively by youth representatives and cultural presentations highlighting each were made, conversations started. Then, periodically, Bible Studies were led by the Committee Members focussing on the theme of Mission increasing the depth of our conversations. These discussions were major highlights of the tour, some of which included:

1. Who is a Moravian? Identical amongst all who were part of the tour was the constant question and lack of answer as to who is a Moravian, and being identified as Mormons. None of us had an answer. We were then challenged to not start with where we come from, but identify ourselves as a Church that believes in Jesus Christ and then build from there. Some believed we need to set a common standard because we are not uniformed.

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Others asked 'what can we as Moravians offer and have to offer'. We were forced to stop looking at the differences across the region because our culture and geographic locations and experiences majorly impacted the difference. We decided to zone in on the common things: Lamb/Moravian Seal, singing, food and the Word of God. The discussion made us realise how much we do have in common.

2. Sex in the Church. Condom use created a rift especially amongst the Tanzanians and the other provinces. It was established that we preach abstinence first. However, one cannot be naive to the reality that persons are engaging in sex before marriage and pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted infections (STIs) become a major concern. This is why condom use is encouraged. On the other hand, the Tanzanians made it clear that talking about sex and condom use in the Church is only reserved for discussions on family planning geared to married couples. Children and Youth are not exposed to such and promote condom use is not encouraged. Their view is that once one begins to talk about condom use the Church is therefore promoting sex before marriage. Then, a few of us got the chance to engage a Student Pastor and congratulate him on his engagement. As we spoke, he shared that he lives with his fiancé and it is becoming a popular thing in Germany. Finally, Homosexuality became another major topic. It was noted that The Moravian Church Worldwide says no to such behaviour but will not discriminate. It was very prevalent in the Netherlands – we witnessed firsthand the strong homosexual community in Amsterdam. More than 80% of the Souvenirs were sexual in nature. It was evident that even amongst us the discussion was uncomfortable while others were confident about being for it or against it.

3. Alcohol consumption. The Europeans expressed that drinking was a common practice amongst church members and that they also engaged in such practice. Again, the Tanzanians were very vocal on this issue. They challenged us to consider whether we would rather put cultural practices above the Word of God.

4. Decline in Membership. Spontaneously, this conversation took place as we sat one afternoon at Berthelsdorf in the Lutheran Church and was discussed at length to understand our purpose as a church and where we really fit into God's major plan as Moravians. As the tour went on and cultural presentations were done, persons passionately shared experiences they have had. It was noted by many that we no longer do missions and evangelise. We are no longer helping each other or sending persons out to do mission. Furthermore, we need to share more

ideas with each other as to how we can grow not only physically or encouraging persons to become a Moravian, but part of the Kingdom of God. We recognised that the European Context is struggles the most. During a presentation, the representative from Tanzania East shared that the church in his area is growing. However, the growth is not due to mass evangelism, but instead a natural growth. He further explained that it is through child birth why their churches are growing. We were challenged to see that even if we go out and evangelise and one person becomes part of the Kingdom of God, that one is good enough.

We recognized that we also struggle with youth ministries as life today is becoming more demanding and persons seem more career-focused and not God-focused. Some Provinces spoke of lack of participation and opportunities not being given to youth to participate in worship. New ministries are not accepted e.g dance ministries. Someone shared that the Sunday the dance ministry was launched, members walked out of the Church. So those Provinces which have strong Youth ministries shared how they have been able to encourage the youth and assist in creating a balance.

The context and style of worship and was another thing highlighted. Some Provinces are grappling with 'Contemporary' songs vs hymns or Liturgy vs. Spontaneous worship. One representative from the Northern USA Province shared that on Saturday evenings, some members meet for worship and engage using contemporary songs. On Sunday, it was strictly hymns. Only until a question was posed to him as to why this was so that he recognised the separation. We came to the conclusion that location and experiences will and should inform how one worships. In this way, the worship can and should speak to the people's experiences.

Although each person got along, the racial divide was obvious. It was more pronounced each time we had to choose roommates. Blacks: (Tanzanians and Malawians stuck together), (Caribbean, 1 South African, 1 North American); Whites: (Germans, British, Netherlands, Americans and 1 mixed South African). Is this something that is affecting our Church today?

It doesn't change the fact that though our skin type, geographical location and experiences may be different, we all share the same History; a history that could not have been captured in one place and so we had the opportunity to visit many places. Each place we visited visually spoke of our rich Heritage. We were impressed at how consistent, knowledgeable and passionate each tour guide was, as he or she spoke about Moravian History in each of the following places:

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GERMANY

- Moravian Church in Herrnhut

- **Sculpture Trail remembering Zinzendorf's 300th birthday.** Through the Moravian Forest sculptures are placed along a trail each depicting the journey and struggles of Moravians. Exiting the forest the sculptures took us to Zinzendorf's childhood village where the ruins of his initial Castle are.

- **Moravian Mission in Cottbus** – Spontaneous Mission home, with a resident Pastor. Offers a feeding programme, Support Group for young nursing mothers, a ministry for men, specifically Fathers. There is no structured worship. Our contribution was assisting the home prepare for the winter season, by storing wood.

- **God's Acre** (Moravian Cemetery) where the graves of Zinzendorf and many early missionaries like Dober can be found.

- **Castle of Zinzendorf in Berthelsdorf**, a house bought from his grandmother.

- **Lutheran Church in Berthelsdorf**, - place where Moravians in Herrnhut worshipped before deciding to build their own church. The August 13th service continues at this church, and we were able to be part of it by sharing in the Intercessory Prayers.

- **Dresden** (Historical city that was damaged during the War). It is also home to a small Moravian Community. The Church is presently unable to fully pay the Pastor; therefore, an arrangement was made where he works 75% outside of the Church and 25% in the Church.

- **Moravian Star Factory**, in Herrnhut which produces the Moravian Star: an idea developed by a Math teacher at the Moravian School as a means of teaching his students Geometry. Every single star is still handmade.

- **Moravian Archive** in Herrnhut (1764) holds our records, and will celebrate 250 years in 2014. The director mentioned that the archive is 'not about documenting what people did, but what God has done'. A new wing had to be built to accommodate the growth and protection of each document.

- **Moravian Community in Ebersdorf**, the oldest Moravian Church in Germany. We stayed in the 1 Moravian Square. This community is where Zinzendorf met his first wife. The organ used in this church is the original from the Castle Zinzendorf's wife once occupied. The square does not function as it did, and so the building once used for the Single Sisters is now a Museum displaying Moravian artefacts.

¹ Most Moravian Communities were shaped in a square. The Church in the Center and the buildings surrounded formed a square. In each building you would have the single sisters, another building was the single brothers, married couples etc.

- **Herrnhag** is another Moravian Community/Settlement founded later by Zinzendorf after he left Herrnhut. Today it is downsized to the old Single Sisters home (Moravian Pastor and a few ecumenical families live here), Count House (many rooms and chapel) used as guest houses and for events, a graveyard and a well; an employment project is available for unemployed young people.

CZECH REPUBLIC

- Kunvald

o Kallich – known as a secret place of worship used by Moravians after the Thirty Years war. The intricacy and natural formation of the rocks, and the natural sand below the feet, created a great hiding place amongst nature to worship. Later that day, we had lunch at Železný Brod congregation

o **Visited the first Moravian House** – settlement where Moravians first worshipped before their dispersion out of Czech Republic. Today the building serves as a Museum.

- **Moravian Church Potštejn** where we had lunch with a few members of the congregation.

- **Prague** – we stayed at a hotel and had the opportunity to worship with one of the last congregations established in this city. Unable to own their own sanctuary, they presently worship at a Home for the Elderly. The devotional group on duty, of which Sis Onita was a part, participated in this Service by sharing a short meditation and song.

NETHERLANDS

- **Moravian Church Zeist:** Our final days of the tour were spent with different families in the Moravian Square community. It is a very active Moravian community. All of its buildings are still there; however, the operations are different. Each home is now rented to and reserved only for Moravians to live in, with a few spaces rented to businesses. There are a Church, School, Home for the Elderly and God's Acre.

- **Amsterdam** – Visited many places in this city to learn of its rich History. There are two Moravian churches in this city, with a large Surinamese influence. One Church is located in South East Amsterdam with a middle school and the other is King's Church. Although the interior of these churches are white, one could not tell that these buildings were a church. They represent modern day architecture.

Conclusion

Our closing exercise was a Communion Service led by Rev. Sacha Lambert, symbolic of our unity. Many of us left Europe on Saturday August 24th; some by plane and others by train. MJ and I are indeed grateful to the Church for having been selected to share in this experience.

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We left not only amazed by what we saw through physical structures and tracing the Moravian Journey physically and visually but with eyes opened from the discussions we had. Everything we experienced cannot be placed in this report but we hope you were able to see Germany, Czech Republic and Netherlands through our eyes and with our photos. Today, a closed facebook page has since been created by the Committee targeted as a place where we can share ideas to assist each other. This tour will take place in another seven years and perhaps thought will be given to visit another Province.



Storing Wood for Winter at Mission in Cottbus, Germany



Moravian Church Potstjen, Czech Republic



Moravian Star Factory, Herrnhut Germany



Zinzendorf's Castle, Berthelsdorf Germany



Secret Place of Worship in Czech, During Wars



Youth Representatives and Members of the Zelezný Brod Congregation, Czech Republic

Fulfilling the Mandate - Submit to God's Rule



MORAVIAN UNITY

Committee focuses on worldwide matters at meeting in Bethlehem

Members of the Unity Executive Committee met in Bethlehem, Pa., in September to pray for and conduct business on behalf of the Unity Board of the Worldwide Moravian Church. The three days of meetings focused on matters that pertain to the Unity provinces, mission provinces and mission areas around the Moravian world.

During our meeting in September, we received reports from the Unity Commission on Theology, the Unity Mission and Development Board and the work of the Unity Business Administrator. We addressed concerns raised by tensions in Eastern Tanzania, Honduras and Alaska. We discussed matters that may be brought before the Unity Board meeting in 2014.

Two developments of the past several years have significantly impacted how the UEC does its work. The 2009 Unity Synod authorized the hiring of a Unity Business Administrator to organize and coordinate the work of the Unity. The Rev. Dr. Jørgen Bøytler has brought a tremendous amount of communication and coordination with all provinces of the Unity.

The other significant development is email and the capacity to scan documents. Whereas weeks would often pass between an event and the communication of that event, now members of the Unity Executive Committee learn of it within hours. This allows the UEC to spend less meeting time on sharing information and more on developing solutions to address situations.

The Unity Executive Committee includes one representative of each of the four regions of the Unity. Br. Robert Hopcroft represents the European Region and serves as President of the Unity Board. Br. Nosigwe Buya represents the African Region and serves as Vice-President of the Board. Br. Cortroy Jarvis represents the Caribbean Region; Sr. Betsy Miller represents the American Region. Each representative is elected by his or her region at the Unity Board meeting. Br. Jørgen Bøytler, Unity Business Administrator, lives in Denmark. ■

Betsy Miller is president of the Northern Province Provincial Elders' Conference and a member of the Unity Executive Committee. Below: Cortroy Jarvis, Jørgen Bøytler, Robert Hopcroft, Nosigwe Buya and Betsy Miller.





Birthday Greetings for the month of December is extended to:

Bro. Alban St. Hill	02
Bro. Ulric Smith II	02
Sis. Eloise Stephen	02
Sis. Liselle Roberts	08
Sis. Lucia David	09
Sis. Bonnie E. B. W. Smith	10
Sis. Cicely Athill-Horsford	12
Bro. Hilton Joseph	18
Sis. Nasel Ephraim	18
Bro. Vankys Juan Isaac	18
Sis. Maureen Lewis	23
Bro. Alvin Barker	25
Bro. Matthew Crooks	25
Sis. Olga Baird Joefield	25



Anniversary Greetings for the month of December is extended to:

Bro. Cortroy Jarvis & Sis. Althea Jarvis	07
Bro. Ulric & Sis. Bonnie E. B.W. Smith	10
Bro. Winston & Sis. Karen Jones	13
Bro. George & Sis. Zenaida Ramsay	18
Bro. Algernon & Sis. Denise Smith-Lewis	20
Bro. Errol & Sis. Joycelyn Connor	22
Bro. Patrick Cadogan & Sis. Nasel Ephraim	22
Bro. Patmore & Sis Jovanca Lewis-Smith	27
Bro. Hilton & Sis. Sharon-McCardy Joseph	29
Bro. Samuel & Sis. Gwendolyn Jacobs	31

Quote of the Day

Love begins by taking care of the
closest ones - the ones at home.

Mother Teresa

Let us share some Love
this Christmas

God is in Control, Trust Him

A man had just gotten married and was returning home with his wife. They were crossing a lake in a boat, when suddenly a great storm arose. The man was unmoved, but the woman was scared to death, because the boat was small, the storm was really huge, and it seemed as if they were going to be drowned at any moment. The man sat silently, calm and quiet, as if nothing was happening. The woman was trembling and she asked, "Are you not afraid?" "This may be our last moment of life! It doesn't seem as if we will be able to reach the other shore. Only some miracle can save us; otherwise death is certain. The man laughed and took a sword out of its sheath. The woman was even more puzzled: What he was doing? Then, he brought the naked sword close to the woman's neck, so close that just a small gap was there, it was almost touching her neck. He asked, "Are you afraid?" She started to laugh and said, "Why should I be afraid? If the sword is in your hands, why I should be afraid? I know you love me." He put the sword back and said, "This is my answer". I know God loves me, and the storm is in His hands. My friends, even though the storms of life may be raging around you and all hope may seem lost, just remember that God is in control and He can calm any storm. TRUST HIM!!



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