

Unity Newsletter

Message from the President of the Unity, Rev. Dr. Paul Gardner



The season of Advent, and Christmas in particular, holds great significance in the life of the church. During this time we will listen again to the reading of prophecies concerning the Messiah as well as the messages of the Angels to the earthly parents of Jesus and to the Shepherds. The messages instilled hope in a people who were prone to doubt and a people who perhaps believed that they would not live to see such great a wonder. **“For unto you is born this day a Saviour who is Christ the Lord”.** The message of hope remains valid as today as it was on that first occasion when Christ’s birth was announced. **“The Shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all**

they had heard and seen, as it had been told” (Luke 2:20). The very announcement of Christ’s birth signaled a new political and social order. It radically changed the status quo. The bearers of the gospel of God were not some elitist and privileged members of the society. The bearers were hirelings; men who were entrusted to look after the flock that invariably did not belong to them. It sets the stage later for the kind of persons that Jesus would call out to be his disciples. In many parts of our Unity we continue to wrestle with situations of injustice, conflict, violence, and economic and social exclusions. We see the homeless, the hungry, the displaced, the migrant worker, the stranger, persons infected and those affected by HIV/AIDS. In these situations we are being called to bring Christ’s message of hope. Hope is not a pie in the sky dream; it’s not a projection of what we

desire or how we desire things to be. Christian hope is rooted in the certainty of God’s justice, God’s vindication, God’s promise of a better and brighter tomorrow. Hope provides us with a passion to live differently and not set our eyes on perishable things. As a church we have seen the miracle of love around us. We have heard testimonies from our brothers and sisters that have led them to glorify and praise God even more. Our task as members of the Unity is to create signs of hope; signs of a better world, a better condition for many who are experiencing great difficulties. We live with the certainty that Christ, our hope, will set us free from all debilitating conditions. It is my hope that during this Advent and Christmas we will instill hope in those with whom we come in contact so that they may see the great possibility of the coming year.



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Message from the Unity Business Administrator, Rev. Dr. Jørgen Bøytler (PHD)



“The Unity comprises of 25 Unity Provinces and Mission Provinces, which are all independent parts of a world-wide church, knit together through a common identity, history and a will to exist and develop as one church, the Unitas Fratrum.”

A new position in the Unity, the one of the Unity Business Administrator has since 1st of August, 2010 been filled. The core functions include preparations of elections, Unity Board meetings, Unity Synod and other conferences. It also includes monitoring the execution of the decisions taken by the Unity Synod/Unity Board, editing and publishing of the Unity Newsletter and other sources of information, monitoring payments and finances of the Unity and the UMDB, and to organize and maintain the archive of all Unity Synod and Unity Board documents, including COUF. The task as liaison between Provinces, representative tasks and other duties assigned by the Unity Board completes the job description. The Unity is rapidly developing, new Mission Provinces and Mission Areas are added and some of them develop into new Unity Provinces. The Moravian Church lives and serves in different cultures, from arctic to tropical areas, from wealthy to

poor parts of the world. The theological views within the Unity differ according to history, culture and traditions and prepare for challenges, which at times threaten to distance Moravians from one another. Amidst these challenges, the Unity is seeking to find the essentials that are the common ground, on which the Moravian Unity can live and serve the world.

The Unity comprises of 25 Unity Provinces and Mission Provinces, which are all independent parts of a world-wide church, knit together through a common identity, history and a will to exist and develop as one church, the Unitas Fratrum. Paying due respect to the structure and identity, the Unity Synod felt the need for having the office of the Unity manned by an administrator. It is witnessing to the will of the Unity Synod to further the fellowship and unity within the world-wide Moravian Church.

The development of the Unity, with an increasing number of members and

provinces, offers new opportunities and new challenges. Tensions within and between provinces and differing theological views on some issues must all be seen as part of the global reality, in which the Unity works. The ways of dealing with these issues pass through honest and open discussions and respect for the points of view expressed. Transparency and a will to understand is of paramount importance as is the realization of the fact that opinions have developed in contexts, of which Moravians live; the Moravian Church is after all contextualized into many cultures and traditions. However, what gives hope is not only the day to day life as church within the provinces, but also the many contacts, the meetings, gatherings and other events, in which Moravians together join in service, sharing and worship. The future is rife with hope and the Unity has great promises of blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Unity Budget

We are hereby appealing to the Provinces to make sure their contributions to the Unity are forwarded in a timely manner. Please make sure every effort is made to remit the contributions from the Provinces, according to the obligations. Without these con-

tributions, the Unity cannot function as wished by the Provinces. The Unity Synod 2009 has once again decided on the contributions to be paid by each Province, and as part of the worldwide Unity, the contribution from each Province should be paid, not only

because it is an obligation, but also in solidarity with the good number of Provinces that pay and because the Unity as a worldwide church has been given important tasks in this world. Thank you for honoring this task.



Unity Board Meeting, Calgary, October 2010



The Unity Board at the Kingsfold Retreat Centre outside Calgary in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Canada.

The Unity Board met in Calgary, Canada on 1-8. of October. The executive committee of the Unity consists of Rev. Dr. Paul Gardner (Caribbean Region), president, Rev. Frieder Vollprecht (European Region), vice

president, Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Miller (North American Region). Rev. Lennox Mcubusi represents the African Region until further notice.

A message to the Unity and a list of resolutions from the Unity Board

meeting are posted on the Unitas Fratrum website

www.unitasfratrum.org

*In All Things Love:
Mission as our
Common Heritage*

Website Unitas Fratrum

The website www.unitasfratrum.org is being up-dated. A revised Directory of Chairs and Superintendents can be found. Please inform the office of the Unity Busi-

ness Administrator boytler@ebu.de when changes in contact information occur. Please also report any incomplete or incorrect information in the Directory.

New devices and services are currently being planned for the website. Please make the website known throughout the Unity.

Bishops' consecrations

Three bishops of the Unity have been consecrated within the past few months: On October 17th, 2010 Br. Volker Schulz (ECP) was conse-

crated in Basel, Switzerland, on 13th of November 2010 Br. Christian Giesler (MCNP) was consecrated in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and on No-

vember 13th, Br. Frieder Waas (ECP) was consecrated in Herrnhut, Germany. Prayerful support of the newly consecrated bishops is asked for.

Consultation of Moravian Theological Training Institutes, Paramaribo, Suriname 2010

Cultural evening at the consultation



Working at the consultation

On the Consultation of Moravian Theological Institutes, which took place in Paramaribo, Suriname on October 6-12, 2010, the participants committed themselves to support each other with all means at their disposal, and share resources, to advance the cause of quality theological education, to contextualize the theological training in order to produce pastors who are equipped to render a dedicated ministry to their Provinces and congregations, and to implement those decisions with regard to theological education made by the last Unity Synod. Further a commitment to work as theological educators to support women in ministry, and to the effort of

introducing or maintaining pastoral care programs and refresher training courses that appropriately address violence against women and children and that equip pastors to give proper pastoral care were expressed.

The Creation of a Unity Task Force for Theological Education was initiated with the main focus on determining a common curriculum for Moravian subjects. A Recommendation for Technical Support and Networking was given. Further, a recommendation on Mission and Evangelism from the consultation proposes that the Unity Standing Committee on Theology (USCT), in consultation with the Board of Mission and Evangelism is asked

to request information from the Provinces of the Unity on mission and evangelism. The information should stipulate what had worked in the past and what is currently working. This is with a view of developing a curriculum on Moravian mission and evangelism. Provinces should be asked to encourage their pastors to engage in continuous education in mission and evangelism. Finally, a recommendation of Student and Faculty Exchange was expressed. About 30 representatives from Moravian theological institutions and from MCF and the Unity took part in the consultation.

The
Creation of
a Unity Task
Force for
Theological
Education
was
initiated



The participants in the Consultation of Moravian Theological Institutes

Unity Offering 2011

The Unity Prayer Day offering 2011 will benefit the erection of a Secondary School in Urambo District, Lake Tanganyika Mission Province, Tanza-

nia. Information about the project can be found on

www.unitasfratrum.org.

The provinces are requested to send the mon-

ies no later than the end of June 2011 to the Unity Fund, based in London.

The reporting on the amount received will follow later in the year.

News from across the Unity

Suriname

This year the Moravian province of Suriname celebrates its 275th anniversary; the exact date is December 20th.

The celebrations started on March 1, 2010 with the launching of the website

www.moravianchurch.sr

In the first week of October a theological consultation with the Moravian seminaries worldwide took place in Paramaribo.

In the last week of October, the Archive Commission organized a cycle of lectures which was attended by many people, and at the end of the month October there was a music festival of church choirs culminating in the performance of a choir consisting of 250 school children from different Moravian schools. Brother Ritfeld celebrated at the end of November

the fact that he has been a bishop of the Unitas Fratrum for thirty years now. On December 5th, four brothers and 1 sister were ordained as Deacons and 1 brother and 1 sister received the blessing of Presbyter.

The culmination of the celebration will be on the 20th of December 2010 in a special service in the evening

Malawi

It was an announcement full of excitement and joy in disbelief when Rev. Clement Jonah Mwaitebele (Provincial Board Chairperson of Moravian Church in Southern Tanzania) announced to the gathering representatives of the Mission Province's Synod in Malawi. ***I wish to announce that from now onwards the leadership of the church here in Malawi shall rest in the hands of indigenous Malawians and no more Missionaries from Tanzania or elsewhere to take up overall leadership role***

of the church here in Malawi, this, the Unity Board has directed!! Therefore Malawians you have grown up for the past 10 years the church has existed in Malawi you have been in the hands of missionaries and today this synod comes as historical moment (transitional) giving us pride that we cultivated, seeded/planted, watered and today are now proudly saying we have harvested in bumper yields.

The synod lasted for three complete days from

21st October to 23rd October 2010 and it was recognized as the number 6th synod of the church in Malawi.

The Moravian Church in Malawi is a registered trustee with the registrar of companies since 2001. The church has currently nine (9) large congregations and six (6) sub stations country wide. It is one of the fastest growing churches in Malawi rated by the government of the republic of Malawi as one of the true and committed partner in development. (continued)

December 2010



Historical picture of a Moravian building in Paramaribo

This year the Moravian province of Suriname celebrates its 275th anniversary; the exact date is December 20th



Moravian Church helping people with a Christian Love!!!



The church ministers a person using a holistic approach

Malawi continued:

The church is a member of the Malawi Council of Churches (MCC)

Social and Development Services

The church ministers a person using a holistic approach. This is a result from the challenges emanating from poverty, HIV/AIDS and up to natural disasters such as prolonged droughts, prolonged earthquakes and dry spell that have left a traditional poor Malawian leaving in extreme need. Malawi is a small country in sub Sahara Africa with a population of 13 million people and rated amongst 7 poorest countries in Africa. Having observed the country being challenged by the afore mentioned calamities, the church established a Church and Society Department that helps the church deal with social and economic development issues since 2006. The following are the interventions the church complements with the government in eradicating poverty;

Eradicating hunger through food security at household level especially to the most needy people

Due to prolonged droughts and dry spells in the traditional disaster prone districts of Karonga, Chikhwawa and Nsanje the Church with support from Moravian Church Foundation – MCF Netherlands has helped needy people with Fertilizers and Seeds and to people living with HIV/AIDS has intervened with supplementary feeding such as Likuni Phala, Maize Flour and Cooking oils with the same support from MCF since 2006

Earthquake Response Project Karonga district of the northern Malawi which hosts the Moravian Church Head Offices was hit by a massive earthquake that measured 6.8 on the Richter Scale on eve of 20th December 2009 this was a climax of series of other earthquakes that hit the district starting from the evening of 6th December 2009. More than 6 people lost their lives (RIP), more than 200 people got injured. More than 23,000 houses were damaged and out of these 10,000 completely fallen walls. The situation was and remains worse almost comparing to that of Haiti. The church through support from HMM – Germany and MCF- Netherlands re-

sponded with emergency relief and people were helped with the following; Temporal Shelters (Tarpaulins), Assorted food items, Kitchen Utensils, Maize and Mosquito nets etc.

Women Empowerment Project; Women are the worst marginalized group in the societies a situation that limits their chances of exercising their rights in development. Malawi registers high disparity levels between men and women. Literature has revealed that social cultural factors are the reasons women fall prey to the circumstances. A women empowerment project is being implemented in the church with the main view of promoting women’s inclusion in both social and spiritual development. We learn that women are key to development and through empowering women, the whole church will greatly be empowered there goes the collation;

continued next page



A Women Piggery Farming at Kiwe Moravian Congregation visited by women from Karonga Moravian Congrega-



Women of Karonga who received nets after training

Malaria Control Programme
The church in Malawi also joined the Global war against Malaria as one way of complying to global need

spelt out in the Millennium Development. The project targeted Pregnant Women and Women with under five year old children among others;

Let's join hands in the unity to help liberate people living in difficult circumstances! Doing so is fulfilling the Gospel.

December 2010

Eastern Tanzania Mission Province

The Eastern Tanzania Mission Province held a synod in Morogoro, Tanzania on November 29th through December 2nd 2010. A Church Constitution for the Mission Province was

adopted and the election of the Provincial Board resulted in election of a new Board. The chairman is Br. Clement Fumbo. The Unity Business Administrator took part and

had the opportunity to visit the Mission Area of Zanzibar together with leaders of the Mission Province. Prayers for the Moravians in Zanzibar will be appreciated.



Bishop Cheyo speaks to the newly elected Provincial Board

Up-coming events

Unity Executive Committee

The next Unity Executive Committee meeting is planned to take place 4th – 6th of July 2011 in Christiansfeld, Denmark

Theological Committee of the Unity

The Theological Committee of the Unity is planning to meet in London on May 4th – 6th, 2011. A number of issues will be dealt with, including some of the resolutions of the Unity Board meeting and the Consultation of

Moravian
Theological
Institutes

Unity Mission and Development Board

Plans are being made to have the Unity Mission and Development Board convene in Tanzania in fall 2011.

Unity delegation visits to Mission Provinces 2010

In consequence of the Unity Board meeting and wishes from the Mission Provinces in East- and Central Africa, visits by Unity delegations are being planned in the first half of 2011.

**"In essentials,
unity; in
nonessentials,
liberty; and in all
things, love."**

