

UNITY NEWSLETTER



December 08

TO: All Unity Provinces, Affiliated Provinces, Mission Provinces and Bishops

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Warm greetings as we celebrate the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ with the encouragement from Luke 2 verse 10

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people”

The world we live in is full of gloom, violence and sadness. There is a longing for the advent of “good news of great joy”. Just as the angels brought the shepherds the good news so the world is waiting for the church to be the source of great joy to all people everywhere.

As we celebrate the festival of the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are reminded of a broken world looking for transformation and renewal. We are called upon to be the bearers of good news that will have an impact and make a difference in the midst of poverty, HIV/AIDS, war, oppression, injustice and suffering.

We are challenged not to be afraid but to proclaim the good news in word and deed of a liberating Christ that continues to enter into the darkness of our world providing a new day of hope where great joy will prevail.

May this Christmas and the year ahead be filled with opportunities to thank and praise God for the great joy of sharing and living the good news of the Gospel!

UNITY PRESIDENT

Sr Angelene Swart has completed her term of office as Unity President and the whole Unity extends its very best thanks for her time in office and for all the efforts she has made on behalf of us all. We are delighted that she has agreed to act as chaplain for Unity Synod in the UK in July & August 09.



Rev Dr Paul Gardner, President of the Jamaican Province was elected as President. We wish to congratulate Br Gardner and pray for God’s abundant blessings on him in this new and challenging task.



Many Provinces had their synods during the course of the year. We wish to extend our good wishes to the new leadership of the Provinces. May our Chief Elder, Jesus Christ continue to strengthen and guide our church leaders to emulate Christ in leading God’s people.

UNITY PRAYER DAY

The 2008 Unity Prayer day offering was for the girls’ Secondary school in Mbeya, South Western Province in Tanzania and has raised almost £29,000 to date. We thank the America South, America North, Labrador, MCT Southern Province, Western Tanzania, Eastern West Indies, European Continental and the British Provinces that have already forwarded their offerings and would encourage the outstanding Provinces to forward their contributions as soon as possible.

The 2009 offering has been earmarked for youth work within the Unity. This offering is taken on the first Sunday in March.

UNITY SYNOD

We look forward to a very blessed synod. Invitations and registration forms have been circulated. We urge all Provinces to forward the forms immediately in order to secure the granting of visas. Please remember the need to have age and gender balance in your delegation to synod. All delegates must make sure that they will attend in order not to waste money by purchasing tickets for people who do not manage to obtain a visa. Presidents are reminded to complete their reports and proposals and forward it to the Unity President and the London Office at your soonest convenience.

FINANCES

The response of the Provinces with regard to their financial obligations towards the Unity is very disappointing. Letters have been sent to all Provinces in arrears without much success. Some provinces did not settle their outstanding bills for the Bishops' conference that took place in 2007 although they have been invoiced. This is an urgent plea to please fulfill your financial obligations!

TASK FORCE

A group of five members namely Sr A. Swart as Unity President, Rev A Musomba representing Africa, Br J. Geis representing North America, Rev J Bøytler representing Europe and Rev Dr P Gardner representing the Caribbean Region met in Cape Town, South Africa from 22 – 27 October 2008 examining the unfolding phenomenon of the growth of the church in Africa. They also discussed the impact of this growth on our world-wide Unity. The meeting was very fruitful. A report and a few proposals were prepared for Unity synod.

NEWS FROM OUR PROVINCES

The Mission Province of Eastern Tanzania and Zanzibar purchased land from their own funds in Zanzibar to erect the first Moravian Church on the island. Sr A. Swart together with members from the Moravian Church Foundation and the African regional leaders had the honour to visit the plot and commend the project to our Lord. Your continued prayers for the work of our Mission Provinces and Mission Areas are requested.

The African Region met in Tanzania to share their various ministries and to plan on common issues such as HIV/AIDS, poverty in Africa, mission work and partnerships.

The Moravian Church Foundation had their annual meeting in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania. Opportunity was also created to visit the congregations and projects.

Mission work in Sierra Leone under the supervision of the US Southern Province is progressing very well.

Members of the Unity Board Executive visited Honduras Province and the Czech Province. The groups in Honduras wish to have spiritual retreats in order to grow together and work towards reconciliation. Funding for this project is needed and the Executive is trying to solicit funds to assist them as this is their initiative.

CONSECRATION

Rev. William H. Nicholson from the Alaskan Province was consecrated as Bishop of the Unitas Fratrum. We pray for the Spirit to lead our Bishop to be a true and humble shepherd as he upholds the scriptures



as the profound word of God for His people.

LAMBETH CONFERENCE

We are thankful that Bishop Beth Torkington could represent our world-wide Unity at the Lambeth Conference. Sr Torkington reported very positively on this experience with Anglicans from all over the world, including a number of other female bishops.



STAR MOUNTAIN



The work at Star Mountain is being restructured and the Centre will be closed for a short period from Christmas to enable this exercise to be carried out. Sr Rauda Marouf has relinquished her role after 14 years service and we would thank her for all that she has done during that time. Donors can be assured that the work continues and that all donations will be used in the same way as previously.

IN MEMORIAM

It was with sadness that we have learnt of the passing away of Rev S. Simwanza, the president of the South Western Province of Tanzania in August 2008.

Bishop S. Mwakasyuka passed away in November 2008, in Lutengano, Tanzania.

We thank God for their committed and faithful service as servants of the Lord. May their memory be cherished and continue to inspire all of us for service.

THANKS AND APPRECIATION

We, the Executive of the Unity Board wish to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all our Unity, Affiliated and Mission Provinces, our Mission areas and Unity Undertakings for your co-operation and support during the past year. May our God bless you all abundantly and give new hope and courage for the future.

With kind regards and best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Swart', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Angelene Swart

**ON BEHALF OF THE UNITY BOARD EXECUTIVE
18 DECEMBER 2008**