

A COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF PEC—EWI PROVINCE

The Information

Then the man said, *"Let me go, for it is daybreak."* But Jacob replied, *"I will not let you go unless you bless me."*
Genesis 32 vs. 26 [NIV]

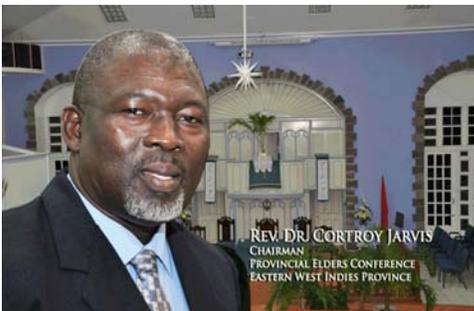
March, 2010



553rd ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MORAVIAN CHURCH -March 01

Lent...A Time of Spiritual Renewal

Ash Wednesday, 40 days before Easter, not counting Sundays, is the beginning of Lent. The name Ash Wednesday comes from a custom in the early Roman Catholic Church of making the sign of the cross on the foreheads of penitents using the ashes of palms brought to church on Palm Sunday of the preceding year.



Lent is a time of introspection. We read Exodus, and watch the Israelites grumbling, even after the amazing things God had done for them (Ex 17:3-7).

"But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

⁴ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

⁵ The LORD answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah ^[a] and Meribah ^[b] because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

In them, we recognize ourselves. For many of us, then, Lent is a time for the spiritual equivalent of New Year's resolutions. We set aside work on ourselves for forty days so we don't end up wandering around in the wilderness for 40 years. We do things to burn off the excess fat that's weighing us down, try to improve our spiritual diet, and do some meaningful spiritual exercises to strengthen the muscles we call "virtues."

But in the early days of the Church, Lent was not so much a time to focus inward. It was a time for Catholics to focus outward. It is a time not just for personal growth, but for growth of the Church.

One can safely conclude that by the end of the fourth century, the 40-day period of Easter preparation known as Lent existed, and that prayer and fasting constituted its primary spiritual exercises. Of course, the number "40" has always had special spiritual significance regarding preparation.

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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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On Mount Sinai, preparing to receive the Ten Commandments, "Moses stayed there with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights, without eating any food or drinking any water" (Ex 34:28). Elijah walked "40 days and 40 nights" to the mountain of the Lord, Mount Horeb (another name for Sinai) (1 Kgs 19:8). Most importantly, Jesus fasted and prayed for "40 days and 40 nights" in the desert before He began His public ministry (Mt 4:2).

In **the days of the Church Fathers**, the whole Church fasted, prayed, and gave alms for the forty days preceding Easter? But Catholics did this primarily for the sake of **others rather than themselves**. There were two groups of people that were the main beneficiaries of this prayer and penance: new Catholics to be baptized at Easter and lapsed Catholics to be readmitted to communion. **These folks were praying and fasting during Lent to break the power of darkness in preparation for their crossing over the Jordan into the Promised Land through baptism and penance.**

We ought to **recover this ancient tradition** and do penance for and with those who will enter or return to the Church at Easter. But there is something else that we should do. There are millions more who should be returning or entering. **We need to tell them about Jesus.**

The story of the Samaritan woman (John 4) teaches that evangelism and discipleship go hand in hand. She was evangelized and discipleship by Jesus and then she returned to her village to call others to Jesus. This is the type of evangelism and discipleship ministry that every member of the Church ought to be involved in.

First, Jesus models it for us. He comes to a town where everyone is a member of a heretical sect and sits down by a well. A woman comes to draw water. Israelites usually don't talk to Samaritans, much less drink out of their ritually impure vessels. In addition, in that society, men usually don't make conversation with women. But Jesus recognizes her existence and affirms her by being willing to accept a drink of water from her. Once she gets over her shock, a dialogue ensues.



It starts out about water, wells, Jews and Samaritans, but Jesus asks her questions that throw her off a bit and make her think. He finally asks a question that leads her to open up, to become vulnerable and admit her need. She's hungry for love. She has gone through quite a few partners looking for the real thing. Jesus' soul-piercing glance tells her that his is the love she's been looking for. She abandons her water jar and runs to her village to tell everyone about Jesus.

She simply **told people**, with joy, confidence, and conviction, what Jesus had done for her. And she **invited people** to come and experience him for themselves. And that's how a large portion of that village came to believe.

As members of the Moravian Church, we ought to listen to our neighbours and co-workers with respect and love, asked questions to find out their needs, and tell them how Jesus had met similar needs in our lives. Once this is done then we issue an invitation for them to come check it out. Having being pursued by God, we must always be in pursuit of the things of God.

One of our more meaningful Lenten resolutions this year ought to be to get over our fear of sharing the good news, to be aware of the spiritual needs of those around us, share his love, and invite them to Church. More people are searching than you think. "The fields are white for harvest." (John 4:35).

From Springdale to Spring Gardens - Small Group Ministry Training

The Moravian Church in Antigua began 2010 with a determined new focus to grow the church and reverse the current trends of decline. This is a decision that was arrived at after much prayer and discussion. The chosen method of growth is that of discipleship and small group development. In this regard plans have been put in place to teach and train the membership in these areas.



Rev. Algernon Lewis

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Unity Sunday

Sunday March 07, 2010 is Unity Sunday. We ask for your continued prayers for the work and witness of the Moravian Church that it will never die.

A special offering will be taken in all Moravian Churches worldwide to go towards the Music School in Costa Rica. The Music School is to offer an alternative to whoever wants to learn and play a musical instrument, especially young people, to keep them off the streets. It is Ecumenical and is also open to people that do not attend church.



Ministers of Christian Education Meeting

The Ministers of Christian Education will convene their first meeting for 2010 in the Antigua Conference from March 11 – 14. Our prayers are requested for them as they meet at such a time as this.



Theological Education Sunday

Sunday March 28, 2010 is Theological Education Sunday. Please remember our Tutor/Warden and all our ministers in training at this

time in prayer. At present our Tutor/Warden is the Rev. Frank Barker and the Three (3) Ministers in training are Camille James, Onita Samuel and Martin Taylor.

On March 28, 2010, we invite our members to contribute a special offering to go towards Continuing Education and the Establishment of our Moravian College. We challenge you to contribute a minimum of \$10.00.



Staff Retreat

The 2010 Staff Retreat will take place in Trinidad from July 08 -13. The venue is the Playa Del Este Sanctuary Resort in Salybia. We invite your prayers for our Staff as we go into Retreat.

UNITY PRAYER WATCH

The EWI Province will participate in the Unity Prayer Watch from 12:01 a.m. April 01, 2010 – Midnight April 14, 2010. The Schedule is as follows:

- ◆ Virgin Islands - 12:01a.m - April 01- Midnight April 04
- ◆ Trinidad - 12:01a.m - April 05 -Midnight April 05
- ◆ Tobago - 12:01a.m - April 06 -Midday April 07
- ◆ Barbados - 12:01p.m - April 07 - Midnight April 09
- ◆ St. Kitts - 12:01a.m - April 10 - Midday April 11
- ◆ Antigua - 12:01p.m - April 11 - Midnight April 14

Conferences are asked to observe the time allotted for our members to engage in the unbroken prayer chain. This prayer meeting developed on August 13, 1727 when the Moravian Church had its Pentecostal experience. The Church was so much on fire that the Prayer meeting lasted for 100 unbroken years. Let us therefore encourage our members to be in prayer, as we continue to seek God's guidance and direction for our Church and indeed our lives.



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From Springdale to Spring Gardens.....

On January 8, 10 and 12 this thrust began in earnest with a seminar hosted by persons from the Springvale Baptist Church in Ontario, Canada.

Over those three (3) nights leaders from throughout the Conference gathered at Spring Gardens Moravian to be exposed to this type of ministry. The sessions were done by Pastor Bob Flemming and Terry Ratcliff a member of the Springvale Baptist Church.

The presenters expounded on the necessity of Small Group Ministries, the importance of people and investing in them, community and the power of fellowship in the body of Christ and Leadership and the call to lead.

The sessions were very informative and opened our eyes to the possibilities for growth in small group ministries. There were also discussions on the actual operation of small groups.

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From Springdale to Spring Gardens.....

Small groups are a very effective way of evangelizing as members invite their unchurched or non-Christian friends to share in the study of scripture or some topic relating to faith, in their homes. It is hoped that as these persons continue to attend the meetings, that they will eventually make a commitment to Christ and eventually become members at the church. The largest churches in Christendom use this method as their primary source of growth.

It is useful to note that small groups are not foreign to the Moravian experience as they were largely used in the Herrnhut community. There were the single brothers and single sister and other groups based of age, status, profession and the like. It was from these groups that new missionaries were recruited. Members in a small group have the opportunity to disciple and encourage each other in Christian growth.

We look forward to reap the benefits of the visit of our brethren from Springdale Baptist in Ontario as we reposition the Moravian Church in the Antigua Conference to be true to the call of God in this time and season, to be true to our heritage and also to grow our members and our membership.

Along with the presenters were representatives from Emmanuel International, an agency that provides funding for developmental projects, particularly in the area of agriculture. We were extremely happy to have had Richard McGowan, the Executive Director of Emmanuel International with us. A presentation was made from them in the name of the Moravian Church to the government of seeds and fertilizers. Future collaborations are being explored.



Funds Collected for the Earthquake Victims of Haiti

Shortly after the massive earthquake that devastated Haiti on January 12, 2010, the PEC sent out an appeal for us to collect a special offering on January 24, to help the people of

Haiti get back on their feet. The monies have started to come in and it is the PEC's intention to use every cent raised by our congregations for the people of Haiti. There are at this point three agencies which have been identified to transmit the monies received on our behalf to assist the people of Haiti:

1. Emmanuel International

This group already operates two orphanages in Haiti and so have a direct link. We are aware of the principals of this organization for they spent a week with the Moravian Church in Antigua from January 7-14, 2010. In fact, they contributed Can \$5000.00 to the Moravian Church in Antigua, to launch out into Agriculture, that is, for us to purchase seeds and fertilizers to distribute to persons who are involved in or who want to get involved in Back Yard Gardening.

This is a Church based organization out of Canada. The group members did three nights of teaching at Spring Gardens for the Moravian population in Antigua on Small Group Ministries and their effectiveness. This relationship can extend to every Conference once the Conference is interested.

2. Board of World Mission

At this time the Board of World Mission is working through the Church World Service to get things into Haiti. In fact, the BWM sends money to the Church World Service and they purchase the things and send them to Haiti. I believe that this is a wonderful opportunity for us to show that the partnership we have with the BWM is not just talk, but we can contribute in a tangible way as well. This I believe will make the bond between the EWIP and the BWM stronger.

3. The Caricom Haiti Fund

This is a fund set up by Caricom to help Haiti in the recovery stage. Each Caricom Government will have this fund and at the appropriate time they will seek to engage and get all the funds to help to rebuild Haiti.

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All of the funds received will be channeled to these three (3) organizations and we will copy the drafts and forward to each Conference to verify that the monies did go to the organizations.

Every member of Staff will get a full account of the funds collected and the amount from each Conference. The idea here is for us to announce in each congregation the total amount collected to see how together we are strong as a Province and can make a difference.

PROVINCIAL YOUTH CAMP 2010

The Moravian Church Antigua Conference will host the 2010 Provincial Youth Camp from August 4 - 14. Invitations have been extended to the Provinces in America, North and South, Cuba, Suriname, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Martin, the British Province and Denmark. They will join the youth from the EWIP. We look forward to seeing as many young people as possible converging in Antigua for this camp.



Birthday Greetings for the month of March is extended to:

Bro. Derick Forrester	04
Sis. Alicia Ross	07
Sis. Elva Kitson	07
Bro. Jeremy Francis	09
Sis. Eulencine Christopher	18
Bro. Kingsley Lewis	20
Sis. Denise Smith-Lewis	20
Sis. Vera Waithe	29



Anniversary Greetings for the month of March is extended to:

Bro. Ralph and Sis Rosalind Prince	02
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Condolences

- ◇ To the Family of Bro. Maurice Woods who entered the nearer presence of God on February 27, 2010. Bro woods served as a member of the PEC for several years. The funeral service will take place on March 08, 2010 in St. Kitts.
- ◇ To Bro. Sean Roberts on the passing of his uncle Mr. George Patrick Roberts in Antigua. The funeral service will take place on March 09, 2010 in Antigua.

Let us remember both families in in our prayers.

FUN CORNER

Three Hymns

One Sunday a pastor told his congregation that the church needed some extra money and asked the people to prayerfully consider giving a little extra in the offering plate. He said that whoever gave the most would be able to pick out three hymns.

After the offering plates were passed, the pastor glanced down and noticed that someone had placed a \$1,000 bill in the offering. He was so excited that he immediately shared his joy with his congregation and said he'd like to personally thank the person who placed the money in the plate.

And there sat our Rosie all the way in the back shyly raised her hand. The pastor asked her to come to the front. Slowly she made her way to the pastor. He told her how wonderful it was she gave so much and in thanksgiving asked her to pick out three hymns.

Her eyes brightened as she looked over the congregation, pointed to the three most handsome men in the building and said, I'LL TAKE HIM, AND HIM, AND HIM!.

Author is Unknown