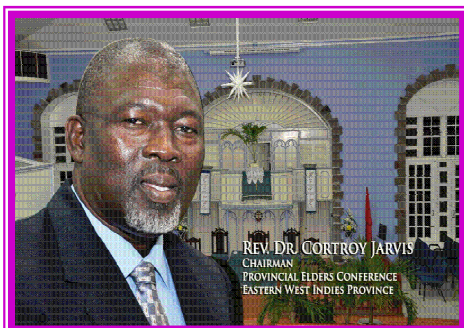


The Information

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]

February, 2011



Signs of a Growing Church

As we begin a new year and come to the end of the first 31 days of 2011, it is time to ask ourselves a few hard questions. Have we being faithful God? Are persons excited about our Church? Are members of our Churches excited about prayer and worship? Is our Church serving the community and meeting the needs of people, especially those who are hurting? Is the Church just

doing things on the surface and failing to impact the lives of others? How do people view the Church and what can we together do to infuse a breath of fresh air into the Church? Is your Church growing, If not, why not?

I believe that God's desire is for His Church to grow both spiritually and numerically. God uses us as His instruments to accomplish His Will and Purpose:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3: 9 KJV).

Pastor David Church says that the seven signs of a growing church are:

- ◆ A Praying Church.
- ◆ A Church that Preaches Truth.
- ◆ A Church that Fellowships.
- ◆ A Church that Serves the Needy in the Community.
- ◆ A Church where there is Unity of Worship and Praise.
- ◆ A Church that has Anointed and Able Leadership.
- ◆ A Church that is Happy.

As the Moravian Church and indeed as the people of God, I want to suggest three other Signs of a Growing Church. They are:

- ◆ A Church that Gives.
- ◆ A Church that Forgives.
- ◆ A Church that Loves

Let us therefore examine these ten Signs of a Growing Church. Acts chapter 2 is a very appropriate point of reference as we begin to examine the Signs of a Growing Church. *Acts 2:42-47 (NIV 2010 edition)*

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

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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

MAILING ADDRESS:

Moravian Church - EWI Province
Moravian Provincial Headquarters
Cashew Hill, P.O. Box 504
St. John's, Antigua

Tel: (268)560-0185

Fax(268)462-0643

EMAIL ADDRESSES

moravianchewip@candw.ag

moravianchewip@gmail.com

WEB ADDRESS

<http://www.moravians.net>

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⁴³Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵**They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had a need.** ⁴⁶**Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.** They broke bread in their homes and **ate together with glad and sincere hearts,** ⁴⁷**praising God** and enjoying the favor of all the people. **And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**

J. A. Bengel, the great Pietist commentator on the Bible, concluded his comments on Acts this way: "Thou hast, O church, thy form [pattern]. It is thine to preserve it, and guard thy trust" (Bengel 1860:1:925).

We must do this by examining Luke's portrait of a Spirit-filled community.

The outpouring of the Spirit produced not just momentary enthusiasm but four continuing commitments: to learn, to care, to fellowship and to worship. *The apostles' teaching* probably included an account of Jesus' life and ministry, his ethical and practical teachings, warnings about persecution and false teaching, and the christocentric Old Testament hermeneutic. But at its center was the gospel message. And so today, to devote oneself to the apostles' teaching means evangelism as well as edification (4:2; 5:42; 15:35).

1. A Praying Church.

The first century church continued in prayer. The fact that it continued means that it had previously started. These people had been praying long before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in the book of Acts.

Luke portrays *prayer* as integral to the church's life (compare 4:24; 6:4; 12:5;

Show me a praying church, and I will show you a growing church.

13:3; 20:36). It is the essential link between Jesus and His people as they carry out His kingdom work under His guidance and by His strength (4:29-30; 6:6; 8:15; 14:23; 28:8). The reputation of the vital, growing Korean church as a praying church shows that the maxim is indeed true: "the vitality of the church was a measure of the reality of their prayers".

Acts 1:14 (KJV) These all *continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

Before the church ever experienced growth there was prayer. Corporate and unified prayer. This was the foundation of what happened in Acts chapter two. Prayer is the most basic and necessary requirement of any church.

Prayer is the foundation upon which everything else is built. A praying church is a church that is ready and waiting to do whatever God desires to do amongst them.

2 Chron 7:14-15 (KJV) *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.* ¹⁵*Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.*

Show me a praying church, and I will show you a growing church.

2. A Church that Preaches Truth.

John 8:31 (KJV) Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;* ³²*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

The first century church continued in the doctrine. Only by continuing in the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles do we become disciples of Christ. The truth is what saves us, the truth is what sets us free from sin. The truth must be preached at all costs. When anything other than the truth of God's Word is preached it is impossible for true growth to occur. True growth can only occur where Truth is preached.

The conviction of sin that followed Peter's Spirit-filled preaching (2:37) was not a momentary panic, but a continuing uneasiness among those who had not yet received the word. *The many wonders and miraculous signs* done by God through the apostles served only to intensify this conviction. Whether the "signs and wonders" element be taken as normative for today (Wimber 1986:21) or as simply the authentication of a fresh stage of revelation (Stott 1974:13), clearly Luke is certain that the church's presence will have an impact on society. Luke sees it as a Caring, Joyful, and Transparent Fellowship (2:44-47).

3. A Church that Fellowships.

The first century church continued in fellowship. People need fellowship. People know when others really care about them. A church that is truly reaching out to others is a growing church. Don't wait for fellowship to happen on its own. Fellowship must happen intentionally. Every church must have some type of fellowship or care ministry that is intentionally, reaching out to others for the purpose of friendship and unity in the body. Jesus fellowshiped with publicans, sinners, harlots and many others.

Fellowship will bring growth

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Jesus did so intentionally, He went out of his way to do so. When He did, it often caused a revival in that city or town. God is challenging us to do likewise.

Fellowship will bring growth.

4. A Church that Serves the Needy in the Community.

Serving the needy in your community accomplishes three important things:

- a. It meets the needs of hurting people.
- b. It shows the Love of God to your community.
(this is the second greatest commandment)
- c. It brings name recognition and exposure to your church.

God requires that we reach out to the hurting of our communities.

Matt 25:40 (KJV) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The apostles' *fellowship* and *breaking of bread* was a sharing of possessions to meet needs and of lives in common meals (2:44-46). What an inviting way of life for our day, when "loneliness drives people into one place, but that does not mean that they are together. It could be a matter of survival.

5. A Church where there is Unity of Worship and Praise.

We can worship and praise God all day long on our own, but there is something different about corporate praise. Something amazing that happens when a group of believers gather together to honor God with their praise and worship.

Visitors can sense that liberty and anointing in your service, and it will draw them back to your church.

Matt 18:20 (KJV) For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Ps 22:3 (KJV) But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

God **inhabits** the praises of His people. It is like the presence of God is multiplied.

His Spirit comes down to dwell amongst us, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Visitors can sense that liberty and anointing in your service, and it will draw them back to your church.

They imparted that vision to the people.

2 Cor 3:17 (KJV) Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

6. A Church that has Anointed and Able Leadership.

The Bible states, "*they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine.*" It was through the anointed and able leadership of the Apostles that the first century church grew. The Apostles had been with Jesus. They had learned the doctrine directly from Him. They had a vision of what Jesus desired for His church, and they imparted that vision to the people.

Prov 29:18 (KJV) Where there is no vision, the people perish:

7. A Church that is Happy.

The first century church had "*gladness and singleness of heart.*"

One thing people always notice when they visit a church is the countenance of the people. Are they happy? Are they sad? Are they friendly? Ask any person who has visited numerous churches and they can tell you if a church has it going on or not, by how happy the people are. During the reign of King Solomon, many of the Kings of surrounding kingdoms desired to sit down with Solomon to investigate what brought so much success to His Kingdom. One such monarch, the Queen of Sheba, came to prove Solomon with hard questions. She had heard how great the Kingdom of Solomon was, but she wanted to see it for herself. This is what she found out;

1 Kings 10:6-8 (NIV) “**She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. ⁷ But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. ⁸ How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!”**

What convinced the Queen of Sheba more than the wisdom, more than the wealth and more than the fame of Solomon, was the happiness of his men and his servants. There was joy in the kingdom of Israel.

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She did not believe any of the reports until she saw the happiness of the people. The same is true in our church. People will come and check it out for themselves, but until they see the happiness of the people in our church, they will not believe. They need to see the joy of the Lord on our people's faces.

8. A Church that Gives

They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. (Acts 2:45). Giving is powerful. Giving is a Blessing. Giving is recognizing that what we have comes from God and that we ought to Bless others with the Blessings we receive from God. Wherever the Blessing came from, there is an unlimited supply there (God). In Blessing others, we empower them. We lift them. We encourage them. We point them to the source from whence our Blessings come. This statement is crystallized in scripture through the Gospel of Luke: **"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."**(Luke 6:38 NIV).

**Giving moves the heart
of God**

Giving moves the heart of God.

9. A Church that Forgives

Paul, in addressing the Church at Ephesus implored them to: **"Make a clean break with all cutting, back-biting, and profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you."** (Ephesians 4:31-32 Message)

Every day the Lord Jesus by his Spirit saved some, incorporating them into *their number*. God's plan is for churches to grow. The challenge for us is, "Will we meet the Scriptural conditions for growth: a dedication to be a learning, caring, fellowshiping, worshipping church?" Will we meet the one essential condition? "As empowering follows petition, so evangelism and Christian unity or community follows Pentecost.

10. A Church that Loves

Daily the community broke bread together in homes--sharing a meal, beginning with the bread and ending with the cup of the Lord's Supper (Lk 22:19-20; 24:35; Acts 20:7, 11). With constant intimacy, exultant joy and transparency of relationship they enjoyed the graces of the Messiah's salvation in a true anticipation of his banquet in the kingdom (Lk 22:30; compare Acts 16:34).

It was a gracious witness to *the people (laos)*, "Israel as the elect nation to whom the message of salvation is initially directed".

**We need to trust God to
do what He says He will
do.**

The Word of God speaks to the Church in 1 John 4:

⁷Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. ⁹In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. ¹⁰Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (1 John 4: 7-11).

¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. ¹⁹We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4: 18-19).

This Speaks of Love at its deepest.

In Acts, the Holy Spirit worked mightily in the Church. May the Holy Spirit continue to work in His Church, Our Church and cause God's name to be glorified. We need to trust God to do what He says He will do.

As we reflect upon the ten Signs of a Growing Church, the song writer Anna L. Waring, gives us hope for a brighter tomorrow:

Green pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen.
Bright skies will soon be o'er me,
Where the dark clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure:
My path to life is free.
My Savior has my treasure,
And He will walk with me.

Ordination

Your prayers are requested for Pastor Liselle Roberts

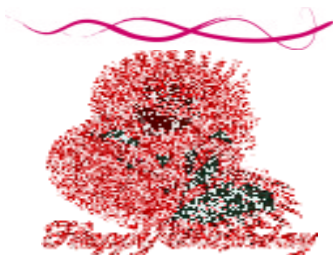


Pastor Liselle Roberts

who will be ordained a Deacon in the Moravian Church on Friday March 11, 2011 at 7:00p.m. The service of ordination will be held at the Moriah Moravian Church in The Tobago Conference. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Lewis will be the presiding Bishop at the Ordination Service. Pastor Liselle is presently serving as a Minister of Christian Education and Associate Pastor in the Trinidad Conference of the Moravian Church.



Congratulations to Bro. Fabian and Sis. Cherice Job-Lewis on the birth of their Son Nathan John Lewis, who was born on Saturday, January 8th, 2011 at about 2.48 a.m. Both Baby and Mother are doing fine. We thank God for their safe journey and wish the family well.



Birthday Greetings for the month of February is extended to:

Bro. Dufferin Culpepper	01
Sis. Adelyn Mgonela	03
Bro. Cortroy Jarvis	07
Sis. Shirley Joseph	08
Bro. Willard Prout	10
Bro. Sean Roberts	10
Sis. June Mcmillan	17
Bro. Errol Connor	21
Bro. Adrian Smith	21
Sis. Esther Moore-Roberts	24



Anniversary Greetings for the Month of February is extended to :

Bro. Ray & Sis. Shirley Joseph	07
Bro. Kingsley & Sis. Maureen Lewis	19

Condolence



On behalf of the Provincial Family, We express condolences to Sis. Monique Lynch and family on the tragic death of her three year old son,

who was accidentally run over by the family car on Thursday January 6th, 2011 and subsequently died. A Service Celebrating the life of Lewjahri Henley was held on Monday January 17, 2011 at the Memorial Moravian Church, St. Thomas at 10.00a.m.

We pray that God will continue to surround her and give her the strength to face the future with hope and confidence.



PROVINCIAL HYMNAL COMMITTEE

Mikie Roberts (Rev)
Chair, Provincial Hymnal Committee

The Provincial Hymnal Committee of the EWI Province had its first face to face meeting in Antigua from January 9 – 14, 2011. Each



Conference was represented. The meeting had a two-fold purpose: (1) to engage with the responses of the first round of recommendations which were made to the Conferences in July 2010; and (2) to make final decision on the selection of hymns that will be

retained and brought forward from the current hymnal and to make proposals for new hymns to be included. By the end of the week, both purposes had been accomplished. Of the 710 hymns in the current hymnal, **121** had been deleted and **589** hymns were retained. With the inclusion of the proposed new hymns the current tally is **656**. Although no final decisions has been made, it has been recommended that new hymnal should contain within the range of **650 – 700** hymns.

The process of working through the entire hymnal brought to the forefront one major matter: how we worship throughout the Province. It was recognized that the musical resources vary widely from congregation to congregation and even from one Conference to the next.

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However, it was acknowledged that the absence of church musicians and the unavailability of the current hymnal, since it is no longer in print, has contributed to the hymnal's under-usage in some cases. Additionally, there was the admission that the limited knowledge of hymn tunes in some Conferences restricted the learning of new hymns whose metres were not that common. Therefore, the committee considered (1) what strategies might be utilized so as to encourage the wider use of a new hymnal and (2) the teaching and learning of new hymns and tunes. For this to be realized there must be a collaborative effort between clergy, musicians, choirs and congregations to not only sing the Lord's song but also to intentionally strive to sing a new song unto the Lord. (Psalm 96:1)

Recognizing that the embrace of the new hymnal must begin at once, the committee took the decision to address specifically the teaching and learning of new hymns. We intend to use this medium to introduce a new hymn each month to the Province. We strongly urge that the hymn first be taught to the choir and be sung by the choir at least two consecutive Sundays before the congregation attempts to sing it. It is important that while the hymn is being sung by the choir (whether as an introit or anthem) the congregation be asked to actively listen and follow so that they too are being taught. We are mindful that a new hymn may not immediately be seen as enabling God's people to be more fervent in their praise and may be seen as an intrusion or interruption in worship. The only answer is – Repetition! Repetition! Repetition! That is the only key that moves a hymn from being unknown to known, from unfamiliar to meaningful.

The Hymn of the Month then is # **76 WHEN THE LORD OF LOVE WAS HERE (Tune: Salvator)**. In the first three verses, the hymn calls our attention to aspects of Jesus' ministry while on earth. In the last two verses we petition God to so work in us so that our lives may bear witness to the life that Christ lived on earth. By our living as Christ did, we give glory to God. We encourage our Provincial family during the month of February then to enter into the message of this hymn with the prayer that it may speak God's eternal truth in a new way.

Next month, God's willing, I will share some of specific changes made regarding the hymn content and also give you an update on the work that the Jamaica Province has been doing on the litanies. Please keep us in your prayers that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide us in this undertaking.

Mission Grenada by Rev. Hilton Joseph (Superintendent Moravian Church St. Kitts)

In the book 'Unleashing Courageous Faith' written by Paul Coughlin, he states, "we must fight to do our part for the Kingdom of heaven, alleviating sufferings, protecting the weak, and creating justice and freedom."



The question to be answered is "What prompted the involvement of the St Kitts Conference in Mission Grenada?" The truth be told, for the last few years (2-3) it almost seems as if mission has been bombarding my thoughts and life. Every book either purchased or given to me spoke to the church's greater involvement on the mission field. The Rev magazine to which I subscribe until the final issue always had an article re: becoming a missional church.

One book that has helped to improve my thoughts towards mission is one written by Walter Kallestad, 'Turn your church Inside out'. The following quotes from the book continue to fuel the fire for mission, bringing structure to my own Kingdom mission:

Archbishop William Temple – *"the church is the only society in the world that exists for the sake of those who are not members of it"*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing from Nazi prison in 1944 states, *"The church is the church only when it exists for others the church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating but helping and serving. It must tell people of every calling what it means to live in Christ to exist for others"*.

These writings transformed my own prayer life – God, why am I here? What is the focus for our church?

We as Moravians are in existence in the West Indies because two men, Leonard and David, were willing to accept the call of God to the unknown world of the West Indies to work amongst the slaves while preaching Christ. This is a legacy which we inherited and to which we must be faithful.

For the greater part of 2010, I found myself asking questions about Grenada and even praying for the mission. As I serve in this Conference, I sense the need of the church to get involved.

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For years we talk about missions, preach about missions, sing about missions; the time is **now** to do missions. The Rev Magazine states that to become a missional church, one has to:

- (a) move from Internal to External; and
- (b) move from being programme-centred to people centred.

It is against this backdrop that the Macedonian call from Tobago was received and acted upon. After much prayer, reflection and discussion we the members of staff reverends Joseph, Ephraim and Francis, decided that our first course of action was to join the Tobago Conference on the Smile Grenada Mission to:

- (a) partner with Tobago for Ministry; and
- (b) access the mission work at Mt. Tranquil, St David's.

We visited the mission site at Mt. Tranquil from 2 p.m. In preparation for our Open-air Services, we distributed tracts and flyers for our Smile Grenada Project and invited persons to attend the services, which were carded to begin the said Friday evening in the area. The people were very warm and welcoming.

It should be noted that as we walked through the community distributing the flyers and extending invitations, the team bore witness to the passage of Scripture from the Gospel, "they were harassed as sheep without a shepherd."

Friday 10th December

The first Mission service took place with Rev Jeremy Francis as the opening batsman, who encouraged the gathering to let Jesus remain the focus of their lives even when life is rough, hence the reason for the celebration of Christ's birthday.

As the altar ministry unfolded (despite the inclement weather) it became clearer to us that Mt. Tranquil was a place where ministry is ripe – the people need pastoral care.

The evenings were spent in prayer, reflections, discussion and planning for the next day's activity.

Saturday 11th December

It was a day of Preparation. A few members of the team went to the capital to purchase supplies in preparation for the Christingle and Christmas Party, while the other team members spent the afternoon in Mt Tranquil with the local brethren preparing the children for the programme. Preparations were also done for the second Open-air Service.

Sunday 12th December

The team worshipped at the Rema Pentecostal Church (outside of Mt Tranquil).

At three p.m., we left for the mission field to host the second and final Open-air Service; yours truly was the middle batman delivering the Word at the service. Encouragement was given to the people to seek the Lord for a better life for self and families.

The weather was good and the altar encounter was overwhelming; the streets became an open altar. Many persons were prayed for- healing, deliverance from depression and other forms of bondage were some of the prayer concerns. Persons responded to the call to be baptized once counselling is done. This was another confirmation that the people were in need of the gospel and pastoral care. We had 45-60 persons in attendance inclusive of those who stayed in their homes and listened

Monday 13th December

The morning hours were spent preparing for the Christingle and party at four pm.

The attendance in the evening was overwhelming; we had over one hundred and fifty children and adults in attendance. Rev Nasel Ephraim was the final batsman who delivered the message for the evening, explaining the meaning of the Christingle and encouraging the brethren to seek to get out of the darkness because of Jesus Christ, who is the Light of Hope in the world.

Please note the following:

- The recitations, skits and songs were done by the local brethren.
- GIF, a government media station, was present.

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- Mr Edwin Frank (PRO for Grenada Board of Tourism) was present and entertained the gathering with a selection on the harmonica.
- A total of ninety gift bags were distributed to children and ten to adults.

The experience on the Mission field in Grenada was profound.

We have committed ourselves to working closely with the Tobago Conference to continue the work in Grenada as we believe it is indeed the Macedonian call to the Moravians to come over and share the gospel, making lives better.

Kudos to the Tobago Conference and the Mission Team for the tremendous work and sacrifice they have executed.

Observations

- The presence of children was overwhelming – very enthusiastic, just needing guidance and a chance at life.
- Young men without much of a life outside of farming spend time liming at the local bars and smoking.
- People are very warm and hospitable.
- Mormons have begun making a move in the area; this was not so up to August 2010.
- Pentecostal Church on the outskirts of the mission site, transporting children to Sunday School; this too was not so up to August 2010.
- Depressed area: sense that persons don't have much to look forward to. Young adults have children early and the cycle continues.

Recommendations

- Pray, Pray, Pray
- Monthly visits for the next six months with a view to establishing a physical structure and maintaining a pastoral presence with the people.
- Develop a holistic approach to Ministry.
- Establish a reading camp.

- Conduct a week of Vacation Bible School, during which we have two nights of Crusade in the month of July.

Prayer focus

- 1) God's wisdom, knowledge, and anointing to show us the right approach and to guide us in the right direction as we proceed to spread the Good News in Mt. Tranquil.
- 2) We pray for like-minded missionaries. Among the missionaries, we pray that our spirits be united and open to spiritual guidance.
- 3) That the people of Mt. Tranquil, Grenada, especially the young men, will have open hearts to receive from God.
- 4) Obtaining lands for the mission – we pray that a shed obtained from a former church be placed on an available marked land.
- 5) That we will be able to acquire a building that will be used as the base for missionary work.
- 6) That the Canal House be totally available to us during our missionary trips.
- 7) Finance
- 8) Favour
- 9) Travelling mercies – we also pray to receive our own transportation on the missionary field.
- 10) Continued media coverage.
- 11) Funds to pave the 'under portion' of the house where our meetings are held.
- 12) That God will help us identify the needs of the people
- 13) Pray for the individual(s) who will be on the ground in Grenada.

We got involved because the words of our Lord still have relevance for today, "*go ye into all the world and preach the gospel*". The gospel – the good news – is what we have to offer this chaotic world and the church, the manifested presence of God, is the one entrusted to do the job. It is my belief that if 'established' churches are going to remain on the cutting edge, we have to get more involved in the lives of people, giving them hope. Let us rise to the challenge of the Grenada Mission and fulfil God's call on our lives.