Information

A COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF PEC—EWI PROVINCE

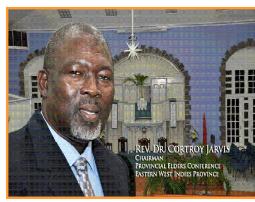
March, 2011



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]

EQUIPPED AND ENGAGED, A CHURCH THAT WILL NEVER DIE

The Moravian Church on March 1, 2011, celebrates 554 years of Christian witness worldwide. In describing the Moravian Church one can testify like St. Paul: *we are hard*



pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. Always carrying about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body (2 Cor.4:8-10).

The "Unity of the Brethren", is a Protestant religious group inspired by Hussite spiritual ideals in Bohemia in the mid-15th century, on March 1, 1457 to be exact. They followed a simple, humble life of nonviolence, using the

Bible as their sole rule of faith. They denied transubstantiation but received the Eucharist and deemed religious hymns of great importance. In 1501 they printed the first Protestant hymnbook, and in 1579–93 they published a Czech translation of the Bible (the Kralice or Kralitz, Bible), the outstanding quality of which made it a landmark document in Czech literature. Their Confessio Bohemica, reflecting Lutheran and Calvinist influences, ef-

fected a union with Lutheran Hussites in 1575 that received Roman Catholic imperial sanction in 1609. By that time the Unitas Fratrum constituted half of the Protestants in Bohemia and more than that in Moravia. About the mid -16th century, Unitas Fratrum emigrants moved into Poland and survived there for some two centuries.

Our Provincial Theme 2011, Pursuing the Blessing, compels us to continue to witness for the Master in good times and bad

Having joined the Czech estates in their fight with the Roman Emperor Ferdinand I (Thirty Years' War), the Unitas Fratrum forces' defeat in 1620 at the Battle of the white mountain was a prelude to their suppression. In 1627 an imperial edict outlawed all Protestants in Bohemia. They sought to destroy the Unitas Fratrum, with all its churches, its Bible, and its hymn books, and its members who were forcibly "catholicized" or exiled. The Unitas Fratrum or the Moravian Church because of persecution became an underground movement. They were determined to serve their God in freedom, no matter what. Remnants of the group, however, eventually found refuge in Saxony and under the name of Herrnhuters had great religious influence through their missionary activities.

Both the Moravian Church and the Evangelical Czech Brethren Church in the Czech Republic trace their origin to the Unitas Fratrum.

Today, we commemorate the 554th anniversary of the founding of the Unitas Fratrum (Unity of the Brethren) or the Moravian Church. This is a Church that has gone through the storms, the flood, the fire, but a Church which is resilient, because it knows the God it serves. It is a Church that will never die. Is there a witness for Jesus and the Moravian Church? Our Provincial theme 2011, **Pursuing the Blessing**, compels us to continue to witness for the Master in good times and bad. *Continue on Page 2*



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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As we celebrate this 554th year of Christian Witness, the question must be asked, is the Moravian Church growing? If not, why not? Growth in this context speaks to both Spiritual and Numerical increase. Looking through a number of reports from Conferences and Congregations, and interacting with Staff Members, it suggests that rather than increasing as a denomination, we are decreasing. What could be the reason or reasons for this apparent non growth?

The story is told of the funeral service of the president of a company, which took place in the auditorium of a Christian school. Many of his friends did not know he was a Christian, but supposed that his connection with the Christian school was as chairman of the PTA, having his children in school. They were surprised at the memorial address given by the minister who told them the deceased had been a man of ardent and devout faith. Indeed the man had kept his being a Christian secret throughout his lifetime. One of his friends said he was a genuine Christian, but there was no odor of Christianity about him.

Why was this man afraid to share his faith? Are there similarities in our Church today where there is no odor from us as to our faith? I believe that when a life is transformed, from sin to Not only is Peter not helping to build the kingdom, but he is actually preventing others from helping because now they are tripping over him.

righteousness, from darkness to light that individual has much to rejoice about. The song writer declares,

"It only takes a spark to get the fire going,

And soon all those around can warm up to its glowing,

That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it,

You want to sing, it's fresh like spring, you want to pass it on."

We read in Matthew a similar situation. In chapter 16, verse 15, Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do you say that I am." And Peter replies, "You are the Messiah, the son of the living God." In verse 18 Jesus says to Peter, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." Now, it only takes five verses for Peter to go from being the cornerstone of Christ's church to being a stumbling block. One minute Peter is the most important stone in the building of God's kingdom and almost instantly Jesus tells him that he is a stumbling block, a hindrance, he's in the way. Not only is Peter not helping to build the kingdom, but he is actually preventing

others from helping because now they are tripping over him.

Was Peter's love not genuine? Of course it was. Peter loved his lord so much that the thought of any harm coming to Jesus was simply

sometimes the plan God has for our lives does not seem like what we expect it should be

unbearable. Peter's only motive was for the safety of his Christ, his lord, his teacher and friend. I don't believe that Peter's motives could have been more selfless. It wasn't as though Peter did not know what the divine plan was. Jesus had just spelled it out for him and the other disciples. The problem was that he was just not comfortable with what God's plan entailed so he made an honest attempt to change it. This is something we can all wrap our minds around as we are just as mortal as Peter was. Sometimes the plan God has for our lives does not seem like what we expect it should be.

So, if Peter really did have Jesus' best interests at heart, why such a severe reprimand? To

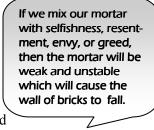
be called Satan must have felt extremely harsh coming from the leader, a peaceful man like Jesus, especially after having

It is much easier to find fault in others than in ourselves

just been told that he was going to be the cornerstone of the coming church. Could it be that what Peter was actually offering Jesus was a way out; a more comfortable alternative option than the one he was going to have to face? Peter had just suggested a worldly alternative to a heavenly mandate. Just as the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness with worldly riches and power, now Jesus' number one disciple is tempting Jesus with a very attractive "human" temptation to avoid pain, suffering and ultimate death. And, it is the temptations of worldly things that cause each of us to stumble, or become stumbling blocks that others could trip over. Is it any wonder Jesus reacted the way he did?

So, how do we avoid the temptations that cause our stumbling? How can we recognize when we are falling

into that trap of being mindful more of worldly things than of heavenly things? It is often hard to see, especially when it is within ourselves that we must look for the answers because as we know, it is much easier to find fault in others than in ourselves.



It was Peter's profession of faith that transformed him into the solid rock that Jesus could use to build his church on.

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SPRING GARDENS MORAVIAN CHURCH (Tobago Conference) Prayer and Fasting January 2011 by Rev Dr. Derick Forrester

At the beginning of the year the leadership of the congregation felt a divine constraint to summon the church to enter into prayer and fasting covering a period of ten (10) days from 19^{th} -28th January 2011.

A dynamic message was delivered by the Pastor on Prayer and Fasting from Joel 2:12-16 on Sunday 16th



January. After the service members were given pamphlets with guidelines on how to enter into Pray and fasting.

Wednesdays were set aside for prayer and Friday 28th for the closing service.

During one of the Wednesday prayer meetings a young lady gave her life to the Lord. She testified of how she never knew

that prayer and fasting was biblical until she read the guidelines given to the church on Sunday 19th January 2011.

This was awesome and we continue to rejoice with, encourage and teach her with the understanding that the

angels are rejoicing in heaven because she accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of her life and that her name is written in the Lambs book of Life. (Luke 15:10; Luke 1:20b.)



Spring Gardens Moravian invited sister churches and



other neighbouring churches, their prayer groups and warriors to participate in the fast and prayer and to join Spring Gardens at

the closing service on Friday 28th January 2011. Among the invitees was a special guest speaker. We had visitors from sister churches and other neighbouring churches. The service followed a particu-

lar pattern until the special speaker came on and delivered a powerful message based on "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 I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and heal their land. 11Chron. 7: 14.

The Preacher highlighted four (4) preconditions:

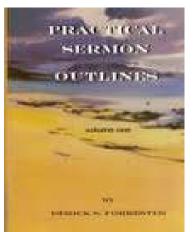
- ♦ Humility
- Intercession
- Passion
- Persistence

His emphasis was on turning from our wicked ways if we want God to visit us, to enter our lives and to experience his blessings. The preacher read from Ephesians to highlight the wicked ways. He spoke of the promised blessing, power, wisdom and knowledge that are available to us through Jesus Christ and how we have to use our feet and not our mouths alone to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ.

The service ended in a time of prayer, members indicated how they look forward to another time of prayer and fasting next year.



The Rev. Dr. Derick Forrester Newly Published Book "Practical Sermon Outlines volume one is now available. He presents this book in the hope that preachers will clothe these outlines with vibrant and relevant messages.



Equipped and Engaged, a Church that will never die Continued from Page 2

Like Peter, we also become building blocks for God's kingdom when we acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, the son of the living God, the savior. But, also like Peter we are fragile and fallible and human, and we can easily become stumbling blocks as well.

The building of God's church, or kingdom, is not unlike building a physical building. The blocks must fit together and the mortar must be strong enough to hold them together.

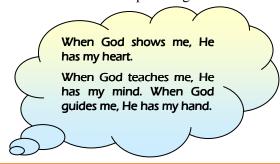
How we witness to others the good news of Jesus Christ is what makes up the mortar that holds us together. If we mix our mortar with selfishness, resentment, envy, or greed, then the mortar will be weak and unstable which will cause the wall of bricks to fall.

In Romans 12, Paul gives us the recipe for mortar that is strong and will not crumble.

Let Love be genuine. Love one another with mutual affection. Extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Live peaceably with all. If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The demand of the Gospel is frequently interpreted as some definite injunction, such as prescriptions against smoking or drinking, or even dancing and the use of cosmetics. In the popular image, many people associate Christianity with a rather rigid set of moral rules. Indeed, the visible evidence of having accepted Christ and the promise to lead a new life is to give up smoking or drinking.

Plants grow in the upward direction towards the sun, that's where they get their energy and life from. If you block the sun, the plants will stop growing. We need to grow in that upward direction to our Lord, for we cannot let obstacles stunt our spiritual growth.



MORAVIANS IN HAITI?

We have received news of the establishment of the Moravian Church in Haiti. While the Caribbean Moravian Provinces have to do a detailed study of this, I share with you a letter received by the President of the Moravian Church in Jamaica, Rev. Dr. Paul Gardner who happens to be the Chairman of the Worldwide Unity.

Dr. Paul Gardner, President Moravian Church

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings to you in the name of Christ Jesus. In the last week I have visited different Moravian Community Churches in the Rural and Urban Areas of Haiti. I have been in Cap-Haitien, Hinche, Plateau Central, Gros-Morne, and Port-au-Prince in the measure to begin to do a Restructuration about all Moravian Community Churches of Haiti and called them by their Names and I have done a good restructuration about them .

I have given all Moravian Community Church in each region of Haiti a name.

- In Cap Haitian, North, I have visited Alliance Moravian Church and I have had a Meeting with the Local Committee of Alliance Moravian Church. Local Responsible for Cap Haitien:Daniel Jean-Francois
- 2. In Hinche, Plateau Central : I have visited Antioch Moravian Church

Local Responsible for Hinche : Louis Sergot

- In Treuil, Gros-Morne, Gonaives, I have visited Alliance Moravian Church and also the project of Construction of Medical Center a Health Community to help the population.
- 4. In Port-au-Prince, I have also restructured Moravian Community Church Haiti in First Alliance Moravian Church.

Local Responsible : Pastor Bernito Dorsainvil

 Alliance Moravian Church Mais Gate, Aeoroport, Portau-Prince, Haiti

Local Responsible : Therland M.

We are ready to receive you for visiting all five (5) Moravian Community Churches Haiti. I look forward to receiving your suggestion concerning your visit in Haiti, please keep me informed for your Visit.

In Christ,

Pastor Jean-Claude Dorsainvil Coordinator Moravian Community Church Haiti

- 1.
- Sister Olga Baird-Joefield, Lay Pastor in the Tobago Conference, has reached the mandatory age for retirement, and therefore officially retired on December 31, 2010.
- Rev. Angela Roberts has withdrawn from the active service of the Moravian Church for family reasons, with effect from February 28, 2011.
- Rev. Bonnie E.B.W. Smith has accepted a call to be the Minister of Christian Education in the Antigua Conference, with effect from March 01, 2011.

Let us remember our sisters in Prayer and pray God's blessings upon them.



2. UNITY AND THEOLOGICAL SUNDAY

 Sunday March 06, 2011 is Unity Sunday when we remember the birth of the Moravian Church on March 01, 1457.

A special offering will be taken in all Moravian Churches worldwide to go towards the erection of a Secondary School in Urambo District, Lake Tanganyika Mission Province in Tanzania.

Sunday March 27, 2011 is Theological Education Sunday.

Please remember in prayer our Warden/Tutor and all of our ministers in training at this time.

At present our Warden/Tutor is the Rev. Frank Barker and our six (6) Ministers in training are:

- Onita Samuel, Pastoral Ministry Year 03
- Martin Taylor, Pastoral Ministry Year 03
- Catherine Governor, Christian Education –Year 01
- Moise Jean, Pastoral Ministry Year 01
- Yvanne Jean, Christian Education Year 01
- Erwin Warner Pastoral Ministry Year 01

On this Sunday a special offering will be taken to go towards continuing Education within the EWIP.

3. Your prayers are requested for Sis. Megan Gibbs, the widow of the late Rev. Rudolph Gibbs. Sis. Gibbs was hospitalized on February 15, 2011, at the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Barbados with a fractured hip. She is due to have surgery. Let us remember her in our prayers.



4. UNITY PRAYER WATCH 2011

The EWI Province will participate in the Unity Prayer Watch from 12:01 a.m. April 01, 2011 – Midnight April 14, 2011. The Schedule is as follows:

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



5. The PEC will meet in St. Thomas Virgin Islands Conference from April 7 - 10, 2011. Please bear up the members of PEC in your prayers as they meet for this very important meeting.



HYMN OF THE MONTH

In keeping with the promise to offer the Province monthly



updates and to highlight the hymn of the month, the following is a brief report from the Provincial Hymnal Committee. The members of the Committee met for their monthly meeting on Saturday February 12, 2011. One of the major decisions arising out of this meeting was to begin the copyright research. Each member of the committee was given approximately ten hymns to investigate

to determine if it is in the public domain or still held under copyright. This process will be continued over the next few months while at the same time reviewing the new hymns to be included and acquiring permission for usage from the copyright holders.

As mentioned last month, each month the Province will be asked to focus on one hymn as a Provincial family. We want to reiterate "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! That is the only key that moves a hymn from being unknown to known, from unfamiliar to meaningful."

As we approach the season of Lent, the Hymn of the Month for March is # 89 HAIL! THOU ONCE DE-SPISED JESUS (Recommended Tune: Rex Gloriae). The hymn presents three key images of Christ – as Jesus the King, as Paschal Lamb who paid for humanity's sin and forever reigning in heaven. With these three images we are reminded of the work of Christ on our behalf. We are called to acknowledge just how much Christ is worthy of our praise and adoration for all that was done for us. The Christ who is worthy to be hailed as King is more than deserving because He through His death, resurrection and ascension "hast full atonement made." The Christian is assured of Christ's constant intercession for us in heaven where Christ is preparing to welcome us one day. Mindful of all that Christ has done for us as sinners and recognizing our position in Christ, the last verse invites us

to offer unending praise with the angelic beings as we "chant Emmanuel's praise."

The alternate tune for this hymn is **Hydrfol** (#192) which we suspect is most often used in many congregations. However, we are recommending the use of the set tune **Rex Gloriae** so that the congregation can learn this new tune. By singing a well known hymn to a new tune it can cause the hymn to speak in a new way. That is what we're praying will happen as we sing during the month of March # 89 HAIL! THOU ONCE DESPISED JESUS (**Recommended Tune: Rex Gloriae**). As always, please keep us in your prayers as we continue to produce our Provincial Hymnal.

Mikie Roberts (Rev) Chair, Provincial Hymnal Committee

Hail! Thou once despised Jesus!

Hail! Thou once despised Jesus! Hail! Thou Galillean King! Thou didst suffer to release us! Thou didst free salvation bring: Hail! Thou agonizing Saviour, Bearer of our sin and shame, By thy merits we find favour; Life is given through thy name.

Paschal Lamb, by God appointed, All our sins on thee were laid; By almighty love anointed, Thou hast full atonement made: All thy people are forgiven Through the virtue of thy blood; Opened is the gate of heaven, Man is reconciled to God.

Worship, honour, power, and blessing Thou art worthy to receive: Loudest praises without ceasing, Meet it is for us to give; Help, ye bright angelic spirits! Bring your sweetest, noblest lays; Help to sing our Saviour's merits, Help to chant Immanuel's praise!

1757. J. Bakewell, a

MISSION FOCUS NISKY MORAVIAN CHURCH

240th Anniversary

The Nisky Moravian Church in St. Thomas celebrated its 240th Anniversary on Sunday February 27, 2011, under the theme, "Preserving the past, inspiring the future through discipleship and mission". The Chairman of PEC, the Rev. Dr. Cortroy Jarvis preached the sermon for the occasion as he encouraged the congregation and all who gathered with the message entitled, "No matter what, don't give up". It was a tremendous worship experience as an almost packed congregation gave God the glory with Dance, Musical instruments of every kind, singing as only Moravians can do and the warm Moravian fellowship. The Lovefeasts brought the worship to a fitting end. To God be the glory.

The Rev. Dr. Winelle Kirton Roberts delivered the Mission Focus notes below.

On May 15, 1763, the Moravian missionary Bro Martin Mack was led by God to hold an open air service at Krum Bay, St Thomas. With the overwhelming response of the negroes from surrounding plantations Bro Mack along with other missionaries continued these public services fortnightly. Hundreds gather to hear the word of God and many were converted to Christ.

It was in 1765 that the Moravians were offered and willingly accepted a plantation at Krum Bay from the owner Dr Rebhuhn. Upon acquisition of this property, the Moravians immediately renamed it *Niesky* (the original spelling) after one of its Churches in Europe. A small meeting place was constructed.

Balthasar Friedreich was one of the first resident missionaries at Niesky. Though he served for just over a year, as he was transferred to St Croix, his labor set the foundation for the growth of this new mission.

By 1768 the meeting place was so small that they had to demolish it and build a new spacious one. The space also accommodated some of the spill over communicants from New Hernnhut.

It was in 1771 that the Church was established as the Nisky Moravian Church. At that point the mission had close to 1000 hearers.

The 240 years from then until now was marked with all

the challenges of most of the Moravian missions in the Caribbean: Frequent transfers of missionaries, Natural disasters like hurricanes and droughts, economic hardships and complacency of members. the history of Nisky: Its openness to all and its pioneering work in higher education.

1. Openness

If there was one Moravian Church that was open to diversity from the beginning of its mission, it was Nisky. Records show that Nisky always had an open door policy in spite of hearers' status, age, class, race or creed. All were welcomed.

Maynard makes reference to a Bro. Benjamin, for example, who was born in the Mandingo country in Africa and whose father was Muslim. When he was brought to St Thomas not only did he maintain his strong Muslim faith but he practiced black magic and herbalism. Bro Benjamin, then Absalom, encountered the missionaries at Nisky who shared the gospel with him. Bro Benjamin accepted Christ gave up his past and was baptized at Nisky in 1789.

He became an active member of the Church.

Keeping an open door is one of the challenges for the Christian Church today. We need a Church that reaches out and welcomes those who do not look, speak, think or dress like us. That is our 240th challenge.

2. Higher Education

Nisky was the location for pioneer work in education at the higher level beginning with theological education. For a long time the Moravians had a difficult time training indigenous people for ministry. When the Provincial Synod met at Nisky in 1883 it resolved to open a theological school at Nisky. It was known as the Moravian Seminary and was the antecedent school for Buxton Grove Theological Seminary.

The Moravian Seminary at Nisky was opened in 1885 and provided a comprehensive training for leaders. Its success was felt both in the Province and community.

Of great import though is that a High School was opened for boys at Nisky in 1893 which was followed by the founding of preparatory school for Young men.

Not only were men prepared for ministry but the teaching profession and every conceivable and permissible profession in the Virgin Islands.

I wonder aloud if God isn't challenging the Moravian Church again to get into higher education that focuses on males. More than ever the Church is challenged to train and equip the males by providing education that is diverse and male oriented. That would be our way of empowering our boys to be Men.

As the New Nisky Complex is built much consideration should be given to having a High School just for boys.

May God challenge us and strengthen us to capture the vision again to do his will.

However there are two things that stand out as unique to

Rev. Dr. Winelle Kirton Roberts

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6. Your prayers are requested for 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.



Birthday Greetings for the month of March is extended to:

Bro. Derick Forrester	4
Sis. Alicia Ross	7
Sis. Elva Kitson	7
Bro. Jeremy Francis	9
Sis. Eulencine Christopher	18
Bro. Kingsley Lewis	20
Sis. Denise Smith-Lewis	20
Sis. Vera Waithe	29



Happy Anniversary is extended to:

Bro. Ralph & Sis. Rosalind Prince

2

Condolences

The PEC expresses sympathy to the Rev. Angela Roberts and family on the passing of her father Bro. Arnold Tomlinson. Bro. Arnold Tomlinson passed into the nearer presence of God on Tuesday February 08, 2011, at home in Antigua.

The Funeral Service was held on February 24, 2011 at the Spring Gardens Moravian Church in Antigua.

Let us remember the family in our prayers.



Fun Corner

A man goes into his doctors office for an annual physical. After a while, the doctor comes out and says, "I'm sorry Bill, but we have discovered you have a condition which only allows you another 6 weeks to live."

"But Doctor," Bill replied, "I feel great! I haven't felt better in years. This just can't be true. Isn't there anything I can do?"

After a moment the doctor said, "Well, you might start going down the street to that new health spa and take a mud bath every day."

Excitedly Bill asked, "And that will cure me?"

"No," Replied the doctor, "but it will get you used to the dirt."

"He who prays and prays, but acts not on what he knows, is like the man who plans and plans but never sows."