

The Information

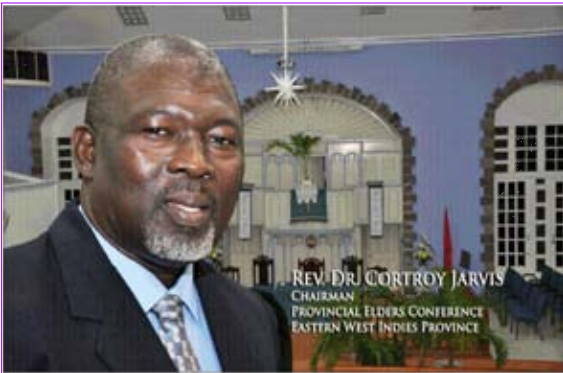
Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is day-break." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." Genesis 32 vs. 26 [NIV]

November, 2012



What does the Bible say about Church Growth?

Although the Bible does not specifically address church growth, the principle of church growth is the understanding that Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18). Paul confirmed that the church has its foundation in



Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). Jesus Christ is also the head of the church (Ephesians 1:18-23) and the church's life (John 10:10). Having said that, it should be remembered that "growth" can be a relative term. There are different kinds of growth, some of which have nothing to do with numbers.

A church can be alive and growing even though the number of members/attendees is not changing. If those in the church are growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus, submitting to His will for their lives, both individually and corporately, that is a church that is experiencing true growth. At the same time, a church can be adding to its rolls weekly, have huge numbers, and still be spiritually stagnant.

Growth of any kind follows a typical pattern. As with a growing organism, the local church has those who plant the seed (evangelists), those who water the seed (pastor/teachers), and others who use their spiritual gifts for the growth of those in the local church. But note that it is God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Those who plant and those who water will each receive their own reward according to their labor (1 Corinthians 3:8).

There has to be a balance between planting and watering for a local church to grow, which means that in a healthy church each person must know what his/her spiritual gift is, so that he/she can function within in the body of Christ.

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:

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If the planting and watering get out of balance, the church will not prosper as God intended. Of course, there has to be daily dependence upon and obedience to the Holy Spirit so His power can be released in those who plant and water in order for God's increase to come.

Finally, the description of a living and growing church is found in Acts 2: 42-47, ⁴²**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

⁴³**And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.**

⁴⁴**And all that believed were together, and had all things common;**

⁴⁵**And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.**

⁴⁶**And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,**

⁴⁷**Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”.**

The believers “devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” They were serving one another and reaching out to those who needed to know the Lord, for the Lord “added to their number daily those who were being saved.” When these things are present, the church will experience spiritual growth, whether or not there is numerical increase. It is not what we can do, but what the Lord will do when we become obedient and walk in His Will. Do I have a witness?

Dedication of the Amos Gloadz Moravian Community Centre, Pigotts Village, Antigua on September 09, 2012 by Marilyn Simon, Project Coordinator

From the time the idea was discussed re the building of a centre, there were doubts and misgivings expressed by some as to the congregation's ability to pursue such an undertaking. There was some wavering whether or not it was a wise thing to do and this held up the planning stage. However, one morning the daily text read thus “Now begin the work, and the Lord be with you” 1 Chronicles 22:16. These words encouraged the congregation and the planning began again in earnest. We have been guided and sustained by the good Lord throughout the project and we give Him all the glory. The idea for this project came out of the need for giving the young people in the

Bethany Youth Group the opportunity to enjoy a wider range of activities that could not be carried out in the church building. The members, who were Anglicans, Christian Unions, Moravians and others who had no particular church affiliation, wanted to have debates, exer-



cises, training programmes and activities that were suitable to their development and found that these activities, although not sinful, would be too boisterous to be entertained in the sanctuary. This was over 10 years ago. At

first it was felt that a container could be transformed into a centre and used by the youth. It seems that this was not to be, as containers proved to be expensive and renovating them would be also at a high cost. Eventually a decision was taken for us to consider building our own centre and application was made to the Conference for permission to build on the church lands. Conference agreed and we will always remember the valiant fight the late Rev. Challenger put up for Bethany when other people thought it was too big a project for a small congregation, but we had faith in God and decided to “rise up and build”

The project was put on the back burner for several years while efforts were being made to accumulate start up funds for the construction of the building. The congregation, and indeed the whole community, participated by supporting all the fund raising activities and some members contributed personally and solicited serious funds and materials from private companies. At last on Sunday February 15, 2009 the longed for ground breaking cere-



mony was held and soon thereafter construction began. It took us over three years to complete but this was because the congregation did not want to enter

into any loan agreements. As it stands today we have not incurred any debts and the building is completely ours. As the Bible says in Nehemiah “the people had a mind to build” hence our success.

Already there are plans for utilizing the building for our after school classes offered to students who are studying for the Common Entrance examinations.

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Dedication of the Amos Gloade Moravian Community Centre, Pigotts Village, Cont'd from Page 2

Bethany has been offering this programme for over four years and we are happy to advise that this year 10 students took the exams and all were successful and have now gone to Secondary Schools. The centre will be able to give increased assistance to the children and we hope that the success rate will continue.



The other plans are for offering training in Basic Life Support and the Emergency Medical Services have agreed to give assistance. There will also be a specialized Compute programme which is being discussed. The details are yet to be finalized.

You will note that there seems to be an unfinished area in the north-eastern corner, but this is by design as we hope to add our kitchen at that location in the near future. The



Scriptures say that one person plants, the other waters and the next reaps the increase. We have seen it happen in the case of the Centre. **Rev Jones**

planted. In the early stages he had heard of a donor agency that was willing to assist third world countries with new community projects. We prepared a project proposal document and sent it off. However we were advised that their main emphasis was on women and since we could not truthfully say that the focus was on women we did not receive approval. Then **Rev Forrester** began to water. **Rev Barker** continued the watering and care, and he is reaping the increase given by God. As a matter of fact the Lord had arranged it so, as Rev Barker is well trained in computer Science and has been a source of advice and direction as to how everything should be conducted. Towards the end we had one concern and that was the possibility of Rev'd Barker's transfer before the completion of the building. We thank PEC for allowing him to see the project through to its end and trust that he will be still at Bethany to carry out the many programmes that are in the pipeline.



L to R - Rev. C. Jarvis, Sis. M. Simon, Bishop Lewis, Rev. K. Barker, Rev. A. Smith, and Rev. E. Christopher

There are some members and friends of the congregation who had made contributions to the project and who believed that we would someday finish it. **Their names are listed below.**

Dr. R. Bekal
Dr. Joseph John
Hon Asot Michael
Mr. Bill Anderson
Dr. Rodney Williams
Mr. Aziz Hadeed
Mr. Ewart Harney

Mr. Michael Josiah
Dr. Sir P. Ramsay
Mr. George Phillip
Mrs. Sonia Gordon
Mr. Mark Gloade and family**
Rotary Club
Mr. Kevin Gomez
The Mega Store

Special from the congregation

Br. O. Gore**
Br. Allington Thomas**
Br. S. Dorsett**
Sr. G. Freeland-Nicholas and her husband Conrad*
Br. W. James*
Br. K. Simon*

** These are our double star donors who gave very generously both in cash and labour. Their donations made a significant contribution to the project and we thank God for their generosity.

The fund-raising committee
The Antigua Conference
The late Rev'd R. Challenger and
Very importantly the whole Congregation

We thank God for their generous contributions knowing that they did it willingly. The financial statement is attached.

We promise to use the facility with great care for the glory of God and in the best interest of the community. Thanks once again to the Conference, the Community, our friends and well wishers and the members of the Bethany Congregation and our Pastor, Rev'd Barker. We look forward to your continuous support.



Income generated from donations and programmes	\$254,608.71
Expenditure	\$249,877.98
Balance in the bank at the end of the project	\$ 4,730.73

My Experience in the “Holy Woods”(Part I)

By Rev. Dr. Winell Kirton Roberts

It was with a mixture of excitement and apprehension that I journeyed to the “Holy Woods (UTCWI),” in September,



as part of my furlough experience. I was excited because Christian Education, which I define as growing in grace and in knowledge of God, has always been my passion and I longed to be in a theological context which is devoted to preparing men and women to be Christian Educators. On the other hand, my apprehension was more personal since I had never travelled to Jamaica alone and was unsure of what

the experience would be. In the end I left the Holy Woods with a great sense of fulfilment, purpose and enthusiasm and embarrassingly wondered: “what was I apprehensive about?”

Reconnecting

Within minutes any past graduate can reconnect with the Holy Woods. The structures are pretty much the same with the addition of the Married Quarters unfamiliar to those who have graduated more than twenty years ago. The student enrolment is considerably smaller with a current residential population of forty-five (45) many of whom, surprisingly, can be categorised as mature or second career students. The married students and their families occupy most of the 19 rooms in the Married Quarters creating more of a residential area than campus living.

In general though, student life follows a similar routine with on and off campus classes, daily chapel, cultural activities and yes “Jordan still rolls” and the “Spirit still moves.” With the closure of the Dining room this semester, students and faculty are left now to prepare their own meals or take the daily trek to UWI. Not only has this accentuated an anti-social culture but it consumes productive hours for those students who are not accustomed to having to balance their time with grocery shopping, meal preparation and maintaining “a home.” This was a major disappointment for me.

The development of the infrastructure in Kingston and by extension Jamaica is widespread, progressive and cutting-edge. From targeted investment in education, technology

and tourism to the marketing of their own productions and the acquisition of the American tastes in the fast-foods, vehicles and fashions, Jamaica has all the hallmarks of a Metropolitan city. It was buzzing with activity, stimulating, entertaining and refreshing.

It was a privilege to sit in classrooms having your batch-mates and colleagues as your Lecturers. It was rejuvenating to sit everyday in prayerful contemplation in chapel albeit enduring some of the well-intentioned testimonies. It was an honour to make presentations in the classrooms to the different denomination sessions and the Graduate colloquium. It was stimulating to be thinking and speaking theologically.

Presentations

I will use this forum to scripts from some of those presentations. I will begin with the Moravian denominational class lecture/discussion which was held on Sunday evening at the new Warden, Rev Neilson Waithe’s residence. This turned out to be very robust and informative.

The topic is: Enlarging our coast: growing the Church.

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord!” Psalm 122:1

The primary objective of this presentation is to encourage us to engage the critical issue of growth and decline in the Moravian Church. I will highlight some historic information which I will ask you to connect with some current trends in the Church today. As you graduate and assume your pastoral responsibility as Moravian leaders, you will have to ask how can the past help or hinder the growth of the Church.

Except for the African continent, Moravian Churches worldwide have been on a steady decline in the last century. If there is any good news it is that it is now believed that for the first time in the history of the Moravian church that the Moravians would record 1 million followers. But this is almost exclusively due to the growth of the work in Africa.

In the English speaking Caribbean, except for Antigua and maybe Tobago the Moravians still fall under the religious category census as “other.”

With the current trends the question must be asked: Where is the Church going to be 20 or 50 years from now should the Lord tarry? Do we as leaders plan for or expect growth? Do you ask yourself as a student: How can I be part of the growth of the Church?

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Pioneers in mission

There is not a mission student who has not heard about the pioneering evangelistic work of the Moravian Church.

So impactful, radical and powerful was the first Moravian missions from Herrnhut to the Western Hemisphere that it is recorded in just about every history book on mission. It is used as a model to follow, it is used as motivation for missionaries who are unsure about their purpose but it is used as a warning against complacency.

I was googling some information some months ago and I quote a statement from a leader of one of the mission institutions: "Let us not become like the Moravians who started off well but have given up their passion for souls."

This passion for mission resulted in early rapid growth of the Church worldwide. Today that passion is evident primarily in Africa, some parts of Latin America and little pockets in other Provinces.

Passion in Pastoral Care

The Moravian Church has also had a strong history of pastoral care. Caring and reaching out compassionately to its followers, from the cradle to the grave, has been a hallmark of Moravianism.

Careful attention was given to Christian instruction, visiting the sick, rebuking the fallen, listening to the burdened and caring for the whole person. Moravians were known for recording every detail. These helped in strengthening the mission work of the Church. Persons were more willing to remain members and encourage their families to be members when they sensed that they were loved and cared for. The Moravian Church was guaranteed sustained growth through pastoral cares.

So what has become of passion and care for souls?

Church Growth

Why aren't we growing in the Caribbean? Is Church growth connected to doctrines, rites, sacraments and rituals? Does it have to do with the preaching and charisma of the Pastor? Does it have to do with the social services and community outreach that we offer? Does it have to do with the format of our worship?

"If I just get some drums, bass guitar and keyboard then this church would be packed every Sunday."

"If I can preach like the apostle Paul, T.D Jakes or Cindy Trimm, everyone will come flocking to the Church I pastor."

"If I start a programme to teach children in the community, feed the poor, take food for the Elderly, or provide shelter for the homeless then more people will come to us."

"If I keep all the rites and rituals that my fore-parents passed down then members would be happy and remain in the Church forever."

"If I pray and wait for the Spirit of God to move among, then others will be drawn to Christ."

The correct answer all of the above.

Growth has to do with doctrines, it has to do with the Pastor, it has to be with outreach, it has to do with worship and above all it has to do with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The problem is when we think that it is just one or the other.

Reflection

As persons who are called to serve in a Church with a long history we have to wrestle with what has already been established while seeking to be relevant to the needs of the people and be faithful to God. My challenge to you then is: How can we experience the growth that was spoken of in the book of Acts? **How can we exploit the traditions of the Church to bring about growth?**

It is my conviction that the rites and rituals of the Church can be used as means of evangelism and pastoral care and are therefore our greatest opportunities for growth.

BAPTISMS

The sacrament of baptism was used as the primary means of growth in the early Church and at the beginning of every mission. Growth was measure by how many people were baptised. It is also true to say that the doctrine of baptism was also a hindrance to growth.

Arthur Dayfoot has correctly pointed that in the Caribbean:

"dissensions among the missionaries themselves over the requirements for baptism in terms of spiritual knowledge and evidence of a change of life, limited the growth of the work."

This is still true today. I don't think that there has been a Synod when we don't talk and have a resolution over the issue of baptism whether Infant or Adult.

Beginning in the 18th century, baptism of infant was practiced in the Caribbean. However adult baptism was the primary mode of baptism during slavery.

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For a slave to be baptized he or she had to make a verbal confession which was followed up with further instruction. It took two years before a slave was baptised by a Moravian.

The missionaries recognized that the baptism itself did not always mean a changed life but they were willing to work with that candidate. For example in 1832 a Cassandra Hall at Mount Tabor in Barbados came to a missionary for baptism. She confessed her sins and received instruction. The missionary accepted her expressed intention to change her heart although he had found that “**Baptism alone did not alter the people.**”

The other side to it was that sometimes the hearers lost patience with the long instruction process of Moravians. In Barbados a man who left Mount Tabor to join St John parish church because he didn't have “the patience to wait any longer.”

By the 1840s Infant Baptism was used for Christian training to families who had already having a faith while adult baptism was reserved for those who experienced conversion. With the decades though infant baptism increased and adult baptism decrease. But there have always been theological challenges with baptism

For the infant baptism it was a case whether the church should be baptising children of the unconverted? In 1862 Moravian rules stated that infant baptism should be permitted for children of parents who attended speaking, for illegitimate children only if their parents decide to marry or the mother is admitted to fellowship. Pastors were free to use their discretion.

By the end of the 19 century some of the Moravians were leaving to go to the newer churches for adult baptism. In Antigua, for example, several of the Moravians left to be baptised in the Christian mission as early as 1899. There was a Bro Knight in 1904, may be a teacher, who had returned to the Moravian Church and confessed that went to another Church for baptism because they “had offered it.” The Moravians were no longer offering adult baptism so members were going to others Churches. While some returned, others remained and grew the numbers in the new Churches.

How can baptism be used as a means of growth?

Personal experience: I have seen phenomenal results in using baptism of infants as means of evangelism and growth. This requires a commitment to taking the time to witness and counsel the parents and introducing them to

Christ who cares. It further means ensuring that godparents are in a spiritual position that they can encourage the parents and take responsibility for the child. It is very important for the Church to have structure Christian education for that infant. This is done through cradle roll and Sunday School and ministries to young children. When these things are priorities the Church will grow and expand from the bottom up. When children are in Church, parents will follow. They are prime candidates for discipleship.

I've also seen the reaffirmation of baptism as a means of evidence of spiritual growth.

CONFIRMATIONS

Confirmation is an open window for evangelism and not a time to argue over doctrine.

It was in 1782 that Confirmation was universally observed as a rite preparatory to admission of candidates to Holy Communion. For the Moravians confirmation as a rite came much later than most of its Protestant brothers and sisters. In the Caribbean, there was not a Confirmation mentioned during slavery. But while adult baptism was decreasing Confirmation as a rite was increasing in the 20th century. For the Moravians Confirmation was an extension of the Christian education. For the most part all those who were part of the Confirmation were already actively involved in every aspect of the Church life

Confirmation was a long process which would take up to four years. Two qualifications were the memorization of the catechism and displaying of Christian behaviour. There was an example in Antigua where a whole confirmation class was kept at Lebanon in 1910 because of bad behaviour.

Today there continues to be the challenge of how effective Confirmation is. To what extent can confirmation be used as a means of growth?

Personal experience: I have wrestled with this and again have concluded that it is a powerful means of growth. I wish to strongly urge all Pastors to use the opportunity you have to teach your own confirmation classes. Your years of theological education have prepared you to instruct Confirmation classes. We have some very powerful and knowledgeable lay persons who can assist with different age groups but with teaching Confirmation is a specialised area which requires much more than rote learning. Be prepared to answer some of the questions that students are wrestling with and bring them back to the Word of God. Do not miss the opportunity to present Christ to them but always remember it is grace that saves.

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Continuing Christian Education after the Confirmation service is just as important as discipleship to a new convert. I started at Memorial a ministry the last five years called Continuing the Faith (CTF). It is a teaching ministry which roots the children in the word of God. As they grow they apply the Word of God to their lives. It is an effective ministry.

MARRIAGE

Churches do grow through the establishment of families. The Christian view is that marriage is the foundation of family life. The Moravians fought especially hard in the early years to preserve marriage as a legitimate rite. In order to keep their members who were leaving to go the Established Churches they had to fight for laws in their favour.

Marriage was also a moral issue. Moravians believed that to deal with the immorality of sexual relations outside of marriage that their followers should be encouraged to be joined in Holy Wedlock. Here it was that the church was teaching on celibacy and monogamy and the leaders couldn't marry their followers. However even when permitted to marry the one thing that the Church was not very effective in was preserving celibacy. Sex was and still is a major issue for the married and unmarried. (This I will expand on in the Joint denomination presentation).

But how can marriages be used as a means of ministry?

Personal: I have seen marriage as the opportunity for the people to become more involved in the life of the Church. Sometimes the male begins to attend Church and can become active. Unfortunately there is today an obsession with weddings as fashion displays and little emphasis on the sanctity of marriage. This also includes us as clergy who can be guilty of weddings that are too extravagant.

Some Churches have been good at following-up marriage couples and this is an area that I need to spend more time on. These can be disciples who can offer their ministry to others in the future.

BURIALS

The one sure way that membership will decline is at end of life. Yet, the ministry to families during this time can be powerful means of reassurance and hope. We know that There is nothing as controversial for the Church as the question of burials. The Moravian developed a theology of death long before most Protestant Churches. That it why it was important for Moravians to have God's Acre. But the question is: who is eligible to be buried in God's acre?

In the midst of the people's loss and sorrow we must offer

pastoral care but we still have to avoid making decisions that have long-term implications.

Personal experience: I have thought of the fact that this is one area that Christian education should take place before families have to deal with loss. At some point every year Pastors should remind members of the rules of the Church so that they can avoid later conflict. However, every effort should be made during sick and shut-in ministry to build a strong enough relations with families so that you will have a sense of what in their minds. And when extraordinary situations arise seek God's wisdom and enlist the support of your Elders. Some adult children have become committed to Christ and active in the Church as a result of the passing of a faithful parent. We must not miss out on that one opportunity to minister.

Conclusion

A Church that is now growing is one that is dying. It is important that we regain the passion for growth in the Moravian Church. Every leader should leave these holy woods with the desire to grow the Church in which ever area he or she is called to serve. If we are individually committed to growth then the entire body will grow.

THE MORAVIAN CHURCH **Present A**



Date: December 17 – 20, 2012
Sessions will be held from
8:00a.m to 12:30p.m daily

These classes are opened to 5th and 6th Formers, in addition to Teachers and other interested persons.

Registration Fee is EC\$20.00

Register between the hours of 8:30a.m and 4:00p.m. daily, from October 01- November 30, 2012, at the Provincial Headquarters at Cashew Hill. Please call 560-0185 for more information.

Facilitator: The Rev. Dr. Conrad Spencer, Mathematics Professor at the University of the Virgin Islands.

UNITY BOARD MEETING

Your prayers are requested for the Biennial Unity Board Meeting which will be held in Herrnhut Germany from October 30 – November 95, 2012. The Chairman of PEC, along with all heads of Moravian Provinces will be in attendance. Reports will be received from all Provinces. A number of decisions will be taken which will impact the entire Church.



PEC MEETINGS

The scheduled meetings for the PEC in 2013 are as follows:

January 25 - 27, 2013 - Barbados
 April 26 - 28, 2013 - Tobago
 July 26 - 28, 2013 - St. Croix
 October 11 - 13, 2013 - St. Kitts

The Superintendents Conference will be held in Barbados from January 28 - 29, 2013.



Birthday Greetings
 for the month of November
 is extended to:

Sis. Patricia Nicholas	15
Bro. Rowan Simmons	19
Bro. Ezra Parris	21
Sis. Myrtle Miller	21
Sis. Geraldine Roberts	23
Sis. Joyce Walters	24
Bro. Nevin Lewis	27



Anniversary Greetings
 for the month of November is
 extended to:

Bro. Alban & Sis. Cynthia St. Hill	24
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Quotes of the Day

- ♦ Be civil to all. Sociable to many;
familiar with few, friend to one;
and enemy to none.
Benjamin Franklin
- ♦ Faith is taking the first step, even when
you don't see the whole staircase.
Martin Luther King Jr.

Fun Corner

Where Are You Going

Grandma and Grandpa were sitting in their porch rockers watching the beautiful sunset and reminiscing about "the good old days". Grandma turned to Grandpa and said, "Honey, do you remember when we first started dating and you used to just casually reach over and take my hand?"

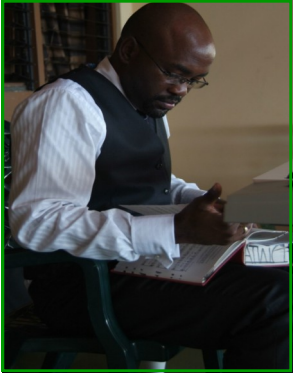
Grandpa looked over at her, smiled and obligingly took her aged hand in his. With a wry little smile, Grandma pressed a little farther, "Honey, do you remember how after we were engaged, you'd sometimes lean over and suddenly kiss me on the cheek?"

Grandpa leaned slowly toward Grandma and gave her a lingering kiss on her wrinkled cheek. Growing bolder still, Grandma said, "Honey, do you remember how, after we were first married, you'd kind of nibble on my ear?" Grandpa slowly got up from his rocker and headed into the house. Alarmed, Grandma said, "Honey, where are you going?"

Grandpa replied, "To get my teeth!"

Hymn of the Month—November, 2012
 Mikie Roberts (Rev) Chair,
 Provincial Hymnal Committee.

Over the next two months as we continue observing within the Province our hymn of the month, we will give attention to the following two (2) hymns. The hymns are:



Our hearts and voices let us raise (# 596) is the hymn of the month for **November**. In the trial hymnal it is #643. The recommended tune is also the set tune **CHURCH TRIUMPHANT**.

All for Jesus is the hymn of the month for **December**. This hymn as well is new to the trial hymnal and it is #68. The words and music for this hymn will be circulated in the near future.

The Provincial Hymnal Committee is now moving ahead to establish Editorial Subcommittees in each Conference. They will be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the words and punctuation of the various hymns are correct. We continue to seek your prayerful support as we move ahead each month to the goal of producing our Caribbean Moravian hymnal.

Here are the words for the hymn of the month for **November**:

Our hearts and voices let us raise,
 In songs of thankfulness and praise,
 Our heavenly Father's love to bless,
 Which crowns the year with fruitfulness.

Cheered by the sun and fostering rain,
 The valleys wave with golden grain
 The corn-fields teem with ripened shocks
 The stalls with herds, the folds with flocks.

For what thy bounteous hand imparts,
 Give us the grace of thankful hearts,
 Hearts which their thankfulness may prove,
 By hymns of praise and gifts of love.

O thou, that art the harvest's Lord,
 Send forth the sowers of the word,
 And may we speed them on the wings
 Of prayers and cheerful offerings.

May distant climes thy word receive,
 Land after land, till all believe,
 And bear the fruit that never dies;
 Till earth shall bloom like Paradise.

Church Triumphant

1862. C. Wordsworth.

This article below entitled Why are they Leaving and written by Ian Boyne appeared in the Jamaica Gleaner on Sunday October 28, 2012. It makes very interested reading and speaks to the fact that some serious research was done by the writer. It is a healthy discussion, because too often some leaders make a lot of assumptions, but fail to do the research. One of the cogent questions is why is the Adventist growing? Certainly not worship revolution! Certainly not the clap hand, dancing and falling down! The Adventist hold fast to their doctrines and teach them day and night. They do not shift with every wind that blows. I commend the article to you, even though it speaks to the Jamaican context there is not much difference in the Eastern West Indies Province. It is hoped that we would examine it with new eyes.

Why are they Leaving?

The Gleaner has done an excellent job in reporting on the decline in membership of traditional churches and the rise of the Adventists and Pentecostals/Charismatics, drawing on statistics from the latest Jamaican census.

Beginning with its lead story in last week's **Sunday Gleaner** ('Exodus; J'cans Flee Traditional Churches; said to be flocking newer denominations') and continuing with Monday's front-page story, 'Jamaicans turn away from 'ritual, boring worship', as well as several others, the paper has tracked the malaise which has overtaken orthodox Christianity in Jamaica.

In the 1960 census, the Pentecostals accounted for a mere one per cent of the population count, numbering 14,739. By the 2001 census that figure had accelerated to 247,452. But in this latest census, Pentecostals have grown to 295,195 - a growth of approximately 20 per cent, the highest growth rate of any denomination over 10 years. People identified as "Church of God" in the census, which has a style of worship and theological framework similar to the Pentecostals, account for 617,000. This category includes denominations like the Church of God of Prophecy and the New Testament Church of God.

But the largest denomination in Jamaica does not even meet on the traditional day of worship, Sunday, as that denomination is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Adventist Church has grown from 281,353 in 2001 to 322,228 in 2011, a growth of nearly 15 per cent.

The decline in the membership of the traditional churches has been dramatic. Take the Moravians, for example, who played such a critical role in Jamaica's history. In the 1960 census, 52,467 persons identified themselves as Moravians. (Bear in mind that Jamaica's population then was approximately 1.61 million, compared to 2.7 million today.) Yet in the latest census only 18,351 persons identified themselves as Moravians.

In the 1960 census, 115,291 persons were identified as Catholic. The number slid to 67,204 in the 2001 census and

in the 2011 census only 57,946 persons identified themselves with the Roman Catholic Church. A nearly 14 per cent decline over 10 years. The Methodists claimed a membership of 107,858 in the 1960 census. But in this latest census, membership has tumbled to 43,000. Not only are traditional churches declining but there is no indication that they will ever see any significant rise in their membership. There are certain factors propelling the decline of traditional churches and the growth of newer Churches.

The Gleaner sought answers as to why the drift away from traditional churches. One Pentecostal pastor was not diplomatic: "Boring, predictable and a ritualistic style of worship", were among the main reasons Jamaicans were fleeing traditional churches like Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, United Church, Moravians and Methodism, he felt. Said he: "Persons are no longer interested in ritual, boring worship that does not connect with them. They want a church where they can connect with themselves on a spiritual level and feel alive and vibrant". But many of the congregations of traditional churches have adopted a more expressive, lively and charismatic style of worship, incorporating musical instruments and contemporary worship in their services to attract and keep young people.

The Gleaner on Tuesday quoted a Moravian minister as saying that, "we are shifting in that direction more in terms of lively singing, choruses and music. This is a response to the fact that people are saying we need more out of worship". But a charismatic-type worship with a lot of shouting, gospel deejay music and band music is not all that's pulling people, for how do you explain the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the largest denomination in the island and that denomination, while not dull, is certainly not among the liveliest. That's a denomination where the pull would be more with doctrine, particularly the emphasis on the Seventh-day Sabbath.

Deeper Reasons

The reasons for the decline in traditional Christianity in Jamaica and for the rise in the newer churches are deeper than have been captured by the Gleaner reports so far. First, the decline in traditional churches is a global phenomenon, particularly pronounced in North America and Europe. This decline has been evident for decades. In 1972 Dean Kelley published his landmark book, *Why the Conservative Churches Are Growing*. He showed that people were generally more attracted to groups which demanded more of them, which established clear boundaries and which eschewed moral ambiguities. The more established denominations tended to be more liberal socially and politically and, of course, were not fundamentalist and literalist. Especially in a country where citing Scripture and being able to memorise it are glorified, churches which are more fundamentalist in their approach to the Bible will have a greater pull. Your average Anglican or Roman Catholic priest or Moravian or Methodist pastor is not likely to beat a Seventh-day Adventist or a Pentecostal pastor in a 'tracing Scripture' match, pitting proof-text against proof-text.

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Why are they Leaving?
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In Jamaica we love a 'clash', not just in the dancehall or on the political platform, or in the bar, but in the religious arena as well. We are an argumentative, cantankerous and contentious people. We are, culturally, a factious, divisive people and religious groups which emphasise distinctives, like the Adventists with the wedge issue of which day we should worship and what is the Mark of the Beast, who is the Antichrist, will carry the swing.

Generates Excitement

The Moravian, Methodist or United Church reverend talking about the love of Christ and the Social Gospel is not likely to generate as much excitement as the Pentecostal preacher 'proving' from Scripture that you must speak in tongues to be saved, that you must baptise in Jesus' name and that you can get your healing and material blessings right now if you show faith. That's more adrenaline-raising than Father Ho Lung's talking about helping dying AIDS patients or the elderly poor.

A statement attributed to Charles Dufour, Archbishop of Kingston, tells precisely why the Catholic Church is likely to continue its downslide in membership: "We don't believe in sheep stealing We don't go after other churches' members and we don't criticise other churches. We are not into that". Well, Archbishop, the newer churches are into that and that's why so many Catholics have left to join them. Your approach is noble and your intention, no doubt, pure and Godly. But in the real marketplace of religion, where the Catholic Church is being beaten down as representing the Beast and the Antichrist; where in Adventist eschatology the Papacy will again plunge the world into religious oppression and will force "the final crisis" upon the world, there has to be a polemical response or others will steal your sheep. Our clash culture facilitates people's trekking from one church to the next because of better lyrics, better rhythms and more wheel-and-come-again doctrines.

The traditional churches take a more intellectual, high-ground approach to evangelism and mission and generally concentrate less on correct doctrine. The Seventh-day Adventists emphasise doctrine, Biblical teaching and is characterised as a "movement of destiny"; a movement with a unique perspective on history and prophecy, one proclaiming the Third Angel's Message of Revelation 14. Sociologists of religion have demonstrated over and over that groups that are exclusivist and which emphasise distinctive doctrines and features attract more people than those which are ecumenical, liberal and cosmopolitan. People want to be told what to believe in a complex, confusing and critical age. Religious groups that have pat answers, packaged solutions and panaceas generally do far better than those which invite people to mystery and self-discovery and which emphasise process over product. People want black and white, not shades of grey.

That is what the newer churches are offering. Plus, the

churches which are growing fastest are not Pentecostal in the old-fashioned sense. You must understand this important shift which has taken place.

It's not just that people want livelier, more rousing worship. Pentecostal and Church of God churches were always offering that while the traditional churches had more members. What has changed? Old-style Pentecostals were largely uneducated peasants and working class people; the kinds of people studied by Ashley Smith and Barry Chevannes. The Pentecostals who are growing today are of a different kind. Enter the Charismatics who are more middle-class, more lettered, more moneyed, more upwardly mobile.

People see successful professionals, business people and celebrities embracing Christianity (Swallowfield Chapel is a who's who among Kingston's church-going elite). So it is no longer your helpers and gardeners who are 'getting in spirit', but big, brown, uptown people. The Holy Spirit has gone uptown, so people finally have the validation they were looking for in this highly stratified society. Besides, while the old-style Pentecostals frightened you with hellfire and brimstone, new-style Pentecostals induce you with blessings of health and wealth. The prosperity Gospel is what is driving many people, including the young, to newer churches. The churches which are growing rapidly, apart from the Adventists, are the prosperity gospel churches.

It's a gospel which is very much in tandem with the materialistic, consumerist ethos of American culture, which is our primary influence. It's the religious version of capitalism. So you have a religion that is not really counter-cultural but fundamentally in line with the spirit of the age.

Jamaicans are highly ambitious, materialistic and acquisitive. Come to Jesus and He will bless you with a good career, a good spouse, good health and a good amount of money.

Whatever you need, as long as you have faith and have Jesus, you'll get it. In fact, you can get it easier than having to work hard as is the gospel in secular society. It's an easier road to the same wealth worship in bourgeois society.

In an excellent book released this year chronicling the shift from traditional churches and titled, *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics*, New York Times columnist Ross Douthat says celebrity prosperity preacher Joel Osteen "embodies a shift of a very different sort - the refashioning of Christianity to suit an age of abundance, in which the old war between monotheism and money seems to have ended, for many believers, in the marriage of God and Mammon".

The Humpty Dumpty of traditional Christianity can never be put back together again in Jamaica.

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