



A COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR OF PEC - EWI PROVINCE

# The Information

"I must turn aside and look at this great sight..." When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Exodus 3 Vs. 3- 4 (NRSV)

January, 2020

## Inside This Issue

## Shift... Seek God!



**Rev. Algernon Lewis**  
Chairman of PEC

Happy New Year to all. With the arrival of 2020, the Moravian Church continues its journey of witnessing for the God who has called us in Jesus, through the Holy Spirit. This new year confronts us with challenges that are possibly greater than those we have had before.

We are well aware of declining numbers and resources. There is also declining influence and impact which threaten the sustainability of the church. The church is just one among many alternatives for people. So, what do we do? Well, we remind ourselves that it is God's church and Jesus is the head of the church. God always has a way forward.

In reflecting on these realities, a theme emerged to guide the way forward. If we do this well, it should address culture, identity, and purpose. The theme is, "Advance the Kingdom – S.H.I.F.T. Advance the kingdom is what each Christ-follower is called to do in our daily lives. S.H.I.F.T. is an acronym that represents:

- S** – Seek and Submit;
- H** – Hear and Heed;
- I** – Imagine and Insight;
- F** – Focus and Function; and
- T** – Totally Transformed.

There is no doubt that the church has a place in our society. Since there is a loss of impact, there must be a problem somewhere. The gospel is still potent and the fields are still white for harvest. We may try to find the answers with surveys and other listening tools. However, the church is a divine organism and whenever it needs a check, only God is able to diagnose the problem; hence seek and submit. The posture of the church at this time needs to be one of pursuing God for direction. Only God knew the way through the wilderness and only God knows the way out of the place where this church finds itself.

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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

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Advance the Kingdom- S.H.I.F.T



*Shift... Seek God!*  
*Cont'd from Page 1*

God's directive must precede any human effort. In Exodus, there was a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Even with that, Israel managed to move in the wrong direction because they looked around rather than look up.

What does it mean to seek God? Usually, there is a precipitating situation that forces us to seek God. For Moses in Exodus 3, it was the burning bush. Burning bushes were probably not an anomaly. What was strange was that the bush was not consumed. Moses' attention was captured by the burning bush then by the angel of Lord. God was seeking Moses' attention as the cries of the people of Israel reached God and now God was setting in motion a plan to bring deliverance.

The bush, the anomaly, prompted curiosity and Moses went looking. God called Moses from the bush. Moses answered and was told to take off his shoes. God did not speak to Moses until he turned or shifted his attention to look at the bush. The things that happen around are sometimes the trigger to get us thinking about how we might help to make things better. It is my view that God wants us to turn aside, to shift our attention to the things that are happening around us. Many of those things are invitations to get involved with God and the mission in the world. Once Moses shifted his attention, God spoke. When we shift our attention, we will also hear from God.

There was an interesting interplay between God and Moses, as Moses questioned the choice of God – "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt." Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" Then God responds, "I AM WHO I AM..." Scholars have interpreted this in many ways. I choose to see that as God saying to Moses, this is not about you, it is about what I will do through you when you allow me. This is a radical thought in an era of personal agency and self-determination. However, the only way the deliverance would take place is if Moses allowed God to use him as the instrument of deliverance. God had been preparing Moses for this from before his birth. Moses did not know but God had it figured out.

It is tempting to approach the biblical narrative thinking that the people God singled out as instruments, opted willingly to join the mission of God. Closer examination reveals that most of the chosen were unwilling to join God in the mission. They were self-absorbed, unwilling and doubting. God had to coax them through their unfolding experiences with God to embrace the call. And even then, some did not fully embrace the purposes of God in them. They learnt to trust God over the process of time.

Moses is a great example of this. Before this encounter, we are not told that Moses had any meaningful experience with God. He would have been told in his youth about God and how he was saved by God for a purpose. His experience living in the privileged confines of Pharaoh's palace could possibly have countered all he was taught during his formative years. Further, when he thought he was acting in his "purpose," he ended up murdering an Egyptian overseer. He then went into self-imposed exile running from Pharaoh, from the Israelites, and from himself. While in Midian he married and settled and became a shepherd for his father-in-law, Jethro. Moses had years in the desert to be convinced that he was a nonentity and the stories told to him about purpose were illusions of grandeur from a hopeful mother. But even if his mother was wrong about purpose, he grew up in the palace. He should not be on the backside of the desert watching sheep. But that was his reality. Feelings of inadequacy, failure, and despair must have characterized his life.

Notwithstanding, it is into this place of dislocation and marginalization that God comes to Moses while he is looking after sheep. God seeks out Moses, not that he was ever lost to God. Every encounter with God is initiated by God – God is the first mover. God reached and Moses responds. It is God who initiates relationship. This is consistent with Jesus' teaching when he declared, "No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me..." (John 6:44). Seeking is first and foremost God's prerogative. Human agents respond to God reaching out to us or drawing us to the divine self. The conversation between God and Moses is the essence of seeking after God.

The more I reflect on that conversation between God and Moses, the more I think it was a necessary conversation. Some commentators highlight the excuses Moses makes to God about taking on this task. I chose to see the **shift** from being a conversation as

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## Shift... Seek God! Cont'd from Page 2

necessary for Moses to shift from being his failing self, to being a sharp tool in God's hand. All the things he said about himself were true and the questions he asked were accurate. What was missing was God's input. God's input was needed to **shift** Moses from being a failure to being an accurate tool in God hand. If Moses' heart did not shift, he could not be an agent of the shift that God was preparing for the people from bondage to freedom. When Moses shifted, he became the paradigm for others to follow.

God always works on the individual for the sake of the general. The work of God must be embodied. There must be a person or a group of people who are willing to be shifted away from their own agenda to seek God for the larger purpose of God.

God has already reached us to draw us. It is time for us to shift our attention and seek God for what is being communicated. Each time we see the realities of declining ministries and influence, it is God reaching out to get our attention to come closer, too look deeper. Sometimes our attention is on activities or on our inabilities or inadequacies. When we get into that interplay with God, our hearts begin to shift. The more Moses' heart shifted the more questions he asked as he gained clearer sight as to the enormity of the demand that was being placed on him by God. The same will be true in our time when we gain greater insight as to what it means to be agents of God in a church living through great disruptions and dislocations. Very few things are the same. But it is God's church and God is acting to move the church forward. Like Moses, none of us are worthy. Further, many do not desire to take on the stress that accompanies the call. Yet, God calls us to shift our attention and to seek as Moses did.

Seeking God is multi-dimensional. Moses had conversations with God. Scripture records that God spoke face to face with Moses (Exodus 33:11; Numbers 12:8; Deuteronomy 34:10). He knew that without those conversations, those times of hearing from God, that he would fail miserably. There are other persons in scripture like Nehemiah who went seeking after God in prayer and fasting (Nehemiah 1: 4-11). Nehemiah's prayers seeking God's directing are throughout the book. His prayer and fasting opened doors for God to

use him in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Without seeking God in prayer, the wall would go the way of all the other attempts tried before.

As we enter 2020, the clarion call is to *Advance the Kingdom – S.H.I.F.T.* If we do not shift, then the decline will intensify and death will overtake us. There is no blue print. What is required is full reliance on the directives from God as we seek after God. There are no magic bullets and strategic plans to save God's church. We have tried many things. There is no strong man or strong woman who can do this work alone either. There are however, Christ-followers whose hearts are bent on seeking God so that their steps are ordered by God. My commitment is to faithfully follow the lead of Spirit as I seek God for the way forward.

Let us seek God earnestly!



### Birthday Celebration

Sis. Margaret John had a birthday celebration with her daughters Joyce and Annette.

Sis. Margaret John migrated to Antigua 10 years ago where she resides with her daughter Joycelyn (Joyce). She is also the mother of Anthony, Annette (Wendy) and the adopted mother of Marilyn Phillips.



Advance the Kingdom~ S.H.I.F.T



## FROM NEW HERRNHUT TO HERRNHUT

By

Winelle Kirton-Roberts (Rev Dr)

*For thirteen years my family lived on the historic Estate of New Herrnhut on St Thomas VI. The significance of this Estate, not only to Moravian history but to Christian Mission, is well known. For me, New Herrnhut was a lived experience in the serene, pleasant, reflective and solemn environment. Often have I imagined what Herrnhut, Germany, the home of the spiritual renewal of the followers of John Hus, might be. Finally, in October 2019, Bro Mikie, Tsalom and I made our first visit to Herrnhut. Now, I can share with you of a journey from New Herrnhut to Herrnhut.*

### The Journey

The trip from Geneva, Switzerland to Herrnhut, Germany was approximately thirteen (13) hours by train. Fortunately, for the three of us, we stopped off in the Moravian community in the German speaking Basel, Switzerland, for two nights. There, we were met by Bro Volker Schulz, Bishop of the Unity residing in the European Continental Province, who welcomed us. We received warm Moravian hospitality from the family of Bro Schulz and the family of Bro Frieder Vollprecht, who currently pastors the Moravian congregation in Basel.

The medieval old town of Basel is the city where Desiderius Erasmus, the great humanist lived and wrote many works, and where the great reformer John Calvin took refuge and wrote the Institutes of the Christian Religion. In addition to a foot tour around the city we worshipped with the Moravian community for Sunday evening worship.



Moravian service in Basel

On the Monday we left Basel at 9:00 am and arrived at Komensky, the guest and Conference house of the Herrnhut Moravian Church, by 6:00pm. En route, we

changed trains four times. We were tired, weary, hungry and it was a bit chilly so we were happy to get an evening meal and head off to bed for a much needed night's rest.

### "Gemeindienstkonferenz 2019" or Staff Conference.

*The members of Staff, the members of the Provincial Board, youth leaders, music directors and their families gathered from Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden and Albania from October 21 to 28 for a time of retreat and fellowship*



Provincial Board

The theme was *heraufgefordert zum Dialog* (Challenges with Dialogue). The topics covered by the speakers and leaders included, Dialogue with the Bible, Media, Social Media City, children and one another. They were all informative and insightful.

There was morning, afternoon and evening prayer, all done in creative ways like drama and dance. There were also organized afternoon tours to places of interest in Herrnhut. On the last night there was a formal dinner with presentations done by the children and members of staff. This was most entertaining. On the final day there was a cup of covenant with prayerful reflections and rich fellowship.



Cup of Covenant

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**FROM NEW HERRNHUT TO HERRNHUT**  
*Cont'd from Page 4*

For me, I learnt much about the Moravian work in Europe, the present work that is being done especially among the youth and children and the mission projects that are supported throughout the Unity.



*Reflection at the end of Retreat*

**Herrnhut: Small Town, Global Significance.**

Notwithstanding the wonderful fellowship, the depth of discussion and very delicious meals, the highlight for me was to visit some of the historic places in Herrnhut. The first visit was to the extensive God's Acre where lies the bodies of the family of Zinzendorf and other well-known missionaries like Leonard Dober.



We also visited the Zinzendorf's Berthelsdorf Manor where the first Moravian Love feast got started; the Lutheran Church in Betherlsdorf where there was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on August 13<sup>th</sup> 1727;

the Unity archives, the Moravian Star factory, the Provincial headquarters, Herrnhut Church and other historic sites in Herrnhut. In the Provincial headquarters one finds the room where the watchwords are drawn, annually.



*Bro Peter Vogt in August 13, 1727 Church*



*Room where Watchwords are drawn by lot*

The journey from New Herrnhut to Herrnhut was surreal mostly but also filled with surprises. Like New Herrnhut, there is profound history, Moravian pride and well-kept traditions in Herrnhut. This preservation of customs in Herrnhut attracts the curiosity of thousands of visitors who want to know of the Moravian Church and faith. But the relatively small membership in Herrnhut and other Moravian settlements in Germany may require continued reflection and evaluation about the future of our Moravian Faith. It is also a challenge for the Moravian Unity: How do we balance our history with the need to serve the present age.

*Happy new year!*  
**Advance the Kingdom~ S.H.I.F.T**



## Call Advisory

### The PEC Makes the following Announcements:

1. The Rev. Dr. Winelle Kirton-Roberts has been seconded to the European Continental Province for two (2) years and has been called into the ministry of the Moravian Church in Switzerland. Her secondment took effect from December 1, 2019.
2. The Rev. Algernon Lewis who was elected Chairman of the Eastern West Indies Province at the 32nd Provincial Synod in July 2019, pastoral tenure at the Spring Gardens Moravian Church has officially come to the end on December 31, 2019.
3. The Rev. Bonnie E.B.W. Smith has accepted a call to serve as Interim Pastor of the Spring Gardens Moravian Church effective January 1, 2020. The appointment is expected to last six to eight months.
4. The Rev. Dr. Cortroy Jarvis has accepted a call to serve as the Pastor of the Memorial Moravian Church in St. Thomas, Virgin Island Conference effective January 1, 2020.
5. The Rev. Dr. Dion Christopher has been seconded to the Moravian Church in North America, Southern Province for five (5) years and has been appointed to serve as the pastor of the Prince of Peace Moravian Church. This call takes effect from March 1, 2020.
6. The Rev. Dr. Jeremy Francis has been called to serve as the pastor of the Friedensberg Moravian Church in Frederiksted, St. Croix. This call takes effect from March 1, 2020.
7. The Rev. Georgette John-Cotton has reapplied for the pastoral ministry of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province and has been called to serve as the pastor of the Gracehill Moravian Church in Antigua. This call takes effect on March 1, 2020.

Please keep our brothers and sisters and their families in prayer as they continue to walk in obedience to the call of God on their lives.

## Unity Sunday

### The PEC Makes the following Announcements:-

- ❖ Sunday March 01, 2020 is Unity Sunday. It was on this day in, 1457 that the Moravian Church was born. We ask for your continued prayers for the work and witness of our Church.

A special Unity offering will be taken in all Moravian Churches worldwide on that Sunday March 01, 2020 for the continued mission of the church.



## Theological Education Sunday

**Sunday March 29, 2020 is Theological Education Sunday.** On this day annually we remember in prayer our Warden/Tutor and all of our ministers in training.

At present, there is one (1) Minister in training: Sis. Marleen Browne. Our Warden/Tutor is the *Rev. Neilson Waithe*.

Let us remember them especially in our prayers.

**A special offering will be taken on March 29, 2020 to go towards the continuing Education of our Minister in Training.**



## PEC Meeting and Superintendents' Conference 2020

The PEC will meet in the Antigua Conference from January 27 - January 28, 2020.

- ♦ The Superintendent's Conference will convene on January 29 - January 30, 2020.

Please bear up the members of the PEC and the Superintendents of the various Conferences in prayer.

Other meetings for 2020 are as follows:

- ♦ April
- ♦ July and
- ♦ September



## Unity Prayer Watch 2020

The Unity Prayer Watch is a special service to the world, offered by the worldwide Moravian Church. The Eastern West Indies Province will participate in the Unity Prayer Watch from 12:00a.m April 03 - Midnight April 17, 2020. The Schedule is as follows:

Conferences are asked to observe the time allotted for our members to engage in the unbroken prayer chain. This prayer meeting began on August 13, 1727 when the Moravian Church had its Pentecost 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.

Name of Conference/ Mission	From	To
Grenada Mission	12:00a.m. April 03	8:00a.m. April 03, 2020
St. Kitts	7:59a.m. April 03	8:00p.m. April 05, 2020
Trinidad	7:59p.m. April 05	8:00p.m. April 06, 2020
Virgin Islands	7:59p.m. April 06	8:00p.m. April 09, 2020
Barbados	7:59p.m. April 09	8:00p.m. April 12, 2020
Tobago	7:59p.m. April 12	Midnight April 14, 2020
Antigua	11:59p.m. April 14	Midnight April 17, 2020



### Birthday Celebrants for January

Sis. Margaret John	4
Sis. Jovanca Lewis-Smith	5
Sis. Sonia Spencer	11
Bro. Moise Jean	12
Sis. Andrea Lorde-Smith	29



### Wedding Anniversary Celebrants for January

Bro. Nevin Lewis & Sis. Billie Sterling-Lewis

5

## Let Go



**A man named Jack was walking along a steep cliff. He accidentally got too close to the edge and fell.**

**On the way down, he grabbed a branch, which temporarily stopped his fall. He looked down and to his horror saw that the canyon fell straight down for more than a thousand feet.**

**He couldn't hang onto the branch forever, and there was no way for him to climb up the steep wall of the cliff. So Jack began yelling for help, hoping that someone passing by would hear him and lower a rope or something.**

***"Help! Help! Is anyone up there? Help!"***

**He yelled for a long time, but no one heard him. He was about to give up when he heard a voice.**

***"Jack, Jack. Can you hear me?"***

***"Yes, yes! I can hear you. I'm down here!"***

***"I can see you, Jack. Are you all right?"***

***"Yes, but who are you, and where are you?"***

***"I am the Lord, Jack. I'm everywhere."***

***"The Lord? You mean, God?"***

***"That's Me."***

***"God, please help me! I promise if, you'll get me down from here, I'll stop sinning. I'll be a really good person. I'll serve You for the rest of my life."***

***"Easy on the promises, Jack. Let's get you down from there; then we can talk. Now, here's what I want you to do. Listen carefully."***

***"I'll do anything, Lord. Just tell me what to do."***

***"Okay. Let go of the branch."***

***"What?" asked Jack.***

***"I said, Let go of the branch. Just trust Me. Let go!"***

**There was a long silence.**

**Finally, Jack yelled, *"Help! Help! Is anyone else up there?"***

**Have you ever felt like Jack?**

**We say that we want to know the will of God, but when we find out what it is, we can't handle it. Sounds too scary or too difficult, and we decide to look elsewhere.**

**When He says, *"Let go of the things that stand between you and Me, and trust Me with your life,"* it sounds pretty scary.**

**But when we let go, we find freedom and safety in His hands.**

**Let Go**

**Advance the Kingdom~ S.H.I.F.T**





# Moravian Multipurpose Complex



## Conference Center & Apartments



*Conferences*  
*Seminars*  
*Weddings*  
*Banquet*  
*Meetings*  
*Dinner*  
*Graduations*

Only ten minutes away from the stores, shops and banks in St. John's.

Our International airport is also just ten minutes away.

Our balcony provides a refreshing view of undulating hills and valleys.

The conference center has a seating capacity for 200 persons.

We are situated on a hill overlooking the picturesque out-skirts of the city of St. John's, Antigua.

There are EIGHT LARGE APARTMENTS which are available for rental. Each room is self contained with kitchenette. The rooms are air-conditioned with available internet and cable TV. All utilities are included with the exception of telephone.

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