

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)

March Newsletter, 2020



Rev. Algernon Lewis
Chairman of PEC

563 and counting

Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow him. This motto has guided the Moravian church over these five centuries. Our spiritual forebears were very deliberate in their ministry. They emerged at a time when the ministry of the church of the day was more form than substance and the church bore little resemblance to what Jesus had intended. God raised up people who were more concerned about the integrity of the gospel than with personal power and prestige. They answered the call and stepped out in faith, being guided by the Spirit of God. This bold, courageous move was undergirded by unceasing prayer and commitment to obedience.

With this much legacy in the background, there is a tendency to think that we have seen it all, done it all, and

are experts at it all. With that mindset, passion and focus are threatened and mission drift can set in. Mission drift speaks of the tendency to wander off the trajectory that has been set. This was not something our forebears had to deal with. However, in the current season, it is part of our reality. The zeal for mission and the cry for souls for the Lamb are not as potent. Other than in the African Provinces, growth seems illusive.

This birthday of the Moravian Church meets us at a critical point. A choice must be made as to whether we want to be a church that lives in the past or one that builds on the revelation of God from the past. There is no doubt that God led our forebears and showed up in unmistakable ways. Being unmistakably led by God is part of our DNA and therefore part of our usable past. The church God is calling us to be at this time is one that is sensitive to the move of God and responds in like manner.

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Vision Statement

**A Church - Transformed,
United,
Victorious in Christ**

Mission Statement

By the grace of God, we seek to be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ; without distinction, we use all that we possess to call all peoples to the truth of the Gospel through worship, evangelism, discipleship and service.

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

365 and counting continued from Pg 1

This bring me back to the theme for this Province – S.H.I.F.T. In previous columns, elements of the theme have been unpacked – Shift, Seek, and Submit. In this column, the focus will be on Hear and Heed. To hear is to receive or perceive sound. To hear is a physical function in that it is natural once the capacity is present. Once an individual is within earshot and a sound is made, the likelihood is that the signal will be received. It is hardly likely though, that we encode most of the things we hear. Most sounds simply pass through our auditory system. Hearing by itself is foundational but not transformational. Therefore, we need to go one step further.

The oft repeated New Testament phrase, “whoever has ears, let them hear”, has relevance here. Those texts were calling readers to heed the message that was sent. They challenged reader to receive the message sent and act on it. It is therefore not enough to hear; one is called to heed. What does it mean to heed? To heed is to pay attention or to take notice. To heed is to go beyond the physical act of receiving the information to the more intentional act of taking on board that which has been heard.

One might say to heed the call, or the challenge is to put faith into action. This is captured beautifully by Exodus 14 as Moses and the Israelites arrived at the Red Sea and were trapped by Pharaoh’s army. The sting of the people’s complaints were strong in Moses’ ear and he was unsure of the next steps. The text records that Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only be still” (14:13-14). This suggests that he heard from God that something was about to happen; but he did nothing. However, in verse 15 the tone of the conversation changes and God seems to speak with urgency to Moses indicating that it is time to act. He obviously heard from God before when he assured the people that God would fight for them. It was now time to move out in faith and act on what was heard – Tell the people of Israel to go forward. It was time to heed what was heard.

In order to heed, one must hear. Moses acted on what he heard, and God did the rest. In this time of disruptions and dislocation as it relates to the ministry

of this church, we can look back to see how Moses shifted so that he could hear and heed what God was saying to him and the wider body of the Israelites. It was life and death for them as it is for us. And the same God in on the case ready to shepherd us through.

The space in which the church does its ministry is largely unfamiliar – we have not been this way before. It is a world filled with new opportunities, but they are not always easily discerned. One has to become a student of the culture to understand where the opportunities lie. It is this author’s conviction that God is calling us out of the confinement of the walls of the church and religion, to the trenches where people live. The church must go back the way we came and hear and heed what God is saying and hear and heed what the culture and the people are saying. In other words, God is calling us to listen. Fundamentally, listening is hearing and heeding.

“Leadership begins with listening!” This statement challenged me the first time I heard it. Surely, it must be incorrect as leadership begins with vision or purpose or even a call. Leadership is a function of movement – moving people or an institution from one place to the next. How does one know that movement is required? By hear and heeding – listening – to the various sounds for change in the atmosphere. As a church we are called to listen to God and listen to the people of God.

The liturgical calendar offers us the season of Lent as a time to slow down and be more focused in our relationship with God. It can be another religious exercise, or it can be a meaningful time to develop our capacity to hear from God. There is no way to please God unless we can hear from God. It matters not if you have people around you “telling” you what God is saying. Each believer needs to hear what God is saying to her or him in their personal affairs. God wants each believer to know the voice of God and to discern it amid all the other voices that are competing to be heard.

Nehemiah went into prayer and fasting when those men told him what was happening in Jerusalem. Those men were sent by God to activate Nehemiah. He could have brushed them aside as he was set in life. But he listened to that word from God and his mission began. There needs to be more listening to God. Over the years this has become the domain of the ordained.

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



Wednesday

Schedule At-a-Glance

Opening Reception and Welcome

3:30-5:00pm

Panel Discussion: "Cultural Interactions During Times of Upheaval: Language, Translation, and the Kituwah (Cherokee) Worldview"

7:30-9:00pm

Thursday

Schedule At-a-Glance

"Walk And Learn!" Events

2:00-4:00pm

Evening Cultural Event: "The Search for Wachovia: The Wachovia Experience for American Indian and African American Peoples"

7:00-10:00pm

Full Program Schedule

Speakers, Panelists, and Performers

Locations and Additional Resources

Reynolda Conference 2020

April 15-18, 2020

Events Free and Open to the Public

Registration Required and/or Recommended

Friday

Schedule At-a-Glance

"Walk and Learn!" Events

2:00-4:00pm

Keynote Lecture: Rev. Dr. Winelle Kirton-Roberts "Black People-White God: Moravianism and the 'Cultural Purification' of the Afro-Caribbean in Antigua and Tobago"

7:00-9:30pm

Saturday

Schedule At-a-Glance

Panel Discussion: "Becoming American: Moravians and Their Neighbors"

10:00-11:15am

Keynote Lecture: "In Essentials, Unity; in Non-essentials, Liberty; and in all Things Love": Tracing Identity in the 18th Century Moravian *Lebenslauf* (Spiritual Memoir)"

11:30am-1:00pm

As new immigrants to the region, Moravian settlers were encouraged by their religious leadership "to enquire of many of the nearest Neighbours ... and collect all the Advantageous and Disadvantageous Moments." Through a historical examination of the concept of "the neighbor," the conference invites reflection on the first fifty years of Moravian-influenced change in the Piedmont. We will ask, who were the Moravians's neighbors? And who did "the neighbor" include and exclude, and how? How did the Moravian communities envision their own role and responsibilities as neighbors?

The many and often deeply fraught modes of exchange based on these questions came to define the unique Moravian-American character in today's NC Piedmont. Neighbor-relations affected economic, cultural, social, and artistic practices, including gender roles, literacy, missions to Cherokee and Creek communities, and enslavement. Elaborating and exploring this conference theme will help us understand the present and future of our region on the way to creating a just and inclusive community.

The conference offers a panel discussion with Cherokee scholars, keynote lectures, "Walk and Learn!" tours, cultural performances, and much more. Throughout, we will ask critical questions and lay the ground for future "town and gown" conversations, research and scholarship. All events are free and open to the public, but registration is necessary to reserve seating.

The conference is funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Additional support is provided by Reynolda House Museum of American Art, the WFU Humanities Institute (made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities), the WFU Office of the Provost, the Department for the Study of Religions, the Department of German and Russian, IPLACe, the Museum of Anthropology, the WFU Intercultural Center, the Anna Maria Samuel Project: Race, Remembrance, and Reconciliation at Salem Academy and College, the Dean's Office at Winston-Salem State University, the Winston-Salem Arts Council, the Moravian Archives, and the Moravian Music Foundation in Winston-Salem.

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

That is wonderful. However, God speaks to all who will listen – open revelation. God wants the ordinary saint to hear as well and know what to say and how to represent the kingdom.

During the season of Lent we get to practice our listening. Setting aside time for prayer and fasting is an excellent way to begin. Some choose a day in the week to fast and pray while others have daily habits. Fasting may be of various types; the general emphasis being of going without something that is a regular part of life – meals, sweets, social media, places, negative habits. There are other spiritual disciplines such as study, silence, service, and meditation that can be part of our listening to God.

In our context we are accustomed to hearing scripture read and interpretation given. That is necessary as it helps us understand the deeper meaning of the word. There is a practice called “Dwelling in the Word” – a way of letting God address people through Scripture rather than using scripture as a source from which one preaches. “Dwelling in the Word” invites the Holy Spirit to enliven a biblical text among us, so that we become aware of and responsive to what God is doing. This is a practice of listening to God through the text and through one another” (Roxburgh 2015).

Dwelling in the Word is not Bible study where commentaries and study guides are used to understand the text. Dwelling suggest “sitting with” or even “living in.” In this practice we bring ourselves before the text with others and are open to what we hear from the text when it is read. It is not about getting it right but listening for what the Spirit may be imparting to us as we listen to the text and listen to what others say about the text. Often, in this setting, a tapestry is woven around that text as persons share what God spoke to them as they listened. This is not interpreting the text as much as it is hearing what the text is saying to the individual. Like any other practice, time brings greater understanding.

Some may be uneasy about persons sharing their thoughts or what they heard from Scripture. Like all other matters of faith, there is an element of vulnerability. When we approach practices asking the Spirit

of God to lead us, we are usually led to where God desires. The Spirit of God also knows how to silence other voices or cause contrary thoughts to evaporate from the atmosphere. When God speaks there is usually a resonance in the individual who is open to hear and heed.

Listening also involves the people God has called us to serve. If the message of God is accurately received but knowledge of the context is inaccurate, failure will result. The context determines how the message is delivered. There are many wonderful sermons that failed to reach the target audience because the delivery was inadequate. This is a new posture for the church as we are accustomed to imparting. This is a growing edge for the church. To go listening is not a negation of the Great Commission. It is a recognition that there are many things that we must learn from our community so the message can be structured for the said community. When we listen to our communities, we are less likely to have preconceived notions about the reality and can properly understand people’s lived experiences. This forces the church to be more deliberate about our lived testimony rather than our spoken words. We are better at speaking than living.

Listening positions the church to hear people on their terms – their joys, their sorrows, and their challenges with faith. When we go listening, adopting the posture of follow sojourners, it should help us just to listen what people are saying without passing judgement. It is difficult to listen neutrally. But it one way for us to reach our community for Christ. This is neither new nor strange for us as Moravians. A study of the ministry of John Hus would reveal that he was effective because he tapped into the issues faced by the people of his day. The same may be said for the efforts our church in the Caribbean to create schools to educate our forebears. It is not new. That is why the call is for us to go back the way we came so that we can reconnect with community and reconnect with what God is doing all around us.

As we celebrate this milestone, let us think deliberately on how we can shift to the place God is calling us. Let us hear and heed – listen – for how God is moving us into place. Let each of us inquire of God as to what we should be doing. All of us can hear and heed. There is something for each of us to do in shifting to a new place in God. Let us use this time of Lent to realign ourselves for what God is doing.

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

Character Building

What is good character?

We want our children and young ones to have good values and strong characters. Good character just does not



happen. As adults, we must lay a solid foundation for the development of character by teaching right from wrong and by being positive role models. It is difficult to raise good children at this time but the task is not impossible. We can assist our children by setting good examples for them to follow. The role of the parent is critical in this regard. We must teach children that their character counts. Their success

and happiness will depend on who they are inside, not what they have or how they look.

People of character know the difference between right and wrong because they are guided by some pillars of character such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and being a good citizen. People of character strive to display these traits at all times.

As adults we should enforce these pillars and be advocates for good character. We should be clear and uncompromising and must try at all times to show the improper conduct will not be tolerated.

We must be careful and self-conscious about setting a good example in everything we say and do. Everything we do or don't do sends a message about our values as adults. Be sure that our messages reinforce our lessons about doing the right thing even when it is hard to do. Even when as adults we slip, we must be accountable, apologize sincerely and try to improve on our errors.

As adults/parents we should seek at all times to be consistent, be concrete and be creative. The moral messages we send must be clear, consistent and repetitive. Children will judge our values by not what we say but by what we do and what we permit them to do. Be firm with your children as you are training them for life.

Character is taught by making tough choices even

when it is difficult. Messages about good attitudes, character traits and conduct should be explicit, direct and specific. Building character must be relevant to the lives and experiences of our children. Having discussions with your children's friends is important.

Effective character development should be creative. It should be active and involve the child in real decision-making that has real consequences, for example, taking responsibility for spending pocket money. Use good and bad examples from our communities, the news, movies and the television to reinforce the pillars of good character. Youth groups and Sunday School classes can assist children and youth in building strong character.

Maureen L Lewis
Character Counts Trainer

Reference: Six Pillars of Character,
Josephson Institute of Ethics



Days of Prayer and Fasting

The PEC uses this opportunity to call the Provincial family to prayer and fast. As the Moravian Church worldwide approaches its 563rd birthday, we pause to give thanks to God and also recognize the journey over which we have come. At this time, the church is faced with many challenges. In times of challenge, people of faith remember the promises of Jesus, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20b) and that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church" (Matthew 16:18b).

For this cause, the PEC calls the church to set aside time to pray and fast on March 1, 2020.

We are also called to pray on **April 1, May 1 and June 1, 2020**. Let us be creative as Conferences and Congregations and determine how best to seek God on these days for direction and wisdom for the PEC, for Pastors, for Joint Boards, for the worship life of our church, for people to answer the call of God on their lives, for financial wisdom and provision, for our youth, for the general membership, for spiritual and numerical growth, for missions, for better relationships, for obedience and faithfulness, and whatever else the Lord lays on your heart. Let us pray!

We look forward to hearing of the moving of the Spirit of God among us as we SHIFT into the new places God is moving this church.

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

Coronavirus alert

The Provincial family, like the rest of the nations of the world, we are faced with the threat of Coronavirus. There is a sense of panic in the community. This becomes an opportunity for the people of God to bring calm to communities and speak peace to people who are worried. The World Health Organization (WHO), Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), and local public health agencies, have been calling the region and the world to make preparations to adequately fight against COVID-19. Please cooperate and comply with their regulations. As a church, we strongly request that we do the following:

- Frequently clean hands using soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if your hands are not visibly dirty. Congregations should stock up on alcohol-based hand sanitizer, providing bottles at each door. Wash hands for about 20 seconds.
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with tissue. Coughing in your elbow will result in the droplets remaining in your clothing. Throw tissue away immediately and wash hands.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough. Any member who has a fever and cough should avoid the corporate worship space. If someone in the home becomes ill, other members should consider avoiding public gatherings.
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early, and share previous travel history with your health care provider.
- Fellowship time at worship should be limited to verbal exchanges as the authorities advise that we limit personal contact.
- Clergy are required to practice the strictest personal hygiene and ensure other volunteers to do the same.
- Keep an eye out for members in your community who are unwell and see how you might serve them and help them be restored to full health while taking all the necessary precautions.
- Our elderly, persons with lung conditions, and persons with immune system complications, are particularly susceptible to this virus.

The information and recommendations surrounding this new virus continue to unfold. Stay tuned to local media for new information and we will also do our best to update this family.

In the meantime, we pray for the persons who are sick and the families who have lost loved one from COVID-19. Our God is with us and will shepherd us through this crisis, keeping our eyes fixed on our eternal hope. Again, let us be present for people in our communities and let us inspire hope as we share the love of Jesus.

Fraternally,
Rev. Algernon Lewis
Chairman of PEC



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:

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

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.

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Birthday Celebrants for March

Sis. Alicia Ross	7
Sis. Gwendolyn Jacobs	8
Bro. Jeremy Francis	9
Sis. Eulencine Christopher	18
Bro. Kingsley Lewis	20
Sis. Denise Smith Lewis	20
Sis. Vera Waithe	29
Bro. Edgar Gonsalves Barriero	29

Wedding Anniversary Celebrants for March

Bro. Ralph & Sis. Rosalind Prince	2
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Furlough

The PEC has granted furlough to the Rev. Vankys Isaac of the Bethany and Emmaus Congregations on St. John from March 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020.

The PEC has granted furlough to the Rev. Nevin Lewis of the Montgomery Moravian Church in Tobago from March 16, 2020 to July 15, 2020.

Kindly uphold our Brothers and their family in prayer as they continue to serve the Lord and 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.**

Condolences

The Moravian Provincial family expresses condolences to:

1. Rev. Belinda Manswell-Daniel on the death of her mother Mrs. Benicia Manswell of Tobago. Mrs. Manswell died on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 in Tobago. The funeral service for Mrs. Benicia Manswell, mother of the Rev. Belinda Manswell Daniel was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at the Goodwood Methodist Church in Tobago at 10:00 am.
2. Rev. Neilson Waithe, Moravian Tutor/Warden at UTCWI, on the death of his uncle Mr. Lionel Waithe at age 93 years. The funeral service for Mr. Lionel Waithe was held on March 4, 2020 at the Westbury Chapel at 10:00 am in Barbados.
3. Bro. Anselm Richards, lay member of the PEC from Tobago, as he and family mourn the death of an uncle, Mr. Maurice Muir on February 25.
4. Sis. Maureen Lewis, wife of Bishop Kingsley Lewis, as she and family mourn the tragic death of her nephew, Andre Ranjitsingh, because of a car crash on March 3.
5. Sis. Paula James-Roberts, wife of the Rev. J. Sean Roberts, as she and family mourn the death of her father Bro. Lewis "Banga" James. The funeral service takes place on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 2:00 pm at the Montgomery Moravian Church in Tobago.

Please continue to uphold the families in prayer as they mourn the death of close family members.

Quote of the Day

**If you 're alive,
There 's a purpose for your life.**

Rick Warren

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



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Theophilus N. Rolle (Bishop)
President of Conference,



December 14th, 2019

BTCL CONFERENCE HURRICANE DORIAN RELIEF UPDATE REPORT

Between September 1st – 3rd, the second and third largest economies in the Commonwealth wealth of the Bahamas – Grand Bahama and the Abacos respectively, were devastated by the passage of Hurricane Dorian. By far, this was the worst natural catastrophe in the history of the Bahamas, leaving infrastructure ravaged, over seventy (70) persons confirmed dead (thus far), hundreds still missing, and countless others deeply traumatized. Thousands of residents were left without food, water, medical aid, electricity, and shelter. To this date, many have still not been able to return home after they were forced to evacuate to other islands of the Bahamas, American or Canada.

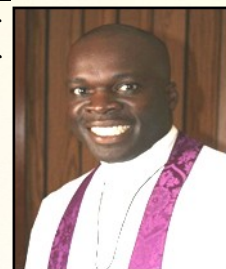
After the initial assessments were conducted, relief teams with aid and donations poured in from all around the world. Meanwhile, the two Disaster Relief Teams of the Methodist Church in Grand Bahama and Nassau, have worked tirelessly to ensure that no one within the affected communities be left out or overlooked. On any given day, a consistent team of about 25 to 30 faithful volunteers avail themselves to be fully engaged at the St. Paul's Methodist Church Command Center.

On the island of Grand Bahama, 60% of the businesses were significantly impacted by Hurricane Dorian. The Government has reported that 23% of these businesses did not have insurance and 13% will not reopen their businesses. We believe this number will be higher, based on the huge number of people still seeking assistance, and the many persons who are still out of work. The situation is compounded by the fact that, as 70% of the island was under water, many of the homes were either damaged, destroyed, or had water intrusion. Consequently, many are still displaced and have had to move in with family or friends. Electricity and water have only been restored to certain parts of the island; and many residential areas remain without power. Likewise, the water still is not portable and can only be used for sanitation purposes.

The Relief Update Report below will shed much light on the tremendous work which is presently being undertaken by the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands

Conference through its Disaster Relief Management Teams. Some of the relief distribution photos have also been attached.

We wish to accord our deep appreciation to our local, regional, and international Partners, for their generosity and solidarity. Most notably, we would like to thank the following: The United Methodist Commission On Relief (UMCOR), The United Church of Canada, The British Methodist Church, 'All We Can' Organization, The World Day of Prayer Committee of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, The South Georgia Conference of the UMC, The UMC Church of the Resurrection, The Florida/Alabama Conference of the UMC, The New York Annual Conference of the UMC, The World Council of Churches and its Alliance of Churches, Third Wave Relief Organization, Sytha Sai International Organization, The Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA), The St. Croix Circuit, The St. Maarten Circuit, The Anguilla Circuit, The South Caribbean District Conference, The Jamaica District Conference, Methodist Churches and other Churches in the USA, The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands Conference, and other local partners.



Because of the support and graciousness of our partners, many people have been given hope. Families on Grand Bahama and Abaco have received lifesaving food and other supplies. Accordingly, people have been reminded that they are not alone, and God is still in control, even in the midst of devastating circumstances.

A) WATER DISTRIBUTION AND RELIEF

In an effort to bring some relief to our communities, the Grand Bahama Circuit partnered with the Grand Bahama Port Authority/the Grand Bahama Utility Corporation/Mercy Corp to provide drinking water to the immediate community on a daily basis through a portable water station. Since the hurricane, this station has provided 250 to 500 gallons of water every day. In addition, through the donations by the Bahamas TCI Conference Disaster Relief and other donors, 30,000 units of drinking water were distributed.

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Through the help of the Sytha Sai International Organization over 500 water filtration systems were distributed to those areas without water, such as, High Rock, Free Town, Bevans Town, Pelican Point, McClean's Town, and persons within the Freeport area.

B) DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD, TARPAULINS, TOILETRIES, AND OTHER RELIEF SUPPLIES

The distribution of food items and other essentials "care packages" have continued on a daily basis. To date, over 25,000 care packages have been distributed to needy persons in the community. Recently, the Disaster Management Team on Grand Bahama set up a temporary distribution center in the Hawksbill Creek area (an area which was significantly impacted by the hurricane). Three hundred (300) care packages were distributed, which comprised of clothing, shoes, school supplies, toiletries and non-prescription medicine. The Relief Team also cooked and served hot meals for persons in the Hawksbill, Pinder's Point, Lewis Yard, Hunters and Mack Town settlements. Volunteers also provided entertainment for the children.



Meanwhile, hurricane relief equipment kits have been assembled to assist persons without electricity by providing on loan, portable generators, chain saws and weed-eaters.

Once the power is restored to these homes an arrangement is in place for the items to be returned and placed on loan to others who are in need of them. As a temporary measure, several hundred tarpaulins have been distributed to persons who have roof damage. The Relief Team has also rendered assistance in the installation of same.

C) ASSISTANCE WITH MEALS & SUPPLIES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

In an effort to assist the Ministry of Education with the reopening of schools in the Freeport area, the Methodist Church, through its outreach feeding ministry at St. Paul's, volunteered to provide 600 cooked meals each day for a period of two weeks. As of the writing of this report, some 6,000 hot meals have been prepared and distributed to school children and teachers. However, due to the challenge of not having enough supplies, the programme has been scaled back to the pre-hurricane feeding schedule of 450 meals on Fridays. Additionally, the St. David's Methodist Church in Eight Mile Rock, continues to provide 150 meals to students on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Also, 210 school bags were distributed to needy school children to start the school year.



FEEDING MINISTRY TO THE SCHOOLS COOKING STAFF & DISTRIBUTION



ONSITE SCHOOL DISTRIBUTION

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D) DISTRIBUTIONS TO ABACO

Rev. Kenneth Lewis led a small team into Abaco to distribute over water 200 filtration units. These units were presented to Rev. Charles Carey, an Independent Methodist minister on the island. Over 500 care packages of food and other essentials, along with 100 tarps were also distributed.

Residents of Abaco who have been evacuated to Nassau, continue to receive assistance from the Disaster Relief Team in Nassau.



E) RECOVERY AND REBUILDING EFFORTS

Thus far, the bulk of the relief efforts have been concentrated on immediate needs such as food, water, tarps, hygiene kits, and toiletries. As the situation changes and some sort of normalcy returns, the focus will shift to providing building material assistance to as many persons as possible, thus, paving the way for people to return to their homes. Similarly, once funds become available, the Disaster Relief Teams will explore ways to help some of our members acquire much needed appliances, such as refrigerators and stoves. Provisions are also being made for members to receive training in the area of mold remediation.



The Building Committee responsible for conducting assessments have categorized the damage to individual homes in four areas:

Minimal (\$500-\$1,000) Moderate (Over \$1,000-\$4,000)
Severe (Over \$5,000-10,000) Catastrophic (Over \$10,000)

It is hoped that a voucher system will be established to assist people with building supplies. In those cases which are adjudged severe and catastrophic, the Disaster Teams have reached out to partners such as UMCOR, to help with Volunteers in Mission Work Teams. To this end, we are grateful for the visits we have received from representatives of UMCOR, and The New York Annual Conference.

F) EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND SPIRITUAL CARE

Pastoral teams from the Florida/ Alabama United Methodist Conference have already made several visits to Grand Bahama and Abaco to assist persons who were traumatized and emotionally disturbed. Also, training in the Ministry of Care during times of disaster was conducted by ministers of the New York Annual Conference and the Florida Conference. Presently, there are ensuing discussions with Bishop Bickerton of the New York Annual Conference, relative to providing our ministers in Grand Bahama with a period of respite care. Hopefully, this arrangement will be finalized early in the new year.

CONCLUSION

Hurricane Dorian has left a trail of destruction on the islands of Grand Bahama and the Abacos. The immediate impacts were catastrophic. Residents living in the affected areas will be in need of help on various levels for a very long time. The people, however, are extremely grateful for the outpouring of support they have received in the initial response phase.

To transition into the recovery and rebuilding phase of the work, much more patience will be required. Likewise, a greater level of collaboration, coordination, and financial and material resources to effectively execute the building of stronger structures will be needed.

Once again, on behalf of the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands Conference, we wish to sincerely express our profound gratitude to all who have come to the aid of our Bahamian people. Such acts of kindness, compassion and generosity serve to remind us each day, that we can rise again. May the God of hope, fill us with all joy and peace, that we may abound in hope; as we praise God for all His goodness and love, and trust Him to lead us in the year 2020.

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



265th Anniversary greetings to Friedensthal Moravian Church



On behalf of the Provincial family, I write to extend joyous greetings to the Pastor, leaders and members of the Friedensthal Moravian Church in Christiansted, St. Croix on the occasion of God's walking with you for 265 years. Let there be exuberant shouts of praise unto God coming from the "valley of peace" for the faithfulness of God over these years.

When our spiritual forebears answered the call of God and laid the foundation stone in 1755, they were not thinking this far ahead. But God had already seen today and inserted Friedensthal as a cog in the system of divine purpose for St. Croix in general and the community of Christiansted in particular. God has used you to lift people out of their difficult places, to love the unloved, and lead others into parts of righteousness. Our God continues to be active even when we cannot see it. Indeed, God's thoughts are above our thoughts and we do well to continue to seek the mind of God through Jesus by the Holy Spirit as to what are the next steps in the unfolding of divine purpose for this community of faith and faithful people.

The Bible declares that those "who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor" (1 Timothy 5:17a). These faithful people are part of the plan of God, keeping the lamp of the gospel burning. The Provincial family joins in giving honor to Bros. David Charles and Hugo Moorehead III and Sis. Doreen Gerard for their labor of love and service to God at Friedensthal. May their legacy inspire others to remain faithful to God.

As you face tomorrow, be conscious that you stand on the legacy of God's actions among you yesterday so that you can follow God into what God is doing now and in the future. This season in the unfolding plan of God calls for bold actions to reach more people for Christ and to continue the legacy for faithful service to this generation. The Spirit of God is opening new avenues to share the gospel and impact people. This is what we are called to do. May God grant the grace and discernment as you shift into the future.

Let Friedensthal celebrate!
And may Friedensthal be a tool in God's creative hand.
May the Triune God lead you on!
Fraternally,
Rev. Algernon Lewis, Chairman of PEC

Food for thought from the book Charting a Faithful Course amidst Postmodern Winds

By Michael Goheen

All of this threatened the missionary enterprise as it had been known and practiced for over 150 years. It was this dramatic, changing, and revolutionary time that provides the context for the following words:

The real question is: What is God doing in these tremendous events of our time? How are we to understand them and interpret them to others, so that we and they may play our part in them as co-workers with God? Nostalgia for the past and fear for the future are equally out of place for the Christian. He is required, in the situation in which God places him, to understand the signs of the times in the light of the reality of God's present and coming kingdom, and to give his witness faithfully about the purpose of God for all men.

The parallel between the dramatic changes facing Newbigin and the dramatic changes we face makes his words intensely relevant for us today. We see many in North America with nostalgia for the past. Postmodernity with its relativism and pluralism presents a threat; the desire is to hold on to the good old days when our country seemed to be more compatible with the Christian faith. There is a genuine fear for where the future might take us. While there may be some legitimacy in this concern, I believe Newbigin is correct when he says that this should not be the primary response of the believing community. Our task is to understand and interpret the current context through the lens of Scripture so we can play our part as God's covenant partners. The vital question that must be pressed is: "What is God doing in these tremendous events of our time?"

To ask what God is doing in these events means that we must attempt to understand our times in the light of God's kingdom and faithfully bear witness to God's purpose for his creation.



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



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