



CEDERE

Communication from the Minister of Christian Education
Moravian Church Antigua Conference

The Unitas Fratrum

Our Church

The Moravian Church or the Unitas Fratrum (United Brethren) is a Protestant denomination. It was founded in what is now the Czech Republic in 1457. This organization has touched lives worldwide. We believe in :

- One God manifested in three equal and distinct person, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (the Trinity).
- The Holy Bible is acknowledge as our Sacred Scriptures and our primary guide for life and faith.
- The Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.
- Spiritual growth through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ , our Chief Elder.

Our Province

The Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province (EWIP) is comprised of six (6) Conferences, namely, Virgin Islands, Antigua, St. Kitts, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and one (1) mission namely, Grenada.

Our Conference

The Antigua Conference established in 1756 is the second oldest and the largest of the six (6) conferences. It is made up of fifteen (15) congregations.

The Moravian Church or the Unitas Fratrum (United Brethren) traces its existence to Lititz, Bohemia, 1st March, 1457. The group was on a quest for a more authentic relationship with God, since righteous living was their goal, following the example of John Hus. The Moravian Church was founded with a threefold ideal of faith, fellowship, and freedom and a strong emphasis on the practical Christian life rather than on doctrinal thoughts or church tradition. As Jesus would have intended, the Moravian Church embraced the mandate to make disciples of all nations and as such came to the West Indies, landed on St. Thomas in the then Danish Virgin Islands on the 13th December, 1732 where they started a mission which spread throughout the Virgin Islands and reached Antigua in 1756, Barbados 1768, St. Kitts 1777, Tobago 1790, Trinidad 1890. The Church is nondiscriminatory, and is opened to membership from all walks of life. According to the Book of Order of the Moravian Church EWIP paragraph 2.1, "All applicants for membership in the Moravian Church, whether by confirmation class or otherwise, shall be given a copy of the Brotherly Agreement". The Brotherly Agreement states that:

"The Triune God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only source of our life and salvation; and this Scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith of the Unitas Fratrum and therefore shapes our life.

The Bible shall be our constant study: we shall read it with prayer for the influence and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

We will faithfully attend the service in the House of God and any special services that may be held in connection with our Church. We will be diligent in private prayer and will practise and encourage family worship.

Realizing that we have been called into fellowship with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and being desirous that we shall be recognized as His followers, we shall conscientiously abstain from all amusements which would be inconsistent with the Christian life. We will avoid gambling of every kind.

Knowing that fornication, drunkenness and all other sins of the flesh are condemned in the Word of God, we will determine by His grace to live pure and morally upright lives.

Covetousness, dishonest practices in trade and wilful deceit are evils which are hindrances to the life of the Christians. These we will seek to avoid in our daily dealings with others.

We will earnestly oppose all superstition, obeahism and "false revivalism".

We will avoid envy, malice, revenge, strife, quarrelling and evil speaking. We will seek to be truthful and endeavour to live in the spirit of peace and good will to others, remembering that lying, profane language, such as swearing, abuse, unclean talk and all other sins of the tongue are contrary to the Spirit of Christ.

We acknowledge that it is our duty to obey the laws of the land in which we live, and we will endeavour to promote good citizenship.

We will endeavour to settle our differences with others in a Christian manner and only seek the aid of the courts of the law as a last resort and with the sanction of our ministers.

By our industry, sobriety and thrift, we will endeavour to erect proper houses and maintain good homes.

As parents and guardians we will bring up our children in a Christian manner and endeavour to secure for them the advantages of good education."

Up coming events

Moravian Week 2015

Moravian Week celebrates the founding of the Moravian Church about 559 years ago. This year Spring Gardens will be the venue for most of the activities and will be tagged "Moravian Village". The following activities will be a part of our celebration:

Friday, 20th February, 2015, 7pm

Stepping:

A celebration in the Dance



Saturday, 21st February, 2015, 9am

Dimensions:

Upward reach and outward stretch

Church Leaders Retreat



Sunday, 22nd February, 2015

Exchange of Choirs



Thursday, 26th February, 2015, 7pm

Dramatic Force



Friday, 27th February, 2015, 7pm

Psalm Alive



Saturday, 28th February, 2015, 9am

NETS (National Evangelism

Through Sports)

YMCA



Sunday, 1st March, 2015

Birthday Festival

Divine Worship 9:30am

Luncheon 12:00pm

Pan Fest 2:00pm



A Review of Youth Revive 2015

The Youth Commission, which is attached to the Christian Education Department of the Moravian Church Antigua Conference hosted the annual Youth Revive weekend and from all accounts this event was a blessing to the youth and adults alike. Opportunities for spiritual Empowerment which targeted young people throughout the Conference were realized and a glimpse of the potential, possibilities and promise which are embedded in the conference was experienced. Clearly, the task which lies ahead is epic and as clergy and laity together we need to rise to the challenge.

As in previous years, the tagged line for the events was "Youth Revive". The proceedings took place from Friday, 30th January - Sunday, 1st February, 2015: The schedule was as follows:

Friday, 30th January 2015 – The Spiritual Enrichment Assembly or youth revival service was held at the Gracebay Moravian Church under the theme "Look up". The preacher was Rev. Ulric V. Smith, pastor of the Gracehill and Cana congregations. With reference to Jesus' encounter with Peter while walking on water in Matthew 14:22-33, Rev. Smith found wisdom in Peter crying out to Jesus when he began to sink. In this vein young people were encouraged to refrain from suffering in silence and like Peter cry out to Jesus because he is able to hear and is able to help.

Saturday, 31st January 2015 - Youth Leaders Seminar was held under the Theme "Look in", at the Timothy O'Reilly Auditorium, 9:30am. The presenters were Sis. Lois Bynoe of Youth for Christ Antigua, Sis. Karen James of the Lebanon congregation and Sis. Dianne Capcio of the Gracehill congregation.

Sunday, 1st February, 2015 – Youth Rally under the theme "Look out". This was held in the Newfield community, starting at Lyon Hill and ending with a time of youthful praise at the **Enon Moravian Church**. All Sunday schools, youth fellowships, dance groups and Uniform bodies were in attendance. Sis. Karen Harris-Quinland of the Greenbay congregation brought the message. Holding the attention of congregation from start to finish, Sis. Harris-Quinland used 2 Corinthians 6 to call the youth to:

1. Get the right band name,
2. Get the right driver,
3. Know when it is time to swerve.

Thanks to the Youth Commission for planning the activities for the weekend.

The woman with the expensive perfume

John 12:1-8

HER STORY

This first century woman, lived in Bethany, which is located south east of Jerusalem. Her name we know, she is called Mary, which means wise woman, or lady. We know that she and her siblings Martha and Lazarus were close friends of Jesus. The scripture does not suggest that she was married, her brother Lazarus seemed to have been the only male representative of her family. This suggests losing Lazarus to death would have been a great loss as a woman without a man in those days was considered poor or defenseless. We do not know her occupation but she seems curious and comfortable in the company of men, learning as much as she could rather than busying herself with domestic affairs. We know she was previously in mourning, since her brother Lazarus was dead and was miraculously raised from the dead by Jesus. This was a thankful woman as Jesus had interrupted customs for his friends and a celebratory dinner was in order.

HER STRUGGLES

In John 11, we see that some villagers who experienced what Jesus did for Lazarus were convinced and put faith in Jesus, while others not so convinced went reporting to the religious leaders, the Pharisees, who called all the other religious leaders into a meeting. In this meeting they decided Jesus was way out of line and his influence was becoming out of control; thus, putting him to death seemed like the best option. The High Priest Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation and for all nations. In Antigua we would say "murder no hide." Mary must have known that Jesus' life was in danger as scripture tells us he had stopped moving around publicly. In other words he went incognito. Mary, not seeing that by Jesus dying scripture would be fulfilled and nations would be saved, was happy that her brother was alive but hurting that her friend Jesus' life was at risk. Mary was consumed by mixed emotions. Perhaps she did not know if to cry or if to laugh.

HER RELIGION

Mary was Jewish by Religion. For the Jews all of life was interwoven, so there day to day practices were also acts of religion. Foot washing was common place in first century Jewish culture and appeared to be a ritual of daily cleansing, or a religious act, or as a token of hospitality when someone first entered the home. This was a world where the roads were dusty and sandals were worn daily. Failure to wash someone's feet was considered a gesture of hostility; remember Simon in Luke 1:36-50? Also, in Timothy 5:10 washing the feet of the saint may be a metaphorical service, as it symbolizes humility. In John 13: 2-11 we see Jesus washing his disciples feet and encouraging them to wash each others feet as a symbol of humility in ministry, suggesting further that they are called to minister not to be ministered unto.

HER FOOT-WASHING

At the point when Mary decided to wash Jesus' feet she took this cultural practice of hospitality a notch higher. Rather than employing the use of pure water she pulled out all the stops and used expensive perfume. This expensive perfume of pure nard was imported from India in those days, which was the reason it was very costly. In fact, it cost a year's wages. Mary took her hospitality and gratitude a little further; she let her hair down and rather than using a towel she wiped his feet with her hair. Culturally, that was taking it way to far, as women's hair remained covered and is exposed only in the presence of their husbands. Thus, this was an act of hospitality, gratitude and intimacy. This disclosed that Mary was comfortable with those in the house and more especially Jesus. I do not suspect that Mary believed that she was anointing Jesus for his burial, for after all if he was able to raise Lazarus from the dead; surely he could elude death. Her action was simply an act of hospitality, gratitude for raising Lazarus from the dead and the close friendship they privileged. But there are those who are always quick to pervert or play down our acts of hospitality, gratitude and intimacy. Look at Judas; you know him well, scripture calls him a thief. He thought Mary's washing of Jesus' feet was okay but did she really have to interrupt the entire house with the smell of this expensive oil? After all the poor could have benefited more from the oil rather than this waste. Does Judas sound like anybody you know?

HER LESSONS TO US

There are many faith lessons, which we can learn from the paradigm offered in the story of "The Anointing of Jesus' Feet". Let us zoom in on three (3).

Firstly, her story tells us any ministry rooted in faith and influenced by love should have **impact**. The word impact suggests the effort or influence one person or thing has on another. Or having a strong effect on someone or something. For example, drugs and alcohol have a strong impact. After a strong drink or sniff or spliff, I do not know of anyone who is not impacted. The collision of two vehicles in a vehicular accident has a strong impact. The vehicles are often bent out of shape. A good teacher has superior impact on the life of his/her students. Have you ever tried to correct something a child is doing? But mommy, daddy teacher says... The church in this pain contaminated society needs to have an impact where ever it finds itself. This impact should

be felt through the word declared and the ministries offered. After our sermons our members should go home haunted by the word declared, as the word of God should make us uncomfortable in sin. The impact of the preached word should be a transformation of our society. The government has given all community sporting facilities and where ever we go across Antigua these complexes are seen over grown with plants and out of commission. What is more impacting than sports evangelism? As a community of faith, we should examine and analyze the needs in our communities and offer a tailored response to the needs of people. Mary's washing of Jesus' feet was impacting because it changed the atmosphere in the room. It was impacting because it made Judas uncomfortable. It was impacting because Jesus acknowledged its purpose. Our ministry has to have impact.

Secondly, our impact should be lasting. Look at the text! The amount of perfume Mary poured on Jesus' feet weighed about 1lb. Could you imagine the lingering effect that it had in that house. Could you image the sweetness of Jesus's feet. Our impact should be lasting. When ever the Moravians show up people should know that we were there even 258 years after. Our forbears understood this well, they started schools among the Africans enslaved in Antigua. That is still being talked about today. The Moravians started missions around the world, that is still being talked about. Is our impact in our communities such that after we are dead and gone they will remember how we in 2015 influenced for good and for God such and such? Or are we so busy talking about the impact of others rather than making our own lasting impact now. Our impact is not felt in the buildings we built but the lives we touch. And you will know when you are doing something good because the devil will harass you. Hear the devil - "Now you know this thing that the Youth Fellowship is doing, that is to much money, money, which could be used to buy a new organ, paint the church. You know what I cannot take with these Moravian pastors, they always preaching these long sermons, which I cannot even remember, when I have diabetes and have to go home to eat and take my medicine. Now Sis. Bonnie always having these programmes look at Psalm Alive, what is so profound about children reciting a psalm." You know your impact is making grounds when the devil starts to take notice. It is then that you increase your impact and make greater strides, not recoil and stop serving. In ministry we should have impact, and our impact should be lasting.

Thirdly, our attempt at impact should be sincere, because God honours sincere ministry. Look at the text, no where does it suggest that Mary was trying to seduce Jesus to get him to choose her over Martha. Nor was she showing off in the presence of her friends. She was ministering to her Lord in sincerity, genuineness, wholeheartedness, or truthfulness; that is, without deceit, hypocrisy or duplicity. She was ministering from a place influenced by love. There are many of us who do things for show and our 'service' is not coming from the heart; people know the difference, since, when things are not going our way we come off the scene and pull our services. When a new minister comes everything is 'Brother so and so' and 'Sister so and so'. But let 'Brother so and so' or 'Sister so and so' do something that we do not like, hear us, "me can't wait fu them move he or she." In fact, we try to influence the move by taking our complaints to the powers that be. In ministry even if you do not like the president of the group, the superintendent of the Sunday School or the pastor ministry does not stop because sincere ministry or service comes from the heart. When you minister to someone who does not like you, you heap coals of fire on the person's head. In other words, you humble them and bring them to a point of repentance. Jesus saw Mary's heart and knew it was sincere. It was for that reason he responded the way he did. Listen to what Jesus said - "leave her alone!" Does that sound like someone who was offended by Mary's action? What about your action or ministry? Are the things that you do in the name of the Lord to cause impact done with a pure heart or are you motivated by the applause of others? Do you just want to serve the Lord or is your ministry characterized by competition? Whatever type of ministry you may find yourself engaged in be assured that God only honours sincere ministry. If your ministry is fueled by impure motives know that you are wasting your time as God only honours sincere ministry.

If we are going to advance the kingdom of God, our ministry has to have impact, the impact has to be lasting and our attempt at making impact has to be sincere, because God honours sincere ministry! If it is that you have been doing all kinds of things and you are realizing that you are not getting anywhere because the impact that you anticipated is not as profound, remember, sometimes it takes a while. Jeremiah was sent by God to warn the people of Judah for many years and they never took him on. But today he is recorded as one of the greatest prophets that ever lived because he had faith in God. He had impact because he was persecuted constantly. But God was ever with him and God will be with you too as long as what you are offering in the name of the Lord is sincere. If it is that you want to do more for the Lord but you just lack the courage, know that God's "grace is enough for you, his strength is made perfect for you in moments of weakness" 2 Corinthians 12:9. If it is that you are a Christian and as you are working for the Lord people keep reminding you of the life you lived prior to coming to Christ and it makes it difficult for you, know that Jesus was called all kinds a names but he still fulfilled what God sent him to do. "Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation old things are passed away and behold all things are made" 2Corinthians 5:17.



Food Story!

A fruit from my childhood which I spurned resurfaced and out of curiosity I pared it with the Antigua Black Pineapple and what emerged was a delectable drink. The fruit which I am referring to is locally called Five Finger, but in other parts of the Caribbean and the world it is referred to as Star Fruit or Carambola. This star shaped tropical fruit has a sweet and sour flavour and is scientifically called *Averrhoa Carambola*.

Five Finger is light-green to yellow in colour with a beautiful smooth waxy coat. Inside, it is mostly water or juicy pulp, crispy and either lightly sweet or severely sour depending on the variety and amount of oxalic acid concentration. Two to three tiny edible seeds can be found in the centre of the fruit.

The health benefits of Five Finger are vast. The fruit is very low in calories but very high in dietary fiber. Fiber is important in preventing the absorption of dietary low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol in the stomach. Also dietary fibers help protect the mucous membrane of the colon from exposure toxic substance by binding to cancer-causing chemicals in the colon.

Five Finger is an excellent source of vitamin- C. Vitamin C helps the body develop resistance against infectious agents and search for and collect harmful free radicals from the body. The fruit is also a good source of B-complex vitamins such as pyridoxine (vitamin B-6), folates, and riboflavin. Five Finger contains small amounts of minerals and electrolytes like phosphorus, potassium, iron and zinc.

Five Finger is rich in antioxidants, which help to protect the body from the destructive effect of oxygen derived free radicals by baring them from the body. This fruit can be used as a diuretic, and to suppress cough. However, persons with kidney problems may be at risk by eating this fruit because of the high level of oxalic acid or oxalate in it.

The Moravian Motto: In Essentials, Unity; In Non-Essentials, Liberty; In All Things, Love

Be seated please!

As a child I along with other girls and boys was scolded about sitting properly. Sitting properly involved correct positioning of the feet and accurate posture. This instruction was frowned upon as more comfort was found in slouching and the careless placing of the feet. As I advanced in age and experience I eagerly embraced the health and social values in the call to "sit properly!"

Ladies, when seated on a chair your backs should be erect, shoulders flushed and feet crossed at the ankles with knees touching. In as much as crossing feet at the knees is more popular, It is not a ladylike option. It encourages poor posture and may result in the unsightly spider veins. Sitting properly indicates that a female is sophisticated or classy and knows that she should be treated in that way. What is more unsightly than the unplanned view of your underwear?

Gentlemen on the other hand should also sit erect, shoulders flushed; but crossing feet at the ankle is optional and if chosen should be done with knees a part. However, knees crossed is very comfortable and adds professionalism. Crossing legs in the figure four is also an appropriate posture for an interview, but be mindful of exposing the sole of your shoes as this is frowned upon in some cultures. Avoid sitting with legs wide a part as this is most offensive because the message sent is one of superiority and intolerable confidence. Such a posture discloses disrespect and poor socialization.

Sit properly please!