



Christian Education Department Engendering Real Evangelism

CEDERE

Communication from the Minister of Christian Education
Moravian Church Antigua Conference

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 is comprised of six (6) Conferences, namely, Virgin Islands, Antigua, St. Kitts, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and one (1) mission namely, Grenada. The Chairman of our province is Rev. Cortroy Jarvis.

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 Superintendent of our conference is Rev. Algernon Lewis.



Moravian Week 2015

The Christian Education Department of the Moravian Church, Antigua Conference stepped out in faith to celebrate Moravian week in grand style this year. Most of the activities were held at the Spring Gardens Moravian Church which was tagged "Moravian Village", as a result. These celebratory events commenced on Friday, 20th February and concluded on Sunday, 1st March, 2015. The following activities were the highlights of the week:

Stepping

The week was officially opened with Stepping, a celebration in the dance. Dance groups from across the conference converged at the Spring Gardens Moravian Church. The highlight of the evening was the first performance of the recently added Moravian Church Antigua Conference Liturgical Dancers (MCACLD). They ministered the opening and closing pieces. Special thanks to all the dancers and instructors especially Mrs Monifer Browne from the Department of Culture who choreographed and instructed the MCACLD.

Dimensions/Church Leaders Retreat

This year the department merged the Church Leaders retreat with Dimensions at the Tim O'Reilly Auditorium. Rev. J. Sean Roberts ably led us in our time of devotion while our first keynote speaker, Rev. Ulric V. Smith Jr. presented with clarity and conviction on the thematic focus for the province, "Advancing the Kingdom". Our second keynote speaker, the Superintendent, Rev. Algernon Lewis was afforded the platform to look at the conference in three (3) Dimensions, past, present and future.

Dramatic Force

The Moravian Church Antigua Conference Drama Club (MCACDC) brought a play written by Rev. Denise Smith-Lewis and directed by Sis. Laurie Freeland-Roberts and Bro. Theodore Barnes to life with humour and precise recollection of history. This play captured in much details the coming of the first missionary of Moravians Church, Rev. Samuel Isles and his wife Sis. Molly Isles to Antigua to begin work among the Africans who were enslaved in Antigua at the time.

From all accounts the presentation was accurate and excellently executed.

Exchange of choirs

Choirs were afforded the privilege to minister at different congregations across the conference. This was a time of exchange, encouragement, fellowship as Moravians worshipped together.

Psalm Alive

This Choral speaking contest held on Friday, 27th February remains a high point for the youth and adults alike. The Sunday schools pulled all the stops in an effort to offer keen competition as choral praises using selected Psalms were sent up to God. Even though the infants ages 3-7 years were not competing their passion and enthusiasm were infectious. Evidently, much efforts were made on the part of the teachers to attain excellence in this aspect of worship and they like the participants should be commended. The results were as follows:

Children 8-12 year

- 1st - Spring Gardens
- 2nd - Greenbay
- 3rd - Newfield

Teens 13-18

- 1st - Spring Gardens
- 2nd - Newfield
- 3rd - Lebanon

National Evangelism Through Sports (NETS)

These games were held at the YMCA on Saturday, 28th February, 2015. Volleyball, Netball and Basketball were the sporting activities of choice. Teams from throughout the Antigua Conference came out dressed and ready to play. The Spring Gardens Moravian Team was victorious in Basketball while Gracebay rose triumphant in Netball both female and mixed divisions. Volleyball was deferred to a later date. Special thanks to all the teams which took time out to play.

Birthday Fest

The week of celebration came to an end on Sunday 1st March with our Birthday Fest. The conference came together to celebrate in Divine Worship at 9:30am, Lunch at 12:00pm and Pan Fest 2:00pm. We thank God for this awesome privilege granted to recall and holdfast to God's faithfulness to us as a people and look with eager anticipation for what God has in store for us.

Up coming events

The Moravian Church Anniversary health walk is scheduled for Saturday, 28th March 5:00a.m from the Greenbay Moravian Church towards King George V Grounds, right onto the Valley Road, pass the Antigua State Collage, right onto Nut Grove Hill, left unto the Valley Road and back to the Greenbay Moravian Church. Breakfast will be on sale at \$10.00. Please note that our colour of choice is **Lime Green**. T-Shirts are available at \$25.00 each.

On Wednesday, 1st April, 2015 7:00pm at the Spring Gardens Moravian Church, the Conference Drama Club presents the annual "Christ's Passion Dramatic Presentation" entitled, **"Just The Facts!"** Come and be blessed.

The Christian Education Department of the Moravian Church Antigua Conference presents **"Summer Camp for the Performing Arts"** from 27th July to 9th August 2015. Registrations forms and other pertinent information will be made available shortly.

Do you have an upcoming event which you want others to know about? If your answer is yes, please send your notices, announcement or advertisement to bonniew10@hotmail.com

The Moravian Church since 1756

When Samuel Isles came to Antigua in 1756 the enslaved were left untouched as far as a positive impact of the Christian church through the Church of England. Quite possibly, the impression the Slaves held of these men of the cloth was not even modestly different from that of the hands that offered ill treatment. In 1701 when the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) was established, the slaves in Antigua received drops of Christianity in an ostensibly unenthusiastic manner, which borders on begrudgingly (Dyde, 2000). Isles, a missionary of the Moravian Church or the United Brethren, a Protestant Church of Bohemian origin began work among the Africans in 1756. Bishop Oliver Maynard (1968) wrote this about Isles; "Brother Isles landed in St. John's unknown, friendless and without introductions, but trusting God to open a way for him" (p. 29). Isles first impression of the Africans was that on Sunday's alcohol was a constant companion used to silence life's troubles. Skirmishing, wounding and poisoning were commonplace. The planters without fair trial quieted the most miserable offenders during Monday morning hangings (Schattschneider, 1995). After seeking the blessings of the planters to offer religious instruction to the slaves, which would be none offensive but the planters would benefit from a work force that was pliable. Isles made concerted efforts to convert the Africans to Christianity and instilled obedience to God and compliance to State. This was proven to be no easy task as the Africans at that time were drenched in the Traditional African Religious outlook (Blair, 2006). Blair (2006) posited,

His task, a stupendous one, indeed, was to rid them of these beliefs and practices inculcated practically from birth. Would the slaves abandon their ancestors and incur their wrath? Would they give up their fear of Obeah? Isles and the missionaries would soon learn of the tenaciousness of the African Religions. (p.26).

With permission granted Isles began work among the slaves in St. John's where residence was found. Less than a year later a female slave of the Gambles Estate was the first slave baptized in January 1757. This growing congregation, which met under a sandbox tree, that still exists on the site of the former Gambles Estate, needed a more concrete structure to shelter from the elements. Thus, the first mission house was erected in 1761 the church was given the name Spring Gardens (Lewis, 2006).

In 1764, Andrew Norling, John Bennet and William Lister accompanied Isles. Isles died that same year. During the first fifteen years of mission the congregation grew very slowly; thus, when Peter Brown/Peter Braun, a German who also spoke English arrived in 1769 Brown met only fourteen (14) baptized members (Schattschneider, 1996). However, by 1770 there was a swift change in the congregation size as the planters came to experience fully what Isles had promised only years before, that the missionaries posed no threat but helped the cause, as the slaves who were converts to the Moravian version of Christianity were more obedient and hardworking. On the contrary, Craton (1997) argued that, rather than "productivity and malleability, it seems to have produced a greater sense of self-worth or even political power..." (p.367). Nonetheless, by this time there were two thousand (2000) Moravian congregants, which had out grown the sanctuary. Thus, in 1775 a newer and bigger sanctuary was dedicated at Spring Gardens. Baptisms were frequent, with the growing membership. By 1774 the missionaries advanced to Bailey Hill in the Falmouth area where the Gracehill congregation was established and later moved to Edgecomb Hill in the near vicinity in 1782 (Lewis, 2006). The efforts of the Moravians were met with much success and other sanctuaries were built in other communities. By 1791 there were approximately seven thousand four hundred (7400) Africans converted to Christianity or seeming so through the efforts of the Moravian church (Lewis, 2006).

The Moravians missionaries were not only interested in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the Africans; learning to read, write, manipulate numbers and developing an ear for music was crucial. In fact, as a rule of thumb the Moravians, who were the pioneers of formal education in Antigua, believed that education "is intended to be a handmaid of religion" (as cited in Lewis, 2006, p. 31). In that, education was not seen as an end but a means to an end. Consequently, though there existed a prejudice against the education of Africans many were taught to read during church services as having school was proven difficult. In response to a question posed, Christian Richter (1808), a Moravian missionary wrote,

We have hitherto found it impossible to keep school with our baptized children; partly, as the number of missionaries has always been too small; and partly because it would interfere in a great degree with the views of many of the proprietors and managers of estates, and the empowerment of the children upon them (p.304).

Regardless of this, by April 7th, 1810 the prejudice had subsided and some Africans were allowed to be 'enlightened' through the instruction of the Moravians. This was evident in the writings of Joseph Newby (1810) as he wrote from Gracehill, "Of late, the prejudice against the negroes learning to read have in some degree subsided" (p.40).

As a result the school, which had started at Gracehill with Missionary James Light in 1809 proceeded and the missionaries launched out with a school in Spring Gardens on June 3rd, 1810 with eighty (80) students and by the July 7th that same year enrollment reached six hundred and forty (640) students. In 1819 a school was established on Lavington's and Sanderson's estates. Samuel Wright, a Moravian missionary opened a school in Newfield on the 18th March, 1827 (Lewis, 2006). Clearly, the Moravians held the monopoly in the field of Education of the Africans. Even with education very few persons in Antigua knew much about Africa (Smith & Smith, 1988). Although the slaves were empowered in the area of education this was not an empowerment, which challenged the oppressive system in which life was carved out. This necessitates the question, was this really empowerment?

The Skin

The education received by the Africans who were enslaved in the Caribbean was church based. This education knowingly or unknown was designed to create a distance between the Africans in the Caribbean and Africa. This distancing of the self from anything that was remotely African and the embracing of that which carries the essence of Europe evolved into much more than the church envisioned. This eventually encouraged self-disgust and further fed the already growing inferiority complex among the Africans. This denial of the African's truer self has been handed down and has manifested itself in a surge in the bleaching or rubbing of the skin.

In the same vein colonizers held a mind set of superiority over any people of darker complexion; Du Bois captures this faulty impression well,

Darker people are dark in mind as well as in body; of dark, uncertain, and imperfect descent; of frailer, cheaper stuff; they are cowards in the face of mausers and maxims they have no feelings, aspirations, and loves; they are fools, illogical idiots, half-devil and half-child (Du Bois, 2004, p. 81).

The closer one's complexion moves to the mahogany hue the further one is removed from the social ladder. Better treatment was given to slaves with lighter complexion, evidently, as a tool of disagreement and discord among the slaves. Lighter skinned slaves were unquestionably a result of the coming together of the master and female slave and were given the most rewarding opportunities. The slaves with the more Cedar hues were chosen as house slaves, while the field workers were the shade of dried vanilla beans. Darker skinned slaves were deemed inferior to the masters' race even by this action. This demarcation continued well into the post emancipation era, where certain jobs were reserved for the lighter toned skin and one was treated based on ones complexion.

This perpetual preference has left many prisoners of any skin cream or concoction which carries lightening potency by removing the melanin from the skin over time. One is left with questions, which are still to be answered; is this preoccupation with skin colour, the strong hold of a colonial demon left to imprison the mind of the Africans as a constant provoking feeling of inferiority? Or do people of enslaved African descent have the "Dog and its reflection" syndrome? In this age-old fable a dog carrying "a piece of flesh", looks down while crossing a stream and sees a reflection in the water. Taking the reflection for another dog carrying something better, the dog barked. With mouth opened wide the meat dropped (Aesop, 2012). This implies powerfully that coveting what one perceives others have causes great loss. In this instance there are permanent damages, which can be irreparable. W.E.B Du Bois (2004,) asked a crucial question, which has twenty-first (21st) century relevance. "But what on earth is whiteness that one should desire it?"(p.68).

The attainment of whiteness may be considered a symbol of social arrival and acceptance. Society is still more trusting of persons of lighter complexion and males are more drawn to such females. Beauty supply stores are laden with skin lighten products this suggest that entrepreneurs understand the negativity aligned to dark complexion and have been taking advantage of it.

In an article in the Antigua Daily Observer dated Tuesday, 18th January 2011 in the Editorial section the Editor

attempts a response to the surge in skin lightening. The article entitled, "The bleaching phenomenon" disclosed to a great extent, the insecurity and inferiority complex, which have descended upon the people of African descent, who are in the masses on the Island of Antigua. The Editor argued that this occurrence is not unique to the People of Antigua as;

Everyone's doing it. People of colour, that is, including men and women, celebrities, the unknown, ordinary folk, and people in all strata of society; in Africa, the US, and in the Caribbean (The Antigua Daily Observer, 2011).

The Chief journalist added further,

While the phenomenon can be considered Cosmetic especially for people suffering skin discolouring conditions (and may be as necessary as wearing braces to straighten imperfection in the lay out of ones teeth) in many cases, the underlying issues can be traced all the way back to the days of segregation and even further to slavery; when the colour of the skin determined the way one was treated...We recognize that the practice of skin lightening is not about to go away. It is bound up with issues of poor self-esteem and the mistaken notions of what beauty looks like. We can only hope that those who engage in the habit think about the repercussions of what they are doing as well as the long-term consequences (The Antigua Daily Observer, 2011).

What a catastrophe of epic proportion, which has descended upon people of African descent. However this catastrophe does not define who the people of African descent are. Like the Europeans who enslaved and traumatized our ancestors we were "fearfully and wonderfully made" Psalm 139:14. People of African descent are not any less God's people? After all scripture records God saying, "let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness, and after our likeness"(Genesis 1:23). By virtue of being made in the image and likeness of God there is something of God in all human beings. By bleaching or "rubbing" we are suggesting that something is faulty in the image of God in which Africans were made. Or by bleaching or rubbing we advocate that there are limits to the image and likeness of God. To be created by God points to the fact that God cares for God's creation. Thus, by acknowledging that all of creation points to God means care, concern, and respect for ourselves and all of creation should be demonstrated as one lives and moves in community.

Although some see bleaching as fashionable and trendy bleaching or rubbing may be aligned with the worst forms of disrespect for self and self-hatred, which may be caused by societal pressures as well as mental disorder. Thus, the church, which has contributed directly or indirectly to this whiteness preoccupied Caribbean needs to understand the skin bleachers to offer the help that is necessary. This requires more than just merely saying not to bleach. Seminars and workshops on self esteem and self worth may be necessary and there is no time like the present to help erase the shame and pain that colonialism has left on our psyche. Such effort has to start with the children before the negative influences within and without dominate. This means we need to look again at the ministry we are offering. Are we just perpetuating much of the same or are we empowering our people to think and act critically?



Food Story

Tamarind can be found in every village on every street corner in Antigua and Barbuda. The tree which is very large with long, weighty bent branches and closely packed leaves is scientifically called *Tamarindus Indica*. During its season, this tree bears thousands of curved pods. Each pod has a shell which houses soft pulp which coats 2-10 hard dark-brown or red seeds when ripen. The fruit can be sweet and tangy or absolutely sour and is used both green and ripen. Tamarind has many health benefits but a medical doctor should be consulted before using it as a treatment. Some of the health benefits of Tamarind are as follows:

1. Tamarind Juice can be used as a mild laxative.
2. Tamarind, like oats can lower cholesterol.
3. Tamarind promotes a healthy heart.
4. Tamarind can be used as gargle for sore throat.
5. The heated juice can be used to cure red/pink eye or conjunctivitis.
6. Tamarind is an excellent source of antioxidant that fight against cancer.
7. Tamarind can lower fevers and protects against the common cold.
8. Tamarind can aid in the digestive process.

Fulfilling the Mandate: Advancing the Kingdom

The thematic focus for the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province is "Advancing the Kingdom". This statement issues a call to all disciples to engage in aggressive evangelism. Many of us think evangelism is a complex phenomenon, which is reserved only for ministers of the Gospel of Christ. Not so, it does not require theological training. Evangelism is one disciple telling a nonbeliever about Jesus the Christ and all who come under the blood-stained banner of Jesus the Christ can and should do this. In doing so we contribute to the advancement of the Kingdom of God by eventually leading others to follow Jesus the Christ as Lord and Saviour.

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

Heels and toes!

All girls are fascinated with heels. Have you ever noticed as soon as they are able to walk, wearing their mother's, aunt's or older sister's high heels becomes a fixation. Eventually, they practically teach themselves how to walk in heels either by trial and error or by mere observation. However, very few of us get it right and more often than not our strides are shaky and lack necessary confidence because proper instructions were not given. With the heels getting higher hurting one's self could be a result if proper instructions are not followed. Consider the following before wearing your next pair of heels:

1. Practice correct posture when walking before using high heels. Try walking around your home with a book balanced on your head. This practice will ensure that your back is straight, your chin up and eyes are looking forward not at your toes.
2. Consider 2" heels or a wedge as opposed to the popular 6" stilettos. Practice walking around your home still with book on your head. Gradually increase the height of the heels.
3. Watch how you step, practice walking heel to toe rather than toe to heel to secure balance and a natural stride. Walking toe to heel makes us look clumsy and clownish.
4. Wearing heels naturally makes our steps shorter, do not attempt longer steps.
5. Create an imaginary straight line and walk on it with one foot before the other. This allows for the natural swaying of the hips.
6. Practice! Practice! Practice! Practice walking in heels on different surfaces: carpet, wood, ceramic tiles, rubber tiles etcetera.
7. Now step out in style and with confidence.