

BWM NEWS

As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” John 20:21b

Christmas Blessings

The Moravian star in Niesky, Germany (below) is said to be one of the largest in the Moravian world. But it is just one of a multitude of stars that shine from homes and churches all over the world during Advent: different colors, sizes, numbers of points. Yet in the



midst of our wonderful diversity is the one light of Christ that shines through to those who need to know God's hope and love. On behalf of the Board of World Mission I wish to thank you for your ongoing support of our work that allows us in some small way to be instruments of this light to the world. We wish you a most blessed Christmas and wonderful 2018!

Judy Ganz



Unity Mission Conference

More than 200 Moravians from at least 35 nations gathered together in Cape Town, South Africa from November 15-20, 2017 to share in the Third Unity Mission Conference. This was perhaps the most comprehensive group of Moravians ever to meet together in one place. The first conference was held in Miami, FL in 1994 and a smaller conference convened in Herrnhut, Germany in 2001. The theme of this third conference was Moravian Unity in Mission: Giving Heed to God's Call in the Twenty-First Century. Bishop Brian Abrahams (above) opened the conference, reminding participants that "we are made for mission." A common comment was that mission is action, not talk. The Rev. Dr. Cortroy Jarvis, president of the Unity Board, challenged us to "put our hand to the wheel." Keynote speaker, Dr. Daryl Balia, reminded participants that we need to understand the primary role of the local church in mission, and to seek to discern where the Holy Spirit is at work.

Nine papers were presented, both sharing historical aspects of our mission as well as current initiatives in mission today. Participants were able to dig deeper into these issues through eleven workshops, touching on issues such as refugees, women and youth in mission, sustainable mission models, Caribbean worship experience, contextualized theology, (continued p. 2)

A Fond Farewell

It has been an amazing 6-1/2 years serving with the Board of World Mission as its Executive Director. Amidst the many challenges has been the gift of learning and living what it means to be a global church. The Moravian Unity is a unique fellowship in the Christian world and I hope that each of you has the opportunity to experience it.

One does not do this work without the support of many—too many to thank here. But most of all I thank our God who called me to this ministry, taught me patience, gave guidance, provided the energy and health for long and frequent travels, and blessed me with friends throughout the world. I pray that we continue to join together to seek out where God is calling us to mission today, and have the courage to follow!

Judy Ganz

“I am about to do a new thing, ... do you not perceive it?” Is 43:19



Mission Conference (continued)

the missional church, mission in the East African context, communicating the Good News, and the World Conference of Churches. There was also a workshop to discuss the new



common curriculum, *Our Moravian Treasures*. A copy was provided to every participant and all were encouraged to provide feedback for further revision of this document.

We heard from areas of the Unity going through great difficulty, such as the Congo that has been dealing with war and the displacement of people. A brother and sister from

India shared about the significant persecution of Christians there. We were updated on the devastation in the Virgin Islands from the two hurricanes that passed through recently. Sr. Eulencine Christopher stated that despite everything, they are resilient. “We will rise.” BWM is working with Sr. Christopher to find the best ways to provide assistance.

We also heard positive stories of God’s movement, as in the Eastern Congo where there are two congregations with the pygmy population. Br. Fabiao Ramos joined us from Angola and found ways to interact with us despite his primary language being Portuguese.

Conference participants also met in small groups to better share their stories and experiences of mission. Groups then brought forth comments and proposals to the full conference. There was a strong emphasis on improved communication throughout the Unity, including more complete translation of important documents into Swahili and Spanish, at the very minimum. Many expressed concerns for youth and women. Methods of moving toward sustainable mission were encouraged, including the development of business models to generate income for the church. We were encouraged to commit to the mission of the church, while at the same time recognizing that we need to be healthy ourselves first. Participants (continued p. 3)

Mission Conference (continued)

were also asked to think about what it means to be part of the Unity and to reaffirm our commitment to the Unity. (one of the ten small groups is pictured below)

These issues were reflected in the several proposals that came out of the mission conference that will be shared with the Unity Board. In addition, there was a proposal affirming the common curriculum, and a proposal to develop a Unity Mission Agreement—taking us beyond the original *Brotherly Agreement*. Suggestions were given for edits and a second draft will go out to conference participants to hopefully move toward a document that would benefit the Unity.

I believe all participants would agree that just being together was a true blessing at the conference. There was energy for the work before us and a joy in the sense of unity that we shared. Excursions to Genadendal, Mamre or Cape Town; worshipping at Moravian Hill Chapel in District 6; attending the District 6 museum; and sharing in the Moravian Hill Musical afternoon certainly added a wonderful depth to the learnings of the week and the relationships that were developing. We pray that all participants return to their churches with renewed passion and commitment to the mission of our church, and to our unity in Christ that is foundational to all that we do. Thanks to the many who contributed time and funds to make this meaningful conference possible!



Representing the Northern, Southern, & Alaska Provinces,
& the Unity of Brethren in Texas

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& now to enjoy the grandchildren!

