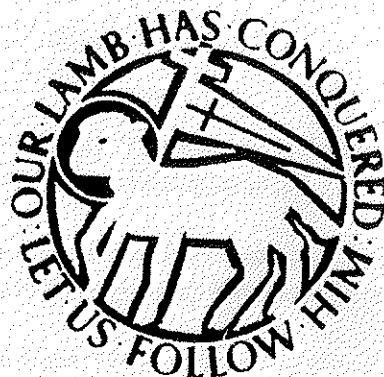


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## FOREWORD

The subject of “Canadian Moravian Involvement in Mission Work” is vast. In this issue of our Magazine we attempt to give the reader insight into just how important the contributions of Canadians have been to Moravian Mission work. The purpose of this issue is to help promote understanding of this subject. It is hoped that knowledge will lead to renewed support for Moravian mission work and interest in the on going work of the recently established Canadian Moravian Mission Society

Fortunately lots of valuable work has been recorded over the years by those who have served in mission work. An examination of the listings in the Appendix of this issue illustrates this fact.

Despite the fact that much has been written there are many gaps in the accounts of mission service. Happily we had a very strong positive response to our attempts to fill those gaps with written accounts. Many of the contributors had to dig deep into

their memory banks to come up with an account of their involvement. But they did so with great results. As Editor it was a great blessing to read these articles and to realize how significant the service of these people has been. Some served for a very long time and some for a relatively short time. All were committed to advancing the cause of Christ. They were all changed by their experiences, and the blessings which have flowed from their dedicated efforts have gone on beyond their expectations or even their knowledge.

The final article, was written by Kevin Corbin, who was the Good News Moravian Church of Sherwood Park representative on the Mission Council. This article was included because it looks back at Moravian Mission work, while challenging the Mission Council of the day (2000), to think through setting up a new Mission Society with goals which are true to our heritage.

The mission work of the Moravian Church carries on with different approaches and new challenges. It is important to understand what has gone before, so we can be inspired by this service and thus be an effective part of supporting the work which lies ahead.

Wm. G. Brese  
Editor

Extract from the Proceedings of the  
First Synod of the Canadian District 1904  
Held at Bruderfeld (Now Millwoods) Moravian Church  
Edmonton, Alberta.

Second Day, Second Meeting June 29, 1904

....After the break they continued their discussion. The chairman gave the committees and individual persons the opportunity to give their reports. Brother Hoyler gave some suggestions:

- 1) That the fifth district undertake the financial support of a missionary or native helper on a mission field.
- 2) That they discover ways to continue year to year funding.
- 3) That the District Board, that is voted in at this Synod, contact the Provincial Elders Conference in Bethlehem or the Mission Board in Bertelsdorf (Berthelsdorf Germany) to properly put this plan into action.

These suggestions were passed on to the Mission Committee.

The following verbal reports were presented. Brother Hoyer reported for Bruederfeld. Following him were the other delegates from the same congregation, these were Brothers Drebert, Rentz, and Mauer. Brother L. Henkelmann gave a special report from the new Hay Lakes Settlement. Brother G. Henkelmann gave the report for Heimtal. Following him were Brothers Wolfram, Klapstein, and Hoyer. Brother Klapstein gave another special report for Strathcona. After this the chairman gave words of encouragement to the Synod.

The Synod ended for the day at 11:35 after verses 2 - 4 were sung from Hymn 494.

## Our Missionary

Brother Theodor Reinke, who is our representative from the Fifth District on the mission field, is the only living son of Bishop C. L. Reinke and his wife Caroline, maiden name Oehler. He was born on September 7, 1878 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in the old seminary building on Church Street where his father, at that time, was a professor and house father. On November 9 he was baptized, into the family of Jesus Christ, by his father, at the chapel of the seminary, with the other professors and all the students in attendance. The confirmation of our present missionary was at the church in Watertown, Wisconsin on Palm Sunday 1893.

Already at 12 years of age he felt the call to ministry. His father was at that time in Herrnhut attending the General Synod of 1889. He received a letter from his son telling him of his son's newfound desire to answer the call of God into full time ministry, and his parents encouraged him. A little more than one year after his confirmation, Brother Reinke started as a student in our seminary in Bethlehem, to prepare himself for his life's calling. After six years his studies in Bethlehem ended in June 1900 and he soon started active church ministry.

Next he became a teacher at the Boy's School in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. After a short time, as there were not enough German speaking preachers, he received a call to the congregation in Windsor, Wisconsin. He regretfully turned down the call. He did not feel happy about leaving the new teaching position he had come to love and begin a new and unfamiliar work.

By the year's end he received the same call and realized that it must be the clear will of God and gave up his beloved job in Nazareth. After he was ordained as a Deacon of the Moravian Church, by his father in Gnadenhutzen, Ohio, he began the work in Windsor, Wisconsin where he tirelessly served for about three years.

Then came a new call. He was recommended to be a missionary helper for the fast growing work on the island of Trinidad, not far from the north coast of South America. Once again, at first, Brother Reinke did not accept the call because of the lack of German preachers, he did not want to leave his position to go to a land where he could rarely use his German. After much conscientious deliberation he realized the unmistakable leading of God that he was destined for mission work.



He wrote to the church leaders and offered his services willingly to go wherever God wanted to use him. The Mission Board called him immediately to Moskito in Central America. After a short visit with his parents in Gnadenhutten, Ohio he began his trip to Moskito on June 23, 1904.

Brother Reinke is for the time being stationed in Bluefields, (Nicaragua) but as soon as possible will be pioneering work with unreached Central American Indians.

Remember this young brother, who is a substitute for you in this heathen world, and in your place carries out the Lord's command. Pray for him, write to him, and let him feel that you participate in spirit with him in his meaningful and important work. Support the work of the Lord, from your resources, that the holy work of mission will succeed. The Lord will repay 100 fold for all you do for the least of these brothers in the heathen world.

Various Letters Regarding the Work of T. Reinke

Bluefields, Nic., Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, 1905

Rev. Clement Hoyler, Strathcona, Alberta

Dear Sir:

Being requested by the Rev'd. Reinke to make a reply to your letter of Nov. 15/04 relative to keeping you posted, with articles of interest in this District I venture to do so. Before going further however I beg to introduce myself to you and your church, as I believe that you, as well as your congregation, will naturally like to know who I am.

Well to begin with, must say that I am a member of the Sunday School Hall Committee for the erection of our new Sunday School Hall. I am also Secretary for the Central Sunday School, which has an average attendance of 300 souls, among which are to be seen children and youths of all description; even the hoary-headed can there be seen.

The Rev. Reinke asks to be excused in delay in answering you. He was very busy and was just at that time taking a trip to some of the coast stations. He has however gathered for you a few articles which he

hopes will meet with your interest as time was somewhat pressing more could not be got at present. In the future however, will do his best to procure more curios for you. You will notice among this lot a small canoe with pointed bow and stern; this is the kind generally used by the natives in going to their Plantations, also in fishing turtles, etc.; the other which is an oval shape and flat at the bow and stern is used chiefly by the Indians in crossing the many rapids which frequent this region. To cross these dangerous rapids requires exceptional skill in handling the Pit-Pan (as the last described boat is called) and in this the Indians are adept.

You will also find in this lot seashells gathered on the coast or beach, as well as some dark coloured seeds, called Ina Iwas; the black and red ones are used by the Indians in making beads to adorn their necks. The back with which basket of shells is tied, is used by the Indians as rope and is quite strong and durable.

Trusting that for time being you will be satisfied with the few curios, and my frail attempt at describing them.

I remain very truly yours,  
Christopher T. Hooker,  
Bluefields, Nic., C.A.

Moravian Mission, Bluefields, Nic.,  
Feb. 9, 1905

My dear Bro. Hoyler,

I'm afraid your patience has been tried to the utmost by this time at not receiving any reply to yours of the 15<sup>th</sup> of November. It reached me but a short time before Xmas and I naturally had my hands very full just then. After Xmas, Bro. Martin had a lot of reports to get out beside all this business with the German Consulate and we really haven't had a breathing spell for a long time. On Jan. 6, I went to Pearl Lagoon on invitation of Bro. Bercken and assisted some with the services and had a good time generally. The boat failing me on the following Tuesday and Wednesday, I took a long trip up to the head of Pearl Lagoon and crossed over to the great river, paddled down to its mouth and visited cousin G. Reinke at Little Sandy Bay 4 miles up the beach (Sharon). Here I was delayed till the 24<sup>th</sup>. Got back to Bluefields by sea on the 25<sup>th</sup> and found a tremendous amount of correspondence had accumulated; and tonight I'm only trying to explain my long silence.

Let me say to begin with that I think the undertaking of the V District is a capital idea; and I feel highly

honored to have been appointed to be the proxy of so progressive a body.

Being so busy I asked Christie Hooker, one of the young men in Br. Martin's bible class to attend to packing a few articles and he promised to write you a letter. Haven't seen him since. I thought the letter itself would be a good testimony to the usefulness of the mission here. Christie was one of our high school boys. In the States he would be called a "nigger"; tho he must be one fourth white at least, if not more. He is the only son of a rather well-to-do planter whose wife also holds some property; and since he was thrown out of a job as clerk to the Southern Steam S. Company when it left here, he has not been regularly employed. He is a young man whom I've never seen without a linen collar.

The dory is the one with a peaked bow and stern. It is used on the lagoons and at sea. The pit-pan is used in the creeks where its round bottom permits it to make the quick turns more regularly. It is also useful because it is easily hauled up on land or over the rocks in the rapids of the upper rivers. The pit-pans I have seen are longer in proportion. The dories are hewn out of tree trunks and then they are spread and a gunwale is built on them. Some of our dory carpenters are

most skillful fellows. These boats and the tea cup etc. were made by Bro. Temple in Pearl Lagoon for \$7.50 (sols) = \$3.15 U.S. (Sol = 42 cents U.S.) This cup etc. are of rose wood if I remember aright. It may pay you to sell them. The people do not use such utensils at all, but I thought they were very skillfully done. The shells etc. come from Sharon beach mainly. I have ordered more baskets from the Indian who presented me with this one. I dare say the bark and seeds and pumice stone suggest industries. The tiny sponge drifted from the coral keys.

Will enclose a stray copy of the news. Have a Kaoligraph now and hope to be able to get out a large edition and send to various reliable parties at home if they will contribute some towards expenses of postage, etc.

A law has been passed forbidding members of religious "congregaciones" to enter the country and it was to have been enforced against us. The German Consul wired Bro. Martin to come to Managua with Br. Bercken as there seemed to be a possibility of settling our differences. This government is a despotism pure and simple and we just hope and pray God to guard and guide our brethren who started out this A.M. in an open boat dory by sea for Greytown. There has been

so much treachery on the part of officials that one's fears sometimes will rise for them.

This is a wretched letter, but I hope that, if you can't make much use of it, it will at least explain matters a little. I have to attend to the warden's work in his absence besides have more ministerial work to do—as we must supply Lagoon from here till their return. I'm very tired and sleepy now as we all lost sleep getting ready for their departure.

With kindest greetings to all,  
Very fraternally yours,  
T. Reinke

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HAM AM LINE  
On board the steamship "SARNIA"  
between Kingston - New York  
June 5, 1905

My dear Brothers & Sisters in Alberta,

You may soon forget that you have a missionary if I do not let you know that I am still alive. As you can see, I am on my way to New York. This journey has the purpose, that I will marry the dear Sister, Miss

Gertrude Small, from York, Pennsylvania. This sister spent two years in a hospital in Philadelphia as a nurse. This preparation will be of great value to my work. As the mail service is so poor, I could not notify you of my engagement before I started my journey. Everything went so fast.

On May 17<sup>th</sup> I received permission from President Gelaya to return with my wife, if I went to America. The following afternoon Br. & Sr. Hermann Beck with their three children and Br. & Sr. Berckenhagen with their seven year old son sailed from Bluefields to Colon. They asked me to go with them so that I could help them get established in Colon, because it was unknown what kind of ship they would find. With the help of three men from the Sunday School class and the faithful assistance of Br. & Sr. Heath (who were still there from the conference which lasted from the 8<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>), I got ready for 1:00 P. M. With the gasoline boat DACIA we went across the lagoon to the bluff at the outflow to the ocean where the custom house stood. We towed our sailboat "Union C" behind us, because the wind was unfavorable. Many friends from the congregation and most of the missionaries from Bluefields accompanied us. Unfortunately the water level was too shallow. The sailboat got stuck and refused to move. We had to wait for the tide to



return. Little Ernst Berckenhagen had already said his goodbye to his parents with many tears. He returned with them on the "Dacia" to Bluefields and had to repeat this the next morning. The Beck's and I were too tired and spent the night on board the ship. We did not get out on the ocean until 5 o'clock the next afternoon and then the trouble began. Ernst cried for his Mama, and sister Beck and the children became seasick one after another. On the second evening it started with me and I do not care to remember this. Had the wind been favorable, our journey would have taken 36 hours. For most of the time there was no wind and we had to contend with big swells that tossed the boat back and forth. Finally we reached Colon with our food supply nearly exhausted.

One reason why I went along was that I have a free pass from the boat owner and thought that would make the journey cheaper. When we arrived in Colon, we found the big Royal Mail Steamship there. We could either rent one cabin or travel as deck passengers. They did not have economy class. If it had not been for all the difficulties we had encountered on the "Union C", I would have travelled as a deck passenger, for I had to pay for the fare with my own money. But I had endured too much.

The difference between the "Royal Mail" and the "Union C" was like heaven and earth. Here we had cleanliness, good water, even for bathing and excellent food and pleasant fellow passengers.

We reached Kingston, Jamaica on the 29<sup>th</sup>, where I stayed with my cousin, Br. Jonathan Reinke. It was a Sunday. In the evening, Br. Beck and I spoke about Nicaragua. On Monday afternoon, the Beck's continued their journey by train and cart and visited an aunt on Tuesday, a sister G. H. Lopp, in Carmel. I arrived there at 8 o'clock in the evening, but had to leave again at 5 o'clock the following morning.

This steamship is very nice too, and the water was calm the whole time. On Sunday I held a service, which was fairly well attended, even by Catholics. We are supposed to arrive in New York on the 7<sup>th</sup>. My plans are not finalized and I thought to spend half of my time there and the other half in Gnadenhuetten. The Mission board granted me three months furlough. I have to be back on my post on August 18<sup>th</sup>. The Lord willing I will then be no more alone.

The conference has called Br. Vaga to Bluefields, because his wife is not well and I am to go to Ephrata or Wounta Hanlover, which is 20 miles north of

Princepolka, where Br. Fluch was stationed earlier. It will be hard for me to bid farewell to the folks in Bluefields as I have come to love them very much. The work in Ephrata will be among Indians.

In closing, may God bless you all; pray always for my work and me as much work lies before us.

Your brother,  
Theo Reinke

---

Gnadenhuetten, Ohio  
July 26, 1905

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Br. Hoyler and Br. de Schweinitz informed me about your generosity. God be praised that His spirit is working in your hearts. Who would have believed it ten years ago, that the Alberta congregations would be able to already support a missionary (and also his wife). When Br. Liebert visited Alberta the first time and then reported about his visit in Bethlehem, everyone was of the opinion that there was a field the Moravian Church should occupy. They thought it would take a long time before that work would be self supporting.

And look! Today the Canadian District is already supporting a missionary couple. It is a fact, the more one gives, the more one has. At first the Home Mission Treasury expended a good sum of money in Alberta, but now it is all coming back to the Foreign Mission Treasury. May God bless all the willing donors and through your gifts and prayers, may many souls be won for His kingdom.

Tomorrow it will be two weeks already that sister Reinke and I are here in the old homestead in Gnadenhuetten. The joy to be here so fast is nearly as great as the one that the good Lord has provided me with a live partner who loves me and the work I do. These are truly blessed days and hours.

Since I have returned to my home country, I have talked in several churches about God's and my work in Nicaragua. Four times I spoke in York and also in Philadelphia, Bethlehem, Littitz, Lancaster, Gnadenhuetten, and Sharon. The interest for Nicaragua appears to be great and many folks have told me that they have read the article about Nicaragua in "The Moravian" with great interest.

We had planned to leave Gnadenhuetten on August 11<sup>th</sup> and then to visit relatives in Chicago and St. Louis on

our way to New Orleans. We were to depart New Orleans on a steamboat on the 16<sup>th</sup> and hopefully arrive in Bluefields on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. However, since the yellow fever broke out in New Orleans, we will not be able to leave for awhile.

Sad news reached us from Bluefields. The highest court of the land was to decide if we were to be classified as a church or not. A decision has been reached. The Moravian Church has all the attributes of a Brotherhood and therefore belongs to the congregations in Nicaragua that by law are not permitted. This should not affect us, since we were given a special permit by the President. What consequences this will bring, nobody knows. But we know, that all those who love God, all things will work out for the best. He is mightier than all the laws.

Tomorrow and on Sunday I will speak again about our work and this time in Fry's Valley. I could tell you much more, but it gets boring when one has to write it down first. May God bless you all and make us, as your representatives, faithful and fill us with His Spirit. That is our prayer.

Your Sister and Brother,  
Gertrude & Theodor Reinke

Hanlover,  
January 22, 1906

Dear Bro. Hoyler:

I'm afraid to think when I wrote last to Alberta. Our time has been so fully occupied that we just could not write. At first it was getting our home arranged, then it was Sister Reinke's serious illness, from which however, thank God, she has entirely recovered; and lastly it was the Xmas and New Year work.

This station, known as Ephrata in the mission books, but always called Wounta Hanlover, has been occupied for almost 50 years. It was the first among the Indians. From here trips were made up and down the coast and up the rivers. To this place the heathen came partly to hear the Gospel and partly for trade. Since then all the principal points about here save Wounta, Princepolka and Halpatilesa have been occupied by missionaries. The importance of the store too has diminished. For Karata and Twappi on the north and Princepolkas great business to the south more than merely compete with us.

From 150 - 200 people have their homes here. To the east is the sea, to the west a large lake or lagoon. The

soil is sand. The place looks pretty and green. The brush is kept down pretty well and the cows keep the grass cropped. Coconut trees keep waving their great leaves in the breeze all the time. Our house is frame. The north and east sides are shingled to make sure of keeping out the rain. Inside it is not ceiled or plastered, but the frame of the house shows. The weather-boarding is dressed on the inside and when painted the whole effect is not so very bad. At first we intended to cook on a blue flame oil stove, but find that too expensive. So our Bluefields cook, Alvina makes fire in the rusty outkitchen stove. (Everything rusts here very badly—even one's shoe eyelets.)

We have tried to make our house look as homelike as possible. Sometime we shall try to get a photo of the interior.

Our people mostly have wattled homes. They are roofed with palm leaf thatch. Most of them have doors and shutters. Glass windows are not used. Some houses are of frame with corrugated galvanized roofing. The better class of people have a kitchen in which to cook. It corresponds to an outkitchen at home. Others have a pile of ashes and sand on the floor and they make fire on that. They have long sticks of wood whose ends they shove together or

apart according as they want a quick blaze or a smouldering fire. In an old tin can or an iron pot they can heat water in a hurry. The smoke easily finds egress through the basket-work like walls. Today I took some snap shots and I do hope they'll be good for once. As I don't develop them, I can't tell for six or eight weeks.

The store consumes a surprising amount of time. It is 5 oz. of sugar or  $\frac{1}{2}$  of coffee all day long. Occasionally an Indian disposes of a dory here for say \$50 and then I can expect to devote from 2-3 hours to him. First he buys \$1 worth of drilling, then \$1 worth of soap, then perhaps coffee, then drill again. He always receives his change after each sale.

I have made 2 trips to Walpa Siksa and 3 to Wounta to hold services. At Walpa Siksa (Black Rock) there are more Christians than at Wounta. At Wounta there are only 4 or 5 married couples. All the rest live together with more or less constancy without being married. It is not that they are utterly ignorant of moral law or of the Gospel, but it is badness and weakness combined. Fornication and adultery are our great evils.

T. Reinke

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**Rev. T. Reinke Dies; missionary, minister  
(1878 - 1973)**

The Rev. Theodore Reinke, the oldest missionary and minister of the Moravian Church in America, died Wednesday at the Lutheran Home, Moorestown.

Mr. Reinke would have been 95 on Sept. 7. He was born in Bethlehem, Pa., in 1878. He was the son of the late Right Rev. Clement L. Reinke.

Services will be held at the Covenant Moravian Church, York, Pa., tomorrow at 2 p.m. with the Right Rev. James G. Weingarth officiating.

Mr. Reinke attended Moravian College and Theological Seminary (1894-1900) and then was a teacher for one year at the former Nazareth Hall Military Academy, Nazareth, Pa. He was ordained by his father at Gnadenhutten, Ohio, July 21, 1901, as a Deacon of the Moravian Church; and was consecrated a Presbyter (the second order of the Moravian ministry) at Bluefields, Nicaragua, in May 1908 by the Right Rev. J. T. Hamilton.

After a three-year pastorate at the Windsor, Wisc. (Deforte) Moravian Church in the Western District, Mr. Reinke went to Nicaragua as a missionary serving

at Bluefield-Ephrata, and Sandy Bay from 1904 to 1910.

He returned to the States for two years to serve at Northfield (Minn.) Moravian Church and then was called to be superintendent of the Nicaragua Moravian Mission from 1912 to 1914. Compelled to return to the States because of his wife's health, he then held pastorates at Mamry, Wisconsin Rapids; Fry's Valley, Ohio; and the Bethany and Olivet Churches, York, Pa., from 1914 to 1942.

In 1942, he returned a third time to Nicaragua where he served the mission at Bluefield (1942-1946).

Mr. Reinke's last pastorate was at Stockholm, Wis. (1946-1947)



Reinke was married in 1905 to Gertrude Small who died in 1936. He was later married to Jessie Winifred Myer(1942). She died in 1968.

Surviving are five sons, Theodore S. of Rehoboth, Del., George C., Phoenixville, Pa., Samuel P. Rock, Tavern, N.Y., James E., Potomac, Md., and Paul K. Moorestown; 13 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

\* \* \* \* \*

## REMINISCENCES OF MISSION SERVICE

By Lorenz W. Adam

In looking back at 20 years of our lives in mission service in Central America many thoughts come to mind. The experiences we had were many and varied. Some were exciting and very challenging. Others were humdrum, also depressing. There were times of enjoyment, also times of disappointments and sorrows. There were times when we were tempted to leave the work but with perseverance and a total commitment to the Lord's call in our lives we stayed, trusting in God's help. Through it all we learned much about God's love and guidance.

How did it all start? The call to Christian commitment began when we were young. We both grew up in homes in which church activities were part of our lives. I was born February 20, 1925, on a farm 10 miles south of Edmonton. The Heimtal Moravian Church was my home congregation. Although I was aware of God's presence at an early age, it wasn't until about the age of 13 that I made a personal commitment to Christ.

Nora was born November 28, 1931, in Edmonton. It was at a Lutheran Bible Camp that she accepted Christ as her personal Saviour, and a year later confirmed her faith and became a member of the Augustana Lutheran Church in Edmonton. During her Junior and Senior High School years her faith was nurtured by her pastor, the Rev. Vikman, and by church sponsored youth activities, including summer camps and young people's conventions.

Influencing my call to Christian service was my pastor, the Rev. Samuel Wedman, who had served as a missionary in Nicaragua. Annual mission festivals exposed me to thoughts of possibly become a missionary. Camp Van Es and the active youth program of the Canadian District also strongly influenced my life. We had missionary speakers at some of those youth conferences. The "Moravian Missionary" periodical which was available during my youth also intrigued me.

There was a strong possibility that I would have to enter military service, but the Second World War ended before I was called up to report for duty. In the spring of 1945 I took a short normal school course after which I was employed as the teacher of 24 children in a one room rural school in north central Alberta for five months. In the fall I enrolled at Moravian College from which I graduated in 1949. I took my first year of seminary training at St. Stephen's College in Edmonton. During this year I also served as student pastor of the Hobbema and Bruderfeld congregations. My remaining two years of training were at Moravian Theological Seminary from which I graduated in 1952. I was ordained a Deacon at Camp Van Es on July 6, 1952, by the Rt. Rev. I. R. Mewaldt.

In 1949 Nora went into nurse's training at the Misericordia School of Nursing in Edmonton. She felt the call to enter mission service as a deaconess in the Lutheran Church. But

God had other plans for her. She and I met each other in the summer of 1951 at an outdoor Moravian youth gathering. We found that we had similar interests and felt a similar calling to go where the Lord would lead us. On August 29, 1952, we were united in marriage in the Edmonton Moravian Church by the Rev. Samuel Wedman.

After this all efforts were directed at preparing for service in Nicaragua under the jurisdiction of the Moravian Board of World Mission. It was an exciting time, also a time when we wondered what experiences lay ahead of us. But, we knew that God had called us to this field of service and that He was with us.

During our first term of service there were difficult times with adjusting to a new climate, new languages and cultures, also illness. Our first introduction to mission service in Nicaragua was in Bluefields, on the south-east coast of the country. We arrived there at the end of October, 1952. This was a good place in which to begin because the people spoke English and there were other missionaries to help us. Wilfred and Lorraine Dreger were our neighbors and helpful in many ways. I was serving as an interim pastor while Conrad Shimer, an older missionary, was on furlough. The congregation is large with hundreds of folks attending the services, e.g. one Sunday 357 persons took part in the communion service. This happened to be the first time that I officiated at a communion service but it went well, due in part to the helpful instructions that Wilfred Dreger and Joe Harrison, the Nicaraguan pastor, gave me beforehand.

One of the adjustments was to the tropical climate. As we stepped out of the airplane in Managua, the capital city of Nicaragua, it felt as if we were stepping into a sauna. The humidity and heat were a new experience which we gradually

learned to get used to. The coastal areas were not quite as hot and humid because of the sea breezes. During our years in the tropics we experienced days of heavy rains, the threat of hurricanes and also times of drought. This was part of life.

During our first week in Bluefields we had the wonderful experience of traveling on a river barge along the Escondido River. On this three day trip we stopped at several villages to have services, to visit with the people, and to gather fruits (bananas, coconuts, oranges, etc.) for the large harvest festival at the Bluefields Moravian Church. On this trip we were introduced to the little stinging gnats and grass bugs. Nora was bit badly on her legs and suffered for it for several weeks. In spite of this, it was a good way for us to be introduced to more primitive life, jungle vegetation, new foods, etc.

Learning to communicate was one of our big challenges. In Bluefields the people spoke Creole English which was difficult for us to understand at first. At Christmas there were programs in which the children and youth portrayed the story of Jesus' birth but we had to guess at what they were saying much of the time. Gradually our ears grew accustomed to this different "dialect" and we began to understand what was said.

After being in Bluefields for nine months, we were moved to La Luz, a gold mining town in the mountains of Nicaragua. This was a whole new adventure. For three months we lived with Joe and Lahoma Gray, the missionaries who were stationed there. While with them, we had 21 lessons in Miskito, the language of some of the people we came to work with. When the Grays left for their furlough we felt very much alone. We were to serve two congregations, one English (Creole) and the other Miskito. We also had the administration of a mission day school with about 50 children in kindergarten through sixth grade. I was also assigned to be the "parson" for a district

which included six outstations which were to be visited about four times a year. There were no roads to most of these places so this meant a lot of walking and travel by dugout canoe on the rivers. In looking back, I believe that all the walking helped me develop some strong heart muscles.

It took time for us to feel "at home" with the national folks and a longer time to be able to fully communicate in Miskito or Spanish. At first I used a lot of quotations from the Miskito Bible in my sermons because I knew those were in correct Miskito. We found that the people were very patient with us and rarely laughed at how we said something. Learning to understand what they said also helped. It wasn't until 1957, after a term of service in La Luz, that we had the opportunity to study Spanish at the Institute of Linguistics in San Jose, Costa Rica. It would have been easier for us if we had learned Spanish before going into mission service but this was not possible.

During our days in La Luz our two sons were born in our mission hospital in Bilwaskarma. Murray was born in August, 1953, during the time we lived with the Grays. Brian was born in November of 1954. They spent the early years of their lives with us in Nicaragua and Honduras and later said that they would not have wanted to "exchange their lives" with anyone. As children they enjoyed life, had lots of animal pets, had friends of other skin colors, and experienced other cultures. When in Honduras they attended a boarding school for missionary children for seven months in each of four years. Being a two hour plane ride away from home was hardest on our younger son. It was also one of our hardships in that it broke the close bond we had with our children. We would not agree to do this again.

It was in La Luz that we experienced most of our times of sickness. Nora had a severe malaria attack in which she was delirious for two days. She was allergic to the medication and had to go to our mission hospital in Bilwaskarma for help. I had a bout with bacillary dysentery and also contracted TB, although I did not know it until I was tested when we went on furlough. My body, with God's help, was able to fight off the bacilli. Both of our children became very sick closer to the time of our furlough. Murray was thought to have TB but it was later diagnosed as a fungus infection in his lungs. Brian had both malaria and typhoid fever and spent ten days in the Baptist Hospital in Managua. This was a difficult time, especially for Nora, because I was away from home a lot on outstation trips and communication with family was almost impossible. We really had to rely on God's help and healing when in these circumstances. During this term of service we developed an immunity to some of the tropical illnesses and, because of this, had very little illness during our next 15 years of service.

In the summer of 1956 after Brian left the hospital we returned to Canada for furlough and a time for recuperation. Then, before returning to Honduras, we were given five months for language study in San Jose, Costa Rica, a beautiful city. This was an interesting and enjoyable time for us as a family. After that it was helpful to be able to communicate more easily in Spanish.

Our last three years in Nicaragua were spent in the coastal town of Puerto Cabezas where we were very encouraged because of the dedication of the Moravian folks there. We again had two congregations, one English speaking and one Miskito. I had the help of Miskito lay workers and a Creole ordained pastor to make the church work easier. I was also administrator of our mission school which had an enrollment of about 500 children. I was grateful for a very capable director and teaching staff.



During our time there we were very busy. Our house was like a bookstore, post office, bank, church office, boarding house and home, all in one. There was never a dull moment with people at the door all day long for everything from begging for a piece of bread to having a marital problem straightened out.

Along with being pastor of two congregations I had outstations to visit but these were accessible by road. We had a station wagon for transportation which made this travel much easier. On occasion Nora helped at the Moravian Hospital in the town. I also did grocery shopping for several other missionary families who were located in remote areas.

The Bay of Pigs invasion was launched from Port with shiploads of men heading for Cuba. Large cargo planes brought in supplies around the clock at the newly refurbished airstrip. This happened to take place during the week that the Honduras Moravian pastors and wives were to have their first retreat in Port. This had to be cancelled. We were not allowed to send out any mail nor have radio communications with people outside of Port. This was a tense time because we didn't know what was really happening until later.

Our next move was across the border to Brus Laguna, Honduras. After a time for furlough and a rest in Canada and the U.S.A. we became familiar with the important work of Missionary Aviation Fellowship whose plane took us over the mountainous jungle of Honduras eastward to the flat savannah and swampland of La Mosquitia, our new home. Brus Laguna was a primitive village of about 1,000 Miskito and Spanish folks. It was a tremendous responsibility for us to take the place of Werner and Martha Marx who had carried on the mission work so capably for 19 years. It was not easy! We were strangers who did things differently. The Marxes were literally "worn out" when they left and it was obvious that some changes

had to be made so that the people would be encouraged to do more things themselves.

I was given the responsibility of being the superintendent and also the treasurer of the Moravian work in Honduras. Along with this there was a mission boarding school to administrate. I also had to supervise the building of a house in which we were to live whenever another missionary couple would come to help. Nora was kept busy as a nurse and as a home maker. She managed a small medical clinic in which she diagnosed, prescribed, and treated the folks who came with their various illnesses. She had the help of Astria Allen, a Honduran, who had been trained to be a nursing assistant. Together they saw an average of 25 patients a day.

It was during our four years at this station that our sons attended "Las Americas", the boarding school for missionary children in Siguatepeque, a two hour plane ride away. We were grateful that they could attend this school because we did not have time to teach them at home. It was later that we realized, that although the boys enjoyed their school experiences, this separation from us was not the best for us as a family.

One of my responsibilities was to "cut the apron strings" because the people had become very dependent on the missionaries in Brus. A hurricane had occurred more than six months before but they were still depending on food handouts each day. Stopping this did not make the "new kids on the block" popular! Every year our school took part in a parade on November 15, the national holiday. Our children wore white shirts or blouses and navy pants or skirts. A couple of days before the parade one mother demanded that Nora give her 15 year old son a shirt and pants. Nora asked whether the boy was ill. The mother said that he was well so Nora said that we would have given him some work to do if he had come earlier

so that he could earn some money for clothes. The mother was angry and told people that this new parson's wife "had a black heart".

These were difficult years for us. I traveled much to visit the various villages in which we had churches. It was such a blessing to have the help of Mission Aviation Fellowship planes to fly to some of the more distant places. In the summer of 1965 I conducted a three month training course for Miskito men who were interested in becoming lay pastors. This had previously been called the Aquila Pricilla School. It was good to have this opportunity to come to know and to help the 15 students who attended the classes. Several became very dedicated lay workers.

In January, 1963, Jerry and Evelyn Arndt, came to Brus Laguna to help us. We were very glad to have them as part of our team. Jerry took over the treasurer's position and also helped much with supervising the boarding school.

In the fall of 1963 a country wide Evangelism in Depth campaign was held. The Honduras Moravian Church also participated. A number of congregational leaders and delegates came to Brus Laguna for training. On our opening night of services in the Brus church the service was interrupted just as we were about to begin. Soldiers came and ordered everyone to go home. A military coup had taken place. Guns were confiscated. We were under a military form of government. The evangelism campaign was able to continue later when the government situation calmed down. Spiritual blessings were many with about 800 persons throughout "La Mosquitia" making decisions for Christ.

After four hectic years of service in Honduras, we returned to the States where I accepted a call to the Lake Auburn Moravian

Church near Victoria, MN. With all the unrest among youth during the later sixties we felt that our children needed to be with us. They had their Junior and Senior High School education at the Waconia High School. Attending a stateside school was a new and also a good experience for them. Serving a church in the States was also a new experience for us.

We were with the Lake Auburn congregation from September, 1966, until January, 1972, when we moved to Northfield, MN to serve the Moravian Church in that city. Along with the Moravian Church I served two small United Methodist congregations. This included preaching at three services every Sunday morning and chairing many meetings. Although our schedule was full it was a good time for us. We enjoyed being with the people we served for the Lord.

Then, unexpectedly, in the fall of 1974, we had a letter from the Board of World Mission asking us to return to Honduras. The need was for someone who was familiar with the languages and the culture of the part of Honduras where we had served before. Our first thoughts were "Lord, isn't there someone else to call?" When we left Honduras in 1966 I did not care to ever return to that place. The reason was that our workload there had been so very great and the responsibilities had been too many. However, Nora and I decided that we would each pray about this call for a few days before replying. As we did this God revealed to us that any reasons we had for not accepting the call were really selfish excuses instead of valid reasons. We then said "Yes" and were at peace about the decision we made. Before leaving Northfield we needed time to procure our U.S. citizenship papers and passports, get visas for Honduras, and to make whatever preparations were necessary before leaving the U.S. for what we thought would be a four year term.

We arrived in Honduras May 30, 1975. After a few days in Tegucigalpa, the capital city, we flew across the jungle by MAF airplane to Ahuas, which was to be our home for the next six years. Soon after we arrived, I was made administrator of the medical clinic so that the resident doctor, Oscar Vidas could devote his full time to the medical work. I was also appointed financial treasurer for the Moravian Church in Honduras. Nora went to work in the clinic and had hopes for holding health classes and also for having pre-natal classes for expectant mothers.

About two months after our arrival, Joe Gray, the mission superintendent, had to leave for the States for medical reasons. Although his illness was not serious the doctor advised him to take a rest. So the Grays began their furlough earlier than originally planned. This meant that I became the superintendent. Again, there was the pressure of a heavy load of responsibility but, with God's help, I was able to do the work and also to enjoy the variety it presented.

Not long after arriving in Ahuas we were faced with serious difficulties because of the actions of Dr. Vidas, the Honduras doctor at the clinic. As administrator, it fell to me to ask him to resign his post, but he refused to do so. He appealed to government medical persons such as the Minister of Public Health to force us to keep him at the clinic. It was a very trying experience. Thankfully, I had the backing of the Honduras provincial board and the support of the Miskito people who did not want the doctor to stay. They did not trust him for reasons which later became clear. For three months the situation was very tense; we did not know what was going to happen. We were threatened with expulsion from the country but believed that we should stay where we felt called to serve. Our past experience helped us face this difficulty.

Eventually the problem was resolved, but then the clinic, the main medical center for 25,000 people, was left without a resident doctor. But, the Lord was faithful in giving the help that was needed. Nora, with some very capable nurses, graduates of the Thaeler Hospital in Bilwaskarma, Nicaragua, provided the primary nursing care. One of the nurses was Norvell Goff who later became the medical doctor who, along with her husband, Gerard Rudy, is now directing the medical program.

During the two years that we did not have a medical doctor, not one patient died because there was no resident doctor. Healing miracles happened and patients needing emergency care came during daylight hours and could be transferred by airplane to other medical facilities. What a joy and relief it was, when in 1978, Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Marx returned to Honduras. It was after this that Nora was able to go to some of the villages for health classes and to give training to a number of midwives. I continued as clinic administrator and found this work enjoyable. We had many guests in our home during our years in Ahuas. There were many medical volunteers, church workers and others such as the editor-in-chief of "Sports Illustrated" magazine, and a Canadian member of parliament. One day the president of Honduras visited Ahuas to give a talk at the school. It was a very hot day so Nora invited him to come to our house for lemonade and cake. He, along with his guards, accepted. I had to be away that day to shop for supplies for the clinic.

It was evident that the Honduras church needed a Provincial Board which was entirely national. I wrote to the Board of Missions, suggesting what might be done, giving names of who might be appointed as the new superintendent or president of the board. With some adjustments, this plan was gradually carried out and Navarro Allen, an ordained pastor, was appointed to become the first Honduras president of the board.

At the next "Asamblea" (Synod) he was officially elected by the church. A Honduran was also appointed to take over some of the treasurer's work. During these changes I became an ex-officio member of the provincial board. I attended meetings, gave encouragement, and gradually let go of most of my responsibilities. It was a good feeling watching my Honduras brethren grow in their leadership abilities, making their own decisions and then seeing them carried out.

In 1981 we left Honduras with mixed feelings but also with the assurance that the work of the Moravian Church was in good hands there. Twenty years of our lives had been filled with a great variety of experiences and opportunities to share the gospel message of God's love. Our lives were enriched in many ways by our brothers and sisters in Nicaragua and Honduras.

I was called to be pastor of the Ebenezer Moravian Church near Watertown, Wisconsin. We began our time of service there in August, 1981. While there I was able to get a mission society organized. We had the opportunity to share our interest in missions with many of the Moravian churches of Wisconsin and Minnesota.

In March of 1985 we were asked to return to Honduras for a three month assignment to help facilitate the merger of the Nicaraguan Moravian refugee congregations with the Honduran Moravian congregations into one organized church body. This meant visiting many of the refugee villages, talking with the Moravian leaders and meeting with the Honduras Provincial Board. I worked on preparing the program for the biannual "asamblea" where the merger would take place. Because I knew a number of the Nicaraguan leaders it made it much easier to relate and interact with the Miskito and Sumu Moravians to accomplish this mission. It was a moving experience when on May 8, 1985, the Nicaraguan Moravians unanimously accepted

the invitation of the Honduras church to join with them to become one Moravian Church body. I felt privileged and thankful to have had a small part in bringing this union about.

P.S. I retired from the active ministry in July of 1990. For a very nominal rent we had the use of a duplex in Gnadenhutzen, Ohio, an old Moravian community. This duplex is owned and maintained by the Ohio Moravian churches. During our 14 years there I had opportunities to serve as interim pastor in a number of Moravian churches.

It was a joy to serve the Prince of Peace Moravian Church in Miami for about a year. This congregation had members from 15 countries when we were there. The majority was from Nicaragua and the West Indies. The couple in whose home this congregation began as a Fellowship is Santos and Daphne Ordonez. I had officiated at their wedding many years before in La Luz, Nicaragua, where they were part of our youth group. Others were people we had known in Nicaragua. We also served the New Hope church in south Miami for three months. The pianist happened to be Otto Brautigam who boarded in our home in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua during the time that he taught in our mission high school. We felt very much "at home" with these fellow Moravians.

We had the privilege of living on the Morongo Indian Reservation near Banning, California, for five months. Working with North American Indians was a new experience for us. We enjoyed our time there and learned to appreciate some of the problems those folks faced. There are some wonderful Christians there, too.

For two months we helped the Grace Moravian congregation in Westland, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. For one month we



were with the Heimtal Moravian Church in Alberta. Then when the Gnadenhutzen Moravian church was without a pastor we filled that position for five months. All of these were fulfilling experiences. It was good to be free to help where needed.

In 2004 we moved to Waconia, Minnesota, and took up residence in an apartment building for older people. This was a new experience for us and we find it to be very satisfactory. We now live about a half hour's drive away from our son, Murray. Our son, Brian, died the year I retired and his grave is in the Lake Auburn Moravian church cemetery. This is the church we now attend. We are again in a community which was home for us when we left mission service in 1966. God has been good to us and we give thanks for the many blessings He has given to us throughout our lifetimes.

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**Back at Ministry on St. Thomas,  
U.S. Virgin Islands**  
By Marvin R. Henkelmann

As I write this article, although I'm writing in the first person, I am paying tribute to Wilma's faithful support of my ministry and her contribution to the work in so many ways.

It all began as a teenager at Camp Van Es. One summer Br. Clement Hoyler was the visiting preacher and he left us with the challenge, "GIVE YOUR LIFE TO GOD. HE CAN DO MORE WITH IT THAN YOU CAN". By my senior year in high school, I knew I had to take action to prepare for full-time service (no consideration of "missions" at this time), so I began the process of applying to Moravian College. I graduated from

Moravian in '50 and from the Seminary in '53. My first call was to Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem as Assistant Pastor. Because of its size, this was a big adjustment. I was accustomed to Bruderfeld (now Millwoods), my home church and New Sarepta/Hobbema where I served as Student Pastor in '51-'52. Both were small churches. Serving at Central was a wonderful learning experience and helped prepare me for what was to come.

The nudge to missions came through Br. Ed Kortz, then Director of the Board of World Missions, and our neighbor. In 1952, the American Board of Mission assumed responsibility for the East West Indies Province (previously administered by the British Province) and Br. Kortz needed pastors. He kept pointing out the need and underscored the challenge that it would be. The Holy Spirit did some nudging, too. We (our first-born son was now one year old) arrived on St. Thomas just after Labor Day, 1955. This is the island where the first Moravian missionaries landed on December 13, 1732. My assignment was to serve as Pastor at the large Memorial Church.

The economy of St. Thomas was at a very low point because tourism had not yet developed. This economic status was reflected in the rundown condition of local real estate and, most glaringly, in the rundown condition of the Moravian buildings on the islands. The economic conditions also impacted the morale of the people. It led many to go "stateside" to seek work and education. The advent of tourism brought jobs and drastic change.

With it, the Moravian properties took on a new look thanks to the infusion of resources by the Board of Missions. Much of my energy during the first years was spent supervising and actually doing this reconstruction. I knew then why God

arranged for me to work for a building contractor while in College. I used every bit of the knowledge I had gained.

The physical activity was made more difficult because of the hot weather. The locals tried to help me adjust. I remember walking with one of the members one day. He gently pulled my shirttail and said, "Reverend, if you want to last until the end of the year, you've got to slow down." The climate became enjoyable, but I missed the changes of seasons. Christmas was like Easter, summer like winter. Every morning you looked out and saw another "disgustingly beautiful day".

The church schedule was very demanding. The morning and evening services were both well attended, but they had to be distinctive because many folks attended them both. There was an early morning and a mid-week service, as well. Because of the size of the congregations, there were numerous funerals, weddings, and baptisms (12 babies at one of the services). Communion was served every month in alternating morning and evening services. The shut-ins expected the same so two afternoons following the communion service in church were devoted to them.

As I learned to know the people, I was happy to see that there was a reservoir of leadership waiting to be utilized. I believe this underutilization was the result of a British church pattern that had not yet accepted the lay leadership concept that was so strong in my prior training and experience. As more American clergy came to the islands, lay leadership training became the norm and soon many of the clergy responsibilities could be delegated to the laity. An example—in the early '60s an old back injury of mine acted up, requiring surgery. On several occasions, I had to call on the lay helpers (elders) to take the service on Sunday. The call may have come as late as Saturday, but they were willing and able to take over for me.

Another reason for the heavy ministerial load was the lack of ordained clergy. There were times when I was the only pastor available for the five churches on two islands. The routine matters were carried on by laity, but the administration of the rites and sacraments created some strain. I remember that on one Maundy Thursday, I served at Bethany and Emmaus on St. John in the morning; I returned to St. Thomas to serve New Herrnhut at 3 o'clock in the afternoon; and served both Memorial and Nisky that evening. That evening's routine was closely choreographed. At a given time, I served Memorial while at the same time a layperson read the Passion Week Manual at Nisky. At another designated time, we announced two long hymns, got into our cars and changed churches so I could serve communion at Nisky while the layperson read the Manual at Memorial. I knew it was working when we passed each other about half way. (Note: this was the only occasion during my ministry of 40 years that I wore my surplice while driving a car.)

Some general observations:

--We were living on the "U. S. Virgin Islands" so there was no immigration hassle.

--There was no need to learn another language. There was a "local lingo" to which some folks resorted in private but everyone knew English.

--The tourist boom brought many Moravian stateside visitors. We gave frequent tours, shared many meals, and housed numerous friends and some strangers. Many came because they had missed the ferry to St. John due to a late plane arrival. Some of the neighbors referred to the parsonage as "the Henkelmann Hotel" but that was part of our ministry, and through it we met many wonderful and generous people.

--The biggest counseling challenge I faced was trying to explain the Civil Rights Movement during the late '50s and early '60s. Stateside TV had just come to the island so we were bombarded by scenes depicting violence and mistreatment of black people. Our people couldn't understand why state troopers with shotguns were keeping a black student from entering a University or why police were blasting peaceful demonstrators with water cannons. These were uneasy times but folks knew where we stood and the message we taught and lived, so we prevailed.

--This ministry was not "missionary" in the sense that these people were hearing the gospel for the first time. Many were well versed in scripture. One of the shut-ins was 80+ years old and blind. Each time I came to share the sacrament, I read a Psalm and the Gospel lesson used in church the previous Sunday. As soon as I started to read the Psalm, she recited it with me. This happened for several months so finally I decided I'd try to stump her with one of the least-used Psalms. As soon as I began, she joined me. As I was about to leave, we shook hands and she pulled me down so she could whisper into my ear, "Reverend, I know them all." (I lost that game of "GOTCHA").

--And hymns...They knew most by heart. A graveside service closed with singing of hymns as long as it took the gravediggers to close the grave. (No hymn sheets and no repeats.) With the grave closed, the family placed flowers on the mound and led the people from the cemetery.

-- I must make mention of the fact that our second son, Brian, was born at the hospital on St. Thomas. The hospital bill was \$18.00. The doctor who delivered him waived his fee. He was

a member of the congregation and lived across the street from the parsonage.

We returned to stateside service in September of '63 with a sense of fulfillment of Br. Hoyler's challenge: "GIVE YOUR LIFE TO GOD. HE CAN DO MORE WITH IT THAN YOU CAN". Thanks to the loving, capable and committed people of the islands, Wilma and I look back on those eight years as the highpoint of our ministry.

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### **SERVICE WITH THE MORAVIAN MISSIONS IN CENTRAL AMERICA**

December 1961 – December 1964

By Lily (Prochnau) Kernich

As a teenager I always had a keen interest in mission work wherever the Lord would open an opportunity. Mission Festivals held each year in my home church (Bruderheim) had a strong influence on me. I did my nurses training as a R. N. in Medicine Hat, Alberta. My sister, Irene, also a R. N. was serving in Central America at this time and her letter correspondence was of great interest to me. On her return we worked at the University of Alberta Hospital. In Edmonton. We shared an apartment with Clarence, our brother, for some months. For further preparation for service I attended the Camrose Lutheran Bible Institute in Camrose for two years. I applied for service to the Moravian American Mission Board. They called me to serve in "La Mosquitia" in Honduras, Central America, with our medical services there.

Before serving, I had three months in Costa Rica for some training in Spanish. I served at three of our main stations—Cauquira, Brus, and Ahuas. I spent most of my time in Cauquira with Rev. Clark and Laura Benson who had served there for many years. Honduras in my time was known to be one of the poorest countries in the world growing mostly rice, beans, bananas and other tropical fruit. Their only tools were an axe and a machete. Housing was very primitive. It is the power of the Gospel that changed many lives though the dread of evil spirits and witch craft was evident in some.

I arrived in Ahuas, the main medical clinic, in December, 1961. The clinic had a small operating room, x-ray equipment, microscope, and a pharmacy all in a very small space. Dr. Sam and Grace Marx were on furlough at the time so I worked with the relieving doctor, Ian Cook and Ruth. Before clinic started in the morning the local evangelist had a short devotion. Seeing 40 – 60 patients daily was common and often each morning. If surgery was needed it could be scheduled for the afternoon. After a few months I moved on to Cauquira where there was little equipment. The languages spoken were Miskito and Spanish which was one of my main difficulties. Patience and trust of the people were always very humbling. I had ham radio contact with the doctor in Ahuas daily if needed. Transport was mostly by foot, canoe and motor boat. When it was required to send a patient to Ahuas from Cauquira or Brus it would take 4 to 8 hours by boat. We did also have the wonderful service of M.A.F. though not stationed in our area taking some hours to arrive and only in the day time.

I certainly could never have depended on my own knowledge or strength with decisions I had to make. Answered prayer and God's presence and guidance was very evident.

## MY WORK IN THE EASTERN WEST INDIES PROVINCE

By Norman Prochnau

This is a description of my work in the Eastern West Indies Province of the Moravian Church. I served in the Virgin Islands Conference on St. Croix, 9/60 to 8/61 as a student pastor; on St. Thomas, in the summer of 1962 following my ordination, and again from 10/67 to 4/74. It will be 32 years next month since I left St. Thomas to serve in the Eastern District of the Northern Province. I will try to be as accurate as possible, relying on my memory, on the write up of my experiences in the Virgin Islands.

In July, 1960 during my stay at Camp Van Es as Camp Manager (employed by the Canadian District Moravian Church that summer), I received a letter from the Rev. Edwin W. Kortz, then Executive Director of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Moravian Church. In that letter he urged me to give prayerful consideration to serve as student pastor for a year at the Friedensfeld Moravian Church on St. Croix. The request actually came from the Virgin Islands Conference of the Moravian Church. Needless to say, this was one of the most difficult decisions that I



would have to make in my life. Seminary graduation would be postponed for a year and I would not graduate with my classmates. I struggled and prayed about this offer for about 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  weeks before saying yes. This also would be my introduction to mission service in an area where Moravian missionaries established congregations in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The purpose of my assignment at Friedenfeld Moravian Church (better known as Midlands Church located on the middle of the island) was to make an evaluation of the congregation as to whether there was the potential for it to become viable or face the possibility to be closed. Midlands Church then had a membership of about 100 but was without a resident pastor for fourteen years. The ordained pastors in Frederiksted and Christiansted administered the sacraments, officiated at weddings, funerals and confirmations but the rest of the work was the responsibility of a lay pastor in the congregation. The members at Midlands felt like second class Moravians because they did not have their own minister. The church building, the grounds and other buildings all were in deplorable condition. When I arrived on St. Croix on a flight from San Juan, Puerto Rico, I was met by the Rev. Donald Fulton, pastor of the Church in Frederiksted and Superintendent of the Conference. From the

airport we drove to Midlands Church for a tour of the place where I would be serving. He told me that I had the toughest work of all the Moravian ministers in the Virgin Islands. I said to him, "thanks a lot" and was tempted to return to Bethlehem to complete my seminary education. But I stayed and it turned out to be one of the best years of my life.

The first real challenge for me at Midlands was to adjust to the West Indian culture—learning to understand the local dialect and to gain more patience because people were always late at board meetings and the church services. It also took me a while to learn directions. On an island it is difficult at first to know which was north, south, east or west. After a month I got to know my way around quite well. More importantly, I began to understand the West Indian English dialect. A lot of exciting things happened during the year. A youth fellowship, women's fellowship and choir were organized, a successful stewardship program enabled the congregation to double its budget, and a first, successful vacation Bible school was held.

I presented reports of all the good things that were happening at Midlands Church to the Virgin Islands Conference at its quarterly meetings. They were

elated that this home mission effort sponsored by the Conference turned out to be a successful venture. One project that boosted the morale of the Midlands people was the refurbishing of the exterior of the church. Planted in the middle of the island with sugar cane fields surrounding it, the newly repaired and painted white framed church was very visible from the main highway and became the talk of the island.

One challenge that I had during the year was to minister to the lay pastor who had kept the church together during the fourteen years they were without an ordained pastor. Instead of giving support to new ideas and programs that were introduced, he resisted them and became quite negative. I spent much time counseling him and assuring him that what was happening was not a judgment on what was done before my arrival. Despite his negative attitude, the congregation continued to adopt changes and move in a new direction. Many good things happened. Enthusiasm and a new spirit among the people was evident, and the congregation has been alive ever since. Student pastors continued to serve the congregation several more years before ordained ministers were available to be their pastor. A new parsonage (manse) was erected at the church about fifteen years ago. The last report I received from Midlands Church is that

things are going well. The congregation is healthy and has been growing in membership.

I left St. Croix at the end of my year at Midlands with mixed feelings, because I really learned to love the people and was grateful for their enthusiastic response to my ministry and leadership. It was hard to say goodbye. A number of the members had expressed hope that I would return after my senior year at Moravian Theological Seminary but that was not to be. This was my introduction to Moravian missions and I will always be grateful for that experience. It has helped me to reshape my understanding of missions and given me a deep appreciation for those who labored faithfully under hardship and trying circumstances over the years as missionaries and pastors.

After seminary graduation and ordination in 1962, I accepted the call to serve as interim pastor at New Herrnhut and Nisky Moravian churches on St. Thomas for the summer months. I was still single and was delighted to accept the call because I was already familiar with the area. It was a great experience. Both churches were a pleasure to serve. Since it was a short interim, I was not going to do anything by way of new programming but carried on the normal duties of a

pastor—preaching, hospital calls, visiting the homebound, administering the sacraments of baptism and holy communion, attending board meetings, choir rehearsals, etc. Extra activities included playing in the church softball league and swimming at the famous beach at Magen's Bay.

Following my five years as pastor of the Palmyra Moravian Church in Cinnaminson, New Jersey, I accepted the call to become pastor of the Memorial Moravian Church on St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. I served two full terms between October, 1967 and April, 1974. This time I returned to the Virgin Islands with Maria and our 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ -year old son Peter. Our younger son, Timothy, was born on St. Thomas.

Memorial Moravian Church was and still is the largest Moravian Church in the Virgin Islands. Its membership is over 1,000. The church was built in the downtown area of Charlotte Amalie in 1882 in memory of the arrival of the first Moravian missionaries on St. Thomas, Leonhard Dober and David Nitschmann, in 1732. Bishop Kenneth Hamilton, in his *History of the Renewed Moravian Church*, says it was built "in commemoration of the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of Moravian missions." The Church is truly a large, magnificent, stone structure.

The sixties brought considerable economic development and population growth both to St. Croix and St. Thomas. Tourism became one of the largest and fastest growing industries following Fidel Castro's take-over in Cuba in 1959. Large hotels sprung up on both islands to accommodate tourism. This also led to increased need for temporary domestic employees from the British West Indies, especially from Antigua and St. Kitts. Among them were many Moravians. Most of the down island Moravians would attend services at Memorial Church. Many would join as members and become active in Sunday school as teachers, pupils, members of the adult choir, women's fellowship, youth fellowship, etc. But because of their temporary visa status, many would also have to return to their native country when their visas expired. Thus, approximately one third of the active membership of the congregation was transient. For example, seventy or more members would join the church annually but approximately the same number would be removed from the membership after they left St. Thomas. This made it difficult to keep an accurate membership directory.

One of the challenges at Memorial Moravian Church during my tenure was the tension between the natives

of St. Thomas and the aliens (as they were called) from the down islands. There was some resentment when down islanders were elected to the official boards or taught Sunday School or held other positions of leadership. Some would even remark to me that the aliens are taking over. I had to remind the natives that part of the church's mission was to welcome these people as brothers and sisters into the church family and assimilate them into the fabric of congregational life. Every now and then I would have to remind some of them when they spoke to me about the aliens that they were speaking to one. In other words, if I was accepted as an alien, why shouldn't they.

The down islanders were aggressive, productive and conscientious workers. For them employment in the Virgin Islands was a great opportunity to improve their lot. The value of the American dollar was twice as much as the British West Indies dollar. The natives of St. Thomas, on the other hand, were spoiled and not as highly motivated, because they were receiving substantial financial subsidy from the federal government of the United States.

As a territory of the United States, all federal income tax, excluding social security, was and still is deposited directly into the treasury of the local government. A

high percentage of natives were employed by the local government. There was a constant tension between the natives and those from the down islands, and the church was a place where this could be addressed constructively. In time, those from the British West Indies who became U. S. citizens were better accepted as members of the church.

The tourist industry, construction of new housing, schools, and other economic developments such as construction of the Hess Oil refinery and the arrival of Harvey Aluminum Company on St. Croix in the mid sixties created a lot of new jobs. These developments sparked rapid growth of the population both in St. Croix and St. Thomas. Maria, Timothy and I visited St. Thomas for a week in February, 2004. It was mind boggling to see the tremendous real estate development since we left the islands—new shopping malls, banks, Home Depot, supermarkets and new housing developments all over the island. It's no longer a quiet, peaceful "paradise" that it was in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century. The Moravian Church faces new challenge amid these rapid changes and must find new ways to witness for Christ in this environment.



What were some significant accomplishments during my tenure at Memorial Church?

Unity Synod of 1967 in Czechoslovakia declared most of the former mission provinces unity status, including the Eastern West Indies Province. That was the best thing that could have happened. Coupled with this action, the Board of World Mission of the Moravian Church established a formula to phase out financial subsidy to the annual operating budget of the Province over a period of ten years. The Province would assume full fiscal responsibility at the end of the tenth year. In addition, the Province was given the responsibility to recruit and train its own candidates for the ordained ministry. In other words, the Province was on its way to be indigenous. With those objectives established, I saw my role to work myself out of a job and to equip the people to assume more leadership and responsibility in the affairs of the church. Today there are no missionaries in the Eastern West Indies Province.

During my tenure on St. Thomas, the first native bishop was elected at Synod in 1969, the first native Provincial Elders' Conference was elected at that same synod.

In 1972, a native pastor was appointed Superintendent of the Virgin Islands Conference of the Moravian Church. I was instrumental in this development.

One of my first tasks at Memorial was to help the Church Committee develop plans with an architect to construct a new parsonage (manse) for Memorial Moravian Church on the estate of New Herrnhut so that Memorial School (at that time, nursery through grade three) could expand classroom and office space at the old manse adjacent to the church building. The new manse was completed in August, 1969, two years behind schedule.

In the latter part of my second term, I helped to develop plans for an addition to the rear of the Church that would include the pastor and secretary's offices, lavatories and a sacristans' room to prepare for baptisms, holy communion and love feasts. The blue prints for this new addition were completed before our departure in 1974. We were delighted to see the new addition to the church in February, 2004.

I was deeply involved with the camping program at Midlands Moravian Church on St. Croix. These facilities were built in the mid sixties. Every summer a full week of camp was held for the junior, junior high and senior high age groups with good attendance at the

three camps. Unfortunately, a devastating hurricane in 1987 destroyed these facilities. Due to inadequate insurance coverage, the Church was unable to rebuild the camping facilities.

During my second term at Memorial Church, at my suggestion, the Board of Helpers (Elders) added a second Sunday worship service 8:00 a.m. to accommodate those who had to work at the hotels at noon hour. This increased the average worship attendance considerably. Memorial Church continues to have two services Sunday morning and the average attendance continues to be good. Attendance now is higher at the early service than at the regular one.

I also was very active as a member of the St. Thomas Ministerial Association which included the rabbi of a small Jewish synagogue. This body sponsored ecumenical events for the Christian community, including an annual Thanksgiving service on Thanksgiving eve. During my second term, a Council of Churches consisting of lay and clergy representation from all the mainline churches and the Roman Catholic Church was organized. It held monthly meetings and fostered ecumenical services. It also spoke out against some of the social issues in the community and offered programs for church members to grow in their

understanding and acceptance of each communion and how together they might offer a Christian witness to the community.

Memorial Church is located very closely to the legislative building of the Virgin Islands Government. I was often called upon to offer prayer at the beginning of Senate meetings. And the Governor's office called me frequently to offer either the invocation or the benediction at banquets for dignitaries from Washington, D.C. and neighboring countries. It was an honor for Maria and me to be seated next to the Governor and his wife for these occasions. It was a good opportunity to represent the church and bear a Christian witness at these occasions.

A memorable challenge came to me during the lenten, holy week and Easter season of 1970. Rev. Arnim Francke who was serving the New Herrnhut and Nisky Moravian churches for a year as interim pastor while Pastor Robert Rierson was on furlough took ill and had to return to Wisconsin for medical reasons. This happened right at the beginning of Lent. Brother Francke was not able to return because of the nature of his illness. So there I was the only ordained Moravian pastor on St. Thomas with three congregations during the busiest season of the church

year. Fortunately, I was able to prepare a schedule with the lay pastors of these congregations for the Sunday and holy week services. But I had additional pastoral responsibilities with baptisms, weddings and funerals in the three churches. Sometimes I had a funeral and wedding on the same day. On Easter Sunday all three congregations wanted the ordained minister to officiate at their morning worship services. I led four services that morning, beginning with the sunrise service at New Herrnhut. A member of New Herrnhut Church commented to me one day after a service, "Pastor, it is good that you are still a young person." I'm glad that I was young for that grueling schedule. But that Easter Sunday was a thrilling experience—four services in three churches with full attendance. At Memorial Church we usually had over 630 people in attendance on Easter Sunday. To hear those people sing, "Christ the Lord is risen today" was both inspiring and uplifting! Memorial Church itself was a busy place to serve. An average of 70 baptisms, 30 confirmations, 24 weddings, 20-25 funerals annually was quite normal. Sometimes I felt that I was a machine instead of a human being because of the work load. But it was worth it. The Lord provided the strength, energy and wisdom to carry on his ministry in this demanding situation.

Before concluding, I would like to add some things about Maria's involvement in musical activities both in the life of the church and the community. She often played at Memorial Church as guest organist for festival services such as Christmas Eve, Easter Sunday, anniversary and mission celebrations. She also was organist accompanist for the combined Memorial, New Herrnhut and Nisky choir concerts held at Memorial and Nisky Moravian churches, including the service of dedication of the new Church at Nisky in 1971. Maria also was co-chair of organizing a choir workshop for the combined Moravian church choirs of the Virgin Islands held at Midlands Moravian Church in June, 1969. About 100 voices were registered for that workshop which concluded with a concert open to the public. The Rev. James Saltzwedel from Winston-Salem, North Carolina was engaged to lead the workshop and conduct the concert. Maria was the accompanist. She also was the accompanist for the Caribbean Chorale on St. Thomas as well as its director for two years. Her talent and musical contributions were very much appreciated by the St. Thomas community and the Moravian Church in the Virgin Islands. During our second term she also was organist-choir director at New Herrnhut Moravian Church.

In conclusion, I really never considered myself a missionary in the Virgin Islands. All our Moravian churches in the islands have been there long before the Moravian churches in Alberta were organized. The New Herrnhut Church was organized in 1738, three years before Central Moravian Church was established in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. It is the oldest Moravian church in the western hemisphere. I am glad that I and my family had the privilege to live with and serve the people of the Moravian Church and the community in the Virgin Islands. It was an honor to live where our first Moravian mission work began in 1732. We treasure the memories of our experiences and the people with whom we shared our lives, loved and served. Living with the West Indian people and adapting to their culture enriched our lives immensely. These people are descendants of the slaves to whom our first missionaries brought the good news of Jesus Christ.

Today the fruit of their labors is very much in evidence. Moravians are well known and respected in the Virgin Islands and in the Caribbean. I give thanks to God that the churches I served in the Virgin Islands and the Eastern West Indies Province are indigenous and carrying on that mission and ministry begun by our forebears. Finally, my year as a student

pastor, although I had absolutely no prior orientation for my assignment at Midlands Church on St. Croix, prepared me well for my years of service on St. Thomas.

P.S. Not all of my personal expectations were met but I believe I grew in my understanding of the West Indian life, the way they do things, often unlike the way Canadians or Americans would do things. I had to adjust my thinking on a lot of things as well as on moral and ethical values. I had to constantly remind myself that these people are descendants of a slave era. Their ancestors were not permitted to be married and this was forced upon them by their white European owners of the cotton and sugar plantations. It wasn't until the Moravian missionaries arrived on the scene that a new way of life became possible. Through a process of proclamation, education, and giving the slaves a new dignity in Christ, the influence of the Moravian missions spread throughout the Caribbean islands and helped pave the way toward abolishment of slavery in the 19th century.

We had some outstanding, educated members at Memorial Church—lawyers, doctors, high ranking administrators in the education department of the government, dedicated school teachers, one member of



Memorial became a judge of the District Court on St. Thomas. Another member of the Christiansted Church was a judge when I lived on St. Croix. Some members were successful businessmen; others were bankers, accountants, and held high positions of administration in the local government. These were the kinds of people that also served on the official boards of both Memorial and other Moravian churches in the Virgin Islands and contributed immensely to the development and well-being of the church. It was good to have such qualified members serving on the boards and I learned many things from them and their Christian example. These and the less educated members had a tremendous influence on my personal life and pastoral ministry. As I look back to those years, I am grateful for all that I learned and all that I was able to do with the gifts that God gave me to serve the Lord and his church in that region.

## GLIMPSES OF THE WORLDWIDE MORAVIAN CHURCH

By Hazel (Schattschneider) Magnussen – Parksville, B. C.

I am honored to be included in this collection of stories of Canadian Moravians who have been part of the Moravian church's worldwide ministry. As a child of the Heimtal congregation, I was always fascinated by the stories of missionaries serving the church in faraway places. In particular, I recall the visits by our relatives, Douglas and Grace Schattschneider, who always included a visit to Canada when on furlough from their work in Alaska.

As I neared completion of nursing school, I made inquiries as to how I might be part of the work of the church in Alaska. Health care for the local people was the responsibility of the United States Native Health Service so I applied to work at the government hospital in Bethel. Founded by Moravian missionaries in 1885, Bethel was a place where I would be able to serve the people both in the hospital and the church.

I worked with many local Moravians at the hospital where we cared for Yupik Eskimo and Indian people from villages throughout southwestern Alaska. In spite of shift work and frequent overtime at a busy, often overcrowded hospital, I was able to assist in the church's children and youth ministry. For two years (1965-66), I was fully engaged in both the church and hospital community. It is an example of how we can serve wherever we live. I didn't think of myself as a missionary in the traditional sense but I enjoyed and learned so much from living in another place and culture.

In 1981, I was invited to assist the Moravian Church of the Redeemer in Jamaica in setting up a clinic for people in downtown Kingston. I requested financial support for the clinic

through the Canadian Moravian Development Fund and returned to do a follow-up visit and report some years later.

In 1982, I spent part of the summer in Labrador assisting in children's and youth programming. It was at the time when responsibility for the Labrador province was being transferred from the British to the North American Mission Boards. Since I was beginning a four-year term on the Board, it was helpful, especially as a fellow Canadian, to gain more insight and knowledge of the Labrador church and its people.

I was privileged to serve on the Board of World Mission from 1982 to 1986 and to visit the medical clinic in Ahuas, Honduras on behalf of the Mission Board in 1986.

It was a time when the role of the Mission Board was shifting from providing personnel and directing services to collaborating with the leadership of the independent provinces of the church. The old idea of missions by the North American church as the authority in its ministry to people in faraway places was changing to one of a partnership with other parts of the worldwide church in its ministry and outreach to new regions. The relationship is being brought into balance, as each party is both recipient and donor, both student and teacher.

I am grateful for these glimpses into my worldwide Moravian roots that have shaped my life and go with me wherever I live.

## MY CALL TO MISSION SERVICE IN THE MORAVIAN CHURCH

by Gordon Sommers

Recently I undertook a 14 month assignment as Interim Executive Director of the Board of World Mission of the Moravian Church. In addition to assisting the Board to redefine its role and to reestablish focus for the Church in World Mission I provided routine administrative work for the Board. A phone call one day came from a man in Florida reporting that he was executor for the estate of Alice Elzinga. In that capacity he was to fulfill the last will and testament of Sister Elzinga that a sizeable portion of funds be invested with the Board of World Mission of the Moravian Church in North America and the proceeds be regularly forwarded to the Moravian Church in Suriname for support of its Orphan ministry. We were able to add the funds to our portfolio and to arrange with the Church in Suriname for regular payments in accordance with our investment policies.

Moravians in Alberta will recognize the Elzinga name. Alice, born in the Netherlands, had served under the Zeist (Netherlands) Moravian Mission Board in the mid-twentieth Century in Dutch Guiana where the Moravian Church had extensive and multifaceted Mission Work. Alice eventually emigrated to the US, had served with the Reformed Church of America (RCA) in a variety of lay ministries, lived in a retirement community connected with the RCA and, at the end of a long and fruitful life, passed on to her eternal rest.

This brief routine exchange also brought back to me childhood experiences at Millwoods Moravian Church of Edmonton (then named Bruderfeld) that were determinative for my life and call to the Mission service of the Moravian Church. It was the practice of the Moravian Church in the Canadian District, in its

more rural days, to have Mission Fests in the fall of the year. Mission speakers came for morning and afternoon Mission Worship Services. Offerings were received. The bounty of the Harvest and the depth of thanksgiving determined the generosity of the farming faithful. Visitors from other congregations were invited to homes of members for the noon meal and for fellowship. Congregations sought to do their best, perhaps even to outdo the others in a friendly rivalry and certainly exceed the previous year's offerings for Mission work.

It was such a Mission's festival when I was 12 years old that our congregation was privileged to have 2 Missions speakers: Sister Kate Hetasch of Labrador and Sister Alice Elzinga of Dutch Guiana (now Suriname). (Alice was visiting in Edmonton at the time with her brother, a feed store owner, who previously had immigrated to Canada.) Both of those missionaries were to figure in my adult life. Kate, in her retirement, lived next door to our home in Bethlehem. Susan provided loving care in her terminal days. And now, after many years, I was to assist in meeting the intention of Alice Elzinga's legacy.

Back to the Mission Fest of my childhood. The fall weather was glorious and sunny, as only October in Alberta can be. The wonderful witness of Kate and Alice opened my mind to new vistas of Christian service. God spoke to me and I felt that I was called to serve in the Mission Field. (I later recalled that Samuel of old heard God's call at 12 years. Fortunately, for me, mine came in the daytime.) It was a moment of spiritual insight never previously known. I received God's call with some fear and anxiety, uncertain as to how this could be applied in my life, since I wanted to be a farmer, like my father. But it was a palpable and memorable awareness of God and vocation that shaped the rest of my life.

The call from God was further strengthened by the Youth Camps at Van Es. At the Saturday evening Campfire and dedication service, when I was seventeen, I declared publicly that I would give my life in the service of Christ and the Church as a missionary. In those days, any preparation for Moravian Church service came through attending Moravian College and Theological Seminary in faraway Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. This necessitated uprooting from home and culture, a traumatic and life-shaping act.

While pre-theological and theological studies were preparation for general Church service, more specific Missionary preparation came through practical cross-cultural experiences. Mission direction for our Church in the period of 1950 to 1970 came from The Rev. Dr. Edwin W. Kortz, later a Bishop of the Church. He found creative ways to draw potential missionaries into service, encouraging them by degrees to explore more specific application of their spiritual call. And so, as a Seminarian, I had my first cross-cultural experience in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua was a good place to begin. The Mission was still dependent on Missionaries from North America. In 1958 I lived in the home of Violet and John Befus and their family for 3 months in Puerto Cabezas and profited from their spiritual maturity and wide experiences as missionaries. Later, I had a year-long internship with another seasoned missionary, Conrad Shimer, in Bluefields where mission work began in 1845 in what was then called The Miskito Coast. I was privileged to know the Rev. Joseph Harrison, first ordained Nicaraguan in the Church, and now retired. When I arrived in Guyana I soon came to know of the revered Rev. John Dingwall, a native of Barbados, who revived early Moravian Church activity in the city of Georgetown in the first half of the 20th century. Brother Harrison wrote to say that he, as a lad, had been house boy for

Brother Dingwall who also had begun his missionary work in Bluefields.

Upon my completion of what had become an 8-year training and preparation I volunteered for Mission service. My wife, baby and I were sent not to Nicaragua, where we had presumed we would serve, given previous experiences, but to British Guiana (now Guyana, following independence from British Colonialism, in 1966). I recall that upon first receiving the formal call, my first question was: Where in the world is British Guiana? a question I shared with many others unfamiliar with this tiny country on the northern coast of South America, with connections more British and West Indian than with Latin America.

Mission responsibility in Guyana for North American Mission Board was relatively recent, along with the transition of the East West Indies Province from British Mission supervision. The British heritage both in the Church and the local life survived the transition to self-government for the nation and for the Church. We were the last missionaries to serve. It was a wonderful ten years of service, a good time to be a part of that culture and to have 3 children to spend their earliest years there. God blessed us, enabled me to grow spiritually and to develop an essential understanding of Church leadership that served me for the coming years. Ministry must always be in context. Thus it was that the challenges for both the Church and the nation to be Independent and self-governing following a history of Colonialism and dependence needed to be shaped by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. How do we see our faith in the Lord Jesus and our Church life and mission where we live and in this time? My understanding of the world beyond my own culture and nation are highly-prized and lasting gifts from those missionary days.

I was blessed also to discover that the Unity of the Church and the Mission of the Church are inseparable imperatives of the Gospel of Christ. How can we proclaim Jesus in a divided and alienated world except the people who bear the name of Christ model unity and reconciliation in their life together? How can we receive the full benefit of being in Christ except we enjoy the fellowship and strength from our unity in Christ? My early missionary years shaped my future ministry to call the Church to bind all people of Christ together. That seems such a contrast to our current competitiveness and business-driven models of Church life. Moreover, it seemed historically congruent with the Moravian Church's Missionary spirit and purpose.

My 46 years of Church leadership as missionary, pastor and President of the Moravian Church have been a rich blessing to me. They began with the initial sense of God's call at a Fall Mission Fest. I lived and worked in 4 distinct cultures and nations. I worked on the board of World Mission for 24 years. But my early life experience in the Moravian congregations of Alberta provided the spiritual nurture and vitality that introduced me to the Lord Jesus. Thanks be to God for this inexpressible gift.



## SCHULZES IN THE WEST INDIES

Our Cross-Cultural Ministry on Caribbean Islands

By Eric J. Schulze

Antigua, June 1967 - October 1967

Connie and I were considering "mission work" since our youth. Connie's intention during her nursing education was to serve in Moravian medical ministry in Labrador. During Seminary years I had thoughts of going to Alaska. Because of the needs in the Canadian District of the Moravian Church we responded to what we felt was God's call to serve in "the homeland". We have, throughout our ministry, retained interest in cross-cultural ministry.

Answering the call from the Board of World Mission of the Moravian Church early in 1967 to serve in the West Indies meant dynamic changes for our family and ministry. We sold or gave away much of what we owned and packed the rest for shipping by air. For me, I pondered the meaning of "life begins at 40".

Leaving behind many friends, family, and possessions, we flew from Edmonton via New York and St. Croix to Antigua. We were there by mid June to serve the Moravian congregation in the city of St. Johns. The

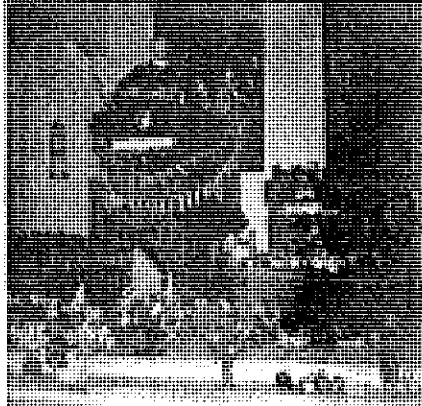
Spring Gardens sanctuary was a beautiful structure; the manse was adequate for that cultural setting. People were respectful and practically helpful to our family.



We faced many changes in culture, climate, living conditions, people, food, and electric voltage. Water was boiled, then cooled for drinking. Challenges we found were issues regarding health, education, and administration.

The worship services in the congregation were liturgical and festive. Junior and adult choirs displayed the singers' natural talent, enhancing musical ministry. The congregation sang with zeal and fervor. Gratitude for the gospel message was seen in their dedication to congregational life and faithfulness to their Savior and Lord. Pointing to an old tree near the

manse, someone said, "under that sandbox tree our forefathers first heard the gospel from missionaries 250 years ago".



Gratitude for the produce of their fields and gardens was expressed in colorful festive decorations around the communion table on Thanksgiving Sunday. The organist, Pat Gordon, showed dynamic leadership for congregational singing of Psalms, Canticles, and Chorals. I marveled how he was able to lead the congregation in an appropriate tempo for the hymns.

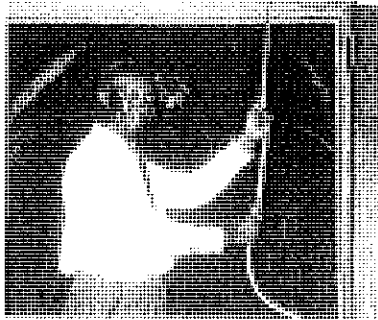
### Personal Notes

On Communion Sundays Elders of the Congregation prepared the elements. I was not accustomed, as I

uncovered the wine, to a scamper of cockroaches in different directions.

Going to bed at night had its own routine. Connie and I tucked the mosquito nets around the children's beds. The challenge came in tucking the net around my side of the bed with both of us inside.

We were always conscious of our visibility on the churchyard. The many windows of the manse were open day and night and had no screens. When I sat up in bed in the morning, still under the mosquito netting, I occasionally heard, "Good morning, Parson". It was Dennis the sexton who was on his way to open the windows of the sanctuary to allow daytime breezes through the building.

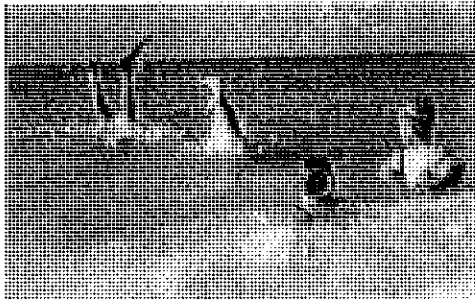


We bought a new spinet piano that arrived from New York several weeks after we had settled into the manse. The novelty of the piano required a rotation

schedule of 15 minute segments, so each of the children could enjoy playing the new instrument. School was not in session so this occupied the children for several hours each day. Later, piano practice became a disciplined activity.

A stray cat and four kittens found their way to our house and became a further time consuming and joyful activity for the children. This occupied another portion of the children's time.

The beaches of the Caribbean Sea were delightful and we took advantage of salt-water swimming several times a week. The children enjoyed the water, floating restfully on the salty water surface. The children used swimming assistance devices while learning to



swim. Flippers, goggles, and snorkels brought under water life into view.

## Ministry

People responded well to the relational warmth of pastoral visits. My best ministry gifts are in the area of pastoral care. Weekly sermons were teaching tools, centered on biblical truths for Christian commitment and discipleship.

A wonderful side of this brief ministry in Antigua was the discovery of my pastoral gifts. Connie tried to fit the pattern of "figure head" pastor's wife. At the Women's meetings she sat in an honorary role, facing the group, while the chairperson conducted the meeting.

## St. Croix, October 1967 - August 1968

We relocated to the Friedensberg congregation in Frederiksted that had recently become vacant. This move required us to obtain United States resident visas. We traveled to Barbados, where the United States Consulate was located. Don Fulton, a U.S. citizen and resident on Barbados, accompanied us to the immigration hearing. He had served on St. Croix and was helpful in acquainting us for our move.

Connie did some home schooling in Antigua, as we waited to move. Morning routine included the strains of "O Say Can You See" as Connie taught the children the Star Spangled Banner, the U.S. national anthem. She taught basic subject material appropriate for the ages of the children during the first two months of the school year.

Arriving in the fall of the year, we immediately enrolled the children in their respective schools, Dan in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at St. Dunston's in Christiansted, and Edee in 4<sup>th</sup>, Dianne in 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Tim in Kindergarten in Good Hope School near St. Croix. Bus service to the schools was available if no cruiseship was in port, when the buses attended the tourists.

Also the fall of the year meant immediate entry into congregational fall programming and teaching catechism classes for young people. As always this part of ministry brought me into close contact with parents of young people in their early teens. My custom was always to have personal interviews with young people before their confirmation. This provided cherished opportunities for facilitating personal commitments to their Savior and Lord.



The congregation was well organized and members were trained to fulfill official duties. People were accustomed to dressing well for Sunday worship. They also enjoyed a worship environment appropriately decorated for the seasons.

### Current Reflections

It is interesting for Connie and me to note that the children's St. Croix experiences were expressions of their gifts and interests developed later in adult life. Dan had a friend, Sam, whose father published the island weekly newspaper. This contact gave Dan beginning insight into the printing process. He is now experienced in servicing printing equipment and specializes in large color copiers for Xerox. His interest in water sports began as Sam and he enjoyed the Caribbean waters in a glass bottom boat.



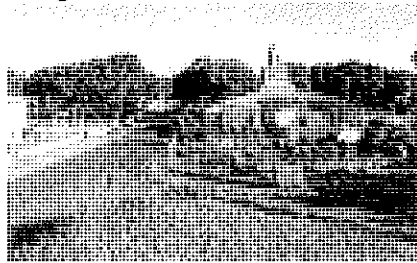
Edee often directed family play and other activities, cultivating her natural administrative gifts with her family. This later was developed in her camping and congregational youth ministry. It led Edee quite naturally to student administration at Wheaton College.

Dianne is naturally relational. Her gift, as we moved to new locations, was discovering new friends, sharing them with her siblings until they found their own. She remains relationally oriented in her activities among her contacts in the Southern California culture. She is raising her family, doing home schooling, and helping her husband, Bill, in his professional music vocation.

Tim adapted well to a variety of situations in our moves to different locations. His interest in cross-cultural ministry is evident today. Tim served in short term missionary ventures and taught in the Moody School of Mission Aviation. He and his wife, Donna, have been on mission committees in their churches, which provided their family with opportunities for ministry in the United States and third world countries. Tim's position at Thales Avionics requires extensive travel in the U.S. and abroad.

This brief cross-cultural ministry in the West Indies remains a cherished memory for our family. We often talk of our experiences there. Edee enjoyed a Caribbean cruise in 1999. The ship made an unscheduled stop in St. Johns, Antigua, because of a tropical storm on another island. She was able to take pictures of the current buildings at the Spring Gardens Church as well as meet persons who were members of the congregation.

Tim took his family on a vacation trip to St. Croix in 2005, to show his family where he had lived and reviewed for them what he had remembered from that part of his early childhood. Our whole family enjoyed photos and videotape of island attractions. It was a blessing to see pictures of the current pastoral couple and the new sanctuary of the Friedensberg Moravian Church in Frederiksted. The undisturbed foundation of the old building remains as a National Historic Site.



Looking back on our life and ministry in the West Indies we see how God has blessed us with valued

experiences of growth and discipleship. We trust our lives were a channel of blessing to some of His beloved children on the islands. In all, may His name be glorified.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **THE ALAN TAYLOR FAMILY IN NICARAGUA**

NOVEMBER 14, 1996 TO NOVEMBER 14, 1969

By Alan Taylor

It is probably not advisable to suggest to the Mission Board where you would like to serve because that will definitely ensure that you will serve somewhere else. The Mission Board knows the will of God better than any humble clergy man. So that's how we ended up in Nicaragua. I had the audacity to volunteer for the West Indies, little knowing that the place of service was not for me to decide. And the truth of all that is that I was not humble enough to accept that all those many years ago.

One more important lesson I learned early in my time in Nicaragua is that "forgiveness is easier to get than permission." Once again, I was made aware that it was not for me to decide. Here is how it happened. One of the local priests, Padre Justiniano, was aware of an opportunity in Mexico for a Spanish immersion course. This involved living with a Mexican family who spoke no English plus daily classes over a three or four week period. My church board was excited about this and agreed that I could use my annual vacation time to do this. Also, the local doctor, Ned Wallace, at the Moravian hospital, had raised some funds to pay my expenses. Every-one agreed

that it would make my ministry more valuable if I had some knowledge of Spanish given that our Moravian School was all in Spanish, all government officials spoke only Spanish, and many Miskito people who did not speak English, did speak Spanish.

I could have gone ahead and done this, but for some strange reason I decided that I would run this by the Mission Board (actually, Dr. Edwin Kortz). It was promptly denied, because, since no other reason was given, someone had the power to do that. I'm sure that if I had gone ahead with the Spanish immersion program I would have been forgiven. But asking permission ahead of time was a very serious mistake. I have learned from that and have tried not to repeat it. There, again, my lack of humility is showing.

I did not immediately like Nicaragua. It was hot, the food was strange, the people were hard to understand; and there were people begging, constantly, on the streets and at our door. Those are my recollections. For the first two months, I just wanted to get sick enough so that they would send me home. Not real sick, but just sick enough.

As for the people of Puerto Cabezas and surrounding area, really, they were the salt of the earth. The youth, especially, went out of their way to make me feel at home. One thing they did early in our first days there was to clean out and paint a room that had been used as a classroom. It was situated right at the back of the church and they believed it would make a good study for me. And they were right. Otherwise, anyone that wanted to see the parson had to come through the gate, hoping the dog was in the house, climb up about eight steps, and ring the bell to get someone's attention. And if they were lucky and the parson was at home he would see them in his study in the parsonage.

With the study in the back of the church people could readily see if I was there because the windows and the door would be open. This may seem to be a lot of talk about a small act but this set the stage for my three years of ministry at Puerto Cabezas. The youth, especially, spent a lot of time in my office. I bought a couple of guitars and there were little song books of Mission Sister songs. Several of the older boys played the guitars, as I did myself, and we had lots of music as we went on youth retreats. The need for those retreats grew out of conversations that took place in the parson's office. I was also included in the youth choir and was invited to be part of that group when they had special concerts. It didn't work for regular worship services as the choir was located in the choir loft in the back of the church, a long way from the pulpit.

The youth also had lots of social activities, connected to the youth program, to which I was often invited. So, in spite of my disappointing start as a "missionary", I was warmly and enthusiastically welcomed into the congregation by the youth and certainly by everyone else. The people were very accepting and loving, and I was soon very glad to be their "parson".

Part of the work to which I came included a congregation of predominantly black people, originally from Jamaica. These people were referred to as Creoles, although we don't normally use this term in other places. Nevertheless, one definition of Creole is "a mother tongue formed from the contact of a European language (esp. English, French or Portuguese) with another (esp. African) language." So the term is actually correct. At any rate, this was the Central Moravian congregation and this was my primary responsibility. With a membership of about 500 this congregation also included a handful of Americans living in Puerto Cabezas, Chinese merchants, and people of mixed racial background. The congregation also maintained, supported, and managed a school

that included two years of Kindergarten plus all grades through 12. The first year we were there the school graduated its first grade 12 class and one of the graduated, Denny Barantes, was later accepted at Yale University.

The Central Church also included a congregation of Miskito members approximately the same size as the Creole congregation. The Miskito people are the main aboriginal people of Central America. This congregation was served by a lay pastor and held their worship in the morning. The Creole (or English speaking congregation) worshipped in the evening when it was cooler. There was also a Wednesday night service for the Creoles which was a little more informal, using the Sankey Hymnal, but still with a sermon.

In addition to this Central Congregation there were two chapels in Puerto Cabezas served by Miskito lay pastors and there were five other such congregations in the outlying area, all served by Miskito lay pastors. I was responsible for supervising the lay pastors and celebrating the sacraments, baptism and Holy Communion as well as the rites of confirmation and marriage. Not being able to speak Spanish or Miskito was definitely a handicap but the Mission Board had decided against language training for whatever reason. There was a definite possibility that if I had received the language training it would have been a totally different experience and we might have stayed for another term.

There were several highlights in my three years that I want to mention and that may be more than enough for this epistle.

The first was already happening when we arrived. The Moravian church building at Port (that is usually how people referred to Puerto Cabezas) was a large frame building with a very high steeple. Before we arrived the church board had

ordered two huge iron rods to be used in pulling the two side walls in. The side walls had begun to bow and there was a danger to the entire structure if something was not done soon. This was just the first of many construction projects that I needed to oversee.

There were too many projects to include here but I want to tell you about Shilling. That was his nickname, and everyone called him that. Parson Stortz, the superintendent of the Moravian Church in Nicaragua, who lived across the street and was a member of the Port congregation, suggested him to me. There was much more work to be done on the church building, including replacing all of the posts under the church, especially the part under the tower that supported the church steeple. We had to have a very skilled person to handle the task. When I asked where I could contact this person, Shilling, I was told that he was in jail, but would be out soon." Why was he in jail?" I wanted to know. "Murder. However, he is a really good carpenter", I was assured. It took me a little while to get over my hesitation, but I finally did and then sent word to him that I would like to see him when he came to Port. He was soon there and our first conversation did not start well. He was very confrontational, and he was very difficult to understand. I had to keep asking him to repeat things and that annoyed him.

What I finally understood him to be saying is that he did not want to come to work for the Mission as a carpenter, but as a contractor. I guess I was not responding well, and consequently it took a while for me to really see the wisdom of what he was saying. If I was to be a pastor to this congregation I did not have time to be the contractor, hiring workers, and going to the lumber yard to pick out materials and then finding a truck to haul it back to the Mission. Instead of paying him 25 cordobas a day (less than four dollars) he wanted to be paid 35 cordobas a day or five Canadian dollars.

It soon became apparent to me that I had struck a real bargain. But what is even more important is that Shilling and I learned to respect each other. Some time later I had the joy of baptizing his children, and the day we left to return to Canada he openly wept. I was moved more by that than by anything else that happened to me in Nicaragua.

A few days after he and his crew started work on the Church I noticed that he had no power tools. I had a skillsaw that I purchased in the U.S. on our trip down and I offered to let him use it. He was the happiest man I have ever seen. Eventually he bought it and I know that I saved the Moravian Church a lot of money because he used it for many future projects at the Mission.

The second highlight happened on the first Sunday in Advent 1967 and was later written up in the Moravian.

Sometime during the year of 1967 I suggested to the church board that it might be interesting to have an ecumenical service on the first Sunday in Advent. Certainly this was more of a possibility just after Vatican II than it would have been prior to that significant Council (1962-5). Almost immediately upon our arrival in Puerto Cabezas we made contact with other pastors and with the two priests, one brother and several sisters of the Roman Catholic congregation. We shared our putz with them at Christmas, as we had done with many people over the years, back in Pennsylvania and Canada. They came to the Moravian parsonage, saw the putz, had some goodies, and we all sang Christmas carols, some in Spanish and some in English. This was a significant connection and certainly paved the way for many significant events between the Moravian and Catholic congregations. Consequently, when the Moravian congregation invited other congregations to join together for an ecumenical



service on the first Sunday in Advent, not one refused. There were seven congregations in Puerto Cabezas, the two largest being the Roman Catholic and the Moravians. There were also Anglican, Baptist, Church of God, Assembly of God, and Seventh Day Adventist.

Surprisingly, all seven participated fully in the planning of the service. The service was held in three languages and each congregation had one pastor/priest and only lay person participating in the service. Also, the choir included people from all congregations. The service was held at the Moravian Church and lasted about two hours. It rained during most of the service, but about five hundred people who could not get in, due to the fact that the church was full, stayed for the duration of the service. People couldn't believe that this was happening. The service was broadcast all over Nicaragua and was truly an ecumenical milestone for Nicaragua. The next service was held at the Catholic Church the following year and we also had ecumenical carol services in the park at Christmas time. The clergy from four congregations, Catholic, Moravian, Baptist and Anglican continued to meet for prayer on Saturday afternoons.

One of the sad consequences of this event was the overwhelming condemnation received by Pastor Juan Ramos (Church of God) from other pastors of his denomination in other parts of Nicaragua. They had heard the service on the radio. "What fellowship has light with darkness?" was the way one of his colleagues put it. In spite of that he and I continued to meet frequently and help each other with our language problem. He spoke no English and I spoke no Spanish, so we tried to help each other. He was a wonderful man and I enjoyed his company very much.

One day soon after the first Advent Ecumenical service I met my head Sacristan, Mr. Jess, on the street and we started to talk

about the service. He said, "You know, Parson, there are people in this town that I never knew, because they were Catholic. Now, we meet on the street and we talk, and it's like we all belong to the same Church."

The third highlight were the youth retreats with the English speaking youth. There were annual youth conferences held for the Miskito youth but very little for the Creoles. A Church official referred to them as the "upstart Creoles". I think what he meant by that is that they did not "bow" to him the way the Miskito people did. The Miskito people were very submissive and easy to influence. The Creoles were not submissive and consequently did not receive the same attention and support from the denomination that the Miskito people did. Certainly, that was my observation and it was the perception of several Creole people who confided in me about the politics of the church in Nicaragua.

Consequently, when I suggested to the Director of Christian Education, Alice Hooker, that we should plan a youth retreat for the Creole youth, she talked to some of them and received an enthusiastic response. We had several of these retreats during the time that I was there but the one I remember the best was the one that we did on "Vocation". The retreat was held at Twappi, one of the Miskito villages about an hour's drive from Puerto Cabezas. We all climbed on the back of a three ton truck and with our guitars and Mission Sister songbooks sang our way to Twappi.

The retreat included Bible studies, singing, eating, and some outdoor activities. The boys and Parson (me) slept on the floor in the church and the girls were billeted at various homes in the village. Women of the village prepared the meals. The central theme of the three day event was developed during the time spent with various people who came to talk about their work.

We had a nurse, Yvonne Francis from Bilwaskarma, Dr. Ned Wallace, from Port, and a school principal from Port. I do believe we also had John Roberts from the Stump Plant. This was an industry that recovered all of the old pine stumps left by the loggers. Turpentine and resin were two of the by products extracted from the stumps. It was a thriving business for there seemed to be an endless supply left from years of logging. John was hired by the company to grow food, plantain, bananas, papaya, pineapples and much more, to help feed the people of the community that had been built to house the workers and their families. But John also trained Nicaraguan workers to do this so that when he was gone they could carry on. Several times I had taken groups of students from our high school to spend a day with John at the plantation. I'm aware of at least one young man from my confirmation class that went on to study agriculture at the University of Managua.

Puerto Cabezas was a wonderful place to raise children. They had no fancy toys but they had washtubs, big boxes, and the barrels that we had used to ship our belongings from Canada to Nicaragua. Our boy, David, followed the yard man around and watched him climb the coconut palms for coconuts. Occasionally these coconuts fell without warning and our yard man, Labonte, was taken to the hospital on at least one occasion due to being hit by a falling coconut. Our children also saw the harvesting of many other fruits and nuts that grew in our yard, mangos, oranges, grapefruit, breadfruit, guavas, pineapples, lemons and cashews. Our two eldest girls had the opportunity to go to Spanish school. Bobbie's grade one teacher was a real Spaniard and spoke no English. Their friends were Creole and Miskito children who lived nearby. We were surprised that there were Miskito and Creole families with the surname, Taylor.

When we left Nicaragua I was replaced by a Nicaraguan pastor and I believe that this was the right way to go. The people, for the most part, I believe, liked having North American pastors. It was a kind of prestige thing. For the development of our churches in Nicaragua, however, leadership has to come from Nicaraguans as is the case now. There have been growing pains, and it is hard to know what the long range effect has been since there are so many other variables. First of all there was the revolution and then the counter revolution. Families ended up on different sides of the conflict and, from my own information about many people that were members of the Central Church, they are now living in Florida and other parts of the United States. Secondly, I have a friend at the Athabasca University that goes to Nicaragua annually. He told me that the population of Puerto Cabezas now is around fifty thousand. When we were there it was five thousand when the mill was working, and less when the mill was shut down, at which time people went back to their villages. It is very difficult for me to imagine what that community, now a city, must look like.

My final comment is that the Nicaraguan people I met in Puerto Cabezas were some of the finest and most loveable people I have met during all the years of my work, as a minister, a social worker, and an administrator. Their style of Christian living is most appealing and genuine. They loved the traditions of the Moravian Church, they took their faith seriously, but they were open to Christians who had a different way of following Christ. It was truly a most wonderful experience for our whole family. Maybe the Mission Board was right after all. And not knowing Spanish helped to keep me humble.

# A PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS

K.F. "Kevin" Corbin

September 2000

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## INTRODUCTION

The struggle rages in every denomination, to decide which of many competing mission projects to support. The Moravian Church is facing the same problem today. In one camp are those who feel that missions should only be humanitarian in nature, and that to preach salvation is morally wrong. In the other are those that believe every mission dollar should be spent exclusively on evangelism, or as it is sometimes phrased, "it is better to send them to Heaven hungry than to hell well fed." It is difficult to reconcile such diametrically opposed viewpoints, which leaves mission boards and denominations struggling to find direction.

In my time with the Canadian District Mission Council (CDMC) I have observed that like many other churches, the effectiveness of our own mission efforts is hampered by a lack of direction. This ineffectiveness is compounded by a perceived state of apathy towards missions from the general population of our congregations.

In an effort to enhance our mission efforts, I propose that we define answers to the following questions:

How do we define "missions"?

What is the role of the church in missions?

What is the role of the CDMC?

What I offer in this paper represents my personal opinions and beliefs. These thoughts are not intended to be representative of the views of other members of the CDMC or Good News Moravian Church (GNMC). They are offered solely for your individual consideration, and to facilitate dialogue that would assist us in focusing our efforts towards gaining maximum effectiveness in our role as a mission Council.

## **DOCTRINAL POSITION**

There are those who maintain that the Moravian Church does not subscribe to a formal system of doctrine. I believe that view point to be partially correct, in that Moravians do not adhere slavishly to a rigidly codified doctrinal system. Throughout the history of the *Unitas Fratrum*, however, a variety of fundamental, orthodox doctrinal truths have been expressed.

These can be found in documents such as *The Ground of the Unity* (1996); *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* (1982); *Catechism of the Moravian Church in America* (1956); *Christian Doctrine and Systematic Theology* (1914); and Bishop Spangenburg's *Idea Fidei Fratrum, An Exposition of Christian Doctrine* (1796), among others.

Moravians recognize that vigilance must always be maintained to see that doctrine and dogma do not close the hearts and minds of Christians. Pragmatically, however, some creeds are effective at describing fundamental truth, and can be of value. To this end I agree with the following statement from the Ground of the Unity:(with one proviso i.e. I have been unable to access a copy of the Confession of the Unity of Bohemian Brethren to review its contents)

“In the various Provinces of the Renewed Unitas Fratrum the following creeds in particular gained special importance, because in them the main doctrines of the Christian faith find clear and simple expression:

- The Apostles' Creed
- The Athanasian Creed
- The Nicene Creed
- The Confession of the Unity of the Bohemian Brethren of 1535
- The Twenty-one Articles of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession
- The Shorter Catechism of Martin Luther
- The Synod of Berne of 1532
- The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England
- The Theological Declaration of Barmen of 1934
- The Heidelberg Catechism”<sup>1</sup>

These documents provide a strong overview of historic Christian doctrine, but a comprehensive review of these creeds is beyond the scope of this paper.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ground of the Unity A doctrinal statement adopted by the Unity Synod of the Unitas Fratrum or Moravian Church, held at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania August 13 to 25, 1996 page 5.

Accordingly, I defer to the familiar phrase, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty and in all things love". This phrase is easy to remember but fails to define essentials. In the following personal statement of faith, I lay out what I consider to be essentials.

### I BELIEVE:

In the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible as originally written.

The Bible is the only infallible authoritative Word of God. Scripture alone can be the true source of our doctrine.

There is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient and immutable. In the deity Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His substitutionary and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of God the Father, and in His immanent personal return in power and glory.

Salvation through faith in Christ alone.

In my opinion, the aforementioned are essential. Issues such as communion, baptism, the present status of various spiritual gifts, music and worship styles, fall into the category of non-essential. Each of these essentials is in keeping with Moravian doctrine as outlined in the previously mentioned documents.

### MISSIONS, A DEFINITION



Websters<sup>2</sup> defines “mission” as: “ n. a group of people sent esp. abroad by a Church or other religious organization to make conversions. // the area of this groups operations // the buildings acting as its center // a group of people working temporarily in a parish to invigorate its religious life // a set of services and sermons designed for the work of this group // an isolated district served by the clergy from a neighbouring church // a body doing religious and charitable work in a particular section of society, a seaman’s mission” (the definition continues with references to personal missions in life, military and diplomatic missions which are not germane to this discussion).

While this is a good working definition for general purposes, for this discussion it lacks the focus to help us define what actually constitutes Moravian missions. Lacking clear direction from Webster, I will endeavour to define Christian missions in general, and Moravian missions more specifically, myself.

The *Unitas Fratrum Book of Order*<sup>3</sup> says the following about the witness of the Moravian Church, “*The Unitas Fratrum is committed to the victory of the Lamb of God that was slain as the hope of the world. It accepts as its central commission the proclamation of this message to every place where the Lord Himself opens the door.*”

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<sup>2</sup> The New Lexicon Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language Canadian Edition 1988

<sup>3</sup> Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Church) 1995 Mooreleys, Derbys Chapter III #151 (a).

Knowing that the primary activity or mission of the church is the proclamation of the Gospel, we can infer that **Christian missions are those activities that proclaim the truth of the salvation through Jesus.**

When members of individual congregations feel called to support local or international relief, and humanitarian groups out of a sense of calling to love their neighbor, it is appropriate for them to do so. There can be no such thing as too much love and help coming out of the Body of Christ.

It is crucial, however, to recognize that regardless of how many humanitarian projects are participated in, or the number of hospitals and schools built, **if the Gospel is not proclaimed, so that people do not come to a saving knowledge of Jesus, the church has failed to meet its primary mission.**

Charitable and humanitarian works can comprise a portion of missions. Yet, if we are to be effective in following Christ's directive, **Christian missions must have a Gospel component.** To participate in strictly humanitarian projects leaves us in no way different from any other service club or secular relief agency. The church is called to be more than this. In the same way, if the church proclaims Christ without showing His Love, we have failed.

Some have argued that it is acceptable to leave out the Gospel component, and concentrate solely on humanitarian aid, for the sake of government funding. To leave out the Gospel component negates our primary role as a church, therefore, engaging in strictly humanitarian

projects while omitting the gospel component for the sake of matching government funding, is an unacceptable compromise.

## **BIBLICAL BASIS FOR MISSIONS**

The Old Testament is full of God's promise of redemption for those who would believe and accept Him. We see examples of it in the provision for the safety of Noah and his family, the Abrahamic Covenant, the salvation of Rahab the harlot, and God's infinite patience with His people through the turbulent times of the judges and kings. God chose the people of Israel as His own so that the world might see His love for the people of the world. Although we see His grace and mercy manifest itself throughout the Old Testament, His redemptive works are shown most strongly in the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

It is in the New Testament, after Christ's physical birth, that our call to missions is laid out. We are commanded by Jesus to take His message to the world *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* (Matthew 28:19-20) **This Scripture alone is sufficient reason to undertake a program of global evangelism and missions.**

Christ, crucified for our sin and resurrected, is the message Christian mission work must proclaim. Many people today espouse the belief that Jesus Christ is **one of many ways** to salvation, and that it is inappropriate for

us to "impose" the Gospel upon people of other faiths. In contrast, I believe that **Scripture is very clear that salvation and forgiveness is only available through Jesus.**

Some of the Scriptural evidence for this position follows:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (John 3:16-18)

"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:9-13)

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

**Forgiveness and salvation are only through faith in Christ, therefore it follows that we accept the premise that people need to hear the truth.** Scripture affirms the need for people to hear the Word, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ". (Romans 10:17)

The need to proclaim the truth, and to send people to make that proclamation, is clearly declared by the Apostle Paul . "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:14-15a)

Based on:

- 1) the direct command of Jesus to do so,
- 2) the supporting Scripture reinforcing the need to proclaim the gospel
- 3) the belief that people need a saving faith in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and salvation:

**Missions exist in the church to bring the truth of the Gospel, and the salvation of Jesus Christ, to the unreached, thereby, bringing glory to God.**

### **A MORAVIAN PERSPECTIVE**

The Moravian Church was founded on orthodox Christian principles. Long before the great Moravian revival of 1727, the Unity and its predecessor Hussite groups proclaimed the need for the Gospel, and that salvation was only available through Christ.

The historical Moravian position has been to boldly proclaim the message of salvation through faith in the Risen Lord. Moravians have frequently gone to the ends of the earth and given their all so that others may come to know Jesus and be saved.

The following examples are a small sample of the historical Moravian position on the role of the church and its mission.

### **Moravian Catechism**

“Question 54. Why was the church founded?

The Christian Church was founded to proclaim the gospel of salvation from sin.

- b) To win believers and build them up in the Christian faith and life.
- c) To send forth its messengers to witness for Christ in all the world”<sup>4</sup>

### **The Moravian Covenant For Christian Living**

“We are called into a Christian fellowship by the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the eternal purpose of God the Father (Eph. 3:11) by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:18-21), and as members of Christ’s Body, the Church, to serve all people by proclaiming the gospel and witnessing to our faith by word and deed.”<sup>5</sup>

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Catechism of the Moravian Church in America for the Instruction of Candidates for Confirmation and Church Membership Provincial Synod 1956, Bethlehem and Winston Salem. This edition 1994 page 30.

**Spangenberg**

"... no man can be compelled to it; but ... must become willing to receive the Grace of God in Christ, that is offered to him; that is, to believe in Christ. This is the only way to salvation, which he has appointed, and which is therefore acceptable to him" <sup>6</sup>

**Zinzendorf**

"I am destined to proclaim the message, unmindful of personal consequences to myself" <sup>7</sup>

**The Ground of the Unity**

The Lord Jesus Christ calls His Church into being so that it may serve Him on earth until He Comes. The Unitas Fratrum is, therefore, aware of its being called in faith to serve humanity by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ" <sup>8</sup>

**Readiness For Mission**

"The mission of the church then is to be God's servant in the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham. It is to go forth into the world as servants of the Lamb and extend

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<sup>5</sup> The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living formerly known as The Brotherly Agreement, Adopted by Northern Province Synod of 1982, The Ground of Our Witness (1.)

<sup>6</sup> August G Spangenberg, *idea Fidei Fratrum (An Exposition of Christian Doctrine)* translated by Benjamin La Trobe, Third English Edition, 1959, Board of Christian Education of the Southern Province of the Moravian Church, Winston-Salem page 196.

<sup>7</sup> Zinzendorf cited by Oswald J Smith, in *The Cry of the World* Marshall, Morgan and Scott, London 1972 page 84

<sup>8</sup> The Ground of the Unity page 3.

the message of God's love and of his kingship over the world to "every tribe and tongue and people and nation"<sup>9</sup>

**Leonard Dober**

"I know that in St. Thomas there are slaves who cannot believe because they have not heard. If another brother will go with me, I am ready to become a slave myself"<sup>10</sup>

**Spangenberg**

"We confess and preach to the heathen Jesus Christ and Him crucified, as the Saviour of the world, because there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ"<sup>11</sup>

**Zinzendorf**

"Our method in proclaiming salvation is this: To point out to every heart the Loving Lamb, who died for us and although He was the Son of God offered Himself for our sins, ... ; by the preaching of His blood, and of His love unto death even the death of the cross;..."<sup>12</sup>

**Br. Kohlmeister (Missionary to Labrador)**

<sup>9</sup> Heller, Schattschneider et al Readiness For Mission Interprovincial Board of Christian Education Moravian Church in America Winston Salem 1982 page 11.

<sup>10</sup> Leonard Dober, cited by Walser H. Allen, in Who Are the Moravians? 1965 (NP) page 16.

<sup>11</sup> August G Spangenberg, Candid Declaration of the Church Known by the Name of the Unitas Fratrum, Relative to Their Labour Among the Heathen September 1768\_\_\_\_Source: <http://www.mun.ca/rels/hrollman/morav/docs.html> Download Aug 26, 2000 Page 5

<sup>12</sup> Zinzendorf cited by John Greenfield in Power From on High 1926 fifth edition 1977 The Moravian Church in America Winston-Salem page 45.



“On my becoming a member of the Brethren's Church in 1778, the Lord soon granted me an insight into His designs with it. I was convinced: --

1. That the pure doctrine of His Atonement, the Word of the Cross, has been committed to it as a special treasure, with peculiar clearness, by which each soul within its borders, may obtain forgiveness of sins, life, and eternal happiness.
2. That the Brethren's Church has, in the next place, been favoured with the high calling, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation amongst Christians and heathen, and thus to spread the kingdom of God throughout the world.”<sup>13</sup>

**Augustus Schultze (President Moravian College and Theological Seminary, 1914)**

“A live Church must be a working Church, must endeavour to spread the Gospel at home and abroad and seek to win souls for Christ, both among the heathen and among nominal Christians. ... There is a loud call for rescue missions, for promoting civic righteousness, without however assuming to do the work of the state, and without forgetting that the specific function of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel of Christ”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Benjamin Gottlieb Kohlmeister, *Lives and Narratives of the Labrador Missionaries: Memoir of Br. Benjamin Gottlieb Kohlmeister Missionary in Labrador, Who Departed This Life at Neusaltz, June 3rd, 1844* Compiled by Dr. Hans Rollmann, ... source: <http://www.mun.ca/refs/morav/lives.html> download: August 26, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Augustus Schultze, *Christian Doctrine and Systematic Theology*, (1914) Second Edition Revised, Moravian Church Southern Province 1979 pg. 206.

## CANADIAN DISTRICT MISSION COUNCIL

What is the role of the CDMC in this Biblically mandated focus on the mission to reach the lost?

I believe the role of the CDMC should be:

- 1) **To facilitate communication within the various components of the Canadian Moravian Church in regards to mission activity;**
- 2) **to educate as to the importance of mission;**
- 3) **to determine a key strategy and leadership vision for missions;**
- 4) **and to utilize all resources at its disposal (including restructuring and amalgamation as required) to attain these goals.**

In the past, the primary role of the CDMC seems to have been one of keeping the various congregations apprised of developments within the world of Moravian missions. This has been a laudable goal, and one that should continue as part of the mandate of the CDMC.

At present there appears to be a great deal of theological ambiguity as to what the role of the church is in missions, and what its mission focus should be. I propose that the CDMC, in consultation with the various levels of denominational government, and with congregational direction commence defining the role of missions. **All such discussions must be covered in prayer and sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.** Until there is a focused goal in mind, the efforts of various groups will remain less than fully effective.

With a clear vision in mind, the CDMC can begin to interact more effectively and consistently with congregations, various levels of denominational government, missionaries and non-Moravian missions groups.

Whether these steps can be taken within the present structure of the CDMC is an issue that will need to be addressed. The possibility of establishing a Canadian Mission Society, which incorporates the CDMC, has been under consideration for some time. This proposal may well be easier to evaluate once the CDMC has established a direction.

## CONCLUSION

The mission of spreading the Gospel is biblically mandated, and an integral part of the Moravian history and character. In the past, God has used Moravians in mighty ways, but we must not be content to live in the past, and must make every effort to return to a mission focus.

When we turn our backs on the mission field and concentrate on our own comfort and traditions, we have turned our backs on our first love, Jesus Christ and salvation through Him. The Church in Ephesus found itself in a similar situation and was criticized strongly by the Lord for it. *"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and*

*remove your lampstand from its place.*" (Revelation 2:4-5).

While this Scripture does not clearly state that the church of Ephesus stopped evangelizing, it does warn us clearly about the dangers of turning away. When a church loses its focus on reaching the unsaved, it is in deadly peril and its own long term survival is questionable. The Church at Ephesus had a history of doing good things, but moved from its first love and did not repent.

Its ability to serve God was lost and its "history" is all that remains. Oswald J. Smith puts it this way, "*If God wills the evangelization of the world and you refuse to support missions, then you are opposed to the will of God*"<sup>15</sup>. John Wesley phrases it a little less strongly but no less truthfully, "*You have one business on earth--to save souls*".<sup>16</sup>

The situation within the missions movement borders on the desperate. Conflicting theological views, congregational apathy, and a lack of focus have brought us to a place of minimal effectiveness. The situation is not hopeless by any stretch of the imagination. We may have limited time, resources, and people, but, we have the power of God behind us. With strong prayer, the leading of the Holy Spirit, some focus and education, the Moravian Church can once again be an effective tool used by God to spread the Gospel. Are we willing to stand up and accept the challenge?

<sup>15</sup> Oswald J. Smith *The Challenge of Missions*, Star Books, London 1959, 1995 edition page 125.

<sup>16</sup> John Wesley cited in *The Challenge of Missions*, Star Books, London 1959, 1995 edition page 126.

We must strive to maintain the delicate balance between humanitarian projects that share the gospel, and evangelization that demonstrates the love of Jesus. Efforts to do one with complete exclusion of the other are doomed to failure.

In conclusion, I simply raise the question posed by Dr. Jarold Zeman in his 1984 Lectures at Moravian Theological Seminary: *"If 'the church is missions', does it mean that a church which fails to carry out its evangelistic task at home and the global missionary task abroad, ceases to be the church?"*<sup>17</sup>

What do you think?  
To God be all glory, honour, and praise.

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<sup>17</sup> Jarold Knox Zeman *Renewal of Church and Society in the Hussite Reformation* The Couillard Memorial Lectures 1980 Delivered at the Moravian Theological Seminary, Moravian Theological Seminary 1984 page 17.



An explanation of who the Moravians are, and what led them to the West Indies.

**"Alaska Missionary"**

Ferdinand Drebert 1971 165 pg.

A testimony to God's faithfulness and to the power of the gospel. An account of the life and service of a Moravian missionary who served the Eskimos of the lower Kuskokwin River and the Bearing Coast of Alaska for 42 years.

**"A History of Canadian Moravian Missionary Involvement in Central America and the Caribbean"**

Wilfred Dreger 1986

Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society, pg. 39-90  
The lifetime of mission service by the Dregers is chronicled along with that of 25 other Canadians.

**"The Missions of the Moravian Church Among the Heathen"**

#4 Africa

Rev. J. Taylor Hamilton 1904

#3 Central and South America

ibid 1905

**"Soldiers of Christ in Honduras"**

Werner Marx circa 1948

A thumbnail sketch of those who helped carry on the mission work of the Moravians in Honduras.

**"Worldwide Moravian Missions"**

Bishop J. Taylor Hamilton, Bethlehem Pa. 1918  
 1732 - West Indies, Greenland, Labrador, Alaska, California  
 (Banning), Nicaragua, Demeraran, Surinam, South Africa, East  
 Africa, Central Asia, N. Queensland (Australia)

**"True Stories of the Early Days of the Moravian Mission in the Kuskokwim (Alaska)"**

S. H. Gapp, Bethlehem, Pa. 1936  
 1885 - The life and service of John Kilbuck et. al.

**"Dayspring on the Kuskokwim" (The story of Moravian Missions in Alaska)**

Anna Buxbaum Schwolke, Bethlehem Pa., Moravian Press  
 1951

**5 CD Disks by Grace Schattschneider**

Which personally recounts the service of the Rev. Douglas and  
 Grace Schattschneider in Alaska from 1931 - 1967.  
 Digitized and donated to the Archives by Joel Henkelman



## APPENDIX II

**MISSION SERVICE ARTICLES IN PREVIOUS  
CANADIAN MORAVIAN HISTORICAL  
MAGAZINES**

- 1995 1) *Ahuas, Honduras, C.A.* - by Lorraine Riske  
Nurse, 1952-1955
- 2) *Alaska Memories* - by Leah Frauenfeld  
1963 - 1972, housekeeper and cook at  
Moravian Children's Home near Bethel,  
Alaska
- 3) *Why Go to Alaska?* - by Gladys Bartz  
1956 - 1959, teacher at Moravian  
Children's Home near Bethel, Alaska
- 1996 *Henkelman's Thirty Years in Alaska*  
by Clarence and Pauline Henkelman  
1948 - 1973, Missionaries and dormitory  
house-parents and Moravian Children's  
Home and pastor at Dillingham near Bethel,  
Alaska
- 1998 1) *Reverend Jacob and Florence Lebsack* -  
by David Lebsack  
1939 - 1949, Missionaries and house-

parents at the Moravian Children's Home near Bethel, Alaska, captain of the "Moravian" a 65 ft. diesel powered supply boat on the Kuskokwim River

- 2) **Some Memories from Alaska, 1946 -1948, - by Vera Lebsack**  
Vera and Ben Lebsack served as house-parents and maintenance man at the Moravian Children's Home near Bethel, Alaska

- 2002 1) **Eleven Years in Honduras -**  
by Ethel Seutter  
Medical missionary at the Moravian Clinic at Ahuas, Honduras for 11 years.

- 2) **The Pastor's Wife -**  
by Violet Stelter Befus, 1943 - 1966  
Missionary - nurse - teacher with her husband John, in Nicaragua