



BOARD OF WORLD MISSION

of the Moravian Church • North America

Advent 2020

Greetings!

The past two years, as I have looked to write an Advent letter, I have attempted to sum up and review the work of the Board of World Mission (BWM) through the lens of four familiar themes we represent with candles in the Advent wreath: Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love.

This year, I want to focus on just one of those themes.... "Joy".

I choose that word because, in January, the Watchword for the BWM was drawn, and this year's verse is ***John 16:24 - "Ask and you shall receive, so your joy may be complete."*** We did not know then, as we do now, how appropriate it would be that the title of the passage this verse comes from, in some scripture translations, is "Grief will turn to Joy".

It may seem misaligned or even inappropriate to focus on "Joy" in a year filled with disappointment and grief by so many. However, the Joy we remember and seek in Advent is the outpouring of belief in what God is about to do. The traditions of this season of expectation are a celebration of what lies ahead, the possibilities and promise of Christ-centered endeavors.

A look back does show that the preparations of the last Advent season and expectations of God's leading presence have been well realized. Early in the year, it was a blessing for BWM staff to be a part of a team assisting in the leadership of the first-ever National Conference in the Mission Area of Sierra Leone. It was mission in the purest sense to sit amongst faithful and talented individuals from this forming church and to join in conversations about formalizing leadership and ministries in a way that honors local culture and tradition while also aligning with the worldwide global Unity.

When the COVID-19 virus began its march around the globe, many plans were changed. Yet, relationships have been strengthened through the increased and continual communication between the BWM and our global partners. Regular check-ins allowed for the rapid response of Moravian Disaster (MDR) funding when needed most. Funding sent to areas such as Peru and Cuba aided local leadership to purchase food and other supplies and distribute it as there was need in local congregations.

MDR also saw its largest single project expenditure since the Hurricane Katrina response, when the need for medical supplies and equipment in La Mosquitia, Honduras became painfully evident. Working with medical suppliers and other contacts in North American congregations, BWM put significant donations from so many faithful donors to work by purchasing much needed medical supplies and shipping them in a container by boat from Florida to Honduras. The shipment, which included oxygen concentrators, personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, etc.), and other needed equipment, was received and distributed to more than 50 health centers in the region. The largest single recipient from the shipment was the Moravian

medical ministry at the Ahuas Clinic. The Ahuas Clinic provided critical care amid the surge of cases of the virus.

The Ahuas Clinic is a good place to transition from looking back to looking forward. As we give thanks for its presence and ministry during an unexpectedly difficult year, we are filled with Joy as we look ahead to 2021, which will be the 75th anniversary of the clinic's formation! This milestone year will be a chance to highlight this ministry's impact and invite all to consider ways they may help the Ahuas Clinic grow and realize its immense potential, serving a region much in need of medical care.

Similarly, we are filled with Advent Joy and expectations for the return of BWM's focus to its core work, the support of our partners in their development, and assisting with the training of leaders... all with the focus of transforming communities and providing guidance as new churches begin their own mission work in the communities where they serve.

We will continue our supervision of the Moravian Mission Areas in Sierra Leone and Peru, we will continue our accompaniment of the Mission Provinces in Labrador and Cuba, and we will continue support of projects and mission efforts in full Unity Province partners in Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, Eastern West Indies... and more! New possibilities for expanding ministry efforts include partnerships or support in places like the Czech Republic, Jamaica, Nepal, Kenya, and the Rukwa Province in Tanzania. In addition to these areas where Moravians already are, the BWM is working with the Unity to discern the possibility of supervising and starting some new Mission Areas where there is interest in areas like Brazil, South Korea, the CAR, and Bangladesh.

"Ask and you shall receive, so your joy may be complete." This is the Watchword for the BWM in 2020... so let me ask a few things.

Let me ask for your continued support of the BWM. I ask for prayers for the Moravian communities around the world, continually seeking God's leading and being guided to serve in their context. I ask for you to share the story of this vital work and remind others of the Joy added to the world because of the ministry of the BWM. I ask for continued consideration of monetary gifts to help support both our long-standing programs and new initiatives.

Finally, I ask that you take a moment to pause and to look forward with joyful and joy-filled anticipation of the ways in which Christ's arrival and presence will help you to complete your part of God's mission for you in the year ahead.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin D Rabbach". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Justin Rabbach
Executive Director
Board of World Mission