

**The Moravian Church in America Southern Province
Inter-Synodal Conference Workshop
Saturday October 26, 2024**

A Model for Moravian Evangelism

The God that we worship as Christians is a loving God who expects us with the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives to bear witness to Jesus Christ and to be committed to mission. Acts 1:8b says *“you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*, and Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5:20, that *‘We are ambassadors for Christ’*.

Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, one of the Founding Fathers of the Moravian church, said that our constant desire throughout our lives was to *“win souls for the Lamb”* and *“to win for the Lamb the reward of his suffering”*. In a world where sin seems to be taking over there is absolutely no time for any church and in this case the Moravian church to be comfortable and in a mode of relaxation. There is much to be done. People without Christ have a great need for salvation The old Hymn of the faith tells us to *“Rescue the Perishing, Care for the Dying”*.

It is important for us to realize the fact that the responsibility of the church is to go and make Christ known. As Christians we should accept this task and count it a privilege to be given the responsibility.

As we consider the concept of Evangelism in a Moravian context, we have a Biblical Mandate and A Moravian Mandate.

The Biblical Mandate

There are several scriptures that speak to the Biblical Mandate:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

“We are therefore Ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.” II Corinthians 5:20

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

“You are my witnesses says the Lord.” Isaiah 43:10

“To those outside the law I became as one outside the law—not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ—that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” I Corinthians 9:21-22

The Moravian Mandate

The Founding Fathers of the Moravian church, said that our constant desire throughout our lives was: “to win souls for the Lamb” and “to win for the Lamb the reward of his suffering”

On October 8, 1732, John Leonard Dober, and David Nitschman, left Copenhagen for the Danish West Indies. As the ship slipped away, they lifted up a cry that would one day become the rallying call for all Moravian missionaries, “May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering.”

As Zinzendorf’s passion for Jesus grew, so did his passion for the lost. He became determined to evangelize the world with a handful of saints, equipped only with a burning love for Jesus and the power of prayer. Here are two phrases attributed to Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf

“I have one passion; it is Jesus, Jesus only. The world is the field, and the field is the world; and henceforth that country shall be my home where I can be most used in winning souls for Christ.”

“Our method of 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.”

Let us not forget the mandate that exists in our seal

*Mwana Kondoo Ameshinda – Tumfuate
Nuestro Cordero Ha Vencido – Sigamosle
Won Shipka Luhpia Pura Luan – Witin Nina Blikpi
Our Lamb Has conquered – Let us Follow Him*

A Definition of Evangelism

The Moravian Church in America, Northern Province, Eastern District Evangelism Commission used this definition: “Evangelism is Communicating the Good News about Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has done, to all kinds of people and inviting them to trust Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord within the fellowship of His church.”

Archbishop William Temple from the Anglican Church tells us that: “To evangelize is to present Jesus Christ in the Power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Savior and serve Him as their King in the Fellowship of the Church”.

Evangelism is the term we use to refer to the preaching of the Gospel.

It comes from the Greek word for gospel [εὐαγγέλιον](#) (euangelion) and literally means “gospeling”

*When we evangelize we are “gospeling” (telling, sharing, the Good news of Jesus Christ).
When we evangelize we are spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

[Εὐαγγελιστες](#):- “evangelist” - the person who tells the Gospel

[Εὐαγγελίζο](#):- “to proclaim the gospel” - the activity of telling the Gospel

Evangelism involves “effectively communicating” the [εὐαγγέλιον](#), the “good news” about Jesus, who He is and what He has done.

- This is the gospel message
- This is the heart of our faith.

Evangelism is complete when individual persons place their faith in Jesus as their Savior and Lord and find their place of service and witness within the life of the Church.

- *This is our goal in evangelism.*
- *This is what we are aiming at.*
- *This is what we mean when we talk about evangelism*

What Is Moravian Evangelism

The heart of the gospel and the focus of faith for Moravians has always been a close personal relationship with Jesus. Zinzendorf declared that “Our method in proclaiming salvation is this: To point out to every heart the Loving Lamb, who died for us...”

For the Moravians the blood and death of Jesus was the essential of essentials.

Moravian Evangelism is Cross Centered

John Cennick expresses this in one of our hymns

Christ is our Master, Lord and God,
The fullness of the Three in One;
His life, death, righteousness, and blood
Our faith's foundation are alone;
His Godhead and His death shall be
Our theme to all eternity

Moravian Book of Worship #479

Count Zinzendorf wrote this hymn in 1739:

The Savior's blood and righteousness
My beauty is, my glorious dress;
Thus well arrayed, I need not fear,
When in His presence I appear.

(please see other verses)
Moravian Book of Worship #776

Moravian Evangelism is Characterized by Simplicity

The Moravian approach to evangelism was to point people to the heart of their faith, a relationship with the Savior.

Moravian Evangelism Relies on The Work of The Holy Spirit

We do not convert anyone!

Bringing about spiritual life and birth is the work of the Holy Spirit.

“Truly, truly I say to you unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5) See also John 16:8-10 (This is the consistent teaching of the New Testament.

Moravian missionaries and evangelists saw themselves as “agents” of the Spirit. Zinzendorf talked about relying on the work of the Holy Spirit in these words: “The blessed work goes on forever and remains in the Spirit's hand, in His disposition. We have no need to be anxious about it.”

The beauty of the Moravian way of evangelism is that it is gentle and unintrusive. Although the Moravians at their best were gentle and unintrusive this does not mean that they lacked zeal for evangelism and never took the initiative.

Zinzendorf's consistent desire throughout his life was "to win souls for the Lamb"

What if...

What If We Shift... Would we be doing Evangelism?

From Fellowship to Hospitality

What if... we were to be more hospitable in our approach to ministry.

What if... each congregation became an evangelizing congregation.

What if... we made the most of every opportunity 'to win souls for the lamb'.

What if... we saw every visitor as a potential member.

Would We Be Doing Evangelism?

From Worship as An Event to Worship as A Lifestyle

What if... our worship continued beyond the benediction...

Would We Be Doing Evangelism?

From Worship as An Event to Worship as A Lifestyle

What if... we worshipped in the supermarket school, home, job, ball field etc.

What if... we were [Ευαγγελιστες](#): - "evangelist" everywhere we went.

What if... we were always thinking - I want to "win souls for the lamb"

Would We Be Doing Evangelism?

From Membership to Discipleship

What if... we were concerned about being disciples and not just church goers.

After all Jesus said "Go into all the world..."

Would We Be Doing Evangelism?

From Serve Us to Service

What if... we were more concerned about engaging people at the point of their need.

What if... we genuinely wanted to serve others.

Would We Be Doing Evangelism?

From Survival Mentality to Generosity

What if... our church budgets were ministry focused.

What if... we taught financial management to our members.

Would We Be Doing Evangelism?

(All references to Shift credited to Dr. Phil Maynard Shift 2,0)

THE EVANGELIZING CONGREGATION

In each congregation the various emphases of evangelism must be present. This must include the following:

1. *Presence Evangelism* – This signifies presence in the world, listening, identifying needs and being willing to serve. This is where Matthew 5:16 comes alive and people can “see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven”.

2. *Proclamation Evangelism* – Living our Faith. This is verbalizing the Gospel in a manner that can be understood and accepted. (Who Are we and what do we do well eg. Lovefeast)

3. *Persuasion Evangelism*. Leading persons to an acceptance of Christ.

4. *Worship Evangelism*. Worship needs to be creative, engaging and inspiring

We need to begin to think about Blended worship.

Our worship needs to be contextual.

Perhaps we need to teach Worship.

All of this combines for an inspiring worship experience blending the traditional and the contemporary.

5. *Propagation Evangelism*. The multiplication of small groups and the planting of new churches.

In conclusion.

As an evangelizing church we must maintain an outward focus. Church Growth must become a priority. We must begin of ‘finding’ members remembering that we serve a God who finds persons. It is clear that people are lost, and the finding God wants them found and brought into his household.

Presented by Dr. Dion Christopher at the Moravian Church in America Southern Province Inter-Synodal Conference Workshop on Saturday October 26, 2024.

Selected Bibliography

1. Allen, Walser H. *Who Are The Moravians*. Bethlehem PA: Moravian Press, 1996
2. Dawn, Marva J. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn of the Century*. Grand Rapids, MI Eerdmans, 1995
3. Drummond, Lewis, A. *The Word of the Cross: A Contemporary Theology of Evangelism*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992.
4. Gibbs, Eddie. *Church Growth Through Effective Evangelism* MC 542. Pasadena, Ca. Fuller Seminary Press
5. Green Michael. *Evangelism Through the Local Church*. London: Hodder and Stoughton 1990.
6. Kendrick, Graham. *Learning To Worship As a Way of Life*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1985
7. Maynard, Phil. *Shift 2.0: Helping Congregations Back into the Game Of Effective Ministry*. Market Square Publishing Company, 2018.
8. McGavran, Donald, A. *Understanding Church Growth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmass Publishing Company, 1990.
9. Morgenthaler, Sally. *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers into the Presence of God*. Grand Rapids Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.
10. Nicholas, Steve. *The Moravian Way of Evangelism*. Marlboro: Moravian Inter Provincial Board, 1989.
11. Schattschneider, Allen, W. *Through Five Hundred Years: A Popular History of the Moravian Church*. Bethlehem: The Moravian Church In America.
12. Weinlick, John R. *Count Zinzendorf*. Nashville: TN Abingdon Press, 1956.