

## **MORAVIAN MOMENT...# 07**

### **What was their Strategy for Mission?**

One of the downfalls of any organization is the failure to plan and strategize the way forward. It is commonly said, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail".

The Moravian Church in its Mission to evangelize the slaves had a definite strategy. **The strategy was one which sought to equip and empower the slaves in their local contextual situation.** The Missionaries were mindful of the distrust of the slaves, who thought that they were spies for the PLANTERS. In addition, they did not need any reminder of the hostility of the planters, who objected to anyone preaching to the slaves and putting ideas into their heads with regard to the fact that they were human beings of value in the sight of God.

How did they strategize? In each settlement, the Gospel was preached to all the slaves to whom the Missionaries gained access and every one was invited to be Reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. **Secondly**, if any were awakened to a sense of need of Jesus Christ, special Pastoral care was given to them. If such persons continued in their earnest desire to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, they were further instructed in the faith and then baptized. **Thirdly**, the Moravians laid great stress upon the pastoral care of every individual member and so **Helpers (Elders) were appointed from the converts to assist with the care of the congregation. This was a master stroke by the Moravians to erase the distrust of the slaves and the hostility of the planters at the same time.**

**Fourthly, the Moravians saw education as the engine for the upward mobility of the slaves.** They established the Moravian Training School for Boys in Antigua. In addition, schools were established in every area where the Mission work was started. The schools greatly helped the slave population morally and intellectually.

**In 1854, the Spring Gardens Female Teachers College was established to equip and empower indigenous females to teach our own people.**

*Fifthly, the Moravians went a step further in equipping and empowering the indigenous people as full time Pastors, by establishing a Theological Seminary in St. Thomas in 1885. This was later relocated to Antigua in 1899. The Moravians needed to build up a strong native Ministry if the Church would continue to make a significant contribution to the spiritual life of our West Indian people. **Education was and is a crucial factor for our Church as it strategized in its Mission work.*** (Next time, we will look at the crucial role the Helpers or Elders played in the Mission work).