

MORAVIAN MOMENT #9 EQUIPPING AND EMPOWERING ITS MINISTERS.

The Moravian Church has always sought to prepare its Ministers for the work of ministry in the best way possible. The Church realized that if natives would be prepared for ministry they would need to be trained from very early in their teens, in order to bring them to the standard where they would become more effective leaders and pastors.

The native ministry from 1856 to 1885 was recruited from the teachers who assisted in the church work and did private studies under the supervision of a missionary until ordination, but this plan was full of difficulties and disadvantages. The missionaries did not think that our own people were capable enough to assume full leadership roles and so they were very reluctant to let go of the control they had on the work. This led to conflict and mistrust. In addition, the native people felt that the missionaries wanted to keep them in subjection and have a dependency syndrome. Whether the missionaries liked it or not the Province needed to build up a strong native ministry if the Church would continue to make a significant contribution to the spiritual life of our people. This required a systematic program of theological training. The survival and sustainability of the Church depended on the training and empowering of Indigenous leaders. In May, 1883, the General Synod (Unity Synod), decided to establish a Theological Seminary at Nisky in St Thomas, where systematic training would be given to natives to prepare them for the work of ministry.

The Seminary was opened on the 1st February, 1885, with three students. Students were admitted if they passed an examination with more than seventy five percent average in Grammar, Composition, Sacred History, Arithmetic, Geography, Dictation, Algebra and Geometry, or if they possessed a First Class Teachers' Certificate from Mico Teachers' College. Once they entered Seminary, the course of study lasted for three years. The course of study consisted of Old Testament History, Rhetoric, Natural science, Logic, Algebra, Geometry, Latin, Greek, Old Testament Exegesis, Church History, Moravian Church History, Homiletics, Dogmatics, Anatomy and Physiology, New Testament Exegesis, Liturgics and Pastoral Theology. The Seminary made a very good impression on the life of the Church. Our indigenous people were emerging as first class Leaders and Pastors. They proved that once given the opportunity that no mountain was too high to surmount.

Today our Church in the Caribbean has mushroomed under total indigenous leadership. Mistakes have been made, but the Church can be justly proud that it gave the opportunity to its sons and daughters to use their gifts to the glory of God. The men and women in the Pew can rejoice and give God the glory their monies have been well spent in the training of our Ministers. (Next time we shall continue with the development of the seminary and its continued impact).

11 February, 2007