

## **MORAVIAN MOMENT #10 KEEPING HOPE ALIVE**

The vision of establishing a Theological Seminary at Nisky in St. Thomas in 1885, proved to be a success story for the training of indigenous PASTORS.

In 1889, the General Synod (Unity Synod) decided to move the Seminary to a more suitable location in order to train ministers from a wider area, embracing Jamaica, Guyana, Suriname, Nicaragua as well as our Province. It so happened that MICO TEACHERS' COLLEGE in Antigua was up for sale and the Church, assisted by John Morton an Englishman, who gave a substantial sum of money, was able to purchase the property. Having purchased the property, the name of the Seminary was changed to Buxton Grove and was reopened on the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1900. The first principal was Clarence Romig, who was succeeded by William N. Schwarze.

The training of Pastors was now extended to five years with an entrance exam along the same lines as was required in 1885. The Church in Antigua benefited tremendously from the work of the students and Tutors.

In 1914, the beginning of the First World War, things were rough economically and the Seminary ended up having more Teachers than Students, and as things got harder, the Church was forced to close the seminary. Eventually, the Buxton Grove property was sold and is now the Antigua Girls High School.

The crucial nature of having our own Seminary, to train our indigenous pastors, can be seen in what Bishop Maynard said, "Our *Moravian College and Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, P.A.*, would not take any coloured students at that time because of the race question". This meant that each Moravian Ministerial candidate, until the 1940's, had to be trained according to his or her ability and the available training facilities. It is amazing how the Church could have embedded itself into the race issue. However, the TRAIN was moving in spite of obstacles and challenges. Some took correspondence courses from Howard University in Washington DC; some from Bible Colleges in the USA; one was trained at Lincoln University in P.A, while others went to Codrington College in Barbados. This proved unsatisfactory and so in 1965, the Moravians in the EWI Province joined with the Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Congregationalist, Baptist and Lutherans, to form the United Theological College of the West Indies, now the Theological Faculty of UWI.

The Church needs leaders, well qualified spiritually and intellectually, to serve in the field of education, so that we will not only save our best potential leaders from falling away, but we may also guide them into dedicated Christian service.

*18<sup>th</sup> March, 2007*