

MORAVIAN MOMENT #39...

The Moravian Church and the Family

The family is the bedrock of any society, without which things fall apart. As we examine the Caribbean today, the family is under attack. While one can understand that there are different types of family units, it is important to know that God created the family for order, stability and good structure in the society. The Psalmist declares in the word of God, "Except the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain". (Ps.27:1)

The Moravian Church has a sacred obligation to uphold the sanctity of the family. The Church Order of the Unites Fratrum (2002), at paragraph 655, places on record the importance of the family to the Church. "The importance of the family in the congregation cannot be overemphasized. The family is a 'natural Choir' within the congregation, and a Christian home is a 'natural school' where the foundations of the Christian life are laid among young people". This clearly shows the significance the Church places on the family unit. Paragraph 656 in (C.O.U.F) cements the position of the Moravian Church even more when it says; "It is therefore a duty and a privilege among all members of the Church to uphold the highest ideals of Christian marriage and family life and to avoid anything that would bring dishonour upon it".

Today more than ever, children are having children at a younger age. The extended family support that existed is no longer in place, for parents and children, and in some cases grand-parents are all having children at the same time. It means that many of our children are left to fend for and grow up on their own. In addition, some parents due to their busy schedules seem not to be spending quality time in the nurturing and upbringing of their children.

The Moravian Church believes that Education, Example and Christian nurture are planks upon which the family must continue to be built. In the Litany for Baptism (E.W.I Province), the Parents and God-Parents are asked, "Do you promise in reliance on divine grace to teach him/her the truths and duties of the Christian faith, and by Prayer, Precept and Example to bring him/her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and in the fellowship of the Church?" In other words, we are called to teach. We are called to model before our children what God would have them to become. We are called to prayer and to help to cement our children's walk in the fear of the Lord and the community of believers.

On a daily basis, the newspapers and radio stations are bombarded with issues of the family. The Moravian Church recognizes that it has much work to do, to rebuild and strengthen the institution of the family. The Moravian Church, honouring the example and injunction of Jesus, acknowledges the responsibility of dealing compassionately and redemptively with human frailty and sin in every area of life, including the failure of marriage.

The Moravian Church is therefore being challenged to instruct our people, especially the youth in the meaning and obligation of the family, because if this institution disintegrates, every other institution will disintegrate. Children act out what they see and learn. The Church must continue to safeguard and affirm the family. The word of God is apt to conclude this article, "Train up a child in the way he/she should go: when he or she is old, he/she will not depart from it".

(Prov.22:6)

7th October, 2007