

MORAVIAN MOMENT # 41...

New Herrnhut Moravian Church... seen through the eyes of the EWI Province.

The Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province is made up of six (6) Conferences, spanning nine (9) Islands with a total of fifty one (51) congregations and four (4) Fellowships. It has a staff component of forty six (46) men and women, with a membership of twenty four thousand (17,546) persons. The Province is headquartered in Antigua but has decentralized its leadership into the six (6) Conferences which are each headed by a Superintendent, who works along with an Executive Board and the Island Conference, which is comprised of delegates from each congregation.

August 13th 1727, is a watershed year in the history of the Moravian Church. The once ordered community of Herrnhut Germany was bitterly divided. The membership of the Church had come from different areas with different subcultures and the challenge of blending together as one congregation proved too much for them. The Church was therefore split along sectarian lines, for each one wanted to be in charge and felt that his or her beliefs should be the one followed. ***The Church that ought to have had one focus, that is, the building up of God's Kingdom, so that the gates of hell would not prevail against it, was now, because of in fighting and the thirst for recognition and power, seems as if it had lost its reason for being.*** But God works in mysterious ways.

On Wednesday, August 13th, as they journeyed to the Berthelsdorf Chapel, never did they envisage what would eventually take place in that communion service. They walked on opposite sides of the road towards the Sanctuary, and not even as much as to look at each other. They sat on opposite sides of the Sanctuary, but the Holy Spirit, like a bolt of lightning, descended upon them and broke down the walls of bitterness and hatred from between them and united their hearts as never before. They wept openly. They hugged. They Kissed. They fellowshiped. They ate. They drank. They forgave one another. They sang the songs of Zion with gusto and more meaning. They prayed.

The transformation that took place on that day, started the one hundred (100) year unbroken prayer meeting of the Moravian Church. It ignited the Missionary zeal for souls which brought Leonard Dober and David Nitschman to St. Thomas in 1732, as the first Moravian Missionaries in the Western Hemisphere, as a result of which the New Herrnhut congregation was planted in 1737, 270 years ago. New Herrnhut congregation is the oldest Moravian Church in the Western Hemisphere and the first in the EWI Province. The Province therefore looks to New Herrnhut for ***Leadership***; for its ***pioneering zeal, its mission out reach emphasis***, for this is where it all started. The congregation must touch the lives of people in the community and bring hope to a dying world. It looks to New Herrnhut as a ***symbol of peace, love, unity and hope***, for had the Holy Spirit not intervened, this Church might not be here today. It looks to New Herrnhut as a ***symbol of bonding***, for we are no longer Greeks or Barbarians, bond or free, slaves or masters, we are one in Christ. It Looks to New Herrnhut as ***a Symbol of Prayer***, for it was prayer that was the engine that energized and transformed the Church into what it is today. Finally, the Province looks to New Herrnhut as a ***symbol of music***. The gifts must be used to glorify God and draw men and women into the Kingdom. There will continue to be challenges, but you must remain steadfast, unmovable and faithful to God.

21st October, 2007