

**MORAVIAN MOMENT #50...**  
**Old Year's Night Moravian Tradition**

In the early days when news traveled slowly, some Moravian Churches made special use of Old Year's Night to review the events of the year, particularly from the standpoint of the Church.

From the diaries and other records kept during the year the Minister of the congregation would prepare the Memorabilia, or annual summary of important items in the life of the congregation. The historical sketch was read to the congregation and then placed on file in the Archives. Over the years, these memorabilia have become of great value to historians.

The style of worship varies, from love feasts to a song service or one of testimonies, depending on the Pastor or the particular state of affairs in the community at the time. Of vital importance is the message proclaimed by the Pastor at the service. **While it is ought to be reflective, the accent must be on hope for the future. Without hope, not false hope, but a hope that is anchored in Jesus, the message would be empty.**

**Worshippers must leave feeling that transformation must take place in his or her life, and that there must be a new beginning.**

At 11.55pm the message is generally concluded and the congregation enters into a period of silent prayer, during which confession is made to God, with the promise to begin anew or to turn a new page in one's life. The signal of the changing year is given by the Tolling out of the old year and the ringing in of the new (by the Sexton, with the Church bell). If there is no bell, then the organ would give the signal. The Preacher must be called to attention and bring the sermon to a swift conclusion. It is always a special moment in the life of all those individuals gathered to worship. Once the New Year is ushered in and the initial greeting is done, the texts for January 1 of the New Year are read from the Moravian Daily Text book. Following such pronouncement, the hymn "**Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices**" is usually song". In some congregations a text is distributed to every worshipper randomly to guide him or her through the coming year. One ought to draw strength from the text especially in challenging and testing times.

The service concludes with more singing and a prayer for guidance of God during the New Year and the benediction is then pronounced. Have a most blessed and Spirit filled 2008 and may the Joy of the Lord be yours.

*30<sup>th</sup> December, 2007*