

**MORAVIAN MOMENT #65**  
**Rebekka Freundlich, a woman of determination**

Rebekka Freundlich did not accept what was determined by others for her. As a woman of faith and integrity, she felt that God had given her the will to make her own choice, even to be the wife of a white man. Pastor Borm of the Reformed Church challenged the validity of her marriage to her husband, claiming that Friedrich Martin her pastor was not properly ordained and hence could not performed weddings. Pastor Borm then offered his services to marry Rebekka and her husband as he said in the right way. Rebekka flatly refused for she was already a married woman. Pastor Borm had laid a clever trap for Rebekka, for he knew that he had the ears of the Government officials. He took the matter to court, for he declared that, "Rebekka and Matthaus Freundlich were living in the married state without legal authority". On December 22, 1738 they appeared in court but refused to recant the validity of their marriage. The court ordered that Friedrich Martin, Rebekka and her husband should be jailed forthwith.

Pastor Borm was terrified of Rebekka and felt that the Moravian Church was going to spread too rapidly and sort to get her out of the way by any means necessary. Would God stand and see injustice being done to his children and not intervene? Was Rebekka going to give up her faith now that she was imprisoned by refusing to accept what she knew was wrong?

On January 29, 1739, Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf, leader of the Moravian movement in Europe and well known nobleman, arrived in St. Thomas with four reinforcements for the Moravian Mission. He immediately contacted the governor and requested that Martin and the Freundlichs be released from prison. The Count's prestige and influence were such that the governor immediately complied. The three Moravians were freed and an enormous obstacle to progress had been removed. Zinzendorf felt that if Rebekka had been so effective in sharing the gospel on St. Thomas that she might be a wonderful Missionary to the Gold Coast of Africa. He therefore invited Rebekka and her husband to Herrnhut, Germany where he prepared them for the task at hand. Before the journey to the Gold Coast however, Rebekka's husband Matthaus, died. Was that going to be the end of Rebekka's missionary effort? She knew that the hand of God was upon her and she was going to fulfill the mission that God had given her.

In 1746 Rebekka met and married Christian Protten an African. Their plan was to educate the mulatto children on the Gold Coast. Perhaps her eagerness to help was because she shared with her new husband a sense of alienation, being totally accepted in neither the white nor black world. Whatever the reason, they travelled to the Gold Coast and established a school with the support of the Danish authorities. Rebekka remained in Africa as a missionary until she died in 1780. Rebekka Freundlich began life as a slave but ended it a free person. She became a Christian at a time when it was no easy achievement for a person of colour to do. Against the odds she was determined to fulfill God's purpose for her life.