

O N W A R D

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Moravian Church in South Africa: Faith & Hope!

The Moravian Church in South Africa (MCSA) is a story of faith, hope and contrasts. As invited guests of Sister Angelene Swart and the Provincial Elders' Conference, Sam Gray, Will Sibert and I were blessed to experience the richness of the church in South Africa. Our purpose there was to share with pastors and leaders about leadership in the missional church and to learn ways that the Board of World Mission might partner with the church to support the Masangane work with HIV/AIDS and other ministries. Our visit was timed to coincide with the festival celebrations marking the 550th anniversary of the Unitas Fratrum. It is also the 270th anniversary of the Moravian Church in South Africa. Their slogan is "550/270: Mustard Seeds for the Lord."

We stayed one week in the Cape Town area and a second week in the Port Elizabeth area. We visited with pastors, toured various mission stations in the regions and held three workshops on leadership and the missional church. We were encouraged by the spirit of partnership and desire to share common ideas about the work of God in the church.

The Moravian Church South Africa faces many of the same issues that our churches face: how to involve more young people, and how to reach out into the community to share the Good News in word and deed. While areas of the cities are as cosmopolitan as any major city in North America, there

are "informal settlements" that are shockingly poor and depressing. Despite the struggles to overcome



apartheid and economic disparity, the faith of the people is inspiring and courageous.

The Moravian work in South Africa began in 1737 when George Schmidt founded the community of

Gnadendal, which means "Valley of Grace". Before Schmidt left Gnadendal, he planted a pear tree and gave his Bible to Magdalena, a young convert. Magdalena kept the faith and read her Bible until the next missionaries arrived from Germany nearly 40 years later. They found Magdalena, by then an old woman, with her Bible. Magdalena had kept the faith and trusted that the seeds God had planted would once again bear fruit. The church grew over the next centuries in many regions of this beautiful country.

Apartheid became a huge challenge for the Moravians in

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Moravians in Suriname: Dual Perspective

A group of twenty four Moravians recently went on a life changing experience to Suriname. Here, and Page 4, are the enlightening stories from John and Barbara Geisler.

A group of twenty four Moravians recently went on a life changing experience to Suriname in NE South America. Our leader was Br. Ray Revaes, an export/import merchant from Suriname, but now an active member of Prince of Peace Moravian Church in Miami. We gathered at the Prince of Peace Church for morning worship, with lots of prayers and good wishes for our 10 day trip. We flew to Trinidad, and on to Paramaribo, the capital.

We had traditional Surinamese

breakfasts and were taken several times downtown at a hotel which is in the huge Moravian owned C. Kersten Co. Department store. We window shopped and were pleased to find everything up to date. We had plenty of good food and several real banquet feasts. We enjoyed many unique fruits, some we knew from Nicaragua. We learned to look right at street corners as the traffic drives on the left, very fast in modern US, European and Asian vehicles. We bought souvenirs and maps like any tourists.

We saw many Moravian buildings (Called Evangelische Broedergemeente, or EBG and well

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