

# O N O W A R D

MORAVIAN MISSIONS PUBLISHED BY THE MISSION SOCIETY, SOUTHERN PROVINCE

October 2008

Volume XXVIII Issue 8

## NUTS & BOLTS OF MISSIONS IN THE AMERICAN BOARD OF WORLD MISSION

- OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS OF OUR LONG-TERM RETIRED/INACTIVE MISSIONARIES: SIMEON & EILEEN MARX HECKMAN (18TH), MITZI KIMBALL (31ST), RICK NELSON (31ST).
- WILL & SAM ON THE ROAD: VISITED MORAVIAN SCHOOL (1,100 STUDENTS) IN INDIA, MET WITH LOCAL BUDDHIST LAMA & VISITED TIBETAN BUDDHIST MONASTERY "IN CHARGE" OF AGRICULTURAL MATTERS; THEY DO CEREMONIES ASSOCIATED W/ PLANTING & HARVESTING.
- MAILING ADDRESS FOR MICHAEL & CECILIA TESH- RAY OF HOPE—P.O.B. 1372-80100, MOMBASA, KENYA.
- CLEAN WATER PRO- JECT: AS SUMMER ENDS, THE FIRST WELL IS BEING DRILLED AT MORAVIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN PUERTO CABEZAS, NICA- RAGUA.
- DR. REV. SAM MARX, RE- TIRED MISSIONARY, FOR- MER EDITOR OF ONWARD, RECENTLY TURNED 91!
- JACK GEIS IS REPRE- SENTING THE S. PROVINCE AT A UNITY MTG. EXAMIN- ING THE UNFOLDING PHENOMENON OF THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA THIS MONTH.

## Hospitality in a Kanga

### "God's cup is always open"

This past July I spent fifteen days in Tanzania, Africa. I was blessed with a ministry team of twelve women representing Moravian congregations in Canada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Our trip was Spirit filled as we worked with Tanzanian women who were celebrating their first Women's Conference. While in Tanzania we were blessed by the gifts of hospitality and generosity. Every stop we made included an official welcome, a time of



Whitney, Anne, Patty, Roberta, and Molly

food and fellowship, and a personal gift for each team member. Over and over again we heard, 'We have a small gift for you so that you will remember us when you return home'. As if we could forget them. We received many beautiful things, but the one I've come to appreciate most is the Kanga.

Kangas are long rectangular pieces of fabric, printed with bright festive patterns of flowers, shapes, Moravian Seals, lambs, etc., placed inside a colored border, and sold as two matching pieces. Kangas are wrapped around a waist like sarongs, worn as headscarves, placed around the shoulders as a shawl on windy days, used as blankets, tablecloths, or curtains, and made into brightly colored skirts, dresses, and shirts by skilled tailors. They cradle babies peering out at you from their mother's backs as they travel to get water from the local well or negotiate a good price for corn or rice at the local market.

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## "Where did you see God today?"

### Laurel Ridge Mission Camp

When I was a youth (in the mid-twentieth century), the concept of missions was distant, and, literally, foreign. My church "sponsored" (through annual collections) missionaries in far-off lands that I was only vaguely aware of. Occasionally I would see pictures of these missionaries or read about their work, but I never met them. Their efforts were totally removed from and mysteriously alien to the world I lived in.

When my wife and I joined Raleigh Moravian Church, it soon became wonderfully obvious that mission within this congregation had been defined quite differently from my own previous church experience. When the obligatory "Mission Sunday" rolled around, we were totally awed by the youth and adult members of the congregation who told their stories of the mission trips they had been part of during the last year. They shared how those experiences touched and changed their lives as well as the lives of those whom they had served.

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# A Message From Our President—Listening for Needs

I recently read an article entitled “Listening with Love” written by Pastor Rick Warren and author of the book “The Purpose Driven Life”. Dr. Warren is the pastor at Saddleback church in Lake Forest, California. Although listening, sounds easy, it can be one of the most difficult things to master. Listening is a skill that must be developed. Here are five ways to have your voice heard and be a better listener: 1) Choose the right time to speak/listen; there is a time and place for everything (Ecclesiastes). 2) Open the lines of communication; questions are a good way to provide clarity and engage listeners. 3) Listen before you answer, do not interrupt; the Bible says, he who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him (Proverbs 18:13). 4) Say what you mean; eliminate mixed messages. 5) End with an encouraging word; always conclude your conversations with commitment to your relationship and love for the person. What is

the point of speaking if no one is listening?

As we pursue various missions, to help our neighbors both near and far, do we listen to their needs or do we provide a solution prematurely? There are many examples of mission outreach where we do listen but there are others where we fell short. Our response to the Nicaraguan people after hurricane Felix is a good example of us listening and responding to their needs. As you can remember, their homes were destroyed and many trees were up rooted. In response to their needs we provided them with saws to convert the trees into lumber for rebuilding their homes.

When we see people in need we should listen to the words of Jesus Christ who said we should share the burden of our fellow citizens. We hear him in those who are burdened by sin and dis-

ress. Show them, there is someone who hears and will always be there for them even when they seem to stand alone. Listen as they struggle with their faith and encourage them, on their journey with the Lord. Listen as they give praise and rejoice in knowing that this will be a blessing to us all.

As you listen and support various mission projects please take the time to come and celebrate mission accomplishments with us at our annual Mission Lovefeast at Kernersville Moravian on November 2, 2008. The Band Prelude begins at 2:30 p.m. and Lovefeast service at 3:00 p.m. Please bring pictures of your mission experiences for display and listen as others share their mission experience.

*Evon Crooks, member of New Philadelphia Moravian Church, is the President of the Mission Society Bd of Directors.*



# Summer in Kenya—A Wedding, Full-time Staff, and Eggs!

Greetings from the family in Kenya. August has been an active and busy month. We had a wedding. James and Amy got married August 9. James is John’s right hand man and Amy is a transplant from Virginia. She has been helping at Ray of Hope for about a year. It is always a great celebration when we have a wedding.

The kids are out of school on holiday this month. We have been keeping them busy around the camp. There is always yard work and we are still working on the septic system. We had Bible camp and had about 125 children. Our kids are really good at ministering to the local children.

Penny is one of our staff and a preschool teacher. She and her son Maro have moved to Tana River. She is still part of Ray of Hope, she just moved closer to home and she is working in our medical clinic there. We officially opened a full time clinic there the first of August. There is such a great need there. We were having just an occasional clinic there, but we have a building and a full time staff now. God works in wonderful ways.

We have eggs! The chickens have

started laying eggs and John has taken two loads to Mombasa to sell. We have enjoyed having eggs here at the base also. Another project growing and blossoming.

Ceci is great. She just went to the doctor and she is 21 weeks pregnant and she is gaining weight. She still has some sickness, but it has improved so much. She completed her schooling this month. She has to take an exam in December and she will have her certificate to be a preschool teacher.

God is so awesome and it has been a blessed month. Continue to pray for us and we are praying for all our friends in the U.S.

Love to all, Michael and Ceci

*Oh God of ev’ry nation,  
of ev’ry race and land,  
redeem your whole  
creation with your  
almighty hand.*

*William W. Reid, Jr. (1958)*



This inviting book explores the Christmas celebrations of the Moravian Church in the South, whose members were marking the holiday as early as the 1780s in ways recognizable to modern Americans. This colorful resource is profoundly researched, abundantly illustrated, and brings history to life. It also reveals the impact Moravian missionaries and mission endeavors have played in our Christmas traditions. **Author** Nancy Smith Thomas is a resident of Winston-Salem, North Carolina and frequently presents lectures and workshops on Christmas decorations and traditions. The book can be purchased by calling UNC Press, 1-800-848-6224.

# Cooperation & Ecumenicalism in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica

**H**ola from Puerto Limon Costa Rica!

The school year is off to a wonderful start with 35 regularly attending musicians enrolled in our fledgling program at Escuela de Musica y Alabanza, or School of Music and Adoration. Our first trimester of class is proving that the students are quick and able learners. This creates much anticipation for the second trimester which starts in this month (October). In fact, the excitement is so great that many people have already registered.



*The future first graduating class of the new School of Music and Adoration in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica*

At our inauguration we were asked to share a few words about our calling to Costa Rica. We could include everything we said but instead we would simply like to share the heart of our

sentiments: We're here for the money.

All joking aside we are here to worship, serve, and witness through music. Most of all we are here because in the midst of our busy

lives we heard a call and trusted in God. We believe that there are great things in store for the people of Limon and we hope to share in the revitalization of this home away home. After

all, in Proverbs 3:6 it says "if you trust in God, he will clear the road for you to follow."

In this time of growth we bring to you several prayer requests:

- Pray for our continuing transition into life in Limon as well as our health as we adjust to the culture.
- For our families as they realize how far away we are and our prolonged absence over the course of the year.
- For the development team as they plan for the construction of our new building.
- For healing in a city that has long been neglected

Your Antioch Servants,  
Roman Brady & Morgan Smith

## Summer Full of Mission Experience—New Relationships

**T**his summer I was very fortunate to be able to go on two different mission trips. The first one was to Laurel Ridge Mission Camp and the second was to Mississippi.

During the week that I was at Laurel Ridge, I learned so much about myself. I became a lot closer to my church youth and met a ton more friends. My church worked at a horse farm that had a therapeutic riding center. Our job was to weed and mulch a bank that had lots of erosion. After that we used rocks to decorate the bank with the center's logo. While doing the work we were able to interact with some of the people that the center services and also play with the horses. After we were finished with the bank, we cleaned some of the stalls. This was a nasty job but I had so much fun. Although we had some dirty and sometimes smelly jobs, we made the best of it. I had a great and unforgettable time.

When we were not at the site working, we were back at Higgins Lodge singing, playing games, and just making new friends. The time that I had at mission camp will never be forgotten and the friendships that I made will always be cherished.

After I got back from mission camp, I had about a day and a half to wash my clothes and repack to go to Ocean Springs, Mississippi for a mission trip to help the victims of Katrina. This was the second year for my church (and parents) to go, but my first. After hearing all of the stories from the people that went last year I was so ready to get down there and do my part. After the 12 hour drive I was energized to get working.

*"Although my first month of summer break I was on mission trips, I had more fun and had more meaningful memories than if I was hanging out with my friends" ..*

The first house that we worked at was Ms. May's. She had had some flood damage from the storm and the siding on the back of her house was wind and water damaged. We replaced the siding and painted it. We also tiled a floor that had been flooded and also painted a bedroom. After the majority of the work was finished, half of our group went to another house and the rest stayed to finish Ms. May's. At the second house, we gutted the entire first floor. The house had had 6 feet of water in the house and the house was 2 feet off of the ground. That is 8 feet



of water damage! The couple that lived in this house continued to live in the upstairs with all of that water damage. The water had gotten in the walls and started to mold. We had to wear gloves and mask so

that we would not breathe in any of the harmful black mold. We worked two days at this house. Although the work was hard and it was very hot and humid in Mississippi, this experience was so meaningful. I was able to hear the horror stories of the people that lived thorough Katrina. I saw the damage that was done and I saw how they were able to restart their

lives. But most of all I connected to my church family like I never thought possible. It was a life changing experience and I will never forget it. Although my first month of summer break I was on mission trips, I had more fun and had more meaningful memories than if I was hanging out with my friends. I was so blessed to have these experiences. I thank God for this time.

*Hanna Cheek is a freshman in highschool and a member of Calvary Moravian Church. of Winston-Salem, NC.*

# PRAYER 2ND Mile Project

Moravian congregations that fully participate in the common ministries of the Northern and Southern Provinces are encouraged to go the "second mile" in world mission. The Second Mile projects below are submitted by our partners and affirmed by the Board of World Mission.

The Board of World Mission invites Mission societies, fellowship groups, church school classes and individuals to prayerfully consider investing in a 2nd-Mile Project. Choose any of the projects listed below and discover the joy of shared ministry with brothers and sisters from around the Moravian Unity!

## Honduras

1. Assistance for "Street Children Project" in Puerto Lempira \$500
  2. New or used computers (laptops and desktops).
  3. Keyboards (music) for local congregations.
- Submitted by the Rev. Julian Platino, Superintendent*

## Costa Rica

1. Assistance for Spanish hymnal project. \$2000  
*Submitted by Dr. Leopold Pixley, Superintendent*
2. 10 electronic keyboards are needed for the School of Music and Worship in Limon, Costa Rica. \$200  
*Submitted by the Moravian Church in Costa Rica*

## Eastern West Indies

1. Trinidad—For furnishings and car for their new pastor and family from Sikonge for the L'anse Noir Congregation. \$2,000  
*Submitted by the Moravian Church in EWI, Trinidad*

## Tanzania

1. Roofs for the following church buildings:
 

Itiga	\$500
Mgandu	\$500
Cheyo	\$500
Maswa	\$500
  2. Renovation of an old building formerly used by early missionaries in Tabora; converting it to a "Pastoral Retreat Center." \$2,000
  3. Seminar/workshop on "Evangelism and Spiritual Growth, Church Polity and Administration" for local evangelists. \$1000
  4. Assistance on the establishment of a "Vocation Training Center" for youth in Sikonge. Material items include: motorbikes for ministers and keyboards for choirs in rural areas. \$1000
- Submitted by the Rt. Reverend Isaac Nicodemo*

Keep these Moravian churches in your prayers as they grow their mission ministries. Checks can be made out to the 'Board of World Mission', designating the 2nd Mile Project which it should be directed towards.

Visit <http://www.moravianmission.org/> for the most up-to-date 2nd Mile Project news from the Moravian Board of World Mission. For inspiring or creative ways of inspiring your mission committee or congregation on adopting a project such as these, contact Jill Kolodziej (Western District) at [jillannk@charter.net](mailto:jillannk@charter.net), Glenna Tasedan (Southern Province) at [moravianonward@yahoo.com](mailto:moravianonward@yahoo.com), or Lisa Mixon (BWM) at [lisa@mcnp.org](mailto:lisa@mcnp.org).

# Hospitality

*Continued from Page 1*

More than a piece of clothing, the giving, receiving, and wearing of a kanga marks significant events in Tanzanian life. New born babies are wrapped in a kanga at birth, girls are given a new kanga to mark their passage into womanhood, special guests are honored with the gift of a kanga, on their wedding night husbands and wives each wear half of a kanga. Kangas are passed down from mother to daughter, each representing a different event and conveying a specific thought.

Each kanga is stamped, at the bottom in a colored rectangular box, with a wisdom saying. Considered Swahili proverbs, the words on the kanga are important. Some serve as blessings, some lift up family life, some warn against gossip or invite discussion about religion, politics, or culture. Here are a few examples:

- Kombe la Mungu li wazi. *means* "God's cup is open"
- Penzi la mama haliishi *means* "A mother's love doesn't end"
- Mhesabu visa pendo haliwezi *means* "Whoever counts the mistakes of their friends can never love"
- Chakukupu sina ila nakuombea dua *means* "I have nothing to give you except to pray for you"
- Mola atayamaliza wala sina wasiwasi *means* "I am not worried because God is going to take care of me"
- Ingawa tumeachana yaliobaki ni mazoea *means* "Even though we have separated, our past experience lives on"

Many, simply by wearing a kanga, invite those around them to join them in the joy of praising God, serving the Lord, and celebrating the Christian life. Faith is like a kanga. Think of it, like a kanga, faith comes in different shapes, sizes, and colors. Like a kanga, our faith has many uses, we can wrap ourselves in it during troubling times, we can apply it to our thoughts and actions leading us to be more just, loving, and compassionate, and we can share it with those around us as we live in community with one another. Like a kanga, our faith is with us in all circumstances calling us to care for others and challenge us to be more like Christ. Like a kanga, our faith transforms us and can be transformed into a variety of ministries when worked on by dedicated and skilled disciples. Like a kanga, our faith celebrates various events and occasions in our personal and spiritual lives. Kangas are passed down from generation to generation; just as we pass our faith on to our children and grand-children. Kangas display words of wisdom for all to see, our faith is displayed as we share with others God's Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And, like a kanga, simply by wearing faith everyday, we invite those around us to join us in praising God, serving the Lord, and celebrating our Christian life.

From the love they have for each other, to the love they shower on their guests, from the simplicity of their everyday lives to the bold acclamation of their faith, from the food they eat to the clothes they wear, the Christian people in Tanzania celebrate their faith. What a wonderful example for us to follow.

*By Rev. Cynthia Rader Geyer*



PRAYERS

August

# Pray Every Day

2008

1. "in Him you are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit" Ep 2:22 Live a life that will be a witness to the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit. Pray for those whom you know and work with, family members or neighbors who do not know Jesus as their Savior and Lord.
2. Give us boldness to speak the truth with discernment and grace and to follow your leading. Pray for the Board of World Mission as they spend today in a spiritual retreat. Bless them and the Mission Societies of the Moravian Church around the World.
3. Pray for the Board of World Mission as they meet today and tomorrow in Bethlehem, Pa. Ask God's blessing on Gerard Rudy as he visits in and around Winston-Salem with news from the clinic in Auhass, Honduras. (Oct. 3-13)
4. Father, bless the programs, services, and activities of our churches. Bless the choirs, Bible study groups, fellowship groups, and other small group efforts that seek to nurture your people. Let your word be taught and heard.
5. Sunday- "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty. The whole earth is full of His Glory" IS 6:3 Pray for Franklin Graham and Samaritan's Purse, ministering all over the world.
6. Pray for George Goff who flies a mission plane into the deepest areas of Honduras to take people to the Moravian hospital. Praise God for George's loving pastoral care.
7. Pray for President Bush and his advisers; for city and all local governing bodies, that they may hear the voice of the Lord, and act accordingly. Pray for all of our men and women serving in the military, in war zones as well as on the home front.
8. Pray for international bible studies; i.e., Bible Study Fellowship, and Community Bible Study, and for the leaders and students who attend these studies.
9. Pray for all retired ministers, missionaries, pastors, Sunday school teachers, bible study leaders, as well as those who are still actively leading in these activities of worship.
10. Thank you for loving, caring people who appreciate those who serve as called.
11. Sunday. "A Sabbath rest remains for the people of God" Heb 4:9. Pray for the Braimas and their missionary efforts in Sierra Leone. Praise God for the many open doors he has provided and for the lives that have been added to the Lamb's Book of Life.
12. Father, may the good works of our global missionary teams become familiar to those who sit in routine, comfortable worship services each week.
13. Father, in a nation, perhaps a world, being more tempted by pleasures of the flesh each and every day, let us be resistant. Enable us to live a life that will witness to your greatness.
14. May our gratitude for our Moravian missionary efforts become greater day by day, week by week. Inspire each of us to offer ourselves to you in service to others.
15. Pray for the presidents and members of the PECs, the president and all members of Mission Societies of the Moravian Church. Pray that many other people will take interest in and support the mission efforts of the Moravian Church around the world to the praise and honor of Jesus.
16. Pray God's protection for the entire Woo family as they live and witness to people in Asia. Pray for peace and support for them as they minister so far away from friends and family.
17. Pray for those people in jails around the world, both civilian and military. Pray for those who take the word into jails and prisons. Ask that many hearts will be open to receive Jesus during such hard times.
18. Pray for the Moree family in Europe and others who are working in translation ministries. Pray for peace, health and support for them. Pray for encouragement, understanding of the language, monetary system, and other aspects of life in another country.
19. Sunday - Thank you, Father, for those who serve so faithfully. Bless those who put personal comforts second to fulfilling the mission you call us to...to 'Go.'
20. Pray for Tom Conrad and the seminary in Bethel Alaska. Pray for the students and their families. It is not easy for them to spend that much time away from home as they try to manage a subsistence life style.
21. Thank God for all Stephen Ministers. Pray that they will be available to those who need their ministry. Encourage others to offer themselves in this ministry to others.
22. For the beauty of the earth, oh Lord we praise you. For the love that surrounds us and keeps us close to you, we stand in awe and bless your Holy name.
23. Thank you for those who use their gifts and talents to lead and witness to young people in your name. Help all of us to reach out to the youth around us and to share our lives and our witness with them. Raise you for them and their witness to us.
24. Pray for those who are shut-ins and are unable to get out to worship and do routine activities. Pray also for widows, widowers and others who are might be alone or lonely
25. Pray for those attending the Unity meeting taking place in Capetown, Africa this week to discuss the Moravian growth phenomenon there.
26. Sunday- "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." Lev 19:2 Spend a little more time with the Lord today. Find time to listen for His urgings. Allow Him to love you. Praise Him for His wondrous love and forgiveness.
27. Pray for Mark Ebert and the Moravian Disaster Response. Ask God what your role in this vital ministry should be. Pray for the safety of those serving in this way.
28. Pray for those who are shut-ins and are unable to get out to worship and do routine activities. Pray also for widows, widowers and others who are might be alone or lonely.
29. Give thanks to God for Michael and Cecilia Tesh and their dedication to the orphans, pre-schoolers, and babies in the "Ray of Hope" compound in Shimba Hills. Pray for blessings on their chicken/egg project. May Cecilia stay in good health.
30. "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Ph.4:13 Give strength and grace to Anne and Rob Thiessen working among the Mixtec.
31. "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Ph.4:13 ..and nothing I do in my own strength will survive, therefore, Father, help me to rely on you for every decision I make today. Help me to remember to praise and thank you for everything you do for me and through me today.

# “Where Did You See God Today?”

*Continued from Page 1*

We were moved to tears by the sincerity and love they expressed for their mission experience. I knew that I wanted to have that experience for myself.

When one lets it be known within a church that they are willing to volunteer, they will experience no delay in becoming actively engaged. So, when I expressed my interest in missions, I was immediately invited to join the Moravian Youth Fellowship, attend their Sunday evening meetings, and mark my calendar for Laurel Ridge Mission Camp (LRMC). LRMC is the mission experience that we provide for our middle school youth, and this was my second year attending this trip.

As a veteran, I had a general idea of what to expect. On a mission trip, I have come to expect delightful and heart-warming surprises.

The week starts with the selection or assignment of work crews. This year, the boys were vastly outnumbered by girls, although that doesn't really matter, as I had learned on my previous trip. Girls at this age are very competent with hand and power tools, and very quick studies when taught something new. By the end of the week, they are all capable of consistently hitting a nail with a hammer, taking accurate measurements, and operating a sliding compound electric miter saw – all without injury or mistake of any significance.

Our assigned project consisted of building a seven-foot wide deck connecting the existing front and side porches of a small ranch-style house built into about a thirty degree slope. For various reasons, we were instructed to make our deck a free-standing structure, unattached to the house.

Our first task was to dig thirteen postholes, with good old-fashioned posthole diggers. The camp did not have an auger, and finding one to rent did not look promising. I stood there on Monday morning wondering if we would be able to finish digging thirteen holes in a week, much less build a deck over them.

My crew threw themselves into the posthole-digging task like warriors. One young lady actually loved digging holes, and she set the example that the rest of us followed. By some miracle that occurred right under my nose and watchful eyes, we had managed to complete the digging of thirteen holes and have seven posts set in concrete by the end of the first day! We were exhausted, but we felt a great deal of accomplishment on our van ride back to Laurel

Ridge that afternoon.

We continued to make excellent progress each day of the week, but on Thursday morning we grew fearful that we might not finish before we had to leave to head home to Raleigh. It was then that angels, in the form of two other leaders from Raleigh Moravian and three Laurel Ridge Mission Staff, appeared on site and pitched in to help complete the job.

A successful building project gave all of us great satisfaction, but the manual labor we provided in the mountains is a small portion of what is offered and received on a mission trip.

Our homeowners, Maddie and Raymond, and their playful dog Molly, became our friends. Youth and leaders would drift into Maddie's living room or kitchen to chat, prepare string beans for canning, or listen to Maddie's stories about life in the mountains. Raymond began the week by observing our efforts with the project but was soon lending a hand or a sage word of advice regarding the nailing, sawing, or drilling being done. By mid-week, he was an indispensable member of the crew. Maddie and Raymond opened their home and their hearts to us. They were appreciative of our efforts. They welcomed us into their lives and made a positive and lasting impression on the minds and hearts of our young teenagers.

Each evening, all the youth and adults from Raleigh Moravian would assemble to reflect upon the day. “Where did you see God today?” was the question asked of each of us. The answers our youth gave would make you laugh and make you cry; make you proud and leave you stunned; make you think and make you thankful. There was nothing fake or rehearsed. Their words and their emotions were true and real. They value their mission experience, and they would love to tell you about it!

*Submitted by Ray Ansley*

*Next Month: Another report on MDR*

# Pics

## Of Today's Stories *Raleigh Moravian to Ocean Springs*



*Teammembers lined up nailing the shingles*

## Hospitality in a Kanga—Tanzania



*Worship*



*Tranzania Moravian Church*

ONWARD is published by the Moravian Mission Society, South, Inc. Subscriptions cost \$10./year. Editor: Glenna J. Tasedan. Mission Society membership is \$20./year for Seniors & Students, and \$25./year and includes Onward each month. Checks are payable, and mailed to: Mission Society, 500 S. Church St., Winston-Salem NC 27108. News submissions to: [moravianonward@yahoo.com](mailto:moravianonward@yahoo.com) . Pray Every Day ministry participation to Helen Gullledge at [helen@akcc.org](mailto:helen@akcc.org) . ONWARD is on the world wide web at: [www.bethabara.org/ONWARD.htm](http://www.bethabara.org/ONWARD.htm)

## The Indiscriminate Sweeping of a Pandemic-Series: Part 2 of 2

The past several years saw renewed zeal and passion from the Church in South Africa in its fight against social injustice. The Church is empowered and emboldened in its fight against HIV/AIDS and other issues of common concern to the poor and destitute. As it breaks the silence, its voice is growing louder in response to the painful lament of God's children as the pandemic continues to rob a Continent of its children, its possibilities and its future. It is mobilizing leaders and resources and has begun to create real change through educating its members and communities about the importance of education –

prevention, abstinence, testing and treatment, and remaining on treatment - and reverence for the gift of life. The Church is working to change the behavior patterns of the young adult demographics (between the ages of 15-24), where the percentage of prevalence is higher than in other demographics. In addition to its personal engagement with those living with AIDS, the Church is also working in tandem with government agencies and NGOs to find solutions to break down the cultural barriers to combat stigma that is so deeply connected to the disease.

The Church has been called to live the Gospel and it is inspiring to witness this as the response unfolds. Fundamental to our faith, Christ directs us through the scriptures,

'.....Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matt 25:40 TNIV) Meeting these new challenges in very practical, hands-on ways of caring for the sick, ministering to the hurt and the dying, and nurturing the caregivers is a living testimony of one's faith. And, incredibly, once more, in times of tremendous distress, South Africans are poised to teach the world new lessons of survival, courage and compassion.

One of the largest and most effective Christian organizations involved in helping to meet the spiritual, social, health, political, and economical challenges is the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA). Formerly the Federation of Lutheran Churches in SA, and founded in 1966 to promote fellowship among its congregations, it has evolved into LUCSA, a communion of several of denominations, including the Moravian

Church of South Africa (MCSA). The organization is led by the Lutherans and each denomination pays annual dues although its budget of about R1 million per annum is derived mostly from funding in the West. It is broad-based with an extensive agenda, and operates in ten separate countries in Southern Africa.

# Oh God, why?

For the past fifteen years, its main objectives have been primarily HIV/AIDS and the uplifting of the disadvantaged communities across Southern Africa. Its focus has also been on educating, training, and empowering leaders at all levels of churches as well as women and young people at the grass roots level.

With support from LUCSA and other funding sources in the United States (U.S.) and Europe, the Masangane Moravian AIDS program began in 2005. The

program, which has been evaluated by institutions in SA as well as by institutions in the U.S. and in Europe, is considered a pioneer of its kind. The genesis of Masangane was the brainchild of the late Rev. Mgcoyi, who was a

Moravian pastor, a teacher and leader, and the Rev N. Matinisi, both from the Eastern Cape, and the Rev. Renate Cochran, a German missionary, working at the time in South Africa, and others within the Moravian Church on the Eastern Cape. The name, "Masangane", "to embrace" in the Xhosa language, conveys a powerful message from the South African Moravian Church as it strives to follow the teachings of Christ. Even as some progress is being made through Masangane, there is still major work to be done to transform attitudes of biases and prejudices of many leaders and members within the Church. It is no accident that the Masangane program originated in the Eastern Cape where the majority of residents represent the poorest of the poor. The congregations of the MCSA are comprised primarily of African blacks and "coloreds," people of mixed races - the indigenous San people

(also known as Bushmen) and early Dutch settlers – who lived on the Western Cape where the church originated in the 1730s. The term "colored" was designated through the stratification process that characterized the apartheid era. African blacks were denigrated to the lowest level of racial hierarchy. This has contributed to racial tension between the two groups, exacerbated by an assertion that HIV/AIDS strictly affects only African blacks. Unfortunately, these erroneous beliefs not only undermine efforts of reconciliation but further contribute to the spread of the disease. The question of denial is still very real as Alice Sears, another member of the

Likewise AIDS Ministry team that visited last November, stated in her article in the May issue of *The Moravian*. Many South Africans who have lost loved ones have yet to acknowledge that those persons died of AIDS or of AIDS related diseases.

Despite these setbacks, the Church is on a mission for positive change and momentum is gaining across all denominations. In comparison to the late 1990s, there has been a significant upsurge in the response of the public sectors, too. AIDS education and activism are evident across the full societal spectrum. Billboards advocating prevention in all of the 11 official languages of the land tower above city streets and in rural areas; there are frequent public service announcements on television and radio. Schools are skillfully utilizing the internet to educate, break the silence, and combat stigma. Peer groups, special choirs, and theatrical performers tour the country with special cultural skits, songs and stories, intended to reach out to people of all ages to help them understand the importance of prevention and getting tested and even dispelling harmful myths. Many mining companies that have lost more than half of their migrant workforce and experiencing serious shortfall in profits, have begun creating in-house clinics for educating, testing, treatment, and care of their employees. The government has rolled out comprehensive AIDS programs in all major cities, free to all South Africans who can't afford payment. In addition, social programs have been instituted to help alleviate poverty: child grants for all children under age twelve, disability grants for persons with a CD4 count under 200, foster grants, and pension grants for the elderly, a benefit to unsung grandmothers who have become the primary

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## Sweeping of a Pandemic—Part 2 of 2, Series

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caregivers of their grandchildren due to AIDS. There are over 200 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), both national and international, working on all aspects of combating the disease, ranging from research for finding a cure, to lobbying for less expensive drugs, to providing basic education about prevention. The combined effort on prevention and eradication of AIDS in South Africa is a profoundly massive operation which is gaining momentum daily. Based on its own history and the survival and determination of its people, I am convinced that South Africa is on a trajectory of inevitable change for the better. There is no question that given the scale of the problem, change will take time. But what is important is that key players across the political, civic, social, and religious spectrums are now fully engaged.

Conversations with the leadership of the MCSA as well as the Moravian Department of Development, Diaconic and Welfare Services have ensured the expansion of the Ma-

sangane program. They have outlined an impressive agenda and are positioning themselves to aggressively seek funding at home and abroad. The value of Masangane is a life-line of survival for many people in rural areas where the centers are located; its value to those communities is precious. Through on-site visits with clients/patients and their

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families, Kim and I had the opportunity to experience both the pain and joy of their shared stories of desperation, courage, and survival. At every home, we heard expressions of gratitude to the Moravians for saving lives and uniting families. Patients/clients and medical professionals praised the vision and commitment of the Moravian Masangane program. The Church has brought renewed hope to the people living with AIDS and to their families and part of that hope is conveyed through the incredibly small and dedicated staff that serves each of the centers. Expressions of sheer happiness lit up faces at each home where care workers and treatment counselors were welcomed, with the kind of affection reserved for beloved family members. We were moved, too, by the compassion

and love lavished on the patients by the staff. Support groups, comprised of former clients who have resumed meaningful lives in their own communities, are living examples to those afraid of disclosing their status and come forward for testing and treatment. Some of these women, and they are mostly all women, travel long distances, sometimes on foot, to attend weekly meetings where they affirm each other and help comfort and soothe the anxieties of new clients. These are indeed “mustard seeds of hope” which have begun to yield the fruits of the spirit, that are slowly but assuredly drowning out the lament of “O, God, Why?” Instead, the sounds of praising and praying are growing louder, “O, God, teach us the way and strengthen our faith to help us go the distance. With Christ, all things are possible.”

As we in North America join our hearts, hands, and prayers with our South African brothers and sisters, in fact with all of our brothers and sisters across the globe, to explore ways of working together to address the prevention and ultimate eradication of the HIV/AIDS, we, all of us together, validate the teachings of Christ through our faith in action. *Submitted by Carol Armstrong, Member of the Board of World Mission.*