



Our new bishop, Brother Joachim Kreusal, reflects on the Christmas message



'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all on whom his favour rests.'

(Luke 2:14)

Do you cherish your childhood memories of Christmas? You may have fond memories of gifts like a doll or a toy car, you may think of the Christmas tree in all its splendour and light, of festive church services and family gatherings, of celebrations under the Caribbean sun or of fun on snow-covered ground - depending on where you grew up.

Christmas is a time when we 'dig out' these memories and know they are a God-given blessing.

For many people Christmas is a time when you can leave the daily routine behind and enjoy the moment, a time when you realize that all the hard work leading up to it was worth-while. For others it can be a lonely time.

Christmas is also a time to reflect on its meaning. One of my favourite pictures is a woodcut by the German artist Hans Georg Annies (1930-2006) which can help with such reflection.

The title is 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all on whom his favour rests'.

It almost seems as if the picture has very little to do with the angels' message. There are no angels in the picture. Perhaps the image has more to do with the consequences.

We start with the centre of the image. As the carol says, Jesus was 'lying on a bed of straw' in 'a draughty stable with an open door'. But then, is it just a manger in which Jesus is lying? It has the shape of a cross, and his arms are stretched out like on the cross. The Christ child has a facial expression which is that of an adult, looking at you and me with wide open eyes. The fourth

verse of the quoted carol comes to mind, 'mine forgiveness by Your death for me, child of sorrow for my joy'.

It seems as if the whole earthly life of Jesus, from birth to death, can be found in the centre of the picture. Is this what it means that 'the Word became flesh', that God entered humanity? Does it mean he entered the life and situation of everyone? I would say 'Yes'. By 'everyone' I mean 'everyone'; the distressed man or woman lonely at home or walking hastily along our streets; the jolly neighbour; the person who became a victim of abuse and the 'average' satisfied person; the one suffering from an incurable or terminal illness and the one whose life is easy-going (at least at the moment); the traumatised children and adults in Syria and elsewhere in the world; and the children in a playground here. Yes, God entered everyone's life.

It seems as if the cross comes out of the crowd around Jesus. Does it mean that his cross is a result of people's behaviour and attitude? Look at the dark figures. Their hands are clenched to fists. Some of them turn against each other. They use their hands to shield their eyes from the bright light which they cannot cope with. Is this where we are in our world?

But the Christ child seems to bring a change: people near him are immersed in light. They open up their hands and reach out to each other. They turn towards each other and make peace with one another. This year it is 25 years since the Berlin wall was brought down and the dividing border through Germany was overcome. Peace and reconciliation are possible, in people's personal lives and in the international arena.



**Connect
2014**

(page 137)



**Ockbrook took
part in Heritage
Weekend**

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Y.P.M.A. Projects being carried out in 2014

Aquaboxes

An Aquabox is a means of supplying safe water to those in desperate need.

It is a box that is filled with water and a filter and hand pump clipped to the side. The user then just has to pump to get drinking water.

Y.P.M.A. is providing 17 Aquaboxes, each suitable for providing drinking water for a whole school or village. In addition seven smaller units suitable for a family have also been provided.



Khalatse school children



YPMA new school bus

Motor Bikes for Western Tanzania

Motor bikes are being purchased for use in the southern area of Western Tanzania. This is a very poor and dusty area of the province. These bikes will be used as transport between Moravian Church communities. Motor bikes have been chosen as it is the only economical form of transport due to very poor road conditions.

School bus for Khalatse

Money has been provided to purchase a new school bus for the Moravian school at Khalatse. In the school there are 200 students from different villages, 10km, 12km, and 22km from the school. The new bus is a great help to get the students to school on time.

Paul Greenhough
Y.P.M.A. General Secretary

Christmas message

continued

The angels' message becomes reality. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all on whom his favour rests'.

I pray that our churches become more and more places of healing, reconciliation and peace. I am convinced that God will not fail us when he pronounces his love and peace over his creation. However, he wants us to be involved in the process. He does not want to work without us.

Without any doubt Christmas has its sentimental values. It is good to immerse in good memories and relaxation.

At the same time Christmas remains a challenge, for the message of peace from above is as relevant as it always was. In what way can we allow ourselves to be drawn towards the centre, towards light, peace and Christ himself?

Will it have a ripple effect like the light in the picture?

Missing Vowels *by Augustus Gottlieb*

One of Augustus Gottlieb's favourite TV shows is the devious BBC2 quiz programme, "ONLY CONNECT". Each episode of the quiz ends with the "MISSING VOWELS" round, where words or phrases have had the vowels removed; the remaining consonants are squashed up together and then respaced just to cause further confusion. The contestants then have to identify the word or phrase in question.

Augustus Gottlieb has prepared twenty "MISSING VOWELS" Christmas Carol first lines for you to have a go at.

The answers are on the back page.

1. NTHBL KMDW NTR
2. WYN MN GR
3. NCNR YLDV DSCTY
4. THFR STNW LLTHN GLDDSY
5. WHLSHP HRDSWTC HDTHRFL CKSBYNGHT
6. NTSB YSBRN
7. NGL SFRMTHRL MSFG LRY
8. MRN NGST RCHRN GSGHT
9. PSTTH RCLCK
10. LTT LTW NFBT HLHM
11. DNGD NGMR RLYN HGH
12. SWTHG LDNSS MNFLD
13. CMN DJNT HCLB RTNS
14. GTLL TNT HMNTN
15. HR KTHH RLDNG LSSNG
16. NFNT HLYN FNLT WLY
17. LNGT MGNB THLHM
18. MR YHDB BYYS LRD
19. SHML YNGN BDFS TRW
20. WTH RKN GSFR NTR

Latest news from the Provincial Youth and Children's Office



Joy's Journal

This month I thought I would share my hunt for a summer camp venue. You may think this is easy, until you put 'activity centres' into Google. There are hundreds of centres. So where do I start? What are my priorities? They can be listed as:

- **Location.** There are some fantastic centres offering really exciting activities but they are in Cornwall, rural Wales (usually on the coast) or Scotland! Considering where the campers have to travel from, many of these are not suitable, as we don't want to start camp with young people tired out from the journey.
- **Camping or not** - the church does not have either the physical resources for camping, or the man power, so a venue with fixed four walls is preferred.
- **Size.** This year I have been looking for accommodation with 40-50 beds. This seems to be a difficult number - too large for some of the homelier places and not quite enough for the really large venues.
- **Space for two groups to have their own home base.** It is great if the two groups can have a hall-type space each, one of the halls must be big enough for all camp to gather if there is no separate space.
- **Outdoor space is essential.** Camp spends lots of time playing games outside. After a school year cooped up, the young people appreciate time spent playing games, chilling and enjoying.
- **Space for leaders.** The volunteers who run camp have given up a week of their holiday, so it is really important they have some space away from the young people where they can flop, recharge and drink coffee, tea or cola.
- **Finally, cost.** We do try to keep the cost down for camp, but the centres charge anything from £200 - £350 per week.

PYCC looks at the options I offer to them and make the final decision on venue and dates, sometimes after a lot of discussion. So when you see the advert for camp, think of the amount of work that has gone on to select the venue. It is not an easy task!



Joy Raynor

Fairfield

Colour Calendar 2015 - A Year at Fairfield Moravian Settlement

£5 + £1.20 P&P. Contact Sr Janet Warr on 0161 370 0132 or at jwarr@uwclub.net

Christmas Tree Festival, 06 December 12noon - 6pm; 07 December 1pm-5pm. Theme of 'The First Christmas'. Light refreshments.



Barney the Stable Cat

I'm Barney the hardworking black stable cat once terror of mice and the scourge of each rat: I blend in the shadows, my eyes amber bright, and keep up a vigil throughout the long night.

I weave in and out of the crisp bales of straw to scatter the vermin along the earth floor while oxen and cattle are sleeping like stone with scarcely a twitch of a muscle or bone.

When I was a youthful and mobile town cat, you wouldn't catch me sitting still on a mat, but in my old age, growing stiff in each joint, I reckon an idle life might have some point.

However, I feel that this job is worthwhile and even allows for my own special style, as inching along I will make a great pounce though often misjudge with a tumbling bounce.

The child now appears to be soundly asleep and misses, I trust, every failed frantic leap. You can't always score and I'll settle for that and freely admit I'm an old has-been cat

but keep up my efforts until the dawn breaks to clear out the stable for all of our sakes... 'Bravo' comes a call, very low yet so clear, then bristling fur tells me angels are near.

Margaret Connor

Noticeboard Dec 2014

From the Unity Women's Desk

Continue to pray for our sisters and brothers in Sierra Leone as they deal with the ebola virus epidemic. Pray for the medical doctors and nurses who are serving the people in western Africa and for other scientists who are searching for vaccines to prevent and treat this terrible virus.

Bach - Christmas Oratorio

It is said that Christmas holds a greater place in British society than it does in almost any other major country. The importance of the trading figures for the festive season cannot be overestimated, and the appearance of Christmas goods in the shops and on line seems to be earlier and more extensive year by year. And therein lies a sadness - for this is not how it should be. The message at the heart of Christmas - the birth of Our Saviour - takes second place to the ignoble art of using its traditions as a means of obtaining, if at all possible, something you want at someone else's expense.

Christmas is still a time for music in our churches. Traditional carol services, and even the midnight Eucharist on Christmas Eve, still draw large numbers of people to Church. It provides a wonderful opportunity for the Gospel to take its rightful place in the celebrations.

Music still occupies a central place in this, and composers, both light and serious in style, still try to address its demands. Many performances will be given of Handel's Messiah, intended as "a sacred oratorio", although the composer was probably as interested in its dramatic as its religious potential. It was actually written for Holy Week, and the annual performances to raise money for London's Foundling Hospital always took place in Lent. Some performances were held in the Covent Garden theatre during the Lenten season, and arguments raged as to whether such a subject should be heard in a 'Play-House'

Less frequently performed, but more suitable, is the so-called Christmas Oratorio by J S Bach. It is not really an oratorio, but a sequence of six cantatas, carefully linked both musically and in content, to present the meaning of Christmas. Written in 1734 and 1735, the work sets the story to music as a way of presenting it to the congregations of the two main churches in Leipzig (St Thomas and St Nicolas) when Christmas still meant celebrating the biblical story within the worship of the Church. Bach took very seriously his duty as a professional Christian musician to provide this, and to do it prayerfully. The six parts were each intended to be used in the appropriate service as the days of Christmas unfolded.

The six cantatas each focus on one element of the story as found in Luke and Matthew. The first one, intended for Christmas Day, begins with an unforgettable shout of jubilation in a

triumphant chorus, using trumpets and drums as well as voices in praise of what God has done for us. The music settles to a dignified yet rich order as the utter simplicity of the way in which God entered the human experience in the Christ child is shown in quiet and beautiful harmony. It includes what we have come to know as the Passion Chorale, set to the words O Lord, how shall I meet you?

Part Two, for the day after Christmas, is a reflection of what this means, and uses the pastoral setting with the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem to reveal to the world the dawn of salvation. The first movement is not a chorus but a gentle and lovely pastoral symphony of telling beauty. The text of the Gospel record alternates with choruses which reflect upon the meaning of the story, leading to a most exquisite aria for the alto soloist (Slumber, beloved), a devotional and meditative lullaby for baby Jesus.

The third part, for 27 December, sets the narrative of the shepherds coming to Bethlehem, with all the rustic naivety they can muster in celebration that they, above all men, were given the news first. So on the way home they sing the same chorus, giving the occasion a simple continuity.

New Year's Day is officially acknowledged in today's society as a holiday, often used to recover from the excesses of the night before. In Bach's Lutheran experience the church congregation acknowledged the festival of the Naming and Circumcision of Christ, and part four of the oratorio is more serious. It explores the meaning of the day in pausing to think of the meaning of the name given to the child. The music plays with the names, using both Jesus and Immanuel, and touches on the cross. Each line of the final chorale begins with 'Jesus', offering a short reflection on what the name will mean and what it will offer to the faithful Christian.

Part Five is given to the first Sunday of the New Year, the date of which varies, of course. It focuses on one element of the Christmas story that cannot be precisely dated - the journey of the Wise Men to visit the new-born King. It also touches on the extremes of authority as seen in the frightened uncertainty of Herod and the certain joy of the baby, who demonstrated such power but not in a hall of kings. This is explored in the final cantata, the Visit of the Magi, celebrated on 06 January, the feast of the Epiphany. The political machinations



Statue at Church of St Thomas in Leipzig. Here Bach worked for 27 years and is buried in the chancel

of Herod in trying to establish exactly where the child - his rival - lay compares with the offering of gifts: the three treasures 'of mystic meaning' given by the Wise Men, and God's gift to them of a different way home, such a simple gift to break the potential of a kingdom that did not rest on truth.

In this wonderful work of music there are many symbolic layers. One is that the music tells of deeper meaning through the sequence of chosen keys; another, that much of the music is borrowed from earlier compositions and given entirely new meaning in the new setting it is now expressing. The achievement of the whole work is that it is now greater than the sum of its parts, a theological statement in its own right.

I wonder what the members of the congregation were thinking about on the way home? Would they have understood all that the music was trying to convey? Would they have seen it as a sequence of sermons revealing such depths? Would the music have opened its secrets to them after all that Bach had put into it? Nearly three centuries later, it still has such depths to reveal through its structures, through its meaning and through how this is expressed. But if all we see in it is the pleasing tunes and the standard of the performance, we will have rather missed the point.

Rather like Christmas itself, in fact.

David Bunney

Connect 2014

When Moravial 2014 was cancelled in March, Zoe Ferdinand and Roberta Hoey decided that this did not mean there would not be an international event in 2014 and that they would organise a visit to Herrnhut for British young adults, inviting other young adults for the European Province to join them. A party of three leaders and eight participants left from various airports in August for a week.

Connect was an incredible trip which lifted my spirits and renewed my faith significantly. We arrived on the Saturday evening in Herrnhut, where we stayed in a lovely youth hostel. Straightaway, I felt at home as I was re-united with fellow Moravians who I have previously met at summer camp, Cultra or other youth events with in the Moravian church. We started talking straight away as if we had all seen each other a couple of days ago. It was then that I knew that this week was going to be amazing as I had re-connected with friends that, no matter what the distance or how little or frequently we speak, exists and survives.

Hannah Cooper

This week consisted of not only spending time in Germany in Herrnhut and Dresden but also being able to have a day trip in the Czech Republic to do a bit of walking and to see the place where the first Moravians went to worship while they were being persecuted.

While in Herrnhut, at the beginning of our trip, we were given an opportunity to walk around the area with a guide, finding about the history of some of the places and what the current uses are. During one, we were given an opportunity to have a look from the top of the bell tower of the church. It was a lovely view although it was not so much of a lovely day!

Peter Dunn



We also went on the Sculpture Walk. At the start there is a large wooden sign-like sculpture saying 'Ich bin der Weg. Geh': 'I am the way. Go.' This could be seen as the path that will be taken is the way in which we should go, or something that people can think

back to and reflect on the path that God is sending them on. We were given background on some of the artists and sculptors, what some of the meanings of the sculptures were, and were able to meet one of the sculptors while we had a small barbecue halfway through walking. It was a lovely atmosphere!

Our time in Herrnhut also saw us attend a morning service at the Moravian Church, look at God's Acre, go to the top of the prayer tower and go to the Advent Star factory. Our time in Dresden was not as long but we attended Moravian Church and had our Bible study there, had a tour and an evening out! Throughout the trip, I felt my spirituality grow and help me feel much closer to God, with the help of those who attended with me. It was a great time of fellowship with those from our own Province and also with those who we met in Germany and the Czech Republic.

Rianne Quildan

On reflection I would say the trip's true success was its balance between fellowship and spiritual reflection. Now I'm in London and working with the Anglicans, I always get asked what's distinctive about being Moravian? How are we different? I now very often tell them about the trip and what we did, as I believe I can speak for all us in saying that due to it we now have a much better idea of what being a Moravian is really about!

Offerings

Having escaped the stable cat (page 135) the jubilant mouse sends Greetings!

I'm only a mouse

*a pathetic wee thing
but I've razor sharp teeth
and a tail tough as string.*

I weigh very light

*and there's little I need;
just a few crumbs that fall
from the animals' feed.*

I take little room

*so can fit in a stall
where a child is kept warm.
but I've not told it all:*

I'm always at hand

*chewing deep in the straw
till the sharp ends are soft
and will not rub him raw.*

I've nothing to bring

*so I give him my tail
as a living plaything
and there's never a wail.*

I'm only a mouse

*a pathetic wee thing -
but believe it or not
I'm at home with a King!*

Margaret Connor

James Montgomery Three Christmas Hymns

**Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

James Montgomery, 'the Moravian Poet', was born in Irvine, Ayrshire, in 1771 where his father, a Moravian minister later to die as a missionary in Barbados, had been sent to start a Moravian congregation. Following an unpromising school career at Fulneck, Montgomery was respectively baker's apprentice, bookseller's assistant, radical newspaper editor and finally full-time writer.

Montgomery was a deeply devout man. He claimed to be the only Moravian in Sheffield, his adopted home, where he attended both Wesleyan and Anglican churches. He was a member of Fulneck congregation and wrote two long poems about Moravian missions: **The West Indies** and **Greenland**.

During his lifetime his verse was praised by Robert Southey (the poet laureate), Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron. Byron considered Montgomery's epic **The Wanderer of Switzerland** to be worth more than a thousand of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads!

Today, Montgomery is best remembered for his hymns. Indeed, this seems to have been his wish, for he wrote in the introduction to his 1825 collection, **The Christian Psalmist**, that he would rather be the anonymous author of a few hymns which were an imperishable inheritance to the people of God than bequeath an epic poem to the world to rank with Homer, Virgil or Milton.

In that same introduction he sets out his ideas on what makes a good hymn: it should have a distinct subject, a beginning, a middle and an end. Every line should carry forward the development of the thought. Part of the idea behind this, he tells us, is to aid memorisation to enable them to return 'to haunt the imagination and refresh the soul'. He had no time for a hymn that began with one idea but turned into a mish-mash to suit the rhyme.

Angels from the realms of glory was first published on 24 December 1816 in the

Sheffield Iris, the newspaper he edited and owned, and later in **The Christian Psalmist** under the heading **Good Tidings of Great Joy to all People**. The hymn is a perfect example of Montgomery's views on the structure. We have the angels in Luke's nativity story in the first verse, then the shepherds in the second, and Matthew's wise men in the third. In the original, the fourth and fifth verses were for saints and sinners respectively who would both worship the newborn King. But Montgomery's final verse:

**Sinners, wrung with true repentance,
Doomed for guilt to endless pains,
Justice now revoke your sentence,
Mercy calls you, break the chains:
Come and worship, etc**

proved either too evangelical or not to hit quite the right seasonal note, and is now generally replaced with a blander ending (Though the infant now we see him, etc) which rather upsets Montgomery's balance.

Montgomery's second well-known Christmas hymn is **Songs of praise the angels sang**. Although this hymn is frequently classified as a Christmas hymn, there is little specific to Christmas in the wording which deals, in Montgomery's logical and organised way, with all the circumstances in which songs of praise are sung to God. Verse two clearly refers to the angels in Luke but that is the only specifically Christmas verse. The first verse appears to refer to the morning stars singing together at creation in Job 38.7. This hymn was included in Cotterill's hymnal of 1819, printed and edited by Montgomery and Cotterill. Cotterill was vicar of St Paul's Church in Sheffield and tried to enforce this hymn book on his congregation, who rebelled and brought an action against him. The book was withdrawn and a shorter, less evangelical, version substituted. Montgomery, on his own admission made many alterations to hymns within Cotterill's collection in order, as he said, to correct the sentiment and improve the expression, a matter in respect of which he later felt rather uncomfortable. The hymn also gave its name to the popular **Songs of Praise** hymnal compiled by Ralph Vaughan Williams and others.

**Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
Great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free;
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.**

There is good authority that this hymn was written to be sung at the 1821 Christmas Lovefeast at Fulneck Moravian Church. The hymn paraphrases, or rather interprets, Psalm 72, a prayer for the success of a king and an account of the benefits of a good king's reign. Those with enthusiasm for Christian prophecies in the Old Testament saw the Psalm as foretelling Christ's kingdom. Matthew Henry's Commentary of 1706 reads: 'But, though Solomon's name is here made use of, Christ's kingdom is here prophesied of under the type and figure of Solomon's'. Montgomery also understood the Psalm in this way and the hymn thus becomes a reference to the birth of Christ:

**Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring,
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise the people sing.**

The hymn continued to be sung at Christmas appearing, for example, among the 51 hymns in **The Book of Christmas Hymns** published in 1868. It is also associated with Palm Sunday and Epiphany.

Adam Clarke, author of a once popular Bible commentary, heard Montgomery recite the hymn at a Wesleyan meeting and was so impressed that he appended the words to his commentary on Psalm 72, commenting, 'he has seized the spirit and exhibited some of the principal beauties of the Hebrew bard, though, to use his own words in a letter to me, his "hand trembled to touch the harp of Zion"'.

Montgomery wrote over 400 hymns - most now forgotten - but these three retain a lasting appeal. He died in 1854, and his funeral attracting many thousands of mourners. A statue to his memory stands outside Sheffield Cathedral, the east window of which is dedicated to him.

Adrian Wilsdon

Tanzania

Sr Gillian Taylor of the PEC writes of her recent visit

Here I was again on my way to Tanzania. I travelled this time from Stockholm where I had attended the European Mission Conference. It was 4 a.m. when the taxi collected us for our flight to Dar es Salaam. I was travelling with Sr Judy Ganz, the Director of North American Board of World Mission, and her colleague, Jill Kolodziej, Director of Antioch, which assists young people to do voluntary work overseas.

We arrived in Dar es Salaam in the late evening, and after some sleep set off again at 6 a.m. to fly to Tabora where we were given breakfast and our schedule for the visit. This involved, almost immediately, a six-hour drive to the Southern District of the Western Province, leaving Jill to look at projects more local to Tabora. The Chairman and Bishop wanted us to visit the Southern District as it is the poorest in the Province. It was a very dusty and bumpy journey.

It had been arranged that we should visit as many parishes as possible. These started with Mgunda, then on to Kiyombo, Mwamagembe, Rungwa, Ikumbukwa, Bitimanyanga, Mtanila, Matwiga, Lukula and Kitunda. Matwiga was an unscheduled stop, added in at the last minute as the congregation were eager for us to visit them. All were visited in five days.

In Tanzania each parish has a Pastor and there may be two to three hundred members. There are anywhere between four to ten outstations attached to each parish. The Pastor is also responsible for these, with the assistance of Evangelists - we would equate these to Lay Preachers. These outstations may also have one to two hundred members. It is a great problem for the Pastors to visit the outstations as the roads are not good and travelling on bicycles very slow. Therefore the aim is to provide all Pastors with a motorcycle. Since I returned I have asked the YPMA if they could do anything and they have provided £6,000 for this. Br Yona, the Chairman of the Province, tells me this will cover almost all the remaining motorcycles they need and is very grateful to YPMA. He will send photographs for me to publish in the **Messenger** when they have purchased the motorcycles.



MWA-funded dormitory in progress

At each of the parishes a service was held and this was a service of inauguration of the Pastor and also for baptisms and confirmations. This meant that there were two services a day (lasting three hours each service) and Sr Judy performed 130 baptisms and 50 confirmations during the five days.

The Tanzania people worship with such enthusiasm. We were entertained in each parish by at least four choirs and their singing and dancing puts us to shame. I told them that I needed to bring them back with me to show the British Province how cheerful worship could be. This was met with a great cheer.

When I consider this area which is very dry, has no industry and therefore great poverty, it is amazing that the people still provided us with plenty of food and were sincere in their welcome



Sr Judy Ganz baptises

to us. They could not do enough for us.

After our trip to the Southern District we did return to Tabora where I was glad of a shower and just to wash my hair. We had been three days with no electric or running water. In Tabora Br Yona showed us a disused dispensary which they were trying to reopen. They wanted to fund this themselves and asked for a loan. However on my return we had a donation of £3,000, in memory of Sr Dorothy Moreton. This was to be used for work in Tabora. Therefore I was able to give Br Yona more good news as this would reduce the loan he required. It was good to hear them ask for a loan rather than a donation as it gave them ownership and independence.

It was also good to hear that a seminar on stewardship, which we and the Board of World Mission had financed, to teach Pastors and Church Elders administration and the need to contribute to the Province to enable their Pastors to be paid, had 'borne

fruit'. The figures showed that they had been able to pay all pastors which twelve months previously had not been the case.

My very last visit was to the Bishop Kisanji Girl's School. Here I was able to see the dormitory that is being built with the assistance of money donated by the MWA. They are up to the roof stage and hope to complete before the next school year as they are very short of space for the number of girls wanting to attend the school.

When I reflect on my visit, which was mainly to a very dusty and dry part of the province I feel humbled at the work that these pastors are doing in such difficult conditions. I know that most of us would not survive long term as we are used to our 'creature comforts'. How many of us would want to be without running water and electric which is so basic to our everyday life.

Bishops' conference in Mwanza Tanzania July 2014



The 1995 Church Order states that every seven years a Bishops Conference take place. The first of these was held in 1992 in Nova Paka, Czech Republic, European Province, and celebrated the 400th anniversary of the birth of Comenius. The second took place in 1999 in Laurel Ridge, North America (South) Province; and the third in 2007 in St. Thomas, Eastern West Indies Province. The fourth had to be in Africa, and seventeen bishops from sixteen provinces met in July 2014 in Mwanza, the second-largest city of Tanzania. They came from Alaska; North America North and South; Jamaica; the Eastern West Indies; Honduras; Nicaragua; Suriname; the European Continental and Czech Province, Rukwa, South, Southwestern and Western Province, Tanzania; Congo and South Africa. Unfortunately neither of the British bishops could participate for health reasons: as an integral part of the Unity we missed them and also others who couldn't get a passport in time.

It was a 'young' Bishops' Conference - almost half the participants had become bishops since 2007. So we needed to get to know each other. We spent a lot of the time listening to reports from the provinces, with their different circumstances, culture, language, climatic conditions and economic situations. We learnt how to work as a bishop in the cold region of Alaska with months without travel possibilities; or in the remote areas of Nicaragua.

There are wonderful relations between bishops, in both regional partnership or longtime friendships.

I met Br. Augustine Joemath who served with me more than 30 years ago when we organized children's camps. The knowledge about the Unity, recent and long-term, helped us to express in a pastoral letter our will to strengthen the Unity from within, but also our sorrow about tendencies to move apart from each other.

A conference is always a chance to show the best of our church. All the East Africa provinces showed how honoured they were, and the Tanzanian Provincial Chairs came to at least one session. During the official opening ceremony, held in one of the Mwanza hotels, a representative of the Tanzanian

Government gave a speech (which showed a slight misunderstanding of what a Moravian bishop is). The Hus Memorial Sunday gave the focus for the open air service; on the other evenings the bishops visited a Moravian congregation in Mwanza. The Western Tanzanian Province were good hosts, and showed us aspects of the daily life of the church.

The main topic of the conference was the role of the bishops in our Church. We could agree on three main roles: to ordain, to represent the continuity of the Church; and to be 'pastor pastorum', pastor for the pastors.

A clear difference from the rest of the world-wide Unity is another role in East Africa. While to us the bishop is a brother or sister, to our members in East Africa he is a father figure, the 'Baba Askofu'. This is part of their cultural heritage but is also a role adopted from the other denominations.

Another major topic in Mwanza was how to walk beside the pastors and the congregations, and how to live the pastoral care which is needed. Time was too short to discuss everything on the agenda, and at the end there was a great desire to have more communication among the bishops.

A Bishops' Conference, however, is not only a place to discuss issues but also an opportunity to listen to God's Word and to pray for our Church. In East Africa most of the singing is now done by choirs, so it was only in the last days that singing bound us together. The short morning services showed how few of us can express ourselves effectively in English. This changed significantly when the person moved into their own language during prayer. The Holy Spirit helped us to overcome language barriers. Here we became united in the Lord.

It was a gift and a blessing to participate at Mwanza. It was a special personal gift that I could spend my birthday in the Serengeti National Park.

We need times of exchange and learning from each other to serve in our role: holding together our church as Unity while following Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

Volker Schulz

Unity Bishops' Conference July 3-11, 2014 Mwanza, Tanzania A Pastoral Letter to the Congregations of the Moravian Unity

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

"Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised" (Psalm 48:1). Seventeen representatives of the 49 bishops serving the worldwide Moravian Church greet you from this 4th septennial Unity conference of bishops. We rejoice in your expressions of faith, love, and hope clearly evident in all regions of the Unity. We feel very blessed here with a daily celebration of vibrant and colourful worship. The generous hospitality of each Moravian congregation we visited in Mwanza is matched only by the enthusiasm and skill of the young people singing and dancing for God's glory.

We are keenly aware of vast differences in the socio-political environments affecting our congregations and ministries. Many provinces report reviews of Moravian identity as well as desires to reclaim the formative mission focus of our church. Challenges include discerning who determines identity and for what era and context. While we celebrate the great diversity in practice throughout the Unity, we sincerely believe those who choose not to adhere to certain basic elements of what it means to be Moravian—as described in the Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum—may not continue to self-identify as Moravians. We are truly blessed to be part of the Unity and are mindful of the sense of sacrifice that comes with this responsibility.

We acknowledge humbly that all of us are, at times, stretched because of the diversity throughout the Unity, yet choose to remain committed to shared identity and ministry within the broad umbrella of the Unity. In light of recent developments in some regions of the Unity we reaffirm our statement in the pastoral letter of 2007, consistent with the Moravian Covenant for Christian Living: "We agreed that marriage is between one man and one woman, and we agreed that in our pastoral care we must offer the love of Christ to all God's people."

Evangelism remains a primary passion. We celebrate the growth taking place in various regions of the Unity embracing 1.3 million members. Noted methods of growth include biological, immigration, conversion, and petitions from small or large groups of Christians in areas like Burundi and Uganda. We commend those involved in exchange programs at various levels and encourage their continuation. We believe the short-term or long-term exchange of ministers and other church workers will help strengthen the Unity. Along these lines, we place great value in youth convocations and exchanges involving multiple provinces.

Meeting for this week in Mwanza, we are aware of our privileged

position in being able to listen to and learn from each other. We are strengthening the bond between us. This is invaluable in our roles in conflict resolution and in our prayers for the church. We are grateful for the partnership we are invited to share with administrators in the various provinces where we live and serve, offering our full support of the doctrine of confederal authority. Quoting a piece of German doggerel recalled by Bishop Kenneth Hamilton which may describe one of the fundamental functions of a bishop: *Der Bischof ist ein Mann / Der ordinieren kann* ("The bishop is one who is allowed to ordain"). Quoting another Moravian bishop, Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1727): *Herrnhut's* (that is, the whole Brethren's Unity) time remains unbroken

***As the workings of Your hand
Walk in our church as token
And our love will be its bond,
Till we're finished and expectant
Of as good salt of the earth here***

Being usefully spread out there (abroad in all the world). Please be assured of our prayers for you and for the faithful mission and ministry of the church in the world. We encourage all regions in the Unity to consider, in 2015, the observance of the 600th anniversary of the martyrdom of John Hus.

"I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!" John 16:33 (NRSv)

With every blessing,
Alinikisa Cheyo, Tanzania, Southwest
Stanley G. Clarke, Jamaica and Cayman Islands
C. Hopeton Clennon, America, North
Samuel Gray, America, South
Peter Green, Alaska
Humbert Hessen, European Continental
Augustine Joemath, South Africa
John Kent, Suriname
Petr Krasny, Czech
Kingsley Lewis, Eastern West Indies
Evelio Romero Marmol, Honduras
Tshimanga Mukadi Moise, Congo
Lusekelo B. Mwakafwila, Tanzania, South
Conrad Nguvumali, Tanzania, Rukwa
Isaac Nicodemo, Tanzania, West
Volker Schulz, European Continental
William Webster, Nicaragua

Taxes and multinationals

From the Ekklesia weekly briefing, end of October 2104

Multinational companies may have a moral duty to pay more tax than the letter of the law strictly requires of them, according to a new Christian Aid report about tax and theology.

This will be an uncomfortable conclusion for many defenders of tax avoidance, who often imply that what is legal is also morally sound. The report argues that the morality of tax practices depends on their impact on human beings.

In her contribution to the publication, Tax For The Common Good, theologian Professor Esther Reed of Exeter University

argues that tax avoidance is not right if it damages other people's ability to live decent lives.

Christian Aid launched its tax campaign in 2008. Tax for the Common Good says: 'In 2008, Christian Aid estimated that developing countries were losing as much as US\$160bn each year from tax dodging - more than they receive in aid. That figure is based on an estimate taken from work carried out in the 1990s, claiming that transfer mispricing accounts for seven per cent of global trade each year.'

For more, see www.christianaid.org.uk or www.ekklesia.co.uk

Congregation News

Ockbrook

For the third year, Ockbrook Moravian Church and Settlement took part in Heritage Weekend. During the 1914-1918 War, the Church Hall (the 'Lecture Hall') was used as a military hospital and so that became the focus this year.

In addition to the exhibition showing the history of church and settlement and the tours, the Lecture Hall was set up as the hospital ward it was during the War. Our archives have many photos so we were able to achieve a reasonable authenticity. We also have the Commandant's Book containing details of all the patients and staff and setting out the hospital's rules and timetables. The Derbyshire Red Cross lent us hospital equipment from the period as well as VAD nurses' uniforms, so three ladies dressed as nurses with one young

man in First World War army uniform. A human touch was provided by an autograph album of one of the nurses which contained messages and drawings from patients.



The Church Diary also recorded various activities.



One visitor knew that his father had been a patient. We were delighted to



find information in our records and also to help him to discover details of his father's medals which had been lost.

Over 40 visitors joined the two Settlement tours. On the Saturday evening the Settlement Singers with additional soloists and readers provided a concert of period music.

Marie Rose

Salem

On 07 November a Welcome Service was held at Salem for Sr Jane Dixon and her husband Br Mark by the Lancashire District. She had already taken her first services at Royton and Salem the previous Sunday.

The service was conducted by Br Peter Gubi with the help of Br John Wilkinson. There was a congregation of approximately seventy, mainly from the Lancashire district churches, but also the local Churches Together in both

Royton and Lees and District. There were also people who braved the M62 and came from the Yorkshire district, where Sr Jane had been completing her training.

Over refreshments it was enjoyable for people to introduce themselves to Jane and Mark and to catch up with those from



other congregations that we do not see very often.

The congregations at both Royton and Salem are looking forward to Sr Jane's ministry, after saying goodbye to Br Philip Cooper after many years' service with us.

Anne Broadbent

Do you sense God is calling you to ordained ministry?

This is a big question and one that the Provincial Board would encourage anyone to explore.

So, if you answer to the above question is YES, or even if you are unsure or would like to know more, why not come along to the **ENQUIRERS' DAY**.

To register an interest, or to know more, please speak with your minister or Br David Howarth david.howarth@moravian.org.uk tel. 020 8883 3409.

The closing date for next year's day is 19th December 2014. The programme and venue will reflect those attending.

Enquirers' Day Saturday 24th January 2015

Coronation Avenue (Bath)

In August eight girls and three Leaders went to Corfe near Swanage to join with the Bath Boys Brigade and Taunton BB for a week at camp. We had a wonderful time and the girls said it was the best camp ever and didn't want to come home.

We did activities that included competitions, quizzes, a visit to the RNLI, swimming, pitch and putt, walks, a challenge day, an evening to see fireworks, camp concert and different workshops.

We had the tail end of Hurricane Bertha threatening us but it did not spoil our week at all.

It was good to see the young people all mixing well together and making friendships that will last.

In October we held a Junior sleepover in the Ascension hall. There was DVDs on offer, friendship bracelet kit, foot spa's and games. We all went on a night walk which they loved and ended up in a park where they had fun playing on the equipment in the dark. The evening was rounded off with chips and hot chocolate at the hall and eventually sleep.

Sandy Smith (Captain)

Dukinfield

On 5th July, we were happy to welcome friends to the official opening, by Br Bob Hopcroft, of our Church Family Garden.

When we sold the Manse we kept half of the manse garden and this was fenced off, old trees and privets removed and over a period of 18 - 24 months a garden slowly took shape under the auspices of Brs Nigel Clark and Bob Storey helped by many other pairs of hands too numerous to mention. Br Matthew Taylor, being the most agile of our congregation was delegated to climb up trees and chop down unwanted branches, etc. The land on which the Manse and garden was built was previously a farmhouse and we found thousands of cobble stones which formed the farm yard. These have been cleverly utilised in building a



wall and a barbecue area.

It was good to remember our forefathers (and mothers!) who worked so hard during the years 1968 to 1973 to build our present church building and garden benches have been purchased by several families in their memory.

This hard work, tenacity, total dedication and sheer inspiration

culminated in the opening. The weather was kind and a good day was had by us all. The Besses Boys' (brass) Band played, we had a barbecue, games, tea room, tombola stalls, good as new and plant and cake stalls. A wonderful day - so good that we hope to make it an annual tradition.

Sue Selby

Leominster

It is nearly 2 years since I wrote about my experiences as a newcomer and since our sister Doreen Davies died at the age of 94, after being a member for nearly 40 years. We miss her. She fulfilled many functions within our church, not the least of which was as secretary. I have had to inherit that task and therefore appreciate how much she put into it. Our committee were asked to help clear out her papers and only then really appreciated the breadth of her interests which were mainly the history of her own family, of the local church, of the Moravian church worldwide, of Leominster town and indeed of Herefordshire. Underneath it all ran a deep interest in other people.

We have had funerals and memorial services, one of which was to remember my own husband, Peter, who died 30 November 2013. The church were very supportive, seeing to both the cremation in December and the memorial service in April 2014. We all went to Viv Proctor's memorial service and Rev Monger's at Dore Abbey, courtesy of our organist Ruth Norsworthy.

The consequent drop in numbers has been made up by the return of previous members. Eileen Hewson was welcomed back into membership and Dulcie Scott looks forward to the same soon. Robert Milan and Hilary Bulmer play our

pipe organ or the piano if we have moved into the hall because of cold weather. Occasionally no-one is able to come and we resort to a CD of hymn accompaniments.

Our MWA is small, but our needlework group, Busy Fingers, reaches into the wider community and has grown in numbers. We make items either for ourselves or for the 'table' which always has toys, garments and gifts for sale, especially leading up to Christmas. If it becomes too full, we run a sale on a Saturday, maybe once a year, and include other organizations. The money goes to Mission for Aviation Fellowship, one of Doreen's favourite charities.

MWA also donate to stipulated charities and we have a special project in a local retirement home where one of our elderly members, Nesta Radnor, Sister Joy Owen's aunt, has been for some years. To celebrate her birthday, we donated the money for an arbour bench and plaque in their Serenity Garden

Brother Colin comes to preach once or twice a month and also for meetings and visiting. I take services every other month or when there is an emergency. We have a list of seven other preachers from the Methodist and Anglican churches who come when they can, the advantage being that we are in the afternoon and services are usually

in the morning elsewhere. We have a ministers' and organists' tea once a year to thank them.

Our numbers at services fluctuate considerably, swelling for Harvest and the Christingle service when children visit from Brownies and extended families. Our hall is used for activities such as University of the Third Age and English lessons for Eastern Europeans, which I do voluntarily under the auspices of Churches Together in Leominster. The latter also have meetings in our hall. Brother Colin and I represent our church at the regular bi-monthly meetings. We are the Women's World Day of Prayer venue for 2015, so we have begun organizing that. Organists love our organ and have been recently to share a day plating together.

The church roof leaked badly last winter and a tree came down in the storms. Because of the complication of being a Grade 2 listed building, it has taken all year to consult the council and find a builder to fix the roof. The trees will have to wait until further funding becomes available, but we have established how to proceed.

Despite our small membership we are active and alive in the community of Leominster and the wider church.

Dilys Howard

Congregational Register

Baptism Salem 28 September 2014 Hannah Catherine Shaw

Dates to remember

1

Dec

World
Aids Day
www.worldaidsday.org

10

Dec

Human
Rights
Day
www.un.org/events/humanrights

25
Dec

Christmas
Day

From Church House

December

16th – 17th PEC, BMB and
Estates property
meeting

Church House closed
Wednesday 24
December until Friday
02 January inclusive

Christmas Carol first lines - the answers:

1. IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER
2. AWAY IN A MANGER
3. ONCE IN ROYAL DAVIDS CITY
4. THE FIRST NOWELL THE ANGEL DID SAY
5. WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR
6. FLOCKS BY NIGHT
7. UNTIL US A BOY IS BORN
8. ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY
9. MORNING STAR O CHEERING SIGHT
10. PAST THREE A CLOCK
11. O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
12. DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH
13. AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD
14. COME AND JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS
15. GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN
16. HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING
17. INFANT HOLY INFANT LOWLY
18. LONG TIME AGO IN BETHLEHEM
19. MARY HAD A BABY YES LORD
20. SEE HIM LYING ON A BED OF STRAW
21. WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE

MISSING VOWELS

Prayer Notes

December 7th [Second Sunday in Advent] Mark 1:1-8

Son of God, who came to take our nature upon yourself and sent your messenger to prepare your way; baptize us with the promised Holy Spirit. Touch our hearts, enlighten our minds and cleanse our lips. Call us back to simpler discipleship, readier obedience, and more loving service so that we may be true messengers of your life to others. Keep our paths straight: our hearts sound, our lives pure and our spirits humble, that we might prepare and make ready your way so that when you return you may find in us a dwelling prepared for the Lord of glory. Amen

December 14th [Third Sunday in Advent] John 1:6-8, 19-28

Lamb of God, whose way was prepared by John: the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. Thank you for the way in which you choose such unlikely tools to do your work - fillings uncultured mouths with mighty arguments and proclaiming your eternal truth in provincial dialects. Direct and bless those who in our generation would speak your words. Teach us to be still before you until our ears have caught your accents and our eyes have glimpsed your truth. Then, Lord, open our lips and our mouths shall show forth your praise, and bear witness to your glory. Amen

December 21st [Fourth Sunday in Advent] Luke 1:26-38

God Most High with whom nothing is impossible, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to become the mother of the Saviour of the world, who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven and was made man. Grant that, remembering her faith and obedience, we may seek in all things to do your will, instantly and completely and holding nothing back. Pour your grace into our hearts so that, as Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and became the mother of the Lord and the most blessed among women, so we, believing your word, may receive Christ to dwell in our hearts, and by our lives make plain the mystery of his incarnation and serve his kingdom which has no end. Amen.

December 25th [Christmas Day] Luke 2(1-7) 8 - 20

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who showed your love for us by sending your only Son into the world that we might live through him as your children. Give us the precious gift of faith so that we may know that the Son of God has come. Fill our hearts with the good tidings of great joy which is for all the people, as we remember his nativity and join our praises with the song of the heavenly host as we sing 'glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill'. Amen

December 28th [First Sunday after Christmas] Luke 2:15-21

Heavenly Father who in this holy season has called us again to celebrate the birth of the Holy Child, our Saviour. We have listened to the message of the angels, singing his joyful praise in heart and mind. Like the shepherds we have been even to Bethlehem and seen the thing which came to pass, and the baby lying in a manger. Help us to treasure all these things in our hearts and give glory to you for all that we have seen and heard. In your strength may we go out into the world and make known what has been told us concerning this child; that the love of the only Saviour be planted in every heart and the name of Jesus be set high above every name. Amen

Richard Ingham

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