

truth claims. Early statements of faith became absolute tests of orthodoxy. The discussion begun by Dunn could move forward through a consideration of the historical development of the “exclusive claims” which cause him concern.

Finally, Dunn has rendered a valuable service in presenting issues of Gospel and culture and context which will become increasingly important in Moravian Church discussions. The recent Unity Seminar grappled with these issues during its sessions in Surinam. At the request of the 1995 Unity Synod, the Unity Standing Committee on Theology has prepared a paper, “A Moravian Perspective on Gospel and Culture,” which is being circulated to the Provinces for discussion in preparation for the 2001 Unity Synod. It is appropriate to conclude with comments from this paper.

“The question of truth is one aspect of the ambiguity of our situation. As Christians we confess that we know the One who is the Truth and whose Spirit ‘can guide us into all truth’ (John 16:13). But we are finite beings in a relative world, and the absoluteness of God’s truth is a matter of faith and hope for us, not a matter of certain knowledge or possession. We cannot claim absolute knowledge and the right to estab-

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The eternal Creator God LOVES US! He wants a relationship with us. After God created Adam and Eve, He walked with them in the garden and talked with them. After they sinned, they hid from Him. The conversation stopped.

lish absolutes for others, even though in the past the church did just this. Nevertheless, faith and hope prevent us from falling into the relativism that is spreading throughout postmodern cultures. This relativism asserts that there is a plurality of truths in the area of values (morality, ethics, religion, etc.) and that no absolutes exist. In faith and hope we are assured of the truth that can be known in following the path of Christ. What is this truth? That God, out of his love for the creation, became human in Jesus of Nazareth for the salvation of all creation. Knowing this truth prevents us from accepting the false absolutes of other authorities. Accepting the incomplete nature of our faith and hope helps to protect us from setting forth our own absolutes for others, which often disguises our personal or group interests or prejudices.”

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God provided a flood, leaders, priests and a sacrificial system, prophets, and kings to try to bring people back in communication with Him. These things were temporary. So, God sent His Son Jesus to live on earth as a human being, and to be killed by crucifixion as a sacrifice for our sins. So, the relationship with God was open again. But, a relationship takes two. God is open; what is our response?

It is God's dearest wish that ALL peoples would come to a saving knowledge of Him (1 Timothy 2:3,4). In John 14:6, Jesus tells us that He is the only way to come to God. John 3:16 tells us our response is belief in Jesus, God's Son who died for us.

Is this all there is to it? Do we just stop here and enjoy the open communication with God that Jesus purchased for us? No.

God began with Abram in Genesis 12:1. He told Abram to leave his country, people and father's household and go to the land He would show him. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:2-3). God's passion to bless all the peoples of the earth was first stated to Abram.

The last teachings Jesus gave His disciples are worth studying. Luke 24:46-47 says "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem." Acts 1:8 tells us how this will happen: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

So, Jesus gives us the responsibility of being His witnesses nearby and to the ends of the earth. Then, He provides the Holy

Spirit to empower us to do it. What will happen?

I love the Bible; it tells us how the story ends. Revelation 7:9-10 tells about what God revealed to John. "After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the lamb.'"

Finally, Revelation 7:11-12 says, "All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: 'Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!'"

This is what we will be doing in heaven: singing, worshipping and praising God for ever and ever right alongside those from every nation, tribe, people and language. We can start right here and right now in God's church on earth. So long as what we do and who we are glorify Him, the church will persevere.

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