

new understanding transformed a person like Peter. It can transform each of us: our groups, churches, and even our denomination through the power of God's spirit through Jesus Christ working in and through us. After an intentional period of acknowledging the mystery of how God speaks to us, we discover our unity in God as we wait, question, and listen. It is then that we can talk about vision. Each congregation has the opportunity to come together and talk about their deepest hopes, and dreams. When we place all of our hopes and dreams together, we begin to discover the vision that God has already planted deep within our hearts.

I am reminded of why I trusted this process in the first place. To quote Sarah S. Henrich, "For Christians, the way in which we form groups and manage hospitality

speaks among believers and to outsiders of the character of God." Inspire Bible Study Series (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1997, p. 25). I envisioned "community" to be a diverse group of persons willingly sitting around the table, speaking the truth in love. This willingness, I believe, is a leadership skill of the twenty-first century. It's a new beginning for those of us who have experienced too much sameness! As a province we can challenge one another to commit time and energy to "actively wait" for God's vision as Habakkuk did (Hab. 2.1-3). We can step out boldly and trust God in this process, despite our imperfections, graced by God's affection for us.

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Cynthia Rader Geyer

Why Do They Hate Us?

In the fall of 2000 fifteen Moravian clergy gathered at the Unity Seminar in Suriname South America. The goal of this gathering was three fold. First, to deal with theological and church issues relevant for the worldwide Moravian Church. In this case we explored the effects of Globalization and Pluralization on the Moravian Church. Second, to get to know the life and work of one Unity Province. And third, to form a fellowship of younger brothers and sisters coming from

different cultural and regional background of the Moravian Church. During this experience I came to see that one of the greatest challenges facing the Church in the next ten years is the disparity of wealth between Christians in industrialized nations and their Sisters and Brothers in third world nations.

One of the more memorable experiences I had took place not long after I arrived. One

of the participants, who happened to be from a third world country, came to me and asked if we could talk. I looked forward to having a heart to heart and developing a deeper friendship with him. We found a quiet space in the courtyard and sat down. As we began to talk I could see my new friend was nervous. He took out a small note pad indicating he had written down some things that he didn't want to forget. The small note pad shook as he went through a laundry list of items, "We have become friends. You have showed me pictures of your husband, family, and home. I would like to show you pictures of my home and family, but I cannot because I do not have a camera. Would you be willing to give me the money to purchase a camera?" He then asked me to think about it and get back to him. I began to think about it. Do I give him the money, about \$50.00 US? On the one hand I felt sad that what I had hoped would be a heart to heart talk ended up being a request for money. On the other hand this conversation opened my eyes to the fact that on a deeper level, our relationship was shaped by the economic realities and inequities of our lives.

As part of the Seminar each provincial representative gave an overview of their province, their work, and their life. One of the prevailing questions was "How much do you get paid?" The answers ranged from North America - \$1,700 US Dollars per month to, several third world countries - *if we get paid* - \$25.00 US Dollars per month. I

remember being asked about my salary and trying to justify the monthly salary by sharing information about the general cost of living and the actual poverty line in the US. All my attempts at rationalization failed, I was one of the wealthy.

The truth of the matter is that the people of the United States are only 20 % of the world population, yet we use 80% of the world resources. A little closer to home, Moravians in North America debate whether or not to buy a second or third car, while many Moravians in South Africa and other third world countries don't have enough food to feed their children. The amount of money I spend on bottled water each month is equivalent to one-month salary for a Tanzanian Moravian Pastor. What is wrong with this picture?

North American Moravians number approximately 50,000 and control high amounts of wealth. This begs the question, how are we using this wealth? As a church are we modeling what we should be doing? What about tithing a percentage of all church income? Say the first 10%, above and beyond Benevolent Giving, for God's work in the world? Are we sharing the best of what we have with others around the world? How could someone in the third world not look skeptically at our faith when we have so much and are unwilling to share? The irony is that we are not doing a good job at sharing our wealth, but we are doing a very good job at sharing the desire for

wealth.

Suriname is known for its amazing hand carved cedar wood. On one of our trips through the city of Paramaribo we went to a wood carvers shop. We found the wood carver at home on a little back street location, a vacant lot that had been turned into a small cardboard village. There was no running water, very little to eat, and looks of despair everywhere. Yet, in two of the cardboard homes, there were television sets. The owners of these prized possessions had tapped into the cable of a neighboring home and plugged into the overhead electric wires. Members of the cardboard village gathered around the television sets to watch CNN, ESPN, and MTV, taking in all things North American; their desire to acquire wealth and material possessions was growing each minute. It's true. We have no problem sharing the desire for wealth and material possessions.

To sum up, here is the situation that we are creating. We are one small group of individuals who use the majority of the world's resources. We are one small group of individuals who control the majority of the wealth in the world. We are one small group of individuals creating a hunger in others for wealth by broadcasting images of our lifestyle around the world. The outcome: jealousy, resentment, and, yes, even hate.

If we didn't know it before September 11, 2001 we ought to know it now following the terrorist attacks. Where did terrorists attack?

Our natural resources? Our children and schools? Our places of worship? No, they attacked our money center. We appear to be a culture that worships our wealth. Attacking the World Trade Center, a proud symbol of that wealth, expresses outrage at what they see as the heart of our culture.

As Christians we know that Jesus was concerned about the pitfalls of a materialistic culture. Remember the parable of the sower? In it Jesus tells of a farmer planting seed. The farmer is Christ and the seed the word of God. Some seed fell on the path, some on the rocky places, some among the thorns, and some on the good soil. Concerning the seed that fell among the thorns, we are told in Mark 4:7, "...the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain". Jesus goes on to explain, "...but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing" (Mark 4:18 & 19). Jesus concludes the parable with, "let those who have ears to hear, hear" (Mark 4:9).

Could it be that like this seed, we in North America have heard the word but the lure of wealth and the desire for other things have come in and "choked it, and it yielded no grain"?

I wonder what Jesus thinks as he looks upon our sisters and brothers in the third world struggling to survive as we in North America worry about adding on another garage to store all of our things. Could it be

that when it comes to our possessions we are taking our cues from our culture rather than from Christ? I believe Christ is calling us to change the way we treat the wealth

entrusted to us. I believe that Christ is calling our North American Moravian Church to turn from our culture and look to him.

Hampton Morgan, Jr.

Let's Revisit the *Ground of the Unity*

2002, a year of provincial and Unity synods, marks the 45th anniversary of the adoption of the *Ground of the Unity* as the statement of faith of the Moravian Church. The 1957 Unity Synod that approved the *Ground of the Unity* was the first gathering of the worldwide Moravian Church after the end of World War II twelve years earlier. That Synod gave the Church a new doctrinal formulation. In the intervening years the world has changed much, while the *Ground of the Unity* has changed little. The Moravian Church should seize the moment provided by these first synods of the new millennium to at least begin a formal conversation about whether the *Ground of the Unity* remains a sufficient doctrinal foundation for the challenges of being the church of Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century.

In Confessing our Unity in Christ: Historical and Theological Background to *The Ground of the Unity*, 2nd ed. (Moravian Archives, January 2000), Daniel Crews offers helpful insight into the context out of which the *Ground of the Unity* was developed. Crews notes that the impetus for a new doctrinal statement came from the shattering events experienced by European

Christians, especially the Germans, in the 1930s and 1940s. The German Evangelical Church capitulated in the face of Nazi ideology and many German Moravians were unable to resist the regime's demand that all citizens bow at the altar of this demonic power. It was the still vivid and bitter grief of the church's failure during those years that convinced European Moravians that a new doctrinal formulation was imperative. Though other provinces had not gone through the same experiences, the Holy Spirit cultivated a remarkable unity and the new doctrinal statement was unanimously approved.

Those urging a new statement did not start from scratch. They drew from their own Moravian theological tradition, but it seems clear that the Continental Moravians were also deeply influenced by the Theological Declaration of Barmen (Crews, p. 24). The Barmen Declaration (adopted in 1934) was the doctrinal affirmation of the "Confessing Church," those German Protestants who recognized very early in the unfolding of the Nazi project that the very soul of the German church was at stake. The Barmen Declaration targeted the heart