

A Memorabilia of 2006

Without question, 2006 will go down as a very busy year for the Southern Province thanks in large measure to our second quadrennial Synod, held April 19-23 at Black Mountain, North Carolina. A total of 310 voting delegates and clergy adopted 47 resolutions that will provide structure and guidance for the Province over the next four years. Jesus Christ as the Savior in word and deed was reaffirmed by resolution. A series of resolutions reflected a growing diversity within the Southern Province. One resolution on racial reconciliation apologized for the Moravian Church's participation in the institution of slavery and called for racial reconciliation, elimination of institutional racism, and diversity in our churches. A parallel resolution condemned institutional discrimination of any kind. And a third resolution called again for justice for women. Youth and Latino ministry were encouraged, and church growth was seen as a challenge to be met by the entire Province. As a church with a long mission heritage, mission outreach as ministry to the spiritual, social, physical, and economic needs of humanity was seen as a special challenge for 2007, which will be the 550th anniversary of the Moravian Church and the 275th anniversary of the beginning of the Moravians' mission work.

The daily life of the Province was addressed in a number of resolutions. Synod called for a full-time position of a human resource or personnel professional, whose duties will include the creation of a human resource policy manual. In addition a Provincial Administration/Ministries Task Force will examine all aspects of Provincial agencies and their relationships with local congregations. Synod saw the need for a "Shorter Moravian Hymnal" to benefit new congregations and to expand worship resources. Br. Sam Gray was elected a bishop of the Unity, and after a number of ballots, Br. Wayne Burkette succeeded Br. Bob Sawyer as president of the Provincial Elders Conference.

While Synod employed much energy and work as it laid out the direction of the Province for the next four years, the rest of the Province was just as busy doing their portion of service for the Lord. A number of Provincial agencies have provided brief summaries of their activities for the year.

Ultimately it is PEC that sees Synod resolutions to their conclusion, and with 47 of them passed by Synod last April, PEC will hardly have a spare moment. With three of its five members newly elected by Synod, PEC reorganized last spring and set to work on the resolutions including Mission Challenge 550, Provincial Administration/Ministries Task Force, Synod Study Commission, and minimum salaries for clergy. In addition, PEC is laying the groundwork for an intersynodal conference in April 2008. In September PEC adopted six goals for the Province over the intersynodal period, focusing on building unity in mission and growth. Triennial reviews of congregations began again in October with PEC supporting and encouraging churches to become more committed and intentional in their efforts to grow in membership and discipleship.

As an umbrella agency with a number of committees and commissions reporting to it, the Board of Christian Education remained a busy place. A Moravian Holy Land Trip in January began the year, and a Justice for Women conference was sponsored in March. New Gemeinschaft Committee work began teaching Moravians how to write a personal spiritual autobiography. Working with the Salem Presbytery, the Board of Christian Education is having its Resource Center serve both Moravian and Presbyterian churches in the Winston-Salem area.

Much of the Board of Christian Education's work is with families, especially children, who are the future of our church. Synod provided helpful direction here by calling for a new Moravian resource for spiritual formation for families. Already a new Children and Family Life Commission is working hard to respond to this mandate. An e-newsletter for parents and families is being created, and a family small group experience will be entitled "Roots and Wings." In addition an intersynodal design

conference will be held next March at Laurel Ridge focusing on spiritual formation in the family, and a special weekend retreat next September will help boys and girls navigate our culture as children of God.

Several youth and children's rallies were held during the year. The one at Clemmons on October 8 drew 287 young people from 27 Moravian churches. The Regional Youth Council (RYC) saw growing congregation participation. And looking ahead, a Young Adult CONVO event is planned in the Czech Republic in 2007.

Laurel Ridge, the Province's very special worship place in the mountains, enjoyed another successful year of camps and conferences. Summer camp numbers were up, especially with our younger campers, and that despite a nationwide decline among church camps. Laurel Ridge's Growing for a Lifetime campaign is nearing completion, and already we are seeing more concrete results with construction beginning on the new wing of Higgins Lodge. Among its many programs and opportunities, Laurel Ridge was host in October to "Common Threads," the second annual Moravian Women's Retreat. About 25 women from six congregations enjoyed the weekend in the mountains with program leader Maggie Wellert of Sister Bay, Wisconsin.

The Board of Evangelism and Home Missions, the growth engine of the Province, has assumed more responsibilities with the blessing of Synod. Latino ministries will receive greater emphasis. BEHM assumed oversight of the Older Adult Commission in February, and began plans in the fall to integrate its work with Senior Friends to fully develop older adult ministries in the Province. BEHM has also partnered with the parish nurse program at Friedland and Salemtowne as a wider conversation has begun among churches and agencies in Forsyth County to organize congregational nursing in the community. Synod also reaffirmed two continuing programs of BEHM, the Cornerstone Campaign for new church development, and the Forsyth Jail and Prison Ministry with chaplain Robert Wolfe.

In addition, BEHM continues to foster growth in the Province with our three newest churches, Cordero de Dios (Lamb of God), New Beginnings, and Holly Springs. Holly Springs welcomed its new pastor, Tracy Robinson, and his family, originally members at Palm Beach Moravian Church. This is a historic call, for it is the first time a predominately white Southern Province congregation has had a minister with non-white heritage, in this case Nicaraguan.

When hurricane Katrina swept through New Orleans in August 2005 little did we envision the unifying outpouring of response by Moravians. It has spanned both Northern and Southern Provinces, involved a number of Moravian agencies in cooperative effort, and now has its own title for current and future needs: Moravian Disaster Response. The interprovincial Board of World Mission purchased a storm-damaged house in coastal Mississippi, and teams set to work to make it livable again. By the first anniversary of Katrina's landfall last August, 46 teams from 43 Moravian churches plus Moravian Theological Seminary and Salem College had pitched in. The work continues, and cooperative efforts have reached out to include Habitat for Humanity, Samaritan's Purse, Lutheran Disaster Response, and the North Carolina Baptist Men.

Ask Sunnyside Ministry for a report on its doings, and this surprisingly happy agency — it lends a hand to some our most downtrodden fellow human beings — responds with poetic license:

It is time to consider a year to remember:
Jennifer [Clark] joined us, a change for the better;
Student enhancement and a trip to the U.K.,
Smoke in the building from microwaved buns,
No broken bones after falls from the porch,
Programs expanded for service demanded,
Families assisted with grace and respect,
Responded with tears and smiles of thanks.
Bypass surgery of cabbage [Br. Roma Combs's heart] times 5;

The staff and volunteers stepped into the breach,
Things went smoothly for week after week;
Old friends departed and new ones arrived.
The Lord blessed his place with so many blessings
That if only for seconds lives saw complete justice.
Is that the sound of the kingdom coming,
Because some were doing the Sunnyside thing?

Blessings upon Br. Combs and his happy Sunnyside gang, who do indeed serve “with grace and respect.”

The Moravian Music Foundation spent 2006 celebrating its 50th anniversary with a wide range of activities throughout North America. Publications included *Moravian Advent and Christmas Hymns*, with accompanying recording; a third volume of organ works by Francis Florentine Hagen; a set of handbell pieces for Lent by Nola Reed Knouse; and *Cheer, Boys, Cheer*, a second CD of music of the 26th North Carolina Regiment Band. Phase one of the aptly named Securing the Future endowment campaign is nearing its goal of \$2.5 million. Concerts and workshops were held in such far-flung places as Unionville, Michigan, Golden, Colorado, Bethlehem and Lititz in Pennsylvania, New York City, Charlotte, Longwood, Florida, Columbus, Ohio, Northfield, Minnesota, and the Music Foundation’s home base of Winston-Salem. The 22nd Moravian Music Festival, held in Columbus, Ohio, in July, was a great week of music, learning, and fellowship. In all, the Music Foundation’s 50th anniversary year was a wonderful time of collaboration with other arts organizations to perform Moravian music, including the Winston-Salem Symphony, Piedmont Chamber Singers, Salem Academy and College, North State Chorale, and others. “Our hope,” says Director Nola Reed Knouse, “is that more and more people will come to appreciate the thriving musical heritage of the Moravians as a precious gift of God and a way to serve our Savior and to reach other people.”

Keeping track of all the Province’s activities for historians 100 years from now is the Moravian Archives, which also had a few projects of its own in 2006. Most exciting was publication (at last!) of volume 13 of *Records of the Moravian in North Carolina* spanning the Reconstruction years of 1867-1876. When not translating nifty hymns from our old Czech Brethren’s hymnal of 1615, Archivist Daniel Crews occupies himself with a new task: a complete translation of the minutes of the Provincial Elders Conference of the 18th and 19th centuries. Yes, they were fretting over church matters then too. Some 12,000 memoirs were scanned into the computer, completing a three-year task. Not only are the memoirs easier to fetch, but the originals can be put away for safekeeping.

Among the Southern Province churches, the biggest project was at **Covenant**, which dedicated its splendid new church facility the weekend of May 13-14. It began in May 2002 with the formation of a building committee. Now the church members have the new task of filling the church, which would fit nicely with Synod mandates for the Province to grow. Several churches have undertaken organ restorations including **Kernersville**, **Bethabara**, and **Calvary**. **Raleigh** Moravian is placing an archway to its “God’s Acre” section of historic Oakwood Cemetery in downtown Raleigh. It’s a restful area there, very Moravian in the midst of the monument-festooned cemetery. **Union Cross** is preparing for the future in its fast growing neighborhood by studying potential plans and sites for a family life center.

Band members got a treat last spring with the introduction of a new supplemental band book to accompany the familiar “green book.” There are 175 tunes crammed into the new “blue book.” All of them can be found in the 1995 *Moravian Book of Worship*, and not one is a repeat from the “green book.” There are such familiar tunes as *Be Thou My Vision*, *Peace*, *Perfect Peace*, and *Jerusalem the Golden*, and then there are the Calypso rhythm and Tanzanian melody that should have our Moravian bands swinging praise to the Savior for many years to come.

— Richard W. Starbuck
Moravian Archives, 12/20/06

