

A Memorabilia of 2003

Viewed in hindsight, almost any year looks worn and tattered, and 2003 is no exception. Yet despite the tatters, 2003 saw much activity and upbuilding in the Southern Province as well as ample cause for celebration and thanksgiving.

A request for a brief summary of activities brought forth a tremendous response from Provincial agencies.

The poor economy gave much work to the Sunnyside Ministry. Br. Roma Combs reported, "The needs of the desperate families we see are relentlessly and ruthlessly sustained by hunger, sickness and hopelessness resulting in poverty above description. Expenditures will approach \$677,000 for 4,500 requests for service. We have done what we can to assist in the name of Christ in honor of the caring community of all those who have supported this ministry of graceful love for all God's magnificent creation."

"The Mission Society continued its primary work of fulfilling the Great Commission both at home and abroad," reported Br. Jack Geis. "We were pleased to be able to provide cross-cultural training and financial support for 57 high school and college students in our Young Partners in Mission Program this past Summer, and to assist, in similar fashion, 32 adults in Short Term Missions. We have maintained our support for 13 full-time missionaries, some with families, operating under various sending agencies such as Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth With a Mission (YWAM), Overseas Mission Fellowship (OMF), Wycliffe, Wings of Mercy, Samaritan's Purse, and others.

"Our Mission Residence, consisting of two apartments on Main Street in Old Salem, provided accommodation for 41 visiting guests, for a total of 573 days. We have maintained monthly intercessory prayer contact by phone with Rev. Sam and Debbie Proptom in Labrador, and our monthly publication *Onward* is now on line at Bethabara.org/Onward.htm."

The Board of Evangelism and Home Missions saw a smooth change of leadership and the addition of a new church and a new ministry in the Southern Province. Br. Bob Reirson retired after 39 years in the ministry, 12 of which as director of BEHM. Succeeding him was Br. David Guthrie. On September 14 the Southern Province gained its 59th currently active congregation when Holly Springs was formally organized. This crowned four years of endeavor by Br. Hal Atkins, ably assisted by Raleigh Moravian Church. The new ministry is among Spanish-speaking people in Winston-Salem. Begun at Ardmore Moravian Church, it has gained support from BEHM in establishing a "home base" at the former Immanuel Moravian Church building in Woughtown. Br. Enrique Alcantara has been appointed director of this new ministry.

The Moravian Music Foundation's year was, if anything, more hectic than usual, with the recording and release of a CD of Moravian hymns, *Joining Our Voices*, in May; the Moravian Music Festival in June; new publications of organ works by Francis Florentine Hagen and Brian Henkelmann, and anthems arranged by Nola Reed Knouse for SAB chorus; a great many research inquiries (mostly via e-mail); and the near completion of the *Companion* to the 1995 *Moravian Book of Worship* by Albert Frank. Arriving late in the year was yet another CD that should be a favorite of any band member. The CD's title is *Mit Freuden zart*, and it features the Giannini Brass playing a number of Moravian chorales.

Director Rick Sides reported a busy year at the Board of Christian Education: "Highlights include Lisa Mullen joining our staff as Director of Children & Family Ministries, a successful season of summer camp ministry at Laurel Ridge, College Age CONVO in Miami, an emerging post-college/young adult ministry, expanded internet resourcing, development of the new seminary version of the Gemeinschaft program, excellent participation by congregations in the Regional Youth Council, strong use of the Resource Center, work on getting our entire Resource Center on line, active commissions and appointed working groups, development of the new study guide for

The Ground of the Unity and the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* (due off the press in January 2004), a good year for sales and serving congregations and the community through the ministry and outreach of the Moravian Book & Gift Shop, stewardship resourcing in a number of congregations, and a great and committed staff!”

The Moravian Archives has been keeping track of the Province’s past with numerous filings of church and agency documents (including 300(!) maps from Salem Congregation), presentations to church and civic groups, translations of early PEC minutes and Friedberg Diary, and scanning memoirs into computer (we’re up to G now, only 10,000 or so to go). In addition, the Archives participated with the Interprovincial Board of Communication in publishing the fourth edition of Adelaide Fries’s *Customs and Practices of the Moravian Church*, a veritable treasure trove of “whys,” “wherefores,” and “did you knows” of the Moravian Church. With an eye to the future, the Archives is also compiling our current events in such handy accounts as this Memorabilia for use by historians in years to come.

Overseeing all this activity — and much, much more — has been the Provincial Elders Conference. The PEC office reported that “call processes were conducted in fourteen congregations and BEHM. One Moravian pastor was ‘loaned’ for several months to serve as a professor at the Moravian seminary in Bethel, Alaska. Four active clergy were granted permission to retire. Two pastors on leave of absence returned to the active ministry. Five deacons were consecrated presbyters. Three Provincial acolytes were reviewed and re-appointed. Three new congregational acolytes were appointed. Five pastors were called or renewed to specialized ministry. Fourteen candidates were in process of working toward ordination.”

PEC continued work on appointing Synod mandated task forces and committees, including the Task Force to Study Recognition of Specialized Ministries, the Commission on Ordained Ministry, and the Stewardship Study Commission, which received an additional mandate from the Financial Board to “recommend Provincial structure and organization that would exercise good stewardship of resources and provide effective Provincial ministry.”

Questions of faith were addressed, as Br. Bob Sawyer reported the visioning process “resumed with the purpose to discover anew a strong, clear, and passionate sense of Moravian Christian identity, which involves our values, beliefs, and our vision of God’s call for the Southern Province. Outcome is to claim our common ground for witness, mission, and ministry as we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Events in the larger world also weighed upon PEC and the Province as a whole. The economic downturn had its effect all around. In light of a projected 10 percent shortfall in income, Provincial agencies held a retreat and several budget meetings to trim expenses. In addition, The PEC office reported that “concerns were expressed and discussions ensued concerning the Moravian Church’s dialogue with the Episcopal Church in light of that denomination’s action to confirm the election of a practicing homosexual as a bishop.”

Turning to the churches, the backbone of the Province, we find much activity during 2003 despite the year’s poor economic conditions. New major construct was rare, but extensive remodeling and requisite repairs took place.

Konnoak Hills conducted a \$220,000 sanctuary refurbishing project that gave the congregation a beautiful “new” worship area. Moravia had groundbreaking last April for a new \$160,000 addition to its worship facilities, and Bethania had the consecration and cornerstone laying for its \$1.4 million building project which included a new two-story addition, a new entrance, new and improved parking, and renovation of the old education building. Kernersville had a day-long dedication on June 1 of its new organ, a magnificent instrument that will give glorious assistance to worshipping the Lord for many years to come. Friedland proceeded with the music room addition as part of its multiyear construction master plan. Mindful of the economy, Ardmore gave priority to renovating and expanding Stelter Haus as the initial part of phase one of the congregation’s building needs. Union Cross heralded the end of the four-year drought

with roof repairs and replacements that became necessary with the bountiful rains last spring.

Not just construction, but celebration too filled 2003. The ninth Moravian Women's Conference brought more than 850 Moravians from almost all our Provinces throughout the world to gather June 18-21 on the campus of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem. Earlier in June the 21st Moravian Music Festival presented a week of seminars, rehearsals, and performances at Salem College, with the concluding concert at Winston-Salem State University.

The first full week of May saw the culmination of years of work by Old Salem, Inc., and many others with the reopening of the newly restored 1861 St. Philips church in Salem. The church was formally re-dedicated May 4 in an impressive service attended by hundreds of blacks and whites worshipping together. It was truly a notable occasion in the life of St. Philips Church.

Several other congregations also reached notable milestones: New Hope in Newton its 20th anniversary, Raleigh its 50th.

And then there was the Southern Province itself and our first congregation, Bethabara. Capping the year and keynoting other celebrations was the 250th anniversary of the Province and Bethabara. More than a year of conferences and seminars, proclamations and publications, concerts and workshops, new hymns and compositions, a birthday bash and graveyard walks, all culminated in the 250th anniversary service on November 16 in Wait Chapel at Wake Forest University. More than 1,500 gathered to worship and hear Archivist Daniel Crews's stirring address, *What It Was, Was Jesus*. Then the next evening, the actual anniversary date of the arrival of the first colony of settlers on November 17, 1753, Bethabara held its anniversary lovefeast, concluding with an impromptu unaccompanied rendition by the 300-plus congregation of "Jesus Makes My Heart Rejoice."

Thus well-equipped, we can face the new year confident of the continuing leading and comforting of our Shepherd and Savior.