

Report to the Synod of 2018

From: The Mission Society

Mission, Purpose and Values

The Mission Society's By-Laws describe its purpose as follows ... “We have no view or aim other than the communication of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and esteem it a praiseworthy privilege to support that work to the best of our abilities, being compelled to it by the love of Christ.” For 95 years, this Southern Province organization has tried to carry out that mission.

Responsibilities

Some Moravians are called to fulfill the Great Commission literally; they go and make disciples as they teach obedience to what Jesus has commanded. The Mission Society supports these worldwide dedicated servants financially and in other ways as might be possible. We also support Moravians who commit themselves to short-term mission experiences. These youth and adults seek to live out Christ's love wherever they have chosen to go, be that in the States or internationally.

In addition, this organization partners financially with the work of the interprovincial Board of World Mission, and sometimes responds to other special requests from around the Unity. Beyond all the individuals and specific needs that we are privileged to support, there are also our own congregations. It is our desire to educate Southern Province Moravians about mission work across the globe, and to encourage them to find a way to be involved.

Summary of Activities

The names of the missionaries we've supported over the last four years have not changed much. There are usually 12 families on the list, scattered across the Middle East, Africa, Central America, Asia, Eastern Europe, and some live in the States. Throughout that time span, the Mission Society has budgeted financial support to these dear people totaling approximately \$181,000. Add to that the 'special offering' amounts from the four fall lovefeasts, and our missionaries have received approximately \$217,000. Our love gifts to them.

The 'Mission Awareness Dinner' committee plans a celebratory provincial gathering each June, including a meal prepared by the host church, special music, and a program led by an individual or group who have recently been involved in mission work. During this evening we also recognize those who have already taken a mission trip that year, and commission those who will be participating in the months to come. In 2015, this event was held at New Philadelphia Moravian with Rev. Doug Rights leading a presentation on mission activities by youth and young adults of our province. The following year we gathered at Bethania Moravian and heard about the work at the medical clinic in Ahuas, Honduras from Rev. Dan Nelson. Fairview Moravian was host in 2017, and the program was led by a team that had recently traveled to Peru.

The Mission Society sends out a very informative monthly newsletter called the Onward. Sheila Beaman (the administrative assistant to our board) does most of the work putting it together and getting it mailed or emailed throughout the year to nearly 400 recipients.

Many people apply for grants to support them on short-term mission trips. Combining the four years since last synod, we have assisted 289 youth and adults traveling to numerous places to serve, plus another 206 young people who did the same thing at Mission Camp at Laurel Ridge. Total grants given ... nearly \$67,000.

The lovefeast committee plans a provincial lovefeast each November. Besides enjoying a bun and coffee at this service, those present are also blessed with lots of wonderful music, an inspiring message, and an informative review of the year's activities. This is the time when everyone present can use the provided envelope to join the Mission Society (or renew their membership), to choose to become a lifetime member, and/or to contribute to the 'special offering' that is then passed along to our missionaries. Christ Moravian was where we gathered for the 2014 lovefeast, with guest speaker Cindy Williams who had traveled to Peru with a team from her church. The following year we met at Bethabara Moravian, inviting Michael and Caroline Woo to share about their ministry in Southeast Asia. In 2016 the location for the lovefeast was Konnoak Hills Moravian. Justin Rabbach from the Board of World Mission brought a well-received message. The fourth service included Jamie Dease and Jessy Burcaw speaking about their summer trip to Nepal, as we met at Olivet Moravian.

Each year the Mission Society has sent \$25,000 to the Board of World Mission to help further their work with their partner provinces. A \$1500 donation has also been sent yearly to Cuba, and to Peru, and to Sierra Leone, all fairly new areas for Moravian ministry. Because of the urgent need for help at the medical clinic in Ahuas, Honduras, our board has readily contributed toward this landmark facility that offers spiritual and physical healing. Across the four years, we assisted with a combined total of \$45,000. Then in 2016, we said 'yes' to an expressed need for \$3400, thereby funding the expenses for two Caribbean delegates so they could attend the Unity Women's Consultation in Suriname, South America. Later that year, the board agreed to help with the interprovincial FIT Youth Mission Conference in Wisconsin, providing \$3000 so that more Southern Province youth could attend. Finally, for the Unity Mission Conference in South Africa during 2017, we answered the call from the planning committee and contributed toward overall expenses by sending \$5000. The Mission Society is ready and willing to respond to situations of definite need, as far as our funds allow.

Future Direction and Opportunities

This organization is all about helping to share the gospel, far away and close to home. Just like our church has been doing since 1732. What if every Southern Province Moravian cared enough about that purpose in life that they joined the Mission Society, that they contributed generously, that they absolutely wanted to be part of helping to spread the love of Jesus worldwide. Perhaps therein lies our direction for the future.