



# BOARD OF WORLD MISSION

of the Moravian Church • North America

April 22, 2020

Greetings,

The staff of the Board of World Mission (BWM) has been encouraged by the number of requests we have received for updates on our global partners across the Moravian Unity, and the concern shared for their well-being during this global health situation.

A disclaimer as I share the information below is that even as we are in contact with all global partners, some locations are in a position to provide more timely and regular updates than others. What I provide below is the most up to date information available to the BWM at the time this letter is sent. However, please know that situations are changing daily and differently by location around the globe, so as we receive further updates, we will continue to share them through various channels (BWM website, social media, Youtube, etc.).

Before getting to the updates below, I would be remiss to not mention that just as often as we receive updates and prayer requests from partners, BWM staff has been receiving requests to be informed about the situation in North America, as well as within the Moravian Church here. These requests have come as Moravians around the world wish to offer their words of support and encouragement, along with their prayers for us. Bishop Ezekiel Yona, of the Moravian Province in Western Tanzania, has been particularly diligent in requesting updates to hold us in prayer at a special weekly prayer gathering. This even as he reports a growing number of cases of the coronavirus in his region. I find myself very grateful for these messages, and demonstrations of true partnership and connection, despite our physical distance.

## BWM Global Partner Update

The updates below are bullets containing the current information about direct BWM partner areas, listed by stage of development within the Unity.

### **Unity Provinces:**

- Honduras has registered 442 cases and 41 deaths. We are especially concerned about the consequences of the virus reaching the Moskitia region. BWM sent funds to help with food

purchase and also sent a letter to the government advocating for permission for Miskitu people to travel to their home villages.

- The Ahuas Clinic in Honduras has also received additional emergency funding from BWM to assist with additional expenses for supply purchases due to travel restrictions and business closures.
- Nicaragua is only registering 9 cases and 1 death but there is concern as to the accuracy of these numbers.
- Costa Rica has 642 cases and 4 deaths. We are in communication with Provincial Chairman, Brother Leo Pixley.
- Guyana has 57 cases and 6 deaths.
- The islands of the Eastern West Indies (EWI) have registered about 300 cases, with 30 deaths. Many pastors and congregations are offering online worship services and daily devotions.
- Tanzania has 250 reported cases with 8 deaths. The chair of the Western Tanzania Province, Brother Ezekiel Yona, has contacted BWM to notify us that people in Tanzania are praying for their brothers and sisters in North America.

#### **Mission Provinces:**

- Cuba has reported 862 cases with 27 deaths. Moravian pastor Obed Martinez was hospitalized briefly and tested for COVID-19 but has returned home and is doing well. We are maintaining communication through WhatsApp and Facebook. ARMF is continuing to stay in contact and will be looking at ways to continue supporting the work of the church in Cuba.
- BWM had been exploring options for leading some spiritual retreats and attending the planned Synod in Labrador, but all plans have currently been put on hold due to travel restrictions. BWM, at time of writing this update, has not received news of any cases of the virus in the Moravian communities in Labrador.

#### **Mission Areas:**

- Peru has been hit especially hard with 12,491 cases reported and 274 deaths. BWM sent funding to help with food delivery to the churches in the Amazon District and is looking at additional ways to help. Justin and Sam have been live streaming sermons and Bible Studies by Facebook for Peruvian Moravians.
- Sierra Leone has only reported 26 cases and no deaths, but testing is not readily available in many areas. The Moravian Secondary School is closed until further notice and churches have been told not to gather for worship. We are in communication with Sister Safie Braima by Whats App.

In addition to BWM partners, we have also received requests for prayers from the Unity Province of Malawi in regards to their weak health care system, and from the Mission Area of Uganda asking for prayers for the noticeable increase in domestic violence cases as folks are

asked to stay home together. (It should be noted domestic violence cases have also risen considerably in many U.S. states, including Wisconsin, where I live, and so this issue would benefit from prayers and attention the world over.)

### **Mission Engagement**

The BWM also continues its work with congregations, and we provide a few updates about our ongoing work below.

- With congregations in the Northern and Southern Provinces not being able to gather in their congregations since early March, the Board of World Mission has been offering \$200 grants to assist them in reaching out to their members. To date, we have distributed grants to 43 congregations and agencies of the Moravian Church, totaling just over \$10,000. Some have used this money to purchase Zoom subscriptions, others are using it to increase mailings, and others are setting up phone messaging systems. If your congregation has not yet applied and needs this assistance, please contact Chris Giesler at [chris@moravianmission.org](mailto:chris@moravianmission.org)
- We continue to assist congregations in setting up mission trip opportunities. Some are needing helping in changing arrangements that were already in place, and others are just beginning the discernment process on how best they can help to meet needs. Please contact Chris Giesler if your congregation would like to start this process. We work well over Zoom.
- We are working on organizing our mission discernment and team training materials into a more standardized curriculum that can be used by congregations to assist as they seek to be faithful to God's calling to serve others. We hope these materials will be available on our website and in print form by the end of this year.

If you would like to know more about a specific area of our work, or one of our global partners, please feel free to reach out to myself, or any of the BWM staff for more information. The best ways to reach me directly are via phone (920-941-0697) or email ([justin@moravianmission.org](mailto:justin@moravianmission.org)).

Thank you,



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Moravian Board of World Mission