

## SOAR Curricular Material #2

### *An Urgent Call* (March 1915--Impact of the war on the Moravian Church's interests--Abridged Version)

The violent disruptions of the war in Europe have seriously wounded the vital interests of our **Moravian Church**<sup>1</sup>. Its world-wide unity, so truly international, is threatened, though we hope with no lasting effects. Its missionary activity at least temporarily has been crippled. The loss of men and means to the Church both in Germany and in England is serious. So that today, more than ever before, it **behooves**<sup>2</sup> every member of our American provinces to **heed**<sup>3</sup> the urgent call to a greater self-sacrificing loyalty and a more intense devotion to the work of the Church. And this call comes first of all to every minister of the Church, and to every theological student now in training here at the College and Seminary. It comes as a worthy challenge to each one to manifest and to exercise such loyalty and devotion as is emblazoned upon the pages of Moravian history. Would that we might show the spirit of the martyrs of our Church! Would that we all might catch the vision of the unfading glory, the ultimate joy, satisfaction and eternal reward of self-sacrifice in the ministry! Would that we might all prove ourselves men worthy of the high calling of the ministry in our Moravian Church! Is there anything more despicable than for a man in the ministry to show himself a **hireling**<sup>4</sup>? And by a hireling we mean just what Christ himself implied when He used that term. Such a man determines his decisions from the viewpoint of personal advantage. The impelling motive of self-sacrificing loyalty finds no place in his mind and heart. The reason is plain: "He careth not for the sheep. He seeth the wolf coming, and he leaveth the sheep." Possibly, we say possibly, God sometimes sees fit to call the shepherd of one fold to care for the sheep of another fold, to go from the ranks of the ministry in one Church to serve in another Church, if you please, out of the Moravian fold into the **Presbyterian**<sup>5</sup> fold. But how great the responsibility to make sure that the call really comes from God! This alone can justify a man to leave the sheep of one fold and go over to another. If it is done for any other reason, it is sure evidence that such a man lacks the spirit of that noblest of all self-sacrificing loyalty and intense devotion to which our Church today so urgently calls every man in its ministry and every theological student now in the College and Seminary. What Church of another denomination is more worthy of just this very loyalty and devotion for which our Moravian Church today is calling? If historical precedence can claim any *superior merit*, we have it. When such a man in the ministry, of another denomination so recognizes and appreciates the merits of the Moravian Church that he can earnestly, cordially, and with double emphasis say, "Tell the Brethren that they shall hold fast that which God has given to them," then surely we have every reason that should inspire us "to hold fast," and, if the "discipline" maintained by the Provincial Elders' Conference does ever really "press upon the collar" while we are "in the harness," shall we therefore "jump the traces?"

~~E.L.M.

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### **WORD BANK**

<sup>1</sup> **Moravian Church**—not to be confused with the Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem; Here it refers to the protestant denomination that arose from a 15<sup>th</sup> century religious reform movement in Bohemia and Moravia. In Latin, the term translates to *Unitas Fratrum*, or "Unity of the Brethren."

<sup>2</sup> **Behooves**—it is necessary, fit, proper, or advantageous for someone to do something

<sup>3</sup> **Heed**—to give serious attention or consideration to something

<sup>4</sup> **Hireling**—A person who only does something if they see there's something (i.e. benefit) in it for them.

<sup>5</sup> **Presbyterian**—A member of a Christian church that is officially led by a group of ministers and elders (known as a presbytery)

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### Writing Prompt

**In 2-3 paragraphs consider the following statement and answer the following question. Use textual evidence (quotes, information, etc.) to support your answer.**

This article asks the members of the Moravian Church to be unselfish and sacrificial in their response to the “urgent call” of war in order to exercise the loyalty and devotion “as is emblazoned upon the pages of Moravian history.” By doing this, the members would show “the spirit of the martyrs of our Church!”

How does this statement reflect the interests of the Moravian Church? To what extent have the Moravians’ religious interests influenced the author and guided the war?