

The Spiritual Character of the Life Process that Forms the Person

Human existence and process involves many complex factors. As we live, we experience them and become aware of them if we develop the capacity to reflect upon life. However, not all become able to do this. Thus God provides a "great simplicity" in life which is not dependent on neurological and intellectual development. In life we are there as PERSON and God is there as PERSON, and God gives us RELATIONSHIP. For one to exist and to exist in relationship with God is the *foundational human reality*. It constitutes one as a human being and affirms the spiritual dimensions of being human. In case of severe brain damage or limited neurological development this foundational reality preserves our essence and perseveres through and beyond death. Thus God takes us where we need to go in and beyond life if we cannot be consciously and reflectively involved in our own process. Who cannot develop in this life will develop with God in the next.

Life begins with the genetic resources and patterns which determine us biologically and carry within a familial if not archetypal memory. But we are more than our biogenetic inheritance. There is a spiritual dimension to each person which somehow becomes dimension and resource of life. This is experienced as more than an aspect of mind or psyche. As one experiences oneself and life there are times when it would seem to disappear within the process of one's existence but other times when it transcends one's body and history. Human experience would seem to point to a spirit/soul which has its own reality but in the process of living takes on the experience and identity of the person. Some would like to see this as having its origin within a previous life, but at least one needs to view this as ultimately the gift of God which constitutes the preservable core of the individual life. Life in this world then originates as an act of God as well as an act of the parents. The nature of the act of God may be shrouded in mystery but the presence of a transcendent reality in the life of the person which constitutes the persistent and non-destructible core of the person seems evident. The process by which one lives out one's potential may be described as:

CREATION/BIRTH into this world and individual existence which presents us with opportunities and contexts for development, if able, in a world of dynamics both creative and destructive.

DEVELOPMENT as a process of ongoing CREATION including: dimensions biological, psychological, cognitive, moral, spiritual, concerned with identity, etc.

VOCATION Life involves not just being, but alignment with life's meaning, God's call, community needs, and decisions about what one's life shall serve

RESOURCES for one's process of CREATION/FORMATION including what is genetic, communal, societal, spiritual

SPIRITUAL RESOURCES which include knowledge of origin, identity, destiny the presence of God/Christ/Spirit in life and its productive, formative consequences and blessings the wisdom of the religious tradition which maps and advocates the process of human becoming presence of the spiritual dimension in life as well as in the person

DECREADING – which is the experience of the loss of peripheral aspects of biological existence through the aging process, but with preservation of the person and retention of memory and identity in the indestructible soul

Eventually there is DEATH in this world and BIRTH into the spiritual world, carrying with one what one has become. Christians have often used Jesus' experience of suffering, death and resurrection as a model, to which should be added the many modern descriptions of near-death experience made available by the ability of modern medicine to rescue some from the process of dying.¹

THE FUTURE is with God in God's world, of which one has gained glimpses in the process of life and in which one has gained confidence from the experience of God's companionship.

This brief presentation of life process indicates that out of the biblical tradition and Christian experience an understanding of life has been developed which constitutes a wisdom by which persons may be helped to understand their life process and experience and to live it well. This is of great value.

The Gospel

The Gospel is the proclamation, the good news, of what God has done in Christ. As Paul describes it in Rom. 1:16-17, it is "the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith" and in it "the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith." When Paul calls it the *power* of God he is using a phrase used in Judaism for the action of God within history and used in the Synoptic Gospels for *miracles*. The Gospel is not just about something God has done in the past that is to be applied in the present, but through the proclamation of what God has done *God now acts to effect* what the Gospel announces. This is more than what we might call "the power of words." It is the power of God in these words. Thus the proclamation of the Gospel is as much God's act of salvation as were the original events which it describes. The righteousness of God which is revealed in it is not just the justice of God which judges, but the justice of God which saves.

In this proclamation then God is encountered and what God intends for one's life is encountered. Thus to really hear this proclamation and to respond is to encounter that which changes one's existence and here is called *the Great Healing*.

In its simplest form it is salvation, which means everything from being saved from sin and Satan to being saved into relationship with God and knowing that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:39)." It means to be assured that we are God's children (Rom. 8:14-17). But it also means to be healed and made whole, an understanding of this which well expresses the *total existential impact of the Gospel* upon life and self-understanding.

The Gospel does not consist of a few statements or descriptions, but as the early church collected the tradition about the life and ministry of Jesus the Gospel became the story from the baptism of Jesus to his resurrection, with three of the Gospels adding prologues (Matt. and Lk. about Jesus' infancy and John relating the preexistent Word of God to Jesus). The richness of the many stories included affects us in many ways. We cannot just focus on his death on the cross as salvation. All of the stories in which we meet him in the varied aspects of his life and ministry are in some sense salvation. They are for the healing of our existence. They invite us into the full drama of his life.

¹ For example, Kenneth Ring, *Heading Towards Omega: In Search of the Meaning of the Near-Death Experience*, NY: William Morrow and Co., 1984. I Peter 3:18ff and 4:6 follow the Jewish understanding of death in Jesus' time by describing his going to the place of departed spirits after his death.

Not all of the religious tradition reflects the love of God for you as a real flesh and blood human being with faults and limits. Some of the tradition in the Bible and some Christian theology make God more fearsome and judgmental than loving (read Revelation). Some seem to expect perfection (such as the way Jesus' sayings are cast in Matthew 5). One has to work critically on the tradition, make up one's mind as to truth, and then risk and venture upon it. Continuing analysis will, in some sense, always be appropriate. *But when one ventures upon a vision of self and life, critical analysis must be set to the side or the vision will have no power, drained of possibilities by qualifications.*

The Great Healing

The Gospel and its message can be called *the Great Healing*, that which deals with the central issues of life and provides a basis for all that God would do with us. It would be well to post the following sheet where it could be frequently seen and used in meditation and reflection. The ten items could also be used as a liturgy, the leader reading each and the congregation responding to each item with: "This I surely believe!"

THE GREAT HEALING

While physical healing and improvement of life's quality needs to take into consideration all of the factors and complications of life, there is the GREAT HEALING of our human needs and condition which God accomplishes for us all. It is upon this that all other changes and possibilities in life are based. All of these elements of the Great Healing are implications of the proclamation of the Gospel.

1. *God offers you a relationship as your heavenly Father. God is the source of life and the origin of our world. When you have God, you have everything.*
2. *In this relationship God receives you as sons and daughters. This is not something you can earn or produce by your own efforts. It is a gift of God's love. On this then you can build your life.*
3. *God offers forgiveness of the sins and mistakes which affect the quality of your life and keep you from moving on to new possibilities. God also asks that you forgive others their sins against you not only as a gift to them but also so that you can get free of the bondage of your anger and move on.*
4. *God participated in your creation and birth and gave you a soul. This spiritual part of you cannot be destroyed or affected by disease or death. Whatever your physical illnesses or sufferings, you cannot be destroyed. On death you will be born into a new life in God's world*
5. *Because God participated in your creation, God has a place for you in life and a mission for you to perform. If you cannot find what God calls you to, God will go with you where you go. Trust the way God will work out your life.*
6. *God gives you the Spirit as a resource for your development and life journey. God's strength is working for you, which is much more than your own strength. [Some have called the Spirit "Mother" because "she" cares for persons as a mother. You may want to use this image.]*
7. *When you are God's child you are in community or fellowship with all of God's children. This means that you never face life alone and that others will share your burdens. You are also called to help others in their life journey. God's community for Christians starts with those who gather around Christ, but when one looks at the creation stories in the New Testament one finds that the One who created the world also brought religious experience to all humanity down through the centuries. Thus in the Moravian Church, 18th cent., it was believed that all religious experience found its basis in Christ and thus we have an experiential connection with all other religions, though people in other religions may not understand this and may not desire fellowship with you.*
8. *The negative and evil powers of life cannot overcome you when you belong to God. When life seems too much, remind yourself of Whose you are.*
9. *Always, always, always know that nothing can separate you from God's love.*

10. Jesus brought all of this to you. If you cannot understand it, he will help you. If you have difficulty living it out, he will help you. Let him help you as your Companion, Lord and Teacher.

When one reflects on the implications of these ten items, it becomes clear that their appropriation will have much to do with the well-being of a person. *The Great Healing* is an appropriate name for their collective impact. The meaning-power of this self-understanding together with its reduction of the stress often connected with life may also contribute significantly to physical and emotional health.

Prayer

Besides the Gospel there is the Lord's Prayer which embodies much of the Gospel's meaning and by the time of the *Didache* ("Teaching of the Twelve Apostles", second century CE, our earliest document on Church Orders) had become a regular part of Christian discipline, prayed three times a day. According to the account in Luke 11, Jesus taught the prayer in response to his disciples' request to teach them to pray as John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray. This was immediately preceded by the story of Mary and Martha, where Mary did the "one thing needful" by focusing on her relationship with Jesus. The Lord's Prayer in Luke is a simpler form of the prayer, probably the original form intended more as a pattern for prayer than a prayer to be prayed. In Matthew 6 the Lord's Prayer is made into a more formal, liturgically developed prayer and included in the Sermon on the Mount among several sayings on prayer. The Prayer reflects balanced concerns for the primacy of God's role in life and basic human needs.

Sacraments

And there are the Sacraments. For a long time the church had seven, as the Roman Church still does, but most Protestant Churches have limited the Sacraments to the two which Jesus established: Baptism and Communion. The others, such as confirmation, marriage, ordination, confession, and extreme unction, many Protestants regard as rites which still remain an important part of the spiritual life of the church.

Baptism

For the early Christians, and for Christians down through the ages, Baptism established their identity and spiritually joined them into the creative and empowering events of God's action in Jesus. Baptism in the first centuries was only experienced by adults and thus it would always be remembered, remembered as the event which symbolized what and whose they were. Consequently the description of Christian identity in Colossians 3:1-17, with frequent use of Baptismal imagery, precedes the household ethical code which describes Christian interpersonal behavior in the household. Rom. 6:1-11:36 functions in a similar way. The word "therefore" in 12:1 serves as the connecting link between the understanding of God and what God has done in Christ (described in the first 11 chapters) and the consequent ethics of Romans 12:1 ff. Understanding of human behavior and its possibilities was always based on self-understanding remembered from the baptismal experience. Because we also baptize infants who will not be able to remember this event, it should be acknowledged that because the essence of Baptism is relationship with God, Christ and the Spirit, one does not need to understand and remember to be baptized. The essence of faith is not primarily understanding. However, the meaning of Baptism and the meaning of what happened in the child's Baptism needs later to be shared with the child (in Confirmation and elsewhere) so that she/he can live from the image of Baptism as can the person who was baptized as an adult and consequently remembers.

Now, what was involved in the early Christian Baptism? There was

Preparatory education

Accepting Jesus as Lord, rejecting the service of Satan, and being freed from the controlling powers of world and life

Laying off the old life, usually symbolized by laying off an outer garment

Immersion into water which symbolized being united with Christ in his death and resurrection, thus dying to the old life and rising to a new life

Putting on a new white garment symbolizing putting on Christ and the new life

Receiving anointing with oil symbolizing receiving of God's Spirit, a type of "confirming" or strengthening (which is what confirmation often means)

Central to the Christian treatment of life and ethics is the view that *the conditions of human existence have been modified in Christ*, as symbolized in Baptism, so that in approaching the new possibilities of life one need not be limited by the old. Galatians 2:15-5:26 and Colossians 2 actually speak of the transformation by Christ of the conditions of existence as they are presupposed within each culture. Within the Jewish world the crucifixion of Christ is understood as Jesus taking upon himself the demands of the Jewish culture, especially the Law. By himself bearing the judgment of the Law and atoning for sin, those within Judaism do not need to continue to take the Law and the satisfaction of its highly detailed requirements as the condition of their existence. Paul indicates he as a Jew died to the Law in Christ so that he might live to God. The demands of the Law no longer define existence.

For the Roman world the conditions of existence are also dealt with. For the Roman the problem was not the Law but the cosmic powers, the powerful gods and structures of their world (including even nature and societal/political structures) which were sometimes called "elementals" (often translated "elemental spirits") which governed life and through their rule controlled, deceived and disempowered humans. Forgiveness was necessary here as in the Jewish world, but not because of failure to obey the Law. The primary problem was that the powers of the world controlled life – as did the Law within Jewish culture – and one could not live beyond the influence and control of the cosmic powers. What both Jew and Roman presupposed about the controlling factors of life came to an end in Christ and thus not only the problems and failures of existence were dealt with but *the conditions which disabled the solving of the problems*. In other words, life was not solved only by dealing with individual issues and problems of behavior, but by in Christ escaping the power and control of the conditions of existence. Thus in both Gentile and Jewish context to be in Christ means that the conditions of existence pass away, spoken of as dying with Christ and rising to new life, putting off the old life and putting on Christ. *That the conditions of life are explored both in Gentile and Jewish context and recognized as unique in each means that the Christ event must be seen as solving what needs to be solved in each context for each person.* Thus we have to be careful about always defining the meaning of Christ only from its original Jewish context. Of course Christ died for our sins. But outside of the Jewish context other problems had to be solved. We must first ask what needs to be solved and from what we need to be freed in our context. *You can't grasp the solution unless you clearly know the problems which the solution solves.* Thus not only each cultural context but each personal context carries with it its own history and experience into which Christ must be brought to free the person from the predetermined presuppositions of the past.

Eucharist/Communion

There are four accounts of the institution of Communion by Jesus: Mark, Matthew, Luke and I Corinthians 11 which is the oldest. The accounts differ somewhat because they follow the worship practices of different parts of the early church, Luke even including two cups. This sacrament became a regular part of early Christian worship, so that while Baptism helped to shape Christians' self-understanding at the beginning of their Christian life and could also be formatively remembered, the Communion service was there to nourish Christians on a regular basis. My preference is to describe its meaning from the earliest account in I Cor. 11:23-26.

Paul reminds the readers that he is passing on what came from Jesus and what will remind them of Jesus. The statement about the bread is "This is my body for you." This expression means that Jesus offers them himself (his body) with the bread. Life is to be lived from this gift. In connection with the cup they are reminded that "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." The cup contains his life/blood

for us, but it also represents a covenant, his gift which includes our response. The cup is the point at which we are called upon to also place our life within the cup and to pledge our life to him. This we are to do until he comes, reminding us of his part in our lives. But his coming does not mean that in some sense he is now absent. The Communion is symbol of his real presence in our lives. He continues to be our Lord, as indicated in the early Christian creed "Jesus is Lord" which each Christian repeated at Baptism.

Community/Church

Christian life is always lived in community and in all of the resources of this community. One only has to read I Cor. 12-13 and note all of the gifts available in this community through God's Spirit. Life is hardly possible without community. And there is no Christianity which is not communal and relational.

The Spiritual Realm

Paul in II Cor. 12 speaks of spiritual experiences he has had, including being caught up to the third heaven. The book of Revelation does not just describe the end of history but the reality of the spiritual world – see Rev. 4-5. To know that this is real changes our perspective on life. Jesus seems, however, to have felt that this spiritual world was more a part of this world and life rather than high beyond the heavens. The role of the Spirit symbolizes God's closeness though Christians also believe that Jesus remains close to us, in this world, as our Companion, rather than having gone to heaven and remaining there. Because of the centrality of Jesus to life in this world perhaps heaven is very near, a fourth dimension of our world.

Living the Mystery

The term "kingdom of God" does not describe a geographical place where God rules, rather is it "the rule or sovereignty of God" within life and within us. It is equivalent to what we would call "the presence of God." Here the presence of God is presented as existing and experienced within the complexity of life and world. When complexity in life is recognized then the identification of God's presence and action also becomes a more complex matter. One of the major religious ideas in most religions is that when God is present all will be changed and fixed, for nothing can resist God's power. This has then caused God to be seen as primarily resident in heaven for it is evident that the world is not fixed.

Here God's presence is described as relational (manifested in relationship) and incarnational (present within history and the world's realities rather than obliterating them). In The Gospel of Mark chapter 4 Jesus speaks of God as a sower, sowing seed on all sorts of soil, responsive and unresponsive. The kingdom is like a farmer sowing seed which grows by its own process while time continues, night and day. The harvest will come, but it is not in the control of the farmer. The kingdom is also as a grain of mustard seed, smallest of all seeds, but greatest of shrubs when it has grown. Jesus tells his disciples (Mark 4:11), "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything comes in parables." Some translate the word "mystery" as "secret", but that is not what the text says. When you know a secret, you know it and understand it. When you know a mystery you know it but do not understand it. Jesus points out to his disciples that they are dealing with something mysterious and not understandable, clearly evidenced by the fact that the metaphors which Jesus uses for the "kingdom" do not make any sense in the light of Jewish expectations about the kingdom. Jesus says that for those outside of the group of disciples, everything is in parables. We are used to thinking of a parable in the form of a story comparing one thing to another. But parable also meant something which is enigmatic and puzzling. Thus what Jesus said means: "To you (disciples) has been given the mystery (but also the reality) of the kingdom so that you know it is present even if you can't figure it all out. But for the outsider who hasn't come to terms with the mystery it all remains confusing and a puzzle."

The mystery of the kingdom is related to the discussion between Jesus and James and John in Mark 10 where they want a share in the power of the kingdom and in Mark 8 where Peter confesses Jesus as Messiah but then argues with Jesus about his understanding of the Messiah who Jesus says must suffer and be rejected. His followers are also called upon to "take up their cross and follow" him.

People are the place where the kingdom of God is expressed, like the different soils on which the sower sows seeds in Mark 4. Thus Jesus calls upon people to repent (change their minds) and believe in the kingdom so that it may be expressed in them. But it is expressed in them within the real world where everything does not become different, but some things certainly do.

We know that God is present and can be present in us. But how this all works out is a mystery. Life's complex conditions often persist while the kingdom of God is also present. *This is a mystery which needs to be accepted and lived.* We need to live what we can't completely figure out but nevertheless know is real. Because of God's presence in our lives we can live life in this world in the best possible way. We also know that we have a soul which cannot be destroyed. And we know that we also belong to God's world where we will go after the process of this life is finished.

It would seem to be clear that we are not fully equipped for life unless we go through certain biological, psychological, moral, and intellectual development. The analysis of faith development in our time also assumes that there is a developmental process involving awareness and appropriation of the meaning dimensions of life, moving from familial and conventional forms of faith to more individual and lived-out forms of faith. As there are those who call us forth into personal and intellectual development, most of the world's religions assume that the human being needs to be called into awareness and development of the spiritual, even though religion may be part of a cultural or familial heritage. A central part of Jesus' ministry was his confrontation of persons with the reality of God in terms of the kingdom (God's desire to bring persons under the sphere of God's influence) and the Spirit (the actual participation of God in life). In the Nazareth Synagogue, shortly after his baptism and temptation, Jesus announced his mission and pointed out its transformational implications:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (4:18-19)

Following this the evangelist located a number of healing miracles and exorcisms to illustrate what Jesus was saying. Exorcisms portrayed Jesus' dealing with human needs on the level of conflicting spiritual powers.

Jesus' calling of persons into God's kingdom, to live by God's Spirit, was in a very real sense calling them into the fullness of human existence without which they would be incomplete and ill equipped to deal with the dynamics of life. Jesus, especially in Luke, constantly makes use of the spiritual resources of life which enable him to deal with issues encountered at various stages in his ministry.²

Interestingly enough, Luke has located at a central place in his Gospel several passages which can operate powerfully for us to call us to the foundational healing which is the recognition of and openness to the centrality of God in life. At the end of Luke 10 we are presented with a powerful

² . A significant pattern in Jesus' praying is withdrawal for retreat and prayer in crisis and in relationship to significant actions: his baptism (Luke 3:21), the temptation experience (Luke 4:1-13 and parallels), after the press of many needing healing (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16), before selection of the twelve (Luke 6:12), after the feeding of the 5,000 (Matt. 14:23), before asking his disciples who he is (Luke 9:19), before the transfiguration experience (Luke 9:28-29), in Gethsemane (Mk. 14:31-40 and parallels), Jesus' lament from the cross quoting Ps. 22:1 (Mk. 15:34, Matt. 27:46) and his surrender of his spirit to God in Lk. 23:46. These passages indicate the way prayer both informs and resources Jesus' actions, and that prayer and action are not antithetical.

image. Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha and they provide him with hospitality. But there are many ways for providing hospitality, Martha engages in busy preparation and Mary engages in *attentiveness* and we are left especially with the memorable image of Mary at the feet of Jesus, the position of the disciple, the one thing necessary. But really what both Martha and Mary were doing was necessary. Mary could not have done what she did without Martha doing what she did. But the point that Jesus made was that when Martha was *only* concerned about doing things for Jesus she neglected what was most important: being *attentive* to him. *Attentiveness* to Jesus was not something Jesus needed, Rather it was something that Mary and Martha needed.

Teresa of Avila in her classic spiritual work *The Interior Castle* understands that Mary and Martha represent not two types of people, but two parts of the same person, and this is perhaps the best way to understand the story. There are many responsibilities in life through which one may serve Jesus, as Martha was doing, but there is part of oneself that must stay rooted in and be attentive to God. Teresa envisions a room in the center of the soul where God dwells, and part of the soul must be here where God is. But both Mary and Martha have their role to play.

Teresa discovered that, in spite of business and trials, the essential part of her soul never moved from that room where God was (which she describes as in the center of the soul). She then discovered that there was a Martha-Mary division of her soul. In trials her Martha part complained of the Mary part that was "there always enjoying that quietude at its own pleasure while leaving her in the midst of so many trials and occupations that she could not keep it company." (*Interior Castle* 7.1.10) Teresa concluded that attention to God and prayer were for the sake of service and life, not just enjoyment. She says "... let us desire and be occupied in prayer not for the sake of our enjoyment but so as to have this strength to serve." "Mary and Martha must join together in order to show hospitality to the Lord and have Him always present and not host him badly by failing to give Him something to eat. How would Mary, always seated at His feet, provide Him with food if her sister did not help her?" (7.4.12)

The other passage immediately following the Mary-Martha story is the story of the giving of the Lord's Prayer. Jesus responds to his disciples' request to teach them to pray. Here he teaches them about prayer in what seems to be an abbreviated form of the longer prayer that we are used to in our church services. Since this immediately follows the story of Martha and Mary I would understand that both stories make somewhat the same point. The existential anxieties of life should not keep us from the relationship with God from which we find our deepest resources for life. But God is also concerned about the existential anxieties about life, and the Martha concerns are expressed in the last three petitions of the prayer.

RESOURCE LIBRARY FOR FAITH AND LIFE

Available in the West Room of Central Moravian Church

A Central Perspective on Life is a brochure that you can display and cherish at home and share with others, briefly describing the Moravian understanding of Christian faith and life and Moravian history.

An Approach to Evangelism is a much more detailed presentation of: the Sharing of Faith and Life, and God; *The Spiritual Character of the Life Process* so that we understand how faith informs, enables and transforms life; appreciation of *Being Christian With Our Natural Differences and the Differences Within the New Testament*; the Gospels As Stories which Tell About Us As Well As Christ (including an extended study of how our lives fit into the Gospel of Mark); *The Experience of God and the Central Role of Christ – The One Who Offers All and Engages Us As Life Companion* – all packed into one volume, including poetry, which you can read at your leisure or discuss with the author, Dr. Arthur Freeman.

Though Moravians have believed very much that *the Essential of faith is a personal relationship with God*, they also believe in scholarship and research which will provide the Church, its members and friends, with understanding and resources. *The availability of resources, even if they are not used by many, gives confidence that the Church understands its faith and mission, has worked through many significant issues and has gained usable wisdom. Resources need to be there and people need to know they are there -- even if everyone is not going to read them.*

You may also wish to secure and read the following available in the Library in the West Room:

The Ground of the Unity (the doctrinal statement of the international Moravian Church, with commentary), initially produced at the General/International Synod of 1957, revised 1995.

The Moravian Church, an article on Moravian History published in *the Encyclopedia of Christianity* (this contains a lot of bibliography) for those who want additional reading.

PowerPoint on the History and Heritage of the Moravian Church

on a CD. The necessary programs from MS PowerPoint can be installed on the CD in case you do not have access to PowerPoint. It is also important to know that we make available a video on Central Church by Robert Brown, called "**Welcome to Central**," which visitors can take home.

The Historical Jesus, an article affirming the dependable character of our knowledge about the historical Jesus. This is very important since Jesus is so central to us and our faith. If you are not interested in dealing with the complex arguments about the historical validity of our knowledge of Jesus, it is important to know that *the church has dealt with the crucial issues and we can have confidence in what we believe.*

We have other materials which could also be made available if needed, such as **Reading the Bible**. It is designed to help persons know how to read the Bible, not just to gain information but to live life from the closeness of God to be found in the Bible. The Moravian Church in 1731 developed a helpful devotional approach to reading the Bible known as the Daily Texts.

All of the items listed in bold type are available as needed, providing opportunities for insight and growth. It is our hope that in the future we can make more materials available, suitable to your interest and the faith of our Church. Thanks for your interest in what we are doing.



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