



THE HINGE

*A Journal of Christian Thought
for the Moravian Church*

“Singing is Believing”

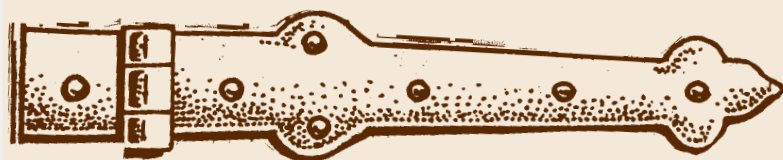
Nola Reed Knouse

2002 Moses Lecture

*Responses: Brad Bennett, Sam Gray, Jan Harke,
Brian Henklemann, Marian Shatto, James Newsom*

Liturgical reflection by Logan Jones
Book notes and review

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The Hinge is a forum for discussion in the Moravian Church. Views and opinions expressed in articles published in *The Hinge* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board or the official positions of the Moravian Church and its agencies. You are welcome to submit letters and articles for consideration for publication.

One of the early offices of the Moravian Church in Bethlehem, Pa. was that of the Hinge. “The office of the Hinge requires that the brother who holds it look after everything and bring troublesome factors within the congregation into mutual accord without their first having to be taken up publicly in the congregation council.” September 1742, *The Bethlehem Diary*, vol. 1, tr. by Kenneth Hamilton, p. 80.

This idea from the Moravian past has been chosen to represent the character of this journal. *The Hinge* is intended to be a mainspring in the life of the contemporary Moravian Church, causing us to move, think, and grow. It is especially sensitive to troublesome factors that may be an obstacle to our mutual accord. Above all, it is to be an instrument for opening doors in our church.

The hinge design was provided by Todd Tyson of Kernersville, N.C.

Editor's Notes:

In this issue, the director of the Moravian Music Foundation, Nola Reed Knouse, presents a summary of her 2002 Moses Lectures given under the auspices of Moravian Theological Seminary. Dr. Knouse explores the complex issues of music in Christian worship and offers concrete suggestions both for improving our Moravian worship and overcoming the destructive barriers we have erected over music in Church. Dr. Knouse helps clarify that underlying issues are not “traditional” versus “contemporary,” but questions of quality and integrity.

Music is one of the things we treasure in the Moravian Church. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that congregational singing was one of the reasons for the Hussite separation from the Catholic Church. Our church published one of the first Protestant hymnals in the sixteenth century, and in the eighteenth century published thousands of hymns and liturgies. Part of the liturgical innovation of the Moravian Church was to create entire worship services that were sung through. Music unites, inspires, and moves our deepest emotions.

Music also divides, diminishes, and angers us. There are many churches (including the early Unity of the Brethren) that see music as too sensual and egocentric for worship. The fact that only some have the talent and training to play musical instruments makes music suspect in many “low church” congregations. Some churches see music as a vain and extravagant waste of money, preferring simple hymns in a simple sanctuary.

There is also the new social reality that music is ubiquitous in America. We have become consumers of music rather than producers, and in doing so, music has become individualistic. We increasingly define ourselves by our musical tastes or even periods of pop music. Songs we heard in our youth become part of our personality. We often confuse the sentimentality of hearing familiar music from our formative adolescent years with the deep emotional and intellectual response that art can produce.

Our respondents represent different perspectives musically and theologically, but all agree that congregational singing is a matter of great consequence. It should be part of the overall benefit people of faith receive from coming together as the church and it is part of our witness as a community.

This is vitally important to Moravians because so much of our theology is communicated through liturgy and song. Music and liturgy unite us as a distinct community of faith. It seems to me that if we preach from the lectionary, pray from the liturgies, observe the liturgical calendar, and sing from the Book of Worship, there will be little danger that our congregations will be anything other than Moravian churches.

In the next issue of the Hinge: Racial Matters in the Moravian Church. How well are we fulfilling the Ground of the Unity when it comes to discrimination and prejudice in our church?

Singing Is Believing: Music at the Heart of Moravian Faith and Life

Dr. Nola Reed Knouse

“If you don’t sing it, you don’t believe it.” Or, in Fred Craddock’s words, (less lyrical, but certainly no less expressive of the truth): “You do not even know what you believe until you hear yourself say it.”²

We in the church have many things to argue about. We disagree over abortion, the color of the carpet, the death penalty, the size of the secretary’s salary, the designation of the Thanksgiving service offering. In most cases, however, these issues do not threaten the stability or the very life of a congregation. Music is a different matter, as poet and theologian Brian Wren notes, “Contemporary worship music is a tricky issue to discuss. Mention it, and a peaceful picnic bristles with partisans; trenches are dug, and battle engaged.”³ Why do we not only disagree, but really fight, over music? The reason, according to Geoffrey Wainwright, is that it matters so very much. “[Q]uestions of worship and sacraments bring into focus all the major themes of theology: God, humanity, Christ, Spirit, scripture, tradition, and... the place of the Church in human history and the wider world.”⁴

Throughout Moravian history music has been not simply a nice addition or cultural enhancement of our life and worship, but rather a necessary feature of our life and worship. Moravians can certainly affirm what Paul Westermeyer says about the proper place of music, “The being of the church under God’s sustenance frees us to treat one another with integrity. Once we get that right, we can begin to discuss music.”⁵

In our descriptions of Moravian worship we have tended to paint a rosy picture of the 18th-century *Singstunde* in Herrnhut.⁶ It is therefore revealing, and even somehow comforting, to read in Anja Wehrend’s comprehensive study of musical theology and practice in Herrnhut that there were a number of problems identified in worship as early as the 1750’s. Citing a letter from Gregor, Wehrend tells of mistakes in hearing the right tune (and given the close resemblances between some of our tunes, it is easy to see how such

mistakes could be made). Difficulties also arose due to the existence of variant forms of the tunes. There were in the middle of the 18th century no standard forms of the chorales.⁷ A century later Francis Florentine Hagen, in a memorial to the Northern Province Synod of 1893, harshly criticized those who would hold to the “old” ways, including certain rituals, forms of decoration, and music.

Some are wont to lay particular stress on singing ancient German chorales to the utter exclusion of American melodies, many of which are far more germane to the sense of some beautiful hymns than the German tunes. The slow, dull, soporific *tempo* of the latter, strongly suggests a corresponding spiritual *status* in those who most strongly affect them.⁸

A second example of past controversies in Moravian worship music comes from 18th-century London. The music in the Moravian worship services was known to be beautiful, and the fear arose that many strangers were coming “for the music’s sake only, and not seeking the Saviour.”⁹ After much discussion, the congregation “resolved to discontinue the music for the present, which probably attracts many strangers.”¹⁰ On Easter Sunday of 1778, the Elders’ Conference in Salem chose not to go to God’s Acre “on account of so many visitors.... [A]fter most of the visitors had gone home we held our Easter Liturgy in the Saal, at 3 o’clock in the afternoon, in the blessed peace of God.”¹¹

How great the contrast in the perspective towards the use of music and worship, that 250 years ago we worried that our lovely music and worship services were attracting too *many* people to our midst – or, more accurately, that they were coming for the wrong reason, to be entertained rather than to worship the Savior.

The issues we face today are not new. They still center on the questions of quality, usefulness, and styles of music we should use to worship.

Music as Craft and Calling

We will begin our study with what makes for specifically “Christian” or “inspired” art. Is it characterized by its creation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? Is it characterized by overtly Christian words or images? What role do training, craftsmanship, trial and error, throwing it out and starting over, and just plain hard human *work* play in its creation? Thomas Merton, in *The Sign of Jonas*, affirms the same about writing:

A bad book about the love of God remains a bad book, even though it may be about the love of God. There are many who think that because they have written about God, they have written good books. Then men pick up these books and say: if the ones who say they believe in God cannot find anything better than this to say about it, their religion cannot be worth much.¹²

We face similar issues of effort and quality in Christian music, but if the composer or songwriter is “one of our own,” and if she is so “sincere in her faith,” we often feel that we need to make allowances, to listen for the intentions and overlook many or most of the imperfections. I would never discourage an aspiring composer. The compulsion to write music is itself a gift of God and needs to be followed in good stewardship. I also recognize that it takes a great deal of courage to show your music to someone else, or to sing or play it for someone. It is, in my sister’s unforgettable phrase, an “introvert’s nightmare.” But the urge to compose does not in and of itself make a composer, any more than the desire to heal makes the doctor. In both cases, that pretentiousness is to contradict in our art the truth, honesty, and integrity of the Gospel itself.¹³

Malcolm Warford, in *Becoming a New Church*, puts it like this:

We need to find once again our liturgical vision with which to define worship. We cannot do this if we are primarily concerned about what will please the greatest number of people. There can be no renewal of worship without a sense of

calling—a reclaiming of our distinctive vocation to be Christ’s body in a particular place – which permits us to partake of the excellence and beauty of God.¹⁴

As you are probably aware, the bulk of the music written by Moravian composers in the 18th century was vocal music on scriptural or hymn texts for use in worship, but those Moravians certainly recognized the beauty and worth of a wide variety of music – even that written for operas, arguably the most “secular” of musical genres. If the line between sacred and secular is fuzzy (if indeed there is such a demarcation in our lives), then how do we begin to discuss music in worship? To say that any music could become sacred music is certainly not to say that it does not matter what music is used in worship; for as Westermeyer says, “Music is the vehicle by which the community remembers and celebrates what God has done.”¹⁵

Many Moravian hymns are theologically “dense” and require a significant engagement of the mind. This is a very important part of our heritage and ought not to be neglected. However, as Frank Burch Brown contends in a recent book on Christian aesthetics, “lighter” music is also important. Not every song used in worship need be “high art.” Some songs just make you feel good, and that can be just fine so long as worship is not lost.

When it comes to religious art, I am prepared to argue that there is room both for sentiment and sentimentality, and thus for easy emotion and a kind of indulgence. That is true for many of the same reasons that Christians should be allowed or perhaps encouraged occasionally to revisit, nostalgically, feelings associated with a quite uncritical phase of love, with naïve sympathy, or with a state of unabashed wonder. Sometimes indulging in easy emotion will open up a capacity to feel more deeply. . . . But when sentimentality dominates the religious space, it truncates religious development, at least in the aesthetic sphere. To acknowledge that sentimental and otherwise “defective” religious art has its place is not to forget the

importance of evaluation but to recognize that various criteria enter into religious aesthetic judgments.¹⁶

Selecting hymns for worship, then, is indeed a serious business, since congregational song both reflects and shapes the congregation itself – the experiences of its members and of the wider church.

Moravian Worship, Moravian Music

In the following reflections, I am indebted to the historical work of Otto Dreydoppel, who has outlined six principles for Moravian worship: it should be biblical, sacramental, experiential, communal, participatory, and liturgical.¹⁷ I have adapted these principles in what follows.

First, biblical: Moravian worship should focus on the reading and proclamation of the word of God. The music chosen for worship, then, should express Christian truth. It should, in Schalk's words, "tell the story of salvation – or at least that significant part of the story which the particular time, season, festival, or commemoration might suggest."¹⁸ This story of salvation is not apparent in every scriptural text; thus the fact that a text is "scriptural" is not in itself sufficient to establish its fitness for worship. Worship songs should "clearly and unambiguously sing of this Easter history in Christ... when they consist of nebulous religious platitudes, they would best be set aside."¹⁹

Second, sacramental: The nonverbal has its place with the spoken and sung words; that is, the presence of God is communicated beyond the power of speech alone. In *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes:

Why do Christians sing when they are together? The reason is, quite simply, because in singing together it is possible for them to speak and pray the same Word at the same time; in other words, because here they can unite in the Word. All devotion, all attention should be concentrated upon the Word in the hymn. The fact that we do not speak it but sing it only expresses the fact that our spoken words are inadequate to express what we want to say, that the burden of our song goes far beyond all human words.²⁰

Third, experiential: Hymn-singing has a peculiar ability to bring about such an experience of the "warmed heart," helping what Wainwright calls "the deep patterns of the Christian life" to enter deeply into the mind and heart.²¹ The Bethlehem Diary of 1742 records a use of hymns that did indeed warm the heart. After each letter from a brother or sister far away was read, the congregation sang a hymn in response to that letter, keeping the letter-writer in mind. Such a practice, it seems to me, strengthens the personal connection over long distances, all deeply rooted and joined together in Christ.²²

Fourth, communal: In the introduction to her edition of the 1659 hymnal of John Amos Comenius, Olga Settari describes the ancient Unity's use of hymns:

Hymns were considered to be confessions of faith and as expressions of the religious belief of the Unity as a whole, not simply an external affirmation of the religious faith of its author or as the result of momentary poetic inspiration. In this way, the Brethren's hymns witnessed both to the character of the religious life of the community of believers and to the internal convictions of the individual believer.²³

In a similar vein, Bonhoeffer writes, "It is the voice of the Church that is heard in singing together. It is not you that sings, it is their is the Church that is singing, and you, as a member of the Church, may share in its song."²⁴

Fifth, participatory: Moravian worship is not "a performance at which we are spectators."²⁵ While the Moravians did indeed adopt a significant amount of music from their neighbors, their preferences were clearly for the simpler of that music – not out of any lack of musical ability on their part, but rather because of their understanding of the purpose of the music to be used by the congregation at worship.²⁶

When the entire congregation sings as one, where heart and voice of the cantor, the people, and the musical choir are really producing one sound – such a *Singstunde* is the highest, most solemn worship of a congregation (though it must still remain imperfect), as well as the liveliest foretaste

of the heavenly festival surrounding it. I certainly believe that the heavenly musicians are delighted in no small way by this sort of human concert, and will gladly bestow on us admission to their perfect orchestra.²⁷

The worshiper is thus actively involved, not an observer or critic. In this regard the church certainly presents a vivid contrast to the surrounding society “where music incessantly comes at us to coerce emotion and sell products and ideas. The participatory character of song in the Christian assembly freely engages persons in the full-bodied worship of God,” as theologian Thomas Schattauer reminds us.²⁸

Finally, Moravian worship is liturgical: “Worship should evoke the majesty and mystery of God. While allowing for spontaneity in worship and the free flowing of God’s spirit among us, we should strive to use words and actions which have established their value and their meaning over time in Christian use.”²⁹ This is certainly not to say that there is no place for the new song – but rather that worship is, “a public act by which the worshipers identify themselves with a continuing community and enter into the ‘story’ of that community.”³⁰ Singing praise to Christ thus helps teach us who we are.

We are already beginning to move beyond theory into questions of practice. In these six features of Moravian worship, we can see tensions between worship and culture as it relates to music. How do worship and culture meet, clash, cooperate, or merge? What is the relationship of corporate worship, musical style, and evangelism? What effect should music have on the musician and on the hearer?

Music, Culture, Worship, Evangelism, Entertainment

If our music is to lift our hearts, to raise our spirits, and to contribute to our adoration of the Lord, it must be of a style and form that is recognizable to us – that is, it must somehow be related to our culture. There have been many studies in recent years on the relationship of worship to culture. Basic to any such discussion is the “Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture,” which presents the partial results of global and regional

research given at the third international consultation of the Lutheran World Federation’s Study Team on Music and Culture, held in January 1996 in Nairobi, Kenya. In this statement, worship (including music, art, and architecture as well as liturgy and preaching) is related to culture in four distinct ways: Worship is transcultural: “the resurrected Christ whom we worship, and through whom by the power of the Holy Spirit we know the grace of the Triune God, transcends and indeed is beyond all cultures.”³¹ Worship is contextual: “Jesus whom we worship was born into a specific culture of the world. In the mystery of his incarnation are the model and the mandate for the contextualization of Christian worship.”³²

Worship is counter-cultural: “Jesus Christ came to transform all people and all cultures, and calls us not to conform to the world, but to be transformed with it (Romans 12:2). In the mystery of his passage from death to eternal life is the model for transformation, and thus for the counter-cultural nature of Christian worship.”³³ And worship is cross-cultural: “Jesus came to be the Savior of all people. He welcomes the treasures of earthly cultures into the city of God. By virtue of Baptism, there is one Church; and one means of living in faithful response to Baptism is to manifest ever more deeply the unity of the Church.”³⁴

This sounds like quite a balancing act, and in our imperfect world our worship may go to one extreme or the other. If we ignore the cultural context, we will become, in Arthur Just’s words, “liturgical fundamentalists” who “stand condemned as a museum keeper of a dead tradition.”³⁵ He warns of the opposite danger, however. “If liturgies must reflect the ethos of the culture, then they will veer towards a feel-good, shallow, artificially uplifting sentimentality that reflects the pop culture in which we live. The liturgy then ceases to be transcultural but becomes just another expression of the culture’s malaise.”³⁶ Moreover, throughout Christian history, various musical styles have been incorporated into worship as new, fresh, and somewhat “subversive” musical expressions of the gospel, but they are gradually folded into the growing mainstream of worship music. Brian Wren comments that “Were I able to revisit earth in a hundred years time, I would not be surprised to

find elderly worshipers lamenting the demise of classical liturgical rap.”³⁷

How do we find the center, the point of balance amid these opposing tendencies? Let us briefly explore one of the primary issues: the very purpose and goal of sacred music. Specifically, is worship – and therefore worship’s music – an evangelistic activity? Should we choose worship music for the express purpose of attracting people to worship or influencing people to make a decision for Christ? This is not a new question. John Wesley is said to have adopted popular melodies with the question, “Why should the Devil have all the good tunes?” The voices speaking against this tendency are likewise compelling. Abraham Ritter complained about “Popular melodies, hatched from operatic fancies, dragged into the Church,” in 1857 and asserted, “If the Devil has the best tunes, let him keep them.”³⁸

The troubling aspect of this debate is in “why.” What is the motivation for our choice of music? Have we fallen victim to one of the less attractive features of our culture – the emphasis on market segmentation and “targeting” a particular audience? Westermeyer puts it clearly: “The underlying premise is that Christianity is one more product to be sold, often by means of entertainment, and that by attracting numbers of people and citing statistics, we can fashion our salvation and guarantee the church’s existence.”³⁹ This is the music of Bonhoeffer’s “cheap grace” – and in so doing, we have become too contextual and have lost the richness of our counter-cultural ministry. We have allowed our worship to center on our own and others’ pleasure rather than the adoration of the Lord. We have come to entertain and to be entertained.

Does this mean that I have no sympathy at all for the use of popular music in worship? Not at all! I am, rather, advocating an insistence on integrity, in that we choose a style which is our own, and on quality in whatever style, or styles, of music we embrace. Wren, ever the advocate of quality, speaks in favor of the use of contemporary musical styles, but affirms that “our contemporary music must be thoroughly congregational, not soloistic and performance driven. It will be energetic, but not compulsive; meaningful, not merely emotional; topical, yet able to connect us to the whole Christian

story.”⁴⁰ In our earnest desire to bring others to Christ, we know that it is Christ who draws people to him, but our words and deeds do matter. Our music is not ultimately responsible for someone’s salvation, but the integrity (or lack thereof) of our worship is a significant witness. Perhaps the music for evangelism ought to be different from the music for the worshipping community of faith.

In a 1995 study in which nearly 500 teenagers from across the United States were surveyed on the topic of the appropriateness of music for the church, the “unchurched students gave their lowest ranking of appropriateness to contemporary Christian music.” Several wrote on their survey forms, “This sounds like my parents’ music!”⁴¹ These unchurched teenagers “were apparently influenced by the standards of popular culture, which would judge the sound of most contemporary Christian music to be neither contemporary nor popular.”⁴² Praise choruses, in particular, use harmonic progressions most popular in the 1930’s and 1940’s, and rhythms most characteristic of the 1960’s, but with lyrics most often in the language of the King James Bible. Robin Leaver observes, “When the Church pursues the musical styles of popular culture as a vehicle for its message, it finds itself promoting what is by then out-of-date.”⁴³

Music serves best as a means of evangelism when we as the church teach the world to sing and play and to take delight in God’s gift of music; when we sing our message in the world; when we support those who already teach music; and when we fill in the gaps with music instruction, amateur musical organizations, concert series, and bring music to retirement homes, hospitals, and everywhere music should be heard. Whenever and wherever we share God’s good gifts, acknowledging them as such, we are sharing the love of Christ.⁴⁴

“Intentional identity with integrity”

I suggest that our music is one of the strongest means we have in the pursuit of what Bill Leonard, dean of Wake Forest University Divinity School, calls “intentional identity with integrity.”

Daniel Zager, writing only a few months ago, sees some indicators that the pendulum is swinging away from the use of Christian pop music in worship.⁴⁵ We

have seen some reasons to question the effectiveness of pop music in reaching unchurched teenagers. Trying to attract members by having church music sound just like what they hear “outside” may not only be questionable theologically; it may also be counterproductive, for “it is the similarities between groups which induce friendship between them, but the differences which impel people to abandon one for the other.”⁴⁶ Certainly in this postmodern world, it makes sense to me to make clear the distinction between the Christian church and the rest of the world – not to try to “blend in.”

Our tradition is more than cute or comfortable practices. Becoming rooted in our tradition does not mean becoming dry, crusty, or barren; it means knowing who we are rather than seeking “success.”

Looking at another church from the outside does not enable us to judge their “success,” any more than size alone is a measure of our “success.”

The constant temptation of all institutions, especially religious ones, is the desire to be something other than what they are called to become. Instead of looking at the uniqueness of the mission that is ours, we tend to imitate existing models and try to transplant those ideal models to our own organizations. More and more we try to do all sorts of things that we have seen other institutions do successfully, only to find that we do not do them very well. In the effort to imitate, we lose sight of the distinctive vocation given to us by God.⁴⁷

A similar temptation is to discard one’s own legacy for “new” forms of worship, sometimes called “alternative” services. In a study called *Encountering God: the Legacy of the Lutheran Book of Worship for the 21st Century*, Ralph van Loon expresses his concerns about not using the worship book. In grateful acknowledgement of our relationship of full communion, I am freely substituting the word “Moravian” for his “Lutheran:”

Those rites and rubrics authored and approved by the church boast the benefit of careful theological review. Since rites and rubrics are liturgical translations, expressions, and celebrations

of the church’s theology, those who use the traditional, approved liturgies are more likely to grow in knowledge of the faith and deepen their appreciation for [the Moravian Church’s] inherited traditions. Similarly, the congregation’s theology is shaped quite differently by its use of “alternative” services and music. ...[A]lternative services have no future simply because they abandon the past. Such nontraditional services are denied the substantive and enriching liturgical contributions that only centuries of Christian experience can provide.⁴⁸

“Intentional identity with integrity” requires of us these steps:⁴⁹

1. We must know our own tradition.
2. We must shape our worship style to our tradition. As Arthur Just rightly claims, “It is difficult to be as proficient at the ‘style’ of another tradition as that tradition itself since the style and substance are inseparable.”⁵⁰
3. We must “do” our worship well. There is no room for carelessness, poor preparation, or a casualness that stems from indifference or fatigue.
4. We must interpret our tradition and our worship to visitors and newcomers.
5. We must make use of the hymnal to teach and reinforce Moravian doctrine. This happens by the use of a wide variety of the hymns and liturgies – old and new.
6. And – this step is often overlooked – we must expect our members to study and grow in their knowledge of our tradition.

For us as Moravians, “intentional identity with integrity” often seems to involve finding a sort of middle ground between two extremes. How can we do this? It requires that our offering of worship be what we ourselves have to offer. The Moravian Church does not have the overwhelming array of published resources that many larger denominations do. We do, however, have a strong heritage of focusing our attention on our people. First, we have a responsibility to train our worship leaders – pastors and musicians. Second, we need to educate our

members, not with one workshop, but throughout their lives. And finally, we need to acknowledge that these questions about identity will not go away.⁵¹ Admitting that music is an important part of our faith and our life, then we must acknowledge our need for well-prepared, well-trained, and knowledgeable leaders – both pastors and musicians.

Many a musician who exhibits wonderful powers of perception and discrimination in matters that are purely musical is relatively inept at judging what sorts of music function well religiously and liturgically. By the same token, many a minister who is theologically informed and liturgically literate is musically rather insensitive, or relatively indiscriminating in aesthetics. Yet all these abilities are needed in order to exercise taste effectively in the context of religious practice. [...] it makes little sense, aesthetically and liturgically, to leave all the judgments in church music either to professional musicians or professional clergy. It makes better sense to train both musicians and clergy to appreciate each other's arts and to complement each other's tastes.⁵²

Church music is a very demanding vocation. While there continue to be many musicians who take on a "church job" simply to supplement the often-pitiful income produced by teaching, the church musician truly functions in a pastoral role to the choir or band, and, to a lesser extent, to the entire congregation. We as the church need to commit ourselves and our resources to engaging the finest musicians, giving them the encouragement they need, training them "theologically and musically, so that they know why they are doing what they are doing, and so that they have the skills to do it well,"⁵³ and paying them for the professional services they render.

Not only must we train our musicians theologically; we must return to our past practice of training our pastors musically. While not all pastors are musically gifted, every pastor has significant musical responsibilities. It is still primarily the pastor's responsibility to shape the hymn singing and musical taste of his or her congregation.⁵⁴

How does the pastor himself or herself prepare for this responsibility? Seminary preparation is indeed the best place for this. Paul Westermeyer asserts that seminaries need to (1) include "how the church encountered music" in its historical and theological study, (2) provide vocal training for its students, and (3) include music in the spiritual formation of students.⁵⁵ Seminarians thus learn "to embody their traditions with musical integrity."⁵⁶

Having trained the pastors and church musicians, we must teach the congregation to sing. When we print the music in all of our liturgical materials, we lose the visual (and thus to a great extent the cognitive) flow of texts from one hymn to another in a lovefeast ode or communion service. I wish for musical literacy, of course, and I wish for enough familiarity with our tunes that our members could indeed use text-only hymnals and liturgies. There is a real need for an identified "core repertory" of Moravian hymnody (texts and tunes), a set of hymns which we would embrace as our own and teach to children and to new members as part of celebrating our identity. Not all of these hymns need be Moravian in origin, but they would be hymns acknowledged and celebrated as important to Moravian worship. We might memorize a number of them, so as to have them instantly available to us in any setting, and we would tell new members we had done this, so as to allow them to do likewise. We also need to add other resources to our Moravian repertoire.

Moravian music festivals have an important role to play, but most Moravian congregations have no hope of singing the bigger Moravian anthems – the ones that fill the heart with rejoicing while they fill the ears with glorious sound. The festivals, then, may serve something of the function of a cathedral – the place for the larger works, to keep this music alive in our hearts. They can also be the place to introduce less challenging works which *are* practical for smaller congregations. Do the Moravian Music Festivals need to take place more often? Do we need shorter regional festivals and workshops? Will our congregations commit to send their musicians to the festivals – not as vacation time or at the musicians' own expense, but as funded continuing education?

The big questions remain. How does the music we use shape the community, and how does the community shape how we learn our music? How does our music reflect who we are as Moravians? We must be faithful first to Jesus Christ our Savior and then to his gift to us - our Moravian community, our continuing tradition, through which we seek and follow and share the Savior's love.

(Footnotes)

1 Condensed from the Walter Vivian Moses lectures presented at Moravian Theological Seminary, April 25, 2002; at the Archie K. Davis Center, Winston-Salem, October 14, 2002; and at Marquardt Manor, Watertown, WI, November 3, 2002

2 Fred B. Craddock, *The Cherry Log Sermons* (Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 39.

3 Brian Wren, *Praying Twice: The Music and Words of Congregational Song* (Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), p. 133.

4 Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford, 1980), p. 293.

5 Paul Westermeyer, "Music: Poured Out for the World," *Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission*, ed. by Thomas H. Schattauer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), p. 136.

6 The only hint of trouble we have acknowledged is advice from Christian Latrobe that if the presider begins to sing in between two keys, the organist should play in the lower key, as it is much easier for the voice to adjust downward than upward to be in tune. Christian Latrobe, ed., *Hymns Sung in the Church of the United Brethren, collected by Chr. Ign. LaTrobe* (London, 1826), preface, p. v.

7 Hence the need for Brother Gregor's work on the chorale book eventually published in 1784. Anja Wehrend, *Musikanschauung, Musikpraxis, Kantatenkomponisten in der Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine: Ihre musikalische und theologische Bedeutung für das Gemeinleben von 1727 bis 1760* (Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1995), pp. 36-38.

8 Francis Florentine Hagen, *Unitas Fratrum in Extremis; or, Thoughts on the Past and Present Condition of the Moravian Church in America, Respectfully Submitted to the Provincial Synod of 1893, at Bethlehem, PA.* (Bethlehem, PA, Moravian Publications Office, 1893), p. 10. Hagen explains himself further saying, "German chorales properly belong to German churches, who sing them well. Having but little melody or rhythm, chorales are insipid, unless sung in 4-part harmony.... By forcing upon English-speaking American Churches foreign tunes, which but few are able to sing properly, we estrange from our services the very people among whom God has placed us to work. Need we wonder at our stunted growth."

9 Colin Podmore, *The Moravian Church in England 1728-1760* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 151.

10 Podmore, p. 151. Citations are for the Pilgrim House Diary 1742-8: 20 October 1748, 19 July 1745, 10 April 1747, and 27 October 1748.

11 Salem Diary, April 19, 1778, in Adelaide L. Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. III (Raleigh, NC, North Carolina Historical Commission, 1926), p. 1228.

12 Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas* (New York, Harcourt Brace and Company, 1953), pp. 59-60. In addressing similar concerns about "secular" or "Christian" art, Madeleine L'Engle relates her response to a student who asked how to write Christian fiction. "I told her that if she is truly and deeply a Christian, what she writes is going to be Christian, whether she mentions Jesus or not. And if she is not, in the most profound sense, Christian, then what she writes is not going to be Christian, no matter how many times she invokes the name of the Lord." Madeleine L'Engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* (Wheaton, IL, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1980), pp. 121-2.

13 Carl Schalk, *Luther on Music: Paradigms of Praise* (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1988), p. 52.

14 Malcolm Warford, *Becoming a New Church: Reflections on Faith and Calling* (Cleveland, OH, The Pilgrim Press, 2000), p. 69.

- 15 Paul Westermeyer, "Music: Poured Out for the World."
- 16 Frank Burch Brown, *Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 20.
- 17 Otto Dreydoppel, Jr., *The Intentions of Our Founders: A Historical Review of Moravian Worship* (Unpublished paper presented at Symposium on Moravian Theology, Moravian Theological Seminary, November 18, 1988).
- 18 Schalk, "The Church and the Composer," in *Cross Accent*, 8 (2000:3-8, here p. 4.
- 19 Schalk, "The Church and the Composer," p. 5.
- 20 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, translated and with an introduction by John W. Doberstein (New York, Harper Collins Publishers, 1954), p. 59.
- 21 Wainwright, p. 214.
- 22 Kenneth G. Hamilton, trans. and ed., *The Bethlehem Diary, vol. I, 1742-1744* (Bethlehem, PA, The Board of Elders of the Northern Diocese of the Church of the United Brethren in the United States of America, 1971), pp. 42-4.
- 23 Olga Settari, "The Sacred Song of Johann Amos Comenius," in *Kancionál* (1659), ed. and with an introduction by Olga Settari (Kalich, Kultur Kontakt, 1992), pp. 25-6.
- 24 Bonhoeffer, p. 62.
- 25 Dreydoppel, p. 19.
- 26 It is well to recall the rich Lutheran heritage of sacred music which surrounded the 18th-century Moravians in Germany. While by the 1750's the music of Johann Sebastian Bach was out of vogue, an overview of the prominent Lutheran composers of the period brings to life the contrast between this more ornate "church music," sung by trained choirs, and the straightforward congregational song of the Moravians at that time. It is instructive to compare two settings of the same chorale tune, one by J. S. Bach and one by Christian Gregor. Both are very lovely; both are quite expressive; but they are representative of two very different forms of piety. While I have never heard anyone even hint that Gregor
- was a master of composition of the caliber of Bach, I believe that on the whole Gregor's chorale settings are much more appropriate to congregational singing than Bach's (which, after all, were meant to be sung by the choir, not the congregation).
- 27 Letter from Christian Gregor, in *Jüngerhaus-Diarium* 1 April 1759. Hahn/Reichel, p. 234.
- 28 Thomas H. Schattauer, "Faithfulness at the Threshold: Church Music, Culture, and Mission," *Cross Accent*, vol. 8 no. 2 (summer 2000), p.19.
- 29 Dreydoppel, p. 19.
- 30 Wainwright, p. 344.
- 31 "Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture: Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities," in *Christian Worship: Unity in Cultural Diversity*, ed. S. Anita Stauffer (Geneva, Department for Theology and Studies of The Lutheran World Federation, 1966), p. 24.
- 32 "Nairobi Statement," p. 25
- 33 "Nairobi Statement," p. 27.
- 34 "Nairobi Statement," p. 29.
- 35 Just, p. 12.
- 36 Just, p. 10, 12.
- 37 Wren, p. 1442.
- 38 Abraham Ritter, *History of the Moravian Church in Philadelphia from its Foundation in 1742 to the Present Time* (Philadelphia, Hayes and Zell, 1857), p. 156.
- 39 Westermeyer, "Music: Poured Out for the World," p. 133.
- 40 Wren, p. 166.
- 41 Barbara J. Resch, "Teenagers and Church Music: What Do They Really Think?" in *Lutheran Partners* (May/June 2000), p. 22.
- 42 Resch, p. 23.
- 43 Leaver, "Liturgical Music," p. 407.
- 44 Westermeyer, "Music: Poured Out for the World," pp. 145-147.

45 Daniel Zager, editorial, in *Cross Accent*, vol., 9 no. 3 (fall 2001), p. 26.

46 Colin Podmore, p. 121.

48 Ralph R. Van Loon, ed., *Encountering God: the Legacy of the Lutheran Book of Worship for the 21st Century* (Minneapolis, Kirk House Publishers, 1998), p. 8.

49 Adapted from Just, pp. 12-15.

50 Just, p. 13.

51 As Brother Crews observed a few years ago, “we most certainly need to keep asking probing questions about our identity as the Moravian Church. Indeed, if the Moravian Church ever quits questioning the nature of its identity, that is probably a sure sign that it has lost it.” C. Daniel Crews, “Questions of Moravian identity,” *TMDK* 9 (July 1996), English edition, p. 32.

52 Brown, p. 174.

53 Westermeyer, “Music: Poured Out for the World”, in *Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission*, ed. Thomas H. Schattauer (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1999), p. 139.

54 Charles B. Adams, findings in 1934 hold true today; see *Contemporary Hymnological Practice in the Moravian Church in the United States* (B. D. thesis, Moravian Theological Seminary, 1934), p. 14.

55 Westermeyer, “Church Music in the Seminary Curriculum,” p. 14-16.

56 Westermeyer, “Church Music in the Seminary Curriculum,” *Cross Accent* 9 (2001):14-16, here p. 16.

Responses

Brad Bennett

I have this picture hanging up in my music room at home that says; “Music must take rank as the highest of the fine arts - as the one which, more than any other, ministers to human welfare.” To many of us, music matters. To some, music matters a lot. Add worship to the mix and we are speaking of one of the most profound, basic and effective mediums for all things God — and us for that matters. For Moravians this is even more true. It’s no wonder that we are passionate about music in worship. And it’s no surprise that current conflicts about music in worship are nothing new.

I found Nola’s article informative, detailed and thorough. She raises many issues that are at the heart of music and worship, placing them firmly in the Moravian context. She makes a convincing case, lifting up quality, simplicity, distinctiveness, competence and integrity when it comes to music in Moravian worship without falling into the tired contemporary vs. traditional conflict. She seeks to balance the objective with the subjective when dealing with the medium and the message inherent in worship music.

Her expansion of others’ perspectives on the principles and culture of worship into the environment of music is helpful in clarifying the content and expression of worship music. I especially liked the suggestion that in whatever musical style or styles we embrace as Moravians in worship, we make them our own (with integrity and quality), and not just mimic a popular trend or someone else’s success story. I didn’t find anything in her article that I felt the need to jump on a pedestal to refute or argue over!

My comments in response to Nola’s article, then, reflect further on some of the issues she raises that are inherent in determining what is acceptable worship music, and how that music is played. In no particular order, the first would be the use of amateur vs. professional musician, or the volunteer as opposed to the paid. Closely related to this issue is the primary instrument (or instruments) played in leading worship. The primary instrument that has led worship for many years is the organ, which calls for extensive training, education and practice in order to play effectively. In recent decades other instruments have become increasingly utilized in worship - most notably, the keyboard and the guitar (electric or acoustic).

Worship music training is most often associated with the professional organist. Guitars and keyboards, when used in worship, are often played, not by professionals, but amateurs or unpaid volunteers. I wonder if these instrumentalists were trained in worship music as stringently as organists, would they be more easily accepted in worship. It seems to me that Nola's comments on quality and competence in worship leadership apply as much to the usage of these instruments as to the organ. Guitars and keyboards (or any instruments), played well and with attention to the worship context fit as well and meaningfully as the organ. I am not an advocate for replacing the organ as the primary instrument for worship music leadership, but I do feel that other instruments can also be used to great benefit. That would positively fit into the perspectives and principles of worship mentioned in Nola's article.

I do sense reluctance in many established Moravian churches to accept nontraditional instruments and musical styles in worship, which I find curious, considering that Moravians have traditionally been very musically innovative. If quality and competence are issues, there seems to be a lot more tolerance of brass instruments and organs poorly played than other instruments. Perhaps that is because organs and brass are the instruments most closely associated with Moravian worship and what many are more used to hearing.

I am not sure how one moves from the amateur to the professional in music leadership without ample experience. At some point a great organist had to be mediocre! How can one become a better worship music leader without actually playing in worship? Larger churches have the means and opportunity to offer music instruction and amateur musical organizations that can give such experience (in the traditional instruments, brass and organ), but I don't always find the openness to using other instruments or musical styles in those church that one might expect.

Smaller churches (which most Moravian churches are) sometimes seem more willing to use other instruments, but musical abilities vary greatly. When the quality of music or the musicianship (on a nontraditional

instrument) is experienced as "bad", it seems to hurt the chances of using the style or instrument again, even when the quality and competence could be improved. The use of any kind of instrument or musical style needs to be developed over time. What may seem poorly played and inadequate once could become well-done and meaningful with proper practice, training and opportunity.

Musical taste is another issue that is quite multifaceted and complicated. I don't think the "traditional vs. contemporary" tag comes close to speaking for all the angles and perspectives that are out there. I suspect those terms often get used for basic umbrellas under which all kinds of points of views get placed.

For example, using a guitar in worship does not automatically mean that the music played will be contemporary, though for many, the use of a guitar equals contemporary! After all, what does "contemporary" really mean? It seems now to be mostly applied to a popular musical genre, "contemporary Christian music," which seems to have as much to do with marketing a product as it does any of the principles of worship that Nola sites. A fascinating wrinkle from a Moravian perspective (in the South anyways!) is that often any guitar music is considered "camp music" no matter where or when it's played!

In the same vein, what is "traditional?" For many it has more to do with what they are used to hearing in their church setting than a particular style. That has more to do with what is customary than traditional. We live in an increasingly cafeteria-styled culture (the same is true in church) so whatever kind of music someone likes is used in worship somewhere. The old joke is really true: I consider what I like, good taste in music! What I don't like is bad taste!

Nola's comments on musical education are right on target, but I'm not sure our society or our churches are interested in such education. It's too easy to find one's particular taste if one looks hard enough. And it's too easy to promote one's own preference over and above anything else. There is nothing wrong with

enjoying and wanting a particular style of music in worship or searching for it. But when a style is seen as THE standard or the ONLY one that is truly spiritual/biblical, then it is no longer a matter of responding to God, but a matter of personal preference that has more to do with personal taste or familiarity than corporate worship. I know of churches that are just as rigid about “contemporary” music usage as others are with “traditional.”

Performance as opposed to participation is another complicated issue. Nola’s citing of Otto Dreydoppel’s work on worship speaks to this distinction, but there is still a wide gray area in the middle. When does worship music leadership slip over into performance? When does a worship music leader’s enthusiasm and inspiration move a song (be it instrumental, solo, praise chorus or hymn) from being offered/led to being performed? I generally look for where the attention is. The greater visual attention given or drawn to the music leader, the more likely it is to be performance oriented. And in the same vein, while a fine rendition of a song should be appreciated by the listeners and/or the singers, the desire or need for applause at its conclusion moves it closer to a performance.

In our visual, big screened, TV oriented age; it seems to me that we have moved MUCH closer to the performance/spectator end of the spectrum in worship that in my view puts the attention away from God. In fact, some modern worship services appear to me to be mechanically the same as secular rock concerts, the main difference being the use of religious language.

Being a guitar player and an advocate of the use of modern instruments and music in worship, I am very conscious of and strive hard to make sure that when I lead music, the focus is on worshipping God, and not on me, my guitar or the type of music. That doesn’t mean I always succeed, and it can be difficult to achieve when the instruments or the songs are not what the worshippers are used to. I am not trying to pick on modern music and instruments, because traditional can also be performance oriented. A spirited organ prelude, anthem solo or violin piece can just as easily become a performance instead of an offering.

As Nola indicates, these discussions only scratch the surface of all the issues involved in music and worship. There are many ways of looking at them, and few are truly cut and dried. Music for many is like life-blood; it isn’t a disposable commodity in worship or anywhere else! Like most other areas in church life we cannot wall ourselves up around whatever our particular perspectives are if we want to be effective followers of Christ. And we must do everything we can to offer music in worship that is real, meaningful and true to the good news of Christ that speaks to those who hear it, sing it, as well as play it, whatever the style or instruments used. With openness, dialogue, education, practice and attention, I believe we can. I’m still waiting on guitars to make it into the Easter band.

The Rev. Brad Bennett is Director of Youth and College Ministries for the Southern Province

Marian L. Shatto

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to be invited to write one of the responses to Nola’s excellent lead article concerning Music at the Heart of Moravian Faith and Life. Since I am in essential agreement with the main points of her thesis, I want to expand on several of her remarks and raise a few questions of my own.

If singing our faith is one of the primary mechanisms which bind us together as a worshipping community (and I fully believe that it is), then it is incumbent upon us to ask how the maximum possible number of the gathered congregation can be invited into joyful and willing participation. There is, in my opinion, no one foolproof answer to this question. Rather, a number of sometimes competing considerations must be addressed.

It might seem that staying with the familiar is the best way to encourage participation in worship. This is true only to an extent; then the boredom factor takes over. The congregation that hears only the same two or three-dozen hymns soon finds its worship stagnating. Praise, awe, and wonder are lost in a sense of the “same old, same old.”

While a mix of familiar and unfamiliar hymns is appropriate to counter this ennui, it is important to present unfamiliar ones in a way that makes them accessible. Sometimes a teaching session prior the beginning of worship is appropriate to introduce a new hymn that will be used later in the service. The choir might sing an unfamiliar hymn as a call to worship or prayer response one week, with the congregation invited to join in subsequent weeks. Some congregations focus on a “hymn of the month,” so that by using the same song in four or five successive services familiarity is gained.

One of the great strengths of the Moravian tradition is our emphasis on four-part singing. In four-part harmony, every voice range can find a line that it can comfortably sing. This is not always the case with unison hymns. Much as I love the text and tune of “Be Thou My Vision,” I find it difficult to sing with full attention to its meaning because it lies so low. I’m sure that altos and basses would have the same complaint at the opposite end of their register were it to be transposed to a higher key. The genius of the German chorale and other four-part songs is that everyone has a place within them, so that by our singing we witness to our community. As Paul observed in a different context, we have different gifts but are all part of one body.

Let me tell a story to illustrate the joy of inclusion that our musical tradition can provide. About five years ago I met a string bass player, a woman in her mid-sixties who loved music but was convinced she could not sing. After sitting beside her during worship at a retreat, I finally said to her, “Ann, you can sing. You are matching pitches just fine, an octave below me. You’re a tenor.” It was a revelation to her. In all her years of church involvement [not Moravian] she had never been given permission to sing in her own range, and the concept of being a female tenor was totally new to her.

With my encouragement she registered as a tenor to sing in the chorus at the 1999 Moravian Music Festival. By the middle of the week she was ecstatic. She was learning the music with increasing confidence, and one of the men near her indicated that he was following her

lead on the more challenging passages. Her delight at having found a voice was a joy to share.

Part-singing requires some basic musical training, however. A number of societal shifts over the past half-century have resulted in a populace who are much more specialized than was previously the case. Children who choose formal musical training have far more opportunities today than they did when I was in school. My observation, however, is that music education for the general student body is not nearly as extensive or thorough as it once was. With the prevalence of numerous forms of electronic entertainment, family music making as a common evening activity is also a thing of the past. Thus churches cannot assume musical literacy among the majority of their members. How this lack can be addressed is a conversation in which few congregations of my acquaintance are engaged. It is one that will soon become necessary, however, if we are going to retain general use of our traditional hymns and anthems.

Another ongoing concern of mine is the tension between worship and performance. As Nola makes clear, this is not by any means a new issue. I especially appreciated the quote from Carl Schalk regarding avoidance of music in worship “that reflects cheapness, superficiality, banality, shoddiness...” While I fully understand the impetus behind the point of view that insists that music in worship should not be a performance, as a trained musician I am always uncomfortable with that statement. For me “performance standard” is the best that I can do, and I refuse to do less than that in service to God.

Counter to this is the attitude that I have heard expressed by several professional musicians over the years, that they do not have to practice very hard because “it is just a church job, not a performance.” Clearly such musicians have the understanding that a church congregation will be content with a level of musicianship far below what is demanded by a concert audience. Somehow we must make clear to them that we expect nothing less than the best of which they are capable, while at the same time giving encouragement and appreciation to the timid fourth grader sawing out “Jesus Makes My Heart Rejoice” on her ‘cello.

It seems to me that education is a significant key to meaningful worship practice. Thus I especially appreciated Nola's emphasis on rigorous training for both pastors and church musicians, and her inclusion of the congregation in the educational process. At a time when many public schools have reduced or eliminated their commitment to education in the arts, the church needs to decide whether it will provide the training required to maintain comfortable acquaintance with our rich tradition of hymnody and liturgy, or abandon the complexities of that tradition in deference to an increasingly musically illiterate populace.

Over the years I have encountered more than once the charge that striving for excellence in the construction of worship and preferring classically-based music to that arising from popular culture is elitist and contrary to the Christian ideal of including all of God's children in the gathered congregation. It is a charge with which I struggle. As one who is strongly committed to social justice and full inclusion for the marginalized, I try to be very sensitive to ways in which my actions might exclude others. Yet I must acknowledge that my own voice lifts far more fervently in praise and joy in the Lord when a pipe organ supports it with full, rich chords than when I am straining to discern the melody amidst a collection of electric guitars.

The Moravian tradition of music requires intention, education, and a certain amount of hard work. What would happen if we were to take seriously Nola's observation that we "must expect our members to study and grow in their knowledge of our tradition"? Is it elitist to have such an expectation, and to convey it vigorously to new members? Would we, as some fear, lose members who were unwilling to take responsibility for the own education and growth? Or are we offering the musical equivalent of "cheap grace" if we are content to permit the majority of our members to remain in ignorance of the range and depth of our hymnody and liturgy? "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so," may indeed be the heart of the Gospel, but in my opinion the mature Christian should be eager to grow beyond that simple statement.

A question over which I have puzzled for years is that of the function of the music apart from the text to which it is set. Frequently eighteenth and nineteenth century composers used music to reflect and reinforce the meaning of the text. For example, in the Credo section of Puccini's "Messa di Gloria," which I had the opportunity to sing last November as a member of the Lancaster Symphony Chorus, "descendit" (He descended) is set to a descending musical line that pushes all voices to the lowest part of their registers. This kind of tone painting is of course much more possible for "through composed" songs and anthems than it is for chorales, where the same musical phrase sets a number of different lines in successive verses.

Some hymns with refrains exhibit this same technique. I fondly recall from my youth the stirring exuberance of a favorite Sunday School Easter hymn, as we sang first in subdued minor "Low in the grave he lay, Jesus, my Savior," then a triumphant ascending major arpeggio on "Up from the grave he arose!" Quite apart from the text, the music itself spoke to us of lying low in grief, then rising in joy.

Having said that, my puzzle is this – does the music of so-called "Christian Rock" and "Christian rap" preach a message contradictory to the gospel text of the lyrics? Or do the lyrics baptize and redeem a style of music which to my ears speaks primarily of anger and violence? Put another way, what I am asking is whether the emotions evoked by a particular form of music are universal and independent of any verbal expression? Or is the meaning of music a function of our enculturation, dependent upon how we have learned to interpret it?

I am aware of several studies on the effects of music on physiology and on cognitive ability. Several years ago much was made of the "Mozart effect," a theory that playing classical music for young children measurably increased their brain function. And I recall reading of a medical study that indicated that prolonged exposure to disco music had a deleterious effect on heart rate and rhythm. I have not, however, seen any report of a controlled psychological study of the effect of different kinds of music on the emotions. It is an area of study

for which I would wish some serious attention. In our increasingly violent society, does the anger in so much popular music merely reflect what is already present in the people who listen to it, or does it have some causal function? Do those who listen to it even hear it as angry, or does the language of music shift in the same way that verbal language does? We in the church have a message of joy and hope and salvation to proclaim. I believe that it is critically important for us to evaluate the medium which carries the message as carefully as we evaluate the expression of the message itself.

Nola has observed that many of our traditional Moravian hymns are very dense theologically. I think we could take much greater advantage of the possibilities for engaging the texts of those hymns than we generally do. My dear friend, the songwriter Carolyn McDade, has mentioned to me that she thinks most worship services don't give enough time with any one hymn for the congregation to really absorb what it is teaching us. She suggests that on occasion it might be appropriate to sing the same hymn three times, instead of three different hymns. When she leads singing during a retreat, she will frequently ask us to sing a song two or three times in succession. By the third encounter with the text, we are much more likely to be singing with heartfelt understanding. Or she will say, "Now turn around and pray the song when you sing it this time." I wonder how many times we actually pray our hymns during worship? Here is a challenge for those worship leaders who would take advantage of the immensely rich resource that is available to us in our Book of Worship.

Finally, I want to affirm the six steps required by "intentional identity with integrity." We as Moravians have a unique musical legacy with which to proclaim the gospel. We have a strong commitment to community. We value education and service. These are precious gifts to bring as our portion in the well-being of the body of Christ. Years ago in Church Music class I learned that "liturgy is the work of the people of God." We Moravians are challenged by our tradition to do our work carefully and with excellence. May it ever be so.

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Sam Gray

Let me begin by saying that in music, as in other areas of our church life, our biggest difficulty seems to be in being able to really listen to each other. We are divided into musical camps (and I'm not referring to places that we go in the summer to improve our musical skills!) and neither camp seems to be willing to listen to the music of the other "side." We end up making assumptions that are not always valid. A person on one side says, "praise choruses? All they ever talk about is a high and mighty God who is always fighting a battle and never cares about the poor and the humble." And the other side is quick to respond, "wake me up when you're finished singing that dirge that you call a hymn."

So, it is very refreshing to read an article that seeks not to ignore these assumptions and sides, but rather to cut through them and seek a faithful center. I find myself in agreement with most of the principles that Nola presents, and I am grateful to her for her thoroughness and clarity on the important issues that she identifies. Instead of responding "no," I will be responding to her with several "yes, and furthermore..." and a few "yes, buts." My response will focus on the central issues that she identifies: the styles, usefulness and quality of music we should use in our worship:

STYLES

Please allow me to take great liberties with a familiar passage from John chapter 4:

Jesus and his disciples were headed from Winston-Salem to Asheville. And "he must needs go through Davie County." Then cometh he to Advance, and, since he was tired, he decided to stop at the local laundromat to get a Dr. Pepper. One of the local women came to do her load of laundry, and, as she and Jesus conversed, she realized that he was a prophet. So she said unto him, "as long as I've got you here, there's something that I've always wanted to know. At my church, we use an electronic keyboard and guitars and drums in worship.

But now, y'all say that pipe organs are the appropriate instruments that people should use in church. Which style is right?"

Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, believe me, the time is coming when neither keyboards nor organs will be around anymore. Those are non-essential things. This is what is essential: God is a spirit; and the 'right' way to worship God is in spirit and in truth."

OK, forgive me for making Jesus say what I want to say (though that's certainly a good way to win an argument). But I would be willing to speculate that the Samaritans of Jesus' day may have had very "spirited" worship, though their theology was incomplete (they only used the Pentateuch as their Scriptures). The Jews, on the other hand, were big on truth, but their worship may have lacked "spirit." I believe that Jesus was saying that true worship requires a balance of both of these things: it must be "spiritual" (wholehearted, from the very depths of our being) and it must be "truthful" (Biblically grounded, theologically sound).

Unfortunately, in the Moravian Church in America today, I think we tend to fall into the same divisions that the Samaritans and the Jews had. Nola recognizes these "sides" as they exist today: "lighter music" vs. "high art," "contemporary" vs. "traditional," "praise choruses" vs. "hymns," and I appreciate the fact that she herself doesn't seem to take sides. I believe that our tendency to take sides based on musical styles has less to do with our "taste" in music and more to do with the baggage (theological, social, and political) that these musical styles carry with them. Let me offer a personal example:

When I use my portable electronic keyboard and sing "All In All," I may think that what I'm communicating is: "Lord, you are my strength when I am weak, you are the treasure that I seek, you are my all in all." This is a similar message to what I would be conveying if I would sing "Jesus my highest treasure" accompanied by a Tracker organ. But, believe it or not, the fact that I am using a keyboard, and singing that particular song, may actually be saying to some people: "I'm a conservative, fundamentalist, NRA-supporting,

KJV thumping, Republican, Rush Limbaugh fan who hates homosexuals and knows that all Buddhists are going to hell." Our assumptions make it difficult for us to listen not only to each other's musical styles, but to each other.

Sacred music, as Nola implies, must transcend this type of baggage. It must be, as in the Hebrew concept of what "sacred" or "holy" really means, set apart from these things. So I agree with Nola concerning the danger that exists in too close of a relationship between sacred music and the music of the popular culture. Yet, sometimes I think we need to be reminded that music is not necessarily any more sacred just because it sounds more like Tchaikovsky than like Shakira.

Nola suggests that the first steps toward developing a sacred musical style of integrity are first of all to know our tradition, and then to shape our worship style to it. Yes, but how do we define "our." Who is "we?" I'm reminded of the many times, at New Hope Moravian Church in Miami, a small congregation with seventeen countries represented! I have said, "let's pray together our Moravian blessing," and the response is usually either "our?" or else "whose Moravian blessing?" I think we have to be careful about selecting a particular period in history, or a particular part of the Moravian world, and calling that "our."

There is a lot of power present in this "our." Very often the people with the power get to determine who the "we" is. I'm sure that it is quite frustrating for many Moravians to visit a "contemporary service" where the worship leader says, "let's sing this song that we all know," and then proceeds to lead the song, with no printed or projected text. The visitor realizes that he or she is not part of the "we."

I believe that we must work toward developing styles of worship that are not dictated by popular culture (of any time or place) nor by the current "we." I think that all of us on both "sides" need to examine our preferred style of music and ask, "does it proclaim the truth? Is it Biblically grounded and theologically sound? Does it, like the Samaritans, only represent part of the truth? Does it, as far as is humanly possible, give a full picture

of God's character, or does it tend to focus only on our favorite attributes of God? Are we singing this style of music with "spirit," that is with all of our mind and heart and being? Do we believe what we are singing?"

USEFULNESS:

In the fall of 1972, at a retreat in Pennsylvania, Sister Carol Foltz sang a song that not only touched my heart – no, I can say in all sincerity that it actually changed the course of my life. Carol accompanied herself on the guitar. The song didn't even have the normal 3 chord progression of most "camp songs." It was one chord played in 3 different positions. But it served its purpose because it struck a chord in me. Does that elevate it to the level of "high art?" Of course not. However, could Carol have used a more appropriate song for God's purposes? I doubt it. Thanks again, Carol!

Nola mentions the purpose and goal of sacred music – worship – and then addresses the issue of choosing appropriate music for worship. I agree that the primary goal of sacred music is to bring honor and glory to God, but I also believe that different types of sacred music have different functions. Even in New Testament times, the apostle Paul spoke of "hymns, psalms and spiritual songs," with the implication being that the three of them were not necessarily the same thing or the same type of music.

A song that touches the heart of the untouched may do very little to inspire the worshiping community of faith. Yes, the music for evangelism ought to be different. Furthermore, the appropriateness of sacred music needs to be determined by how well it does that which we are asking it to do. Sacred music can teach, touch, reach, and preach; it can allow us to say something to God or give us an opportunity to listen to what God has to say to us. I believe we need to evaluate the usefulness and even the quality of the music within its intended context.

This may come as a surprise to those of you who know me, but I don't really like the idea of planning and celebrating a worship service that is classified as "contemporary." Why? Because that implies that the purpose of the service is to use music from a particular time period, which doesn't seem to me to be a purpose

worthy of much time and energy. What I would prefer is to plan a service that has a more significant purpose (evangelistic; healing; instructional; opportunity for praise, and so forth) and then look at all of the musical resources that are available in any century and from any cultural context and see which ones serve that higher purpose in the best way.

QUALITY

Nola advocates an insistence on integrity and quality in whatever styles of music we embrace. Yes, but is it possible (or even desirable) for us to agree on the definition of, and the guidelines for, quality in sacred music? Who decides? I'm afraid that often we try to evaluate the quality of sacred music by accepted Western secular musical standards.

Music is a means of communication. I know that is alike to calling a Rolls Royce a "means of transportation," but songs, to me, don't exist on paper or even in the mind of the composer. Corny as it may sound, I do believe that not only is "a song not a song till you sing it," but it's not really a song until it has been heard. A song is something that was born in the mind or heart of a "sender," taken audible form (or even visible, "signed" form), and has entered into and touched the heart of a receptor.

The quality of a particular musical work can be determined (or at least affected) by the quality of each one of these elements of communication: the composition of the work itself, the presentation of the work (the choice of instruments or voices; the quality of the "performance;" the context in which it is presented); and the receptiveness of the hearers. This last element includes the hearers' degree of musical training; their comfort in the present context; their willingness to hear the music; the "filters" through which they hear the music such as prejudices, assumptions, positive or negative feelings toward the presenter or composer, memories or feelings that are evoked by the music itself, and countless other filters. It gets complicated!

But maybe, again, the criteria for musical quality needs to be based on the two guidelines that Jesus gives us: spirit and truth. Worship music must

begin with God. What matters is who God is and what God wants, not our own likes or dislikes, our personal preferences concerning style or our culturally determined standards of musical quality. Brother Sydney Hooker, a born and bred Moravian of 75+ years, puts it this way when he hears the youth singing in church: “I can’t say that I like it, but I know that God does!”

Finally, thank you, Nola, for putting all of this in perspective with your final statement that we must be faithful first to Jesus and then to his gift to us. In the midst of the discussions and debates and disagreements of the past year, it has truly been a blessing to be reminded in song that what brings us together and joins our hearts is not always our music, or our traditions, or our interpretation of Scripture, but rather “the pardon which Jesus our High Priest imparts; ‘tis this which cements the disciples of Christ, who are into one by the Spirit baptized.”

The Rev. Sam Gray is pastor of New Hope Moravian Church in Miami, Florida.

Jan Harke

It is somewhat comforting to know that our modern struggles with music in worship aren’t new. I suspect that as long as the church is comprised of human members and continues to strive to witness to each generation with vitality, the issues surrounding music and worship will never be resolved. Rather, they will be part of the ongoing struggle to retain that vitality and meaning in an ever-changing world.

Michael Kinnamon, in his opening address delivered to the delegates of the Northern Province Synod in 2002, described Moravians as a “both - and people” (as opposed to “either or”). We are a local group of people who treat each other as family, with all that may mean (both good and bad). At the same time we are a global community including very diverse cultures. Moravians are ecumenical and evangelical. While we recognize and affirm with pride our own unique heritage, we also affirm the heritage and ministries of our Christian brothers and sisters regardless of

denominational affiliation. In short, we recognize and want it all.

This “both - and people” identification can easily be applied to the discussion of worship and church music. It would seem that our history of recognizing that there is no one “right” way would be very affirming in the current struggle of how to “do” church music. It is rather the insistence of doing what we do with integrity that would be the most important issue. Whatever we choose to do, however we choose to express who we are as Moravians in a specific congregation at a specific time, must be done to the absolute best of our ability using the best resources possible. I can only underscore Dr. Knouse’s affirmation that “our music is not ultimately responsible for someone’s salvation but the integrity (or lack thereof) is a significant witness.”

The ultimate question for me as a church musician working within a Moravian context is how? How do we put these ideals and goals into practice?

How do we instill a sense of our “both – and” identity in our congregations? How do we stretch very limited resources to include something few people see as an essential? How do we teach an appreciation for the “core repertory” whatever that may be?

How do oftentimes poorly trained and underpaid church musicians begin to work together with an oftentimes musically illiterate clergy who have the final (and perhaps only) say in the selection of congregational music for worship? How do we train our clergy musically when theological seminaries already complain of inadequate time to include all the necessities?

Simply being faithful to Jesus Christ and to the gifts of community, heritage and tradition are not enough by themselves. We also need intentional and concrete ways to implement an educational process for all: clergy, musicians and congregations.

Jan Harke is Director of Music at Palmer Township Moravian Church in Pennsylvania.

James Newsom

I have great respect for Dr. Knouse and high praise for the thoughts she presents in “Singing Is Believing: Music at the Heart of Moravian Faith and Life.” Her love for the Lord and her desire for Him to receive the worship, honor and glory that He so richly deserves is evident in her life and work. I am grateful for her realistic look at our denomination’s musical history and find myself in agreement with almost all her suggestions and conclusions. With that in mind I share some thoughts that came to mind after reading her paper.

Although I like many of the popular praise and worship songs and consider myself a fan of several artists in the contemporary Christian music category, there is a lot of music in those genres that troubles me. Many of these songs seem thin on biblical truth and seldom focus on any attributes of God beyond His love (e.g. holiness, justice, grace). Another problem is a lack of proper reverence for God. Some of the songs are so vague as to the object of their adoration that they could just as easily be one of Paul McCartney’s “silly love songs.”

While surfing a youth ministry website, I recently saw a comparison of two current songs which provide a case in point. Both are titled “I Need You”:

Song #1	Song #2
Love, I need love	You’re my only reason,
You are love	You’re my only truth
I need You	I need you like water
Love, You are love	Like breath, like rain
I need love	I need you like mercy
I need You	From Heaven’s gate
You know my	There’s freedom in
deepest fear	your arms
You know when I	That carries me
am scared	through
You can read	I need you
my empty page	
You can feel my rage	

Song #1 is a praise and worship song by the popular Christian group Sonicflood. Song #2 is by the country music singer LeAnn Rimes. When it becomes nearly

impossible to tell the songs of the church from the songs of the world, the church needs to re-think what we are singing and to Whom and for Whom we sing.

Not all modern praise and worship songs are theologically thin. I was pleased to see songs like “Let There Be Praise” and “His Name Is Wonderful” included in the Moravian Book of Worship. I hope that future editions will include more good songs of this type (“Shine, Jesus, Shine” and “He is Exalted” to name just two). If necessary, I would be happy to suggest some hymns currently in our book of worship which could be removed to make room.

My biggest complaint with The Moravian Book of Worship is the presence of so many hymns with tunes that are difficult to sing. I cannot read music, but I can sing and I can hear. And there are a lot of songs in the book of worship that I don’t like to sing or hear! Far too many times in my early years of ministry I searched through the hymnal and found a song with words that fit perfectly with a certain biblical text or sermon topic, only to discover at choir practice (or worse yet, in worship on Sunday) that the tune was a congregational flop. I soon learned to use the metrical index in the back of the hymnal to find alternate tunes which were more familiar and easier to sing.

Dr. Knouse is correct when she says “there is a real need for an identified ‘core repertory’ of Moravian hymnody (texts and tunes), a set of hymns which we would embrace as our own and teach to our children and to new members as part of celebrating our identity.” Once that is done it would wonderful to make those hymns and tunes available on CD and on the web. I would suggest going even further and making all the tunes used in the hymnal available on the web as MP3 files and the entire book of worship (liturgies and hymns) available on CD-ROM. That way, worship leaders would be free to listen to alternate tunes, to edit liturgies, and print out copies suited to the particular needs of their local community. The Episcopal Church already does this with their hymnal and the Book of Common Prayer.

I agree in theory with Dr. Knouse’s contention that “we must expect our members to study and grow in their

knowledge of our tradition.” However, my concern is what that means in a practical sense. Past experience has shown me that many of those steeped in Moravian music approach educating the congregation in much the same way my parents approached educating me about eating cooked spinach. I call this the “here it is, it’s good for you, eat it and be quiet” approach.

Simply put, no amount of historical background on the author of a hymn or tune; no exposition concerning a hymn’s theological depth; and no amount of repetitive singing can make up for the fact that some hymn tunes sound bad and are terribly difficult to sing. If my mom and dad would have served me cooked spinach every day and brought in nutritionists to extol its many virtues, I still would not have liked it. There are other ways to get vitamins, minerals and vegetable fiber inside little boys and there are other ways to get our members to know and appreciate Moravian music.

Having heard Dr. Knouse speak, play music and teach I have every confidence that she knows what needs to be done and is very capable of leading the way. If she and others like her are willing to teach and lead, then I and many others like me, are willing to learn and follow.

The Rev. James Newsom is pastor of Rural Hall Moravian Church in North Carolina.

Brian Henkelmann

My initial response to Sr. Knouse’s article was a fervent “Amen!” The accounts of earlier “music in worship” controversies illustrated that we are part of a continuing process and not experiencing a unique phenomenon as we try to discover the most appropriate worship music. Br. Dreydoppel’s “six principles for Moravian worship” provide a wonderful context for discussion of music in worship. The section “Music as Craft and Calling” provided a reminder of who I am as a church musician and my responsibility as a music educator.

In the discussion of “Music, Culture, Worship, Evangelism, Entertainment”, I relived yet again the “balancing act” which is part of being a worship leader

in charge of choosing, teaching and bringing to life the music of the worship service. I was reminded of the statement of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, “Music in Catholic Worship,” in which articles 26-41 state, in part, that any musical component of liturgy must be judged by the following criteria:

a) Musical – Is there an aesthetic and technical quality in its rhythm, harmony, and melody? Besides the quality of the rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic elements, is there a concern with the wedding of text to music? b) Liturgical – is the music appropriate to the nature and importance of the liturgy? Is the theological content sound? ... c) Pastoral – Is the music appropriate to the ability of the assembly? Does the music in the celebration enable the assembly to express the faith of the Church, in this place, in this age, in our culture? (Adapted from “The Liturgy of the Roman Rite and African American Worship” by Rev. J-Glenn Murray, S. J. in the hymnal *Lead Me, Guide Me* (GIA, Chicago, 1987).

It is the final section “Intentional identity with integrity;” however, that prompts me to raise some questions to the church at large and offer some my hopes and dreams about ensuring that in the future we will have Moravian musicians who are trained well enough to deal with the criteria mentioned in the article and familiar enough with their Moravian musical heritage to offer its many riches to the Moravian church and the church at large.

I am always intrigued (and slightly disheartened) when I enter a Moravian church that has no Moravian hymnals. Seeing only the 1969 (red) book also leaves me saddened that so many quality worship resources are unavailable to the congregation. But the lack of any Moravian hymnal makes me wonder what part of the worship life at that church is “Moravian”. I realize that with overhead projectors and in-house “songbooks” (PLEASE GET COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS AS NEEDED), some congregations feel no need to have hymnbooks, but I know of nowhere else that the Moravian hymn tradition and the theological teaching it incorporates is available in one book.

What loss is it to get rid of those “stuffy” German chorales? (Francis Florentine Hagen’s comment rang such an amazingly familiar bell). Besides the obvious musical loss, the greatest void is the loss of connection with our musical/theological heritage and the unity that a shared body of hymnody provides. I believe that one solution is to supplement those traditional hymns with quality music of various worship styles.

As many churches begin to have separate “contemporary” services, a definite danger exists. The debate over which (if any) style is “better” misses the point. The problem, as I’ve experienced it, arises from the fact that two separate congregations begin to develop, each with their own body of shared worship experiences and songs of the heart and mind. In some congregations these differences are woven together to make a stronger community. In most I fear, the two groups either go their separate ways or openly do battle for talent and financial resources.

From a musical standpoint, I know how a sense of harmony and voice leading developed almost unnoticed through the years as I sang, heard and played chorales at church, Sunday School and during singstunden. I worry that as the music styles get more and more basic, this subconscious training will come to an end. I agree with Sr. Knouse that many of the great Moravian anthems are beyond the musical resources and, if you take into account the use of musical instruments, the financial resources of our congregations. The average church choir seems to be leveling off at 8 to 12 members, many without musical training. How then do we perpetuate our Moravian non-hymn musical heritage? Perhaps it is with more groups such as the Moramus Chorale and the Unitas Chorale.

The Moravian Music Foundation continues to provide the chance to hear and participate in quality musical events whether they are Moravian Music Festivals, regional conferences, accessible editions of past anthems, or recordings of the treasures of Moravian music. The staff has catalogued, preserved and is making available the manuscripts passed down through the years. Equally promising, the Foundation is reaching out to contemporary composers and exploring not only how the Moravian musical heritage can be maintained but

also expanded. This hopefully includes new resources based on the Moravian Book of Worship as well as choral settings for small choirs using the tunes and texts of our heritage as a basis.

I challenge the Moravian-related schools at all levels to offer occasional courses on Moravian music and to promote performance of it whether through forming actual performing ensembles or supporting local ones already in existence. I challenge the local congregations, or possibly groups of local congregations, to meet and explore possible ways they can promote Moravian music in their own field of influence.

Perhaps it is by offering scholarships for music study to promising students. Perhaps it is by bringing in a teacher to teach some master classes to that beginning trombone choir. Perhaps it is by commissioning an anthem or an organ piece for a special service or event that can then become part of the general worship resources. Perhaps it is by sending youth as well as adults, clergy as well as lay people to the next Moravian Music Festival. Perhaps it is by sponsoring a regional conference on Moravian music as well as supporting the Moravian Music Foundation in its work. Perhaps it is just by letting the group of committed musicians you already have know that they are valuable and appreciated and that their interest in the Moravian musical heritage is important. Perhaps it is just by giving your music leadership enough of a budget to do their jobs at the highest level they can.

In whatever way you can, help the Moravian church build on the rich blessing of poetry and music it has received. Join in the new songs as well as the songs we can sing unto the Lord.

Brian Henkelmann is an artist/lecturer in the music department at Moravian College and church musician at Rosemont Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, Pa.

The Author Responds

I read these responses with a sense of joy in having shared questions which have meaning for these respondents, and I note that there are some common “themes” among these responses.

Sr. Shatto and Br. Bennett raise important distinctions regarding worship music as “performance” or as “worship leadership”. Br. Bennett rightly bases the distinction on the intent of the musician (to direct praise and worship to God, not to the musician or even to the music itself) and the attention of the worshiper (led to God through the music). Sr. Shatto’s term “performance standard” is indeed a helpful concept: it means “ready to present to others”, not in the sense of seeking adulation for one’s own accomplishments, but rather as well prepared as can be. She is rightly critical of those “professional” musicians who are content to offer to the congregation – and to God – less than what they would prepare for a secular audience.

The distinction, then, is indeed in the intent of the musician, who rightly and humbly invites the listener to share in worship through thoughtfully-chosen, well-prepared, and humbly-offered music. In this light it is well to remember the compositional style of our Moravian forebears in their sacred solo arias: the works are lovely and well crafted, deeply expressive of the meaning of the text, but not at all virtuosic. They are not intended to show off the capabilities of the singer – quite the opposite. And I suspect that one reason for the lack of solo organ works in the early Moravian repertoire (in contrast with the Lutheran tradition) is the very real danger that the organ, as a solo instrument, can so easily become a vehicle for self-serving solo performance.

Of course, composing is not immune to this temptation. One need only reflect on the spiritual struggle of Johann Friedrich Peter, as described in his *Lebenslauf*, when he wrote of the dangers of his musical gift. Was he writing music (even sacred music) for the wrong reason, for the praise it brought to him rather than to God? When I have told this story both to academic and to church audiences, I’ve been greeted with smiles – which generally fade into thoughtfulness. Would that more of us were so honest in our self-examination!

How our music is received in the congregation is a vital issue for our respondents. Br. Gray is wise to recognize the stereotypes which too often come into play, making the message received quite different from the message intended. Br. Bennett also shrewdly recognizes the different degrees of tolerance offered to different styles and/or instruments. In reading his observations I was reminded that the same issue arises, for instance, with women as pastors. An “intolerable” imperfection or error made by a woman pastor would more likely be excused by many people if committed by a clergyman; and a congregation which has had an unhappy experience with a female pastor will be very slow indeed to accept any other woman as pastor. Any “innovation” or change carries such injustices for at least an entire generation, and we who are in the forefront of change must bear a heavier responsibility not only for ourselves but for those who follow in our footsteps. (And, Br. Bennett, I would welcome you and your [acoustic] guitar into any band I lead!)

Sr. Harke raises the ever-difficult “how” questions in response to my call for education, and Br. Newsom echoes the need for such education. Need I say that I rejoiced anew to read Br. Henkelmann’s challenges to us all? He offers specific charges to the Moravian Music Foundation, Moravian Theological Seminary, Moravian College (and Salem College), and (let me add others) the Moravian Western Christian Education Committee, the Southern Province Music and Worship Commission, the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission, and each board, agency, and congregation. In this regard I also appreciate Sr. Harke’s reference to Michael Kinnamon’s address:

we are indeed a “both-and” people. To commit more of our resources into worship and music – things we have historically done very well – does not necessarily mean to have less to give to outreach and mission – things we have also historically done very well.

Yes, we must continue to be frugal where we can (for instance, in the weight and expense of paper for the Sunday bulletin), but we must continue to be extravagant where we are called to be. Our God has indeed been wildly extravagant, in giving his very self for us, and we also may (and must!) give ourselves for him, our very best, in worship, in mission, in ministry, and in music. With the thoughts of these respondents, and others of similar passion for the Lord Jesus Christ and his church, I have no doubt that the Moravian Church will continue to serve him and the world well, in ministry and in music, in worship and in mission.

Book Notes Recent Works on Moravian History

Kenneth Hamilton and Lothar Madeheim, translators, *The Bethlehem Diary. Volume II, 1744-1745*, edited by Vernon Nelson, Otto Dreydoppel, and Doris Yob (Bethlehem, Pa.: The Moravian Archives, 2001).

The Bethlehem Diary is one of the most fascinating documents in Moravian history, but it is inaccessible for most people, including most scholars. This is unfortunate because the Diary offers a uniquely detailed picture of life in colonial Pennsylvania seen through the eyes of the Moravian immigrants. The Diary, however, is a very difficult document to decipher; therefore the Moravian Archive, Northern Province, is to be commended for publishing volume two of the diary even though volume one appeared thirty years previously. It may be some time before the entire diary reaches the printing press! The translation is of a high quality, and the editors resisted the temptation to make the Moravians in Bethlehem conform to our standards of Moravian doctrine and practice. We are able to see them as they saw themselves, a congregation dedicated to the crucified Savior. We can also see, though, how they dealt with the practical necessities of daily living. Particularly fascinating. Throughout this volume as in volume one, we see the distinctive blending of practicality and religious zeal that characterized the Moravians during the Zinzendorf years.

C. Daniel Crews and Richard W. Starbuck, *With Courage for the Future: The Story of the Moravian Church, Southern Province* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Moravian Church in America, Southern Province, 2002).

The Southern Province celebrated the 250th anniversary of Wachovia with many festivities during 2002-2003. One of the most enduring products of that observance is Crews and Starbuck's history of the Southern Province. It is a weighty tome with 778 pages of narrative and another hundred pages of appendices. Obviously the authors aimed for a comprehensive treatment of the province, but most readers would no doubt have appreciated more judicious editing and selecting of material. In many ways, this is less a narrative history than an encyclopedia of the Southern Province arranged chronologically. The very helpful index will help readers navigate the volume and the chronology presented in the appendix is invaluable. The best contribution this volume makes is in telling the largely untold story of the 20th century. Not all contemporary Moravians will share the authors' interpretation of the last half-century, but this volume should inspire further research into 20th-century Moravian life.

Thomas Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride: The First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

Although this volume is now five years old, its publication was unnoticed by most Moravians, myself included. This was no doubt in part because of the high price of the book (nearly \$100), but it is worth checking out of the library. Fudge presents the best account of the tumultuous years of the Hussite revolution since Kaminsky's *History of the Hussite Revolution*. Although the *Unitas Fratrum* does not figure prominently in this volume, Moravians will find a concise and helpful account of the Hussite movement that led to the founding of our church. Fudge does a nice job with the early reform efforts in Bohemia that inspired Jan Hus. He demonstrates the relationship of theological issues to the concerns of ordinary people in Bohemia and gives a good account of the two divergent branches of the Hussite movement. Particularly helpful is his discussion of the chalice and the martyrdom of Hus as the symbols that inspired and unified all Hussite parties. The chalice represented more than just communion, it was also the symbol of a new understanding of the church and was even viewed by some as a sign of the in-breaking of the eschatological age. Fudge's main concern is with how the Hussites communicated their message to the masses. He examines the variety of media available to them and how they exploited music, preaching, and art for propaganda. It may be disquieting for modern Moravians to realize that our rich musical heritage goes back to songs like "Warriors of God" that were used to inspire the Taborites for battle, but this is a volume worth reading.

John M. Klassen, *Warring Maiden, Captive Wives, and Hussite Queens* (East European Monographs, 1999).

The Hussite movement challenged more than just the authority of the medieval church; it also raised serious questions about the social order and Christianity. Klassen focuses on the issue of gender, and he demonstrates that there was a brief window during the Hussite revolution when the social constraints on women were eased somewhat. It is interesting that Hus had a better view of women and the capacity as leaders than his successors who were more bound by traditional exegesis. The most radical perspective on women was offered by Petr Chelcicky, whose theology profoundly influenced the early Unity of the Brethren. Chelcicky broke with centuries of church tradition to argue that men and women are essentially equal in the eyes of the Lord and in the church. Klassen, though, does not adequately address the fact that Chelcicky viewed society and Christianity as opposing forces; therefore his view on women was restricted to the church. All in all, this is a helpful study of an important period of Moravian history.

Review Essay

John B. Cobb, Jr., *Transforming Christianity and the World: A Way Beyond Absolutism and Relativism*, ed. by Paul Knitter (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 189 pages.

John Cobb has been one of the leading figures in the area of "theology of religion," and is also an active member of the United Methodist church who teaches Sunday School. Unlike many Americans, Cobb does not see the intellectual life as somehow distinct from the life of faith, and in his numerous books he has called upon Christians to think about their faith and their actions in the world. Paul Knitter, another leading figure in the theology of religion, has collected several of Cobb's essays from the last two decades to show how Cobb's thought has continued to develop. In particular, this volume shows how Cobb has moved from a strong endorsement of relativism to a more nuanced approach to religious truth. Although he continues to reject absolutism in Christianity (or Islam and Buddhism) as untruthful and unethical, he recognizes that the type of relativism popular in our academic institutions makes responsible action in the world almost impossible. What is needed is middle path between

relativism and absolutism, or better, one that goes beyond both of those extreme attitudes to the path of truth, faith, and life.

Cobb clearly recognizes the problems that relativism has created in the academic sphere, and he is very careful to distance himself from the idea that relativism means there is no truth. In a 1990 essay, Cobb rejects other forms of relativism, especially “conceptual relativism” and post-modern deconstruction, as absurd and pointless. For Cobb, there is indeed a world “out there” for which we are responsible, and he calls for the world’s religious and intellectual leaders to seek for common ground in the midst of relative truth so that we may address the pressing problems of our age.

Throughout this volume, Cobb critiques the most important approaches to the question of world religions, and finds them all inadequate. He argues that the pluralists (Hick, Knitter, Smith) are not truly pluralistic because they rely on an ultimate unity behind the world’s religions which renders the particularity of actual religious belief and practice superfluous. Cobb sees this as a paradoxical form of Western imperialism since Western philosophers are telling the rest of the world that their religion is really pointing to a philosophical view of God rather than what they think it is doing. Another approach is simply to ignore all religion as irrelevant in the modern age, but Cobb rejects this because religion continues to be the most important motivating factor for billions of people.

Cobb prefers an approach that respects the genuine distinctiveness of each major (or living) religion and its truth-claims while encouraging intense interreligious dialogue that may lead to the transformation of one or more of the major religions. Through dialog, mutual learning, and common work to alleviate suffering, Buddhism *may* become more “Christian,” and Christianity *may* also become more Buddhist. He argues that Christians should not be threatened by this since “Christianity is a living movement” and “should be ever changing and growing” (p. 45). Without this openness and self-criticism, Christianity would cease to live in the reality of Christ (the way, the truth, and the life) and would be “idolatrous and unfaithful.”

It may surprise some readers that Cobb calls for a Christocentric theology in dealing with the reality of other world religions. Inter-religion dialog and cooperation can only take place if Christians remain true to their central affirmation of Jesus as a revelation of God. Rather than trying to Westernize other cultures in order to evangelize them, he urges that Christians drop their claims to be the only religion for all of humankind and accept the fact that Christians perceive God, reality, salvation, and life itself through Western eyes. We can then enter into authentic dialogue with people of other faiths and perspectives without abandoning our own identity.

In his 1993 essay, “Christian Universality Revisited,” he argues that Christians must engage the world, including other religions, as Christians without apology. He acknowledges that it is difficult to use the name Christ when engaging in dialogs with Jews; however, it would be deceptive and unhelpful for Christians to abandon their own language of faith. Similarly, Christians can engage in dialog with Buddhists without abandoning their conviction that we have responsibility to God and to the world as God’s creation. What Christians should give up, according to Cobb, is their claim that Christianity is the final answer for the world and that those who are ignorant of the Gospel or who reject it are condemned for all time.

This remains the sensitive issue. It has become commonplace to say that we live in a pluralistic world. Some, like Cobb, embrace pluralism, others reject it, and many of us go about their business without acknowledging it. Ironically, though, the world is actually less pluralistic today than it was 500 years ago. Most of the world can be counted among the adherents of just five religions (Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish) and their cognates (Mormon, Ba’hai, etc.). The only ideology that competes with the major religions is Market Capitalism. Certainly there are numerous little sects and New Age groups, but few of them actually develop beyond a website and book store.

The fact remains that in the world at large, there is less religious diversity now than at any time since the dawn of civilization. The world is now divided between three major competing and absolutist faiths. Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity each claim to being the only path to lasting happiness and right living. Each sends out missionaries with their message of salvation. Each dominates a major geographical region of the world and now each infringes on the others' traditional spheres of influence. Each has been the victim and the perpetuator of violence and domination. For Cobb, the only way to avoid continual and fruitless conflict is for the major faith traditions to accept their relativity. Just as in physics all motion is relative motion, so in religion, all faith is relative to time and place. Each religion has changed dramatically through the centuries and truths once held as absolute have been abandoned in favor of better understandings or new revelations. Why not go a step further and acknowledge that other faith traditions may also have relative truths? In specific, Cobb argues that Buddhists and Christians as Buddhists and Christians need to work together from their own faith traditions to engage in work to repair our damaged world.

Most people who know of Cobb's earlier works will probably be surprised to read the essay "Proclaiming Christ in a Pluralistic World," because there he asserts that Christians need to preach Christ in words and actions. The goal of proclaiming Christ is the conversion of the world (including the Christian church) to the mission that Jesus proclaimed in the world. We do this best, Cobb says, when we live by faith rather than relying on ancient confessional statements. "A healthy, confident Christian faith is much more likely when we recognize that we do not know what we will believe in the future, but that we know that for now God in Christ calls us to learn all we can" (p. 184). Although you may reject Cobb's presuppositions and conclusions, it is instructive to see the development of his thought. And the questions he addresses will be the most vexing ones for Christians in the twenty-first century..

-- Craig Atwood

Letters

Dear Craig:

I am writing to comment on the Winter 2003 Hinge, Readiness for Ordination: A Statement by the PECs. I am in agreement with the "Notes from the Editor" specifically the statements "Few clergy report being happy and fulfilled in their work" and also "Pastors in distress more often choose to leave the ministry rather than move to a new congregation." Even though these two statements are certainly nothing new, I am glad that they are being pointed out.

I joined the Moravian Church while at Moravian Theological Seminary as part of the process for ordination. As of this writing I will have served in parish ministry nine years. The fact that morale of Moravian clergy is low and conflict between pastors and those they serve is high doesn't surprise me at all. Neither am I surprised that some of the frustration is traced to the call process itself. I do not believe the call process itself is all that difficult to understand nor are the expectations placed on clergy serving in the Moravian Church. The job description is spelled out in the document, "Steps to Ordination" and the call process is the way the minister "applies" for the job.

On the surface everything seems clear and upfront. Unfortunately, the call process is not without its faults. As I see it, there are two particular problems. The first is that the call process can take a long time depending on the church. Smaller churches, high maintenance churches, and churches suffering financial hardship are less likely to go through the process quickly. When a church of the above description does finally install a pastor, they are often "fresh out of seminary." The simple truth is that the small church can't afford a more experienced pastor and because the newly graduated candidate is fearful of turning down that first call.

This leads to the second problem which is (despite the efforts of denominational leadership) that pastors are not always well-matched to the congregation. Again this mostly affects seminary graduates and smaller congregations. It is my opinion that the average seminary graduate is not prepared for life in the small to medium size congregation. Despite the best efforts of our seminary instructors, the average seminary graduate cannot fully understand the difficulties involved with pastoring these kinds of churches until they are actually serving one. Likewise, the laity of these churches do not fully appreciate the amount of pressure the newly ordained person is under. It is possible that both the congregation and the newly ordained expect too much from one another too soon. It is here that morale begins to suffer. If a church has a particularly troubled history, things can begin to deteriorate even more quickly. Since most ministers in the Moravian Church will probably remain in small to middle sized congregations *and* since many of those congregations are high maintenance, it is not hard to understand why morale is low across the boards.

Rev. Kevin J. Henning, Moravian Congregation of Egg Harbor, NJ

Dear Craig:

Maggie Wellert and Margaret Leinbach get it right in their essay in the Winter 2002 issue of the Hinge, “The Good Samaritan as Metaphor for Ministry.” The pastor as guide among a community of mutually supportive Good Samaritans is, in my opinion, a good model for professional ministry. Note her the term, “professional ministry.” Wellert and Leinbach distinguish between professional ministry, “the priesthood of all believers,” and “mutual ministry.” I agree.

Indulge me for a moment to list some verbs, adjectives, and nouns that Maggie and Margaret employ so effectively: *watchful, attentive, stands in, looks out for, preaches, administers, models, sinners, sick, poor, needy, healing, reconciliation*. Read them again faster, then as fast as you can until they blur together. What stands out for you? “Empowers” and “facilitates” stand out for me.

My job title is “Training Officer.” I work in something called “Training and Standards Bureau.” We training officers in training and standards bureaus are concerned with things like recruitment qualifications, task analyses, and training objectives; qualifications to perform specific tasks, to do which we will train you.

So, what are the personal qualifications we should be looking for in individuals whom we hope to recruit for professional ministry in the Moravian Church? What specific tasks do we expect them to perform? How do we train them to perform those tasks? And how do we evaluate their performance? I submit the following from Maggie’s and Margaret’s article:

Qualifications: *watchful, attentive*.

Tasks: *listen, elicit, know, respond, look out for, preach, administer, model, facilitate, empower*.

What we, the Moravian Church, need to do, then, is to find and recruit watchful and attentive people who can be trained to listen, elicit, know, respond, look out for, preach, administer, model, facilitate, and empower. They must be willing to be servants (even slaves) in their ministry to sinners, the sick, the poor, and the needy. Their ultimate goal must be to heal and reconcile.

Here we have gleaned from the insights of two most reliable sources what it takes to professionally minister in the Moravian Church. These should be the standards by which we measure candidate’s readiness to be ordained. At least we should use these techniques to evaluate how we regard ministry, professional and mutual, in our Moravian Church.

John Scepanski, Christian Faith Moravian Church, DeForest, WI

Easter Morning

Logan C. Jones

The Lord is risen. ***The Lord is risen indeed.***

Sing this aloud, proclaim it to the ends of the earth: ***The Lord has set his people free.***

The beeper goes off at 9:15 AM. I am sitting in my office at the hospital, on-call for Easter Sunday. I'm putting the finishing touches on my 11:00 AM worship service in the chapel. I plan to use the Moravian Easter liturgy. I cringe when I hear the beeps. I was hoping for a quiet day. I look at the number to call. My heart sinks. It is the Emergency Department. This is not going to be good, I think.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by his great mercy has begotten us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fades not away, reserved for us in heaven.

Blessing and honor, glory and power, be with him who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.

The secretary in the ED tells me they have a code coming into the trauma room. It is a 15-year-old boy in full code. That is all she knows. God, no. I head down to the ED. I am not sure what exactly I will find.

He was delivered for our offenses: *And was raised again for our justification.*

Who shall bring any charges against God's elect? *It is God who justifies.*

Who shall separate from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

I walk into the ED about the same time the ambulance hits the door. I see the stretcher being wheeled into the trauma room. A paramedic straddles this young boy doing chest compressions. Help us all, dear God. The medical team rushes around him. We don't have a name yet. The EMTs tell me the family is on the way. The doctors and nurses go to work. CPR continues. Labs are drawn. Questions are asked about what happened. The EMTs give jumbled story about the call. It does

not make a lot sense. What is going here? I stand and watch. There is nothing I can do. I feel helpless. Over all the chaos, I hear shouts for drugs and stuff. It is relentless. God, this is hard to watch. I step out. Still no word on the family. Do they know? Where are they?

If you then be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ who is our life appears, then we also will appear with him in glory.

None of us lives to ourselves, and none of us dies to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.

Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died, rose, and lives again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

The team keeps working. I keep watching and waiting. The minutes creep by on the clock. It's been 30 minutes. The sweat pours off the tech doing the chest compressions now. Now 45 minutes. There has been no response from this young kid. He is dead. Dead on Easter Morning. His parents have still not arrived. The team slowly leaves to room, heads are down, voices soft. I cannot believe this has happened. The doctor comes up to me and asked if I would say a prayer for this kid. The staff stops. We gather round the body. The lines and the breathing tubes are still in. We stand around all the mess.

We all stand silently for a few minutes. I put my hand on his forehead. He is still warm. I am not sure what I prayed. It was something about the bonds of death being broken and the promised hope that God would welcome him into the joy of his kingdom and presence. With an Amen, I look up and all the staff are crying. A deep, deep sadness washes over us.

An admission clerk comes up to me and says the family is here. They are in the consultation room. They do not know.

We would not have you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as others do who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

I tell the doctor the family is here. He sighs. He does not want to do this anymore than the rest of us. He looks at the chart. He wants to talk to the EMTs one more time. He is stalling. I say it is time. We need to do this.

I knock on the door to the consultation room. The room seems smaller than usual. The mom and dad sit expectantly. There are questions all over their faces. One of the patient relations staff is sitting with them. I introduce the doctor and myself. He sits down. They look at each other, waiting. He says, "I'm sorry. He did not make it." Before he can say anymore, the mom lets out a wail unlike any other I have ever heard. It penetrates the walls. She slumps in her chair. The dad is stunned. He cannot believe the doctor. He keeps asking, "What?" Again the doctor says, "He died. We could not save him." They look at each other. Tears begin to stream down their cheeks and they collapse into each other.

As we have borne the likeness of him who came from the dust, so shall we bear the likeness of him who came from heaven.

For this perishable body of ours must put on an imperishable form, and this dying body, a deathless form.

What is sown as perishable, *Is raised imperishable;*

What is sown in dishonor, *Is raised in glory;*

What is sown in weakness, *Is raised in power;*

What is sown a physical body, *Is raised a spiritual body.*

Then shall come to pass they saying that is written: Death is swallowed in victory.

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Christ Jesus.

We go back to see the body. The lights are dim. The floor has been cleaned and all the trash taken out. He looks so alone on the stretcher. I bring chairs close to the body. The mom just rocks and strokes his hair. Tears spill from her eyes and her heart, and like Rachel, there is no consoling her. Her son is dead. The dad pushes the chair back and gets on his knees. He talks softly to his son, holding his hand.

Glory be to him who is the resurrection and the life, even Jesus Christ our Lord, the faithful and true witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. For the kingdom of the world shall become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And he shall reign forever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And so they talk to their son. They tell me about him. Finally it is time for them to leave. Holding on to each other, they walk out of the ED into the morning of Easter, the Day of Resurrection.

Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.

To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

I am stunned and drained. I look at my watch, it is 10:50 AM. I head to the chapel. I know there will be some people there waiting for a worship service. I can't believe I am going to do this, but I am. I need to do it. So I gather my materials. There are 12 people in the small chapel. I stand in the front. My voice breaks. Tears well up in my eyes. And I say,

The Lord is risen. *The Lord is risen indeed.*

Sing this aloud, proclaim it to the ends of the earth. *The Lord has set his people free.*

The Rev. Logan Jones serves in the Department of Pastoral Care at Rex Healthcare, Raleigh, NC.

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