

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.