

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

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“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.”<sup>2</sup>

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.”<sup>3</sup> 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.”<sup>4</sup>

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.”<sup>5</sup>

In our descriptions of Moravian worship we have tended to paint a rosy picture of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century *Singstunde* in Herrnhut.<sup>6</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> century no standard forms of the chorales.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

A second example of past controversies in Moravian worship music comes from 18<sup>th</sup>-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.”<sup>9</sup> After much discussion, the congregation “resolved to discontinue the music for the present, which probably attracts many strangers.”<sup>10</sup> 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.”<sup>11</sup>

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.<sup>12</sup>

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.<sup>13</sup>

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.<sup>14</sup>

As you are probably aware, the bulk of the music written by Moravian composers in the 18<sup>th</sup> 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.”<sup>15</sup>

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.<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup> 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."<sup>18</sup> 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."<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup>

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.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

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.<sup>23</sup>

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."<sup>24</sup>

Fifth, participatory: Moravian worship is not "a performance at which we are spectators."<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

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.<sup>27</sup>

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.<sup>28</sup>

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.”<sup>29</sup> 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.”<sup>30</sup> 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.”<sup>31</sup> 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.”<sup>32</sup>

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.”<sup>33</sup> 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.”<sup>34</sup>

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.”<sup>35</sup> 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.”<sup>36</sup> 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.”<sup>37</sup>

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.”<sup>38</sup>

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.”<sup>39</sup> 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.”<sup>40</sup> 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!”<sup>41</sup> 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.”<sup>42</sup> 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.”<sup>43</sup>

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.<sup>44</sup>

### **“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.<sup>45</sup> 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.”<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup>

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup>

“Intentional identity with integrity” requires of us these steps:<sup>49</sup>

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.”<sup>50</sup>
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.<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup>

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,"<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup>

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.<sup>55</sup> Seminarians thus learn "to embody their traditions with musical integrity."<sup>56</sup>

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 18<sup>th</sup>-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 21<sup>st</sup> 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

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### 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).