

speaking.” At the same time, however, to describe our theology with great precision would seem a contradiction in our very nature and our reason for being.

Some of the author’s key points involve his dreams of the Moravian Church as a “mediating body,” one which works for peace and non-violence and which seeks “a better exchange of resources,” which would include narrowing the economic gap between the rich and the poor. These are ideas which all true Christians would wholeheartedly endorse, and the author is to be commended for his dedication to noble ideals and his sense of charity. Nonetheless, I am sometimes visited by what I consider the greatest theological contradiction of all, and it seems to temper the author’s dreams to a degree. Although we strive to behave as God would, we are only human. We seemed to be doomed, to a greater or lesser extent, to fail to realize our dreams in this life.

Let me hasten to add that we should not give up trying to build a better world simply because we are only human. However, we must also be careful not to condemn ourselves and others when we fail. We must intellectually embrace the concept that this will never be a perfect world, nor will we always agree on what needs to be done to improve this life or to grow closer to God.

Finally, any exploration of contemporary issues in the Church is probably best undertaken within a broad historical context. Challenges and debates are

nothing new within Christianity, and I have gained a fuller understanding of this fact in recent months. My wife, Terry, is currently enrolled in divinity school, and I have the opportunity to review her texts and term papers. Her most recent course dealt with the theological development of the early Church, and it is clear that the issues then were even more divisive than those we face today. Catholics were killing Protestants, as well as Protestants killing Catholics, in the most civilized nations of the world in their times. Entire nations were plunged into chaos in the midst of Christian theological debate.

In our current times, we are fortunate to have people such as Hans-Beat Motel who challenge us to dream of an even more peaceful and equitable Christian Church and world. I salute his efforts and am glad that he is a fellow Moravian. It seems to me that the real value of his treatise is his belief that “we must dream; we must develop visions; and we must hope to realize some of them.” It is this type of hope which incrementally improves the lot of humans in this life and enables us to do God’s work to the best of our human abilities.

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Gordon Sommers

Reading the 2003 Moses Lectures given by Brother Hans-Beat Motel intrigued and challenged me as it did when I heard it delivered. The sheer expanse of material, historical and contemporary, reflects the energy and encyclopedic knowledge that have characterized the leadership of one of the Moravian Church’s most gifted contemporary leaders. We owe

much to him and we are privileged to experience his continued influence. His lecture is consistent with the wisdom and strength of his spiritual leadership that I enjoyed in Unity Synods and Unity affairs. His writing is clear and refreshing, all the more commendable when we consider that English is not the writer’s first language, but one of five he speaks readily.

I am greatly challenged by the editor's commission that I respond only from the perspective of the Moravian Board of World Mission. On the one hand, to do so seems natural. As Hans-Beat reminds us, Zinzendorf believed passionately that the Church exists for Mission — MISSION ALONE. On the other hand, he covers many other facets of church life — vision, renewal, essential theological distinctives, ecumenism, community life, and ethics, to name a few. To limit a response to "mission" alone would seem not to do justice to the Zinzendorf legacy here presented.

The essence of Zinzendorf's ecclesiology is that mission is at the apex and center of all we are and do. All other facets of church life must energize and shape the people of God for mission. We know this. We affirm it to be true. We take pride in this essential to our being Moravian. Hans-Beat's analysis of Zinzendorf's legacy for the worldwide Moravian community is a potent reminder of who we are and from whence we've come.

Hans-Beat is not uncritical of our church. He is prophetic in the truest sense of that calling. When we take seriously his critiques, we will be more faithful in mission. Mission then will be not a "program" or a geographic responsibility assigned to a separate board; mission will be an overarching value that will shape all we do as "church."

Brother Motel is excruciatingly fair and perceptive in his judgments of the church. He is pointed in his condemnation of the economic and material differences within the worldwide Moravian Church. I sense the pain he as a person of economic privilege, as am I, has experienced over the many years of interaction with the worldwide Unity. The prayer of the Board of World Mission and all who are "missionaries" is that we never become so inured to those differences that we lose sensitivity to them, and that we fail to confess with humility our complicity in structures that perpetuate economic injustice.

At the same time, he is critical of the injustice that prevents Moravians in all nations from being truly inclusive. Especially is this so for the inclusion of

women. While structures of governance in all the Provinces of the Unity reflect European and North American models, those in power demonstrate unwillingness to examine and abandon prized traditions, especially when they benefit from them.

I take issue with Hans-Beat's claim that Zinzendorf's mission was without a particular strategy, that it was simply a response to "the least and the neediest." His frame of reference is the discussion within the Board of World Mission in recent time to "have a strategy" for "new world outreach." The Board developed an Asian Ministry during the 1990s to respond to the "10-40 window," with reference to the highly populated, largely non-Christian African and Asian territories lying between the 10th and the 40th parallels. The Board of World Mission is in the process of developing a Vision and Plan and is reexamining the relevance of such a strategy for our resources.

The issue of "strategy" recurs when we recall Zinzendorf's determined mission as depicted in the magnificent *First Fruit* paintings by Haidt (located in the Bethlehem Moravian Archives, in Zeist and in Herrnhut.) A mission to win for Christ representative ethnic groups from around the world took the early Moravian missionaries to people and places as diverse as the Inuit of Greenland and the Khoi Khoi of Africa's southern tip. This seems to be a clear strategy. We could criticize the economic feasibility and the anthropological accuracy of Zinzendorf's *First Fruits* strategy just as we could critique a contemporary strategy for new world witness, and for a variety of reasons.

To be historically accurate and comprehensive, to have a full grasp of the worldwide Church with all of its complexities, and to be lovingly critical of the church yet warmly hopeful for its future are all exemplary gifts. The Board of World Mission is most grateful to Brother Motel for making these gifts available to us.

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