



# THE HINGE

*A Journal of Christian Thought  
for the Moravian Church*

**The Joy of Liturgy:**

**Revitalizing Moravian Worship**

Matthew Knapp and Robert Nickel

*Responses: Melissa Johnson, John Jackman,  
Robert Peek, Ramona Routh, and John Wallace*

Book Reviews and Letters

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# *The Hinge*

## *Volume 13, Number 1: Winter 2006*

*The Hinge* is a forum for theological 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.

*The Hinge* journal is intended also to be a mainspring in the life of the contemporary Moravian Church, causing us to move, think, and grow. Above all, it is to open doors in our church.

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# Notes from the Editor

In this issue of *The Hinge* we enter into a discussion that has occupied the hearts and minds of many Moravians for the past two decades. Worship provides an opportunity for the community of faith to come into the presence of God to sing praises, offer prayers, and be nourished for the daily struggle of living as faithful servants of Christ. It is sad that we Moravians got caught up in the fruitless “worship wars” of the late 20th century. Too often we became partisans instead of worshipers, and we divided congregations and even provinces. “Contemporary” versus “Traditional;” praise music versus liturgy; “builders” versus “boomers” versus “X-ers” versus “Millennials” defined our church lives instead of worship.

Matt Knapp and Bob Nickel reach beyond these divisions and assumptions to reclaim the heart of Moravian worship. They remind us that all worship is contemporary if it is truly worship of the living God. They also remind us that all worship is traditional if it is grounded in the ancient words of Scripture and the living witness of Christ through the ages. Most importantly, they remind us that we Moravians have wonderful spiritual resources to draw upon and to offer to the church at large.

I had the privilege and pleasure of worshipping in the Sturgeon Bay congregation in the autumn of 2004, and it was one of the most meaningful and moving worship services I have been part of. There was no doubt that it was Moravian worship from the liturgies to the hymns, but in was by no means musty and dull. The leaders and congregation alike were more enthusiastic and joyful than in any ‘praise service’ I’ve attended. There is no pulpit in the Sturgeon Bay sanctuary because the congregations has reclaimed the old Moravian practice of preaching from the liturgist’s table, which also serves as the communion table. Worship was interactive, and the sanctuary was filled with young people eager to sing, pray, and serve their Lord. We can learn a lot from the rejuvenation of that venerable Moravian congregation.

Our respondents are all Moravian pastors who have responded to the challenges of their contexts with different approaches to worship than that of Sturgeon Bay. There is much that we can learn from each other if we will listen and recognize what is good. My hope is that we will learn to celebrate the good things in contemporary Moravian worship and recover the joy of coming together to sing, pray, and learn. There are no magic formulas for worship. Marketing will never be a substitute for authenticity or integrity, especially in Christ’s church.

Perhaps the most neglected concept in our church today is sanctuary. Rather than using Sunday morning as a proxy battlefield for the cultural wars, we need to reclaim the biblical idea of holy places. Worship can create a sacred space, a safe zone where people of all ages can lay aside their burdens, confess their sins, and learn to love their God and their neighbors.

We bid a fond farewell and Godsend to Rev. David Fischler, former editor of *The Hinge*, who is now serving in another denomination. We are grateful for the contributions David made in *The Hinge*.

# The Joy of Liturgy: Revitalizing Moravian Worship

It seems that much of what is being written about worship these days goes one of two ways. The first is to try to defend one's preferred style or approach to the topic. The other is to attack the "supposed" inadequacies of other styles or approaches. When Dr. Atwood requested that we write about the renewal of Moravian worship as it is experienced at the Sturgeon Bay Moravian Church, these two temptations were before us. We're going to try to avoid them. We certainly have our list of pet peeves and prejudices.

For Bob, these would include:

1. Those who believe that a quality, meaningful worship service cannot possibly include a mix (or blend) of musical styles.
2. Those who insist that the worship service is a "show" and try to impress rather than include the congregation.

3. Musicians who see their ministry as separate or in competition with the ministry of the pastor thereby creating unhealthy tension rather than cohesion during worship.

For Matthew, the list would have on it:

1. Clergy who approach worship as frustrated musicians or actors.
2. Church business being conducted during worship.
3. Sundays designated for specific groups (typically by gender or age).

Having gotten those out of the way, what we hope to share here is the absolute joy we experience in worship together in Sturgeon Bay. We hope to share some things we have found that we feel help make worship meaningful. Finally we

*The Rev. Dr. Matthew Knapp received his BA from Wheaton College, his M.Div. from Moravian Theological Seminary, and his DMin from Bethel Theological Seminary. He has served the Sturgeon Bay congregation since 1991.*

*Robert Nickel is the principle of Sevastopol High School and Middle School. He has been the Music Director at the Sturgeon Bay Moravian Church for the past 16 years. In addition to his various education degrees, he has a degree in sacred music. Bob is the author of "Liturgies for the Moravian Service" a book of liturgies being used widely by Moravian Congregation in both Provinces.*

want to share our enthusiasm for the Moravian Church's rich worship heritage and how it can very effectively honor God and be a blessing to the people who participate in it.

This is not a theological treatise as the readers of *The Hinge* often enjoy. It is merely the reflections of a musician and a pastor on how we attempt to honor God in our congregation.

We need to say up front that Sturgeon Bay is a very "traditional Moravian" congregation. By this we mean that:

- the organ is our primary worship instrument;
- the *Moravian Book of Worship* is our primary worship resource;
- we use liturgy in all our worship;
- we celebrate most of the traditional Moravian worship forms (e.g., lovefeasts, singstundes), and we celebrate all of the great church festivals.

We are not under the illusion that there is some worship that is more "Moravian" than other worship. In fact there might be some who would say our worship is not "Moravian" enough. What we are trying to accomplish is fashioning worship that is as faithful as possible to our understanding of the great worship legacy of the Moravian Church in our community.

Even in our own congregation there is a difference of opinion on what that means for worship. We have learned to embrace the healthy tensions of a diversity of taste and preferences because we feel these competing viewpoints push us to work hard at creating better worship. As in any family structure, differences of opinion will always occur. However, a solid structure

will allow healthy differences to occur without harming the family itself. In essence, the family becomes stronger rather than weaker because of the healthy tension.

We love worship! We struggle with the same difficulties of other worship leaders — juggling the tension of "putting on worship" as opposed to "creating participatory worship." More often than not, we find ourselves coming from worship with the sense of being truly blessed. This is not simply because we adequately covered our areas of responsibility but because in the midst of all our planning and efforts, the Holy Spirit rushes in, and something completely unanticipated brings us fully into the presence of the Almighty.

Many who read these words know exactly what we are trying to express. It is so humbling and awe-inspiring when God gets worshipped. In these moments, even though you are supposed to be a leader, you end up simply being taken along for the ride just like everyone else — helpless in His love.

So here are a few things that we have found work well for us. Please understand this is merely our small view nestled among the great waters of Lake Michigan. We don't think they are definitive or for everyone. We simply offer them in love that somehow they might be a blessing in your worship life.

## **Tradition is Good**

It is our fundamental belief at the Sturgeon Bay Moravian Church that meaningful, life-changing, God-honoring worship is strengthened by claiming our heritage and not hiding the fact that we are Moravians. It begins with our

believing that God has used and continues to use the Moravian Church as a unique witness in this world. It begins with our listening to our worship heritage and traditions that have sustained and shaped our community of faith for centuries.

It also means that we do not become enamored or confused by the conventional wisdom of marketplace trends that come along. We stick with what works and has worked for 140 years in this community. Down through the decades the hymns as well as the liturgies have changed. What has not changed though is that we have a congregation that expects excellence in what happens on Sunday mornings.

It is good to be a Moravian Christian in Sturgeon Bay. That identity shapes how we worship. Striving for excellence in worship has also helped create a reputation for us in our community. Through consistently structured worship, community members know “what they are getting” when they visit the Moravian Church. There will be no surprises or unexpected “events.”

As mentioned earlier, liturgies are used regularly in our worship life. One aspect of the use of liturgy we enjoy is that it creates unity. The congregation experiences unity through communal participation in the liturgy. Even a visitor can be an active worship participant through the praying of a liturgy. We have found that over time liturgy creates in our congregation a common theological language, fellowship with others around the world, and fellowship with the saints.

An example of communal participation of visitors is our use of a newly constructed Wedding Liturgy. Often the congregation assembled at a

wedding is from varied liturgical backgrounds and may very well include those unfamiliar with a worship setting. Through responsive prayers and appropriate, familiar hymns, the congregation is offered the opportunity to unite and become active worship participants rather than uninvolved bystanders.

Having praised the strength of tradition we must also say we have found that tradition must be constantly reinterpreted. This is why Bob has spent a great deal of time writing new liturgies for our various worship needs. We say “new” with a caveat. Often what is written is a reworking of liturgical forms that have been used in the past.

For example our congregation has a very active youth mission ministry. After multiple experiences of commissioning young people to head off to various mission projects, we realized that we needed to bring consistency to this celebration in worship. In the “Liturgy for Missionaries” which Bob crafted you will find the traditional Moravian prayer for missionaries coupled with both traditional Moravian hymns as well as more contemporary hymns. It is through this blending of older worship forms and newer prayers and hymns we feel we are able enrich our current worship life while keeping a precious connection to the worship forms of our past.

## **Careful Planning Welcomes the Holy Spirit**

One question we continually ask ourselves in worship planning is “Why?” Is there a clear theological reason for how worship is structured? Are there resources from our Moravian community to be used? Are there resources from

the ecumenical community that would enhance what we are doing?

We put a lot of effort into our worship planning, and we are deeply indebted to Bishop Graf who, while he was senior pastor, established a system of planning that is still in use today. At least six months out, the pastors select their scripture lessons, sermon, and worship themes for the next several months. We have the luxury of then passing these along to Bob who takes those pieces and adds the music, hymns, special music, and liturgies. Most of our Moravian congregations are not blessed as we are with a trained church musician, and we never take for granted what this does to help us seek a level of professional excellence in our worship services.

Just the task of keeping track of what hymns have been sung so that we utilize fully not only the *Moravian Book of Worship* as well our supplementary hymnals is a task that the pastors would struggle to accomplish but Bob handles for us. Church musicians as well as pastors may find resource material from Concordia, Augsburg-Fortress, and the American Guild of Organists to be helpful in aligning hymns to weekly scripture.

One of the greatest sources of joy for us is seeing how as pastor and musician we have brought our individual perspectives to a worship theme and how the Holy Spirit then fuses them together. For example, without knowing the content of a sermon, we are amazed that weekly the final hymn Bob picked will effectively reinforce that message. It is this sense of being a team in the creative process that not only improves worship but enriches each of us personally.

It has been our experience that careful planning once placed into God's hands seems to set the Holy Spirit free in our worship. In a worship service, we can never predict what will touch someone's heart. Any part of the whole can by itself be the vehicle that brings someone completely into God's presence. You can't predict how the Spirit will do this:

- She stands in the balcony with her youngest daughter. She has placed her older daughter on a plane to Thailand this week for a year abroad as an exchange student. The congregation had offered prayers of blessing last week and had been supportive at the reception following the service. But that was last week. This Sunday a group of younger youth is being commissioned for a mission trip. In the liturgy, one of the hymns proclaims, "God is in the other place. God is in another's face." She had not seen it coming, and the tears run down her cheeks as she receives this unexpected assurance from her Lord of His presence both here and with her daughter in that land far away.
- It is simply the piano, playing an old gospel hymn. It has been a tough week in the community. There was the tragic death of a teenager, one of the saints had succumbed to illness, and there were many other heartaches as well. It was simply the piano playing an old gospel tune prior to a time of corporate prayer. And when the last note finally surrendered to a deep and profound silence the pastor rose to pray. In looking

into the eyes of the congregation, he knew his words that followed, though important, were now merely a benediction. They were already resting in the arms of the Almighty.

- She is 14 years old, and today she is reading the scripture lesson. The pastor in a moment of insanity decided to preach on the “Begats,” or the genealogy in the first chapter of Matthew. She is faced with a list of the most unbelievably complicated names to pronounce. But she has done her homework and is ready. With an air of confidence that far surpasses her years, she clearly articulates all forty-two generations and ends by looking into the faces of the congregation and proclaims with authority, “This is the Word of the Lord.” The congregation, moved by the grace shining through her, respond with applause and cheers.

We never know what part of the worship service we have planned and prayed over will truly honor God. We never know from where the blessings will come. We never know what piece of the whole will deeply touch which person. Worship is not about what we get out of it. It is about our giving it all to Him. You know when you have worshipped. Being moved deeply in the very core of your being only happens when you have encountered God.

## **Education is Essential**

It is our belief that education is one of the most important contributing factors to meaningful worship. It is really simple to teach

people why we worship the way we do, yet it is such a neglected discipline. Explaining to them the meaning, metaphor, and drama of worship, and helping them to connect as deeply as possible to what they experience when we gather to honor God enriches everyone. The results of these efforts are truly amazing.

I (Matthew) learned the liberating power of being taught about worship while in college. I had been Moravian for only three years when I headed off to school. In all honesty, I did not particularly enjoy Moravian liturgy, I thought communion was confusing, and I was pretty ambivalent about my worship life in the Moravian Church. It had been other things that had brought me into the fellowship.

So what an amazing surprise it was for me to go off to Wheaton College, the Mecca of evangelical higher education, and end up falling in love with Moravian worship in the very last place you would imagine.

My matchmaker for this long love affair was a professor who began his academic journey by attending Bob Jones University and ended up becoming an Anglican priest. I happened to stumble into a class taught by Dr. Robert Weber who, when he discovered that I was a Moravian amid all the other students from evangelical denominations and mega-churches, smacked his lips like he had just tasted a fine wine and proclaimed to the class, “*Ah, a Moravian!*” I was intrigued by what he saw as something so delectable that I had obviously missed.

Over the course of the next two years, Dr. Webber hammered his evangelical, non-liturgical theology students on the biblical testimony concerning worship, the richness of church

tradition down through the ages, and how to put that into practice in our modern world. In the process, my mind was opened to something I had not been properly prepared to appreciate. Every single explanation he offered brought me to one of those “ah-ha” moments where I would say to myself, “*So that is why we (Moravians) do that.*”

Later, in seminary, I was blessed by the teaching of Bishop Kortz, who further expanded my understanding of worship. As I answered the call to ministry, I took the experience of being taught about worship as a great spiritual benefit and dedicated myself to sharing that with the people I had been called to serve.

It has been a sad discovery over the years of doing camp programs, workshops, and consultations in Moravian congregations to find out how many of our folks have never had anyone explain to them why we worship, much less why we utilize the forms and liturgies of our rich Moravian heritage.

In Sturgeon Bay we take every opportunity to teach worship. From Music Director Bob taking time before a service periodically to teach new hymns (a practice initially resisted but now loved by the congregation), to classes for the children and youth, and in adult education. Provided with insight and understanding, the people of God take this to heart, and worship becomes so much more meaningful.

Education must be a continuing discipline so that new members of the fellowship can quickly feel a part of the great drama that unfolds each Sunday morning. The educational process for us has also needed to be sensitive and affirming of the previous worship life of those who join us

along the journey. In our context, we need to be particularly aware of the connecting points for those who come from other faith traditions and who are now members of our worship community.

The greatest benefit of worship education is seen in our young people. The Sturgeon Bay congregation is full of teenagers. Their love of Moravian hymns and liturgy might seem strange to those who think young people only want to listen to a driving bass line in worship. We have learned long ago not to look to the balcony (where most of our youth like to sit) while singing “Sing Hallelujah, Praise the Lord.” We don’t look because we don’t want to breakout laughing at the sheer joy of watching 15 teenagers, with no hymnals in hand (since they know the words by heart), coming to those final words of this iconic hymn. With all the passion they can muster they sing

*“For us, (swing your right arm) For us, (swing your left arm) the lamb was slain(throw both arms over your head) Praise Ye the Lord Amen (reach to heaven with all your might)*

Lest some think this is disrespectful, let us assure you it is not. It is their expression of the joy and the triumph they feel in this ancient anthem of our peculiar faith.

We have expected them to honor and sing the hymns and pray the prayers of their Moravian forbearers. And they do so with joy. The unexpected result from this worship education that we now need to address is their frustration when they leave home to try to find liturgical worship in college settings. They come home starving for their “Moravian” fix.

## Conclusion

Tradition, planning and education have all served to enrich our worship in Sturgeon Bay. But it is always and ultimately about the Lord. When we gather He is always there and on a weekly

basis we are moved by His presence in ways that we simply can't express with mere words. We are so grateful and we never want to take this for granted. How good it is to be in worship!

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# Responses

## Melissa Johnson

I agree wholeheartedly that tradition, planning, and education are essential elements of Christian worship, and I appreciate the description of how this occurs in Sturgeon Bay. Matt and Bob have done a wonderful job of describing their view of worship and how they work together to create it.

I struggle with the language of worship and find myself putting many words in quotation marks as I discuss it. For instance, in my context at Palmer Moravian Church in Easton, Pennsylvania, we say that we have two “traditional” services and one “contemporary” service each Sunday. In actuality, we have two rather traditional Moravian services solely using the *Moravian Book of Worship* for congregational singing, incorporating organ, piano, and brass for most of the music, and utilizing the liturgies from the *MBW*.

In addition, we have another worship experience that is really more “blended” than contemporary. In this worship, we tie together

Moravian tradition and some hymnody with some praise music and different instrumentation. It is an experience that allows for experimentation and stretching. For instance, we celebrate communion in several different ways. We have lovefeasts, but they may appear a bit different from the usual experience. We project our congregational readings on a screen, but the readings themselves often come from our Moravian liturgies.

One worship experience is not more or less effective than the other. The experiences are simply different, and they speak to different people. We have come to call our “blended” worship experience, “New Horizon Worship.” This name may signify a new endeavor for our congregation, but it is more than that. If a horizon is a place where two things meet, then this worship experience is meant to be a new (and different) place where someone may meet God.

Because of my experience in different worship settings, I have come to believe that blended worship is incredibly effective; however, it is not the only way. In my mind, leading worship means

creating a space that allows people to experience the fact that God is present and is speaking to each one of us as individuals and as a community of faith. If this is true, then it makes sense that different spaces help different people. Sometimes a traditional Moravian service of worship can function effectively for people; other people may need something a bit more contemporary or different in format to participate authentically in worship.

The reason I have appreciated our “blended” worship at Palmer is that we can do things a bit differently and still claim our Moravian heritage and educate people about Moravian theology in creative ways. I found the authors’ choice of words, “. . . *not hiding the fact that we are Moravians*” to be interesting. It seems to imply that there are others of us who *are* trying to hide this fact. Perhaps this is true, but I hope that all Moravians keep in mind that our congregational struggles largely depend on our specific context.

*The Rev. Melissa Johnson is Director of Admissions for Moravian Theological Seminary.*

## **John Wallace**

As I write these words of reflection on Matthew and Bob’s piece for *The Hinge* on worship, I am grateful for *The Hinge’s* desire to explore the issue of worship. Let me offer my perspective. In Matt and Bob’s bravado style with a sincere blessing, I am struck first by their candor and clean lines of purpose: worship is an experience where tradition, execution/planning, and education under gird the core of celebrating

It is challenging enough to educate people about the Moravian faith in Palmer Township (or I would imagine in Sturgeon Bay) where the name is familiar. In the case of a new church in an area without other Moravian Churches, pastors need to handle this delicate situation creatively. Education about Moravian tradition needs to happen; however, it needs to happen in ways that draw new people into the Christian faith and fellowship.

I agree that effective worship planning is essential. People do expect excellence in worship — more importantly, I believe that God *deserves* excellence in our worship. I resonate with the authors’ statement, “. . . *careful planning once placed into God’s hands seems to set the Holy Spirit free in our worship.*” This is my experience, too. I feel strongly that everything we do in worship should be intentional. I also feel that we should plan just enough to allow for the incredible spontaneity of the Spirit.

our first love for the Lord. For worshiping the Lord, setting aside all of our quirky personal preferences and beliefs, and fully and faithfully standing in the awesome presence of the Lord is the goal of every worship leader and pastor.

Matthew and Bob raise some unifying points that clergy and worship leaders could learn, prepare and present to a congregation in the context of a worship setting. One could easily lead a year long program on learning about “what is a true worship experience.” This

“learning time” could focus on subjects like liturgy, prayer, scripture, hymnology, chorals and choir music. The sequence could expand a congregation’s knowledge base in a delightful, worshipful manner.

This learning time would not be delivered in an arrogant or pejorative manner but with a spirit of excitement, anticipation and love. The pastor could lead the congregation through a series of “worship chambers” not in Mr. Potter’s ask me style but in Lucy’s style of love for Narnia. Thank you for seeding such an idea for us to consider in our worship planning.

Matthew and Bob raise another point that often strains a congregation’s worship experience between “traditional Moravian” and “non-traditional Moravian” forms of worship. I agree with Matt that a good and “healthy tension” can coexist in a congregation. However, there are certain “tensions” that are not worth the struggle in every congregation, like what kind of coffee to make for the lovefeast, who should sing “Morning Star,” or what verses of songs are sung on Easter morning and in what order. As a worship leader, I have lost a few such “skirmishes” over tradition offered in a service. I believe using a blended style of worship helps us embrace and explore various ways to worship the Lord.

I often illustrate worship leadership as offering a prepared meal for the congregation to feast upon with the Lord. For example, if all one served on Sunday mornings were green bean bake, turkey breast, baked potatoes, rolls and pumpkin pie, every Sunday, Sunday after Sunday, at first we would embrace such a delightful and tasty meal. Nonetheless, over time one may grow tired of the same basic meal. Mixing up a wholesome

meal full of variety in hymns, chorals, prayers, liturgy (new and traditional) helps a congregation deepen its faith and expand its appreciation for worship.

Bishop Warren Sautebin once taught me, “Sunday morning worship is the most important time of your week because you can speak directly to the most of your flock. Enter the pulpit fully prepared.” I have worked with various talented musicians over the years, some outstanding performers and some marvelous worship leaders. Matt is fortunate to work closely with Bob but that may not be the case with some of *The Hinge’s* readership.

As we gather for worship each and every week, there are musicians who prepare for worship and those that prepare for their job. We have all worked with a few true worship leaders, organists or accompanist and also a few worship leaders that “hold a congregation hostage.” My simple advice is: unless you can play the organ, piano, lead guitar and sing on key, you may have to work through personal preferences and musical tastes with your worship team. Before the congregation is not the place or way to work through differences in musical tastes, worship styles or theological differences. Remember, we gather to worship the Lord Jesus and reach sincerely into the heart of the gathered parish family.

I would like to close with a simple story. I am reminded of wonderful worship leader in Donald Benedett who has sat on the organ bench of his home congregation for the past 68 years. He “took the bench” over from his mother at the age of 12 and has continued to provide inspiring, classical, reflective organ music for the

Lord all these years. Donald is not a published professional musician; however, what he does do, Saturday after Saturday, is drive nine miles out of town to his Berea Moravian church to prepare for worship. I asked him once why he drove out to the church and didn't just prepare for worship on his home piano. With a smile he said, "It just doesn't sound the same on the piano." True worship leaders like Donald live a life dedicated to their Lord, their church and their craft in their calling as worship leaders.

*The Rev. John Wallace is the pastor of Waconia Moravian Church in Wisconsin.*

## **Ramona Routh**

I am honored to have been asked to be one of the respondents to Rev. Knapp and Mr. Nickel's article on worship. First, I must say; what a wonderfully written article, full of passion for God and for worship! Like it says: "Worship is not about what you get out of it, it's about our giving it all to Him!" Amen, brothers!

I would like to begin at the end. I would say that my background in worship and in all the liturgies began at a very young age. I was born and raised in the Moravian Church. I have to be totally honest: when I was young, I found the music and the liturgies very slow and ominous. During my teens, I would continue attending our church as well as attending Wednesday night and Sunday night services at various churches that my friends attended. The churches included Baptist, Presbyterian, First Assembly of God,

There are many such worship leaders like Donald in our denomination that devote countless hours of practice time to prepare us to honor the King. To those worship leaders of music, I, and many other pastors of this Moravian Christian experience, say thank you for serving the Lord and bringing glory to His name. Matthew and Bob, thank you for your insight and passion for worshipping our Lord.

and Methodist. That is where I gained a truer understanding of the unity of churches. I felt God in all of those churches as well as my own. I began to see that God wasn't calling us to be divided but united in our faith in Christ.

I also attended summer camp not only as a camper but also as a counselor. In fact, this was where I was called into ministry. It was during these years that I fell in love with more contemporary music. This music touched me to the core and helped my gain a better understanding of Christ and of God's love for us! At the time I felt that our worship missed that connection with me.

When I was in my twenties, my family moved to a neighboring town to care for my grandfather. Because I found that the Moravian Church in that town didn't meet my spiritual needs, I chose to join the church my grandfather and parents were attending. Although this church

met my emotional and spiritual needs, there was something missing: the liturgies of the Moravian Church.

I continued attending summer camp, and after my call into ordained ministry, I went back to college. Still, the chapel services in college missed something. They met my spiritual needs, they even encompassed contemporary music, but they lacked one thing; Moravian liturgy. By the time I returned to the Moravian Church, we were using a different hymnal. Although I deeply loved the 'tradition' of growing up with the red hymnal, at this point, I found myself saying: "Ahhhh!" The liturgies and hymns hit home with me!

Thinking back, although I was not in the Moravian Church when all the controversy hit about changing the hymnals, I realize that some people could relate to a comment made in the article with regard to controversy about worship. I feel that Bob and Matt's comments relate. He said, "We learned to embrace the healthy tensions of diversity of taste and preferences because we feel these competing viewpoints push us to work hard at creating better worship." He goes on to say, "As in any family structure, differences of opinion will always occur. However, a solid structure will allow healthy differences to occur without harming the family itself."

Matt's comment about Moravian liturgy creating unity made me think. I agree we unite as a congregation when we come together and pray the same words to the same God. I feel that is one of the most important tasks that worship leaders face is to invite God's spirit to be a part of the planning for worship. Whenever that planning occurs, we must do whatever it takes to

keep God first and foremost in our thoughts and allow the Spirit of God to fill us in every step of the way! This allows for the Spirit to 'rush in' the midst of the service! That is truly when we feel 'helpless in His love!'"

I too believe that our heritage is very important to who we are as Moravians. Matt and Bob shared their thoughts about how to make our liturgy more relevant to those who are worshipping. He said that one way that Sturgeon Bay has tackled this is to have short lessons before the liturgy or even classes to explain the meaning of the liturgies and the history of the music. I feel that this is an awesome idea! I hope to begin to do this in the congregation I serve. I think that had this been done when I was a kid, it would have helped me to not find the music and the liturgy so ominous!

When I began to gain a whole new understanding and appreciation for the words we say when we pray our liturgy together actually happened one day in seminary. One of the preaching coaches was attending the worship service I was leading in my appointed congregation. When I told the congregation to turn to page\_\_\_ as we read together our liturgy, the coach made the most eye opening statement, "We are not *reading* our liturgy, we are *praying* our liturgy."

Another eye opening experience happened while at Moravian Theological Seminary. When Rev. David Bennett began serving as the chaplain of Moravian College and Seminary, he brought an immense amount of talent. One of his greatest talents had to do with liturgy. Dave wrote or compiled his own liturgy for our

various services. In fact, I still have most of these liturgies and use them often (I hope you don't mind Dave!).

Before these experiences with non-Moravian-hymnal-liturgies, I would have said that I was intensely apprehensive about writing my own. After the exposure he gave to MTS and our worship experiences, I feel much more at ease to share my talents with any given congregation. I believe that many of us, like Bob at Sturgeon Bay, have the gifts to share our words, and our prayers in liturgy. We must trust God to show

us how, allowing Him to give us courage to allow 'the Spirit to rush in!'

In conclusion, borrowing Matt and Bob's words, although tradition, planning and education must always serve to deepen our worship, it is always and ultimately about the Lord! We must always allow His presence to move through us. Regardless of what means of worship we use, traditional or contemporary, we must allow God's Spirit to rush in. "We need never to take for granted how good it is to be in worship" ...when we are worshipping the Lord!

*The Rev. Ramona Routh is pastor of Moravia Moravian Church in Oak Ridge, North Carolina.*

## **Robert Peek**

Brother Craig Atwood's request for me to respond to the theme "styles of worship" and "attitudes toward them" reminds me of the Saturday newspaper's Religion section. There, hoping to appeal to the masses (albeit appealing to certain interest), worship events described as "traditional," "informal," or perhaps "contemporary" are listed. The issue(s) relating to how we worship in a particular church seems to always to be just under the surface. My response, rather than taking sides will be to share where Immanuel-New Eden Moravian Church is at the moment.

To understand where we are one must regress about six years to the time when I first became the pastor of two churches in Winston-Salem; Immanuel Moravian Church and New Eden Moravian Church. Beginning April 2000 I

shuttled between the two churches on Sunday and other times to lead worship

To set the stage and keep the focus for this effort it is important to describe as Sturgeon Bay did the parameters of a "Moravian" congregation. Immanuel Moravian Church could be described as a traditional Moravian church

- The organ was the primary worship instrument
- The *Moravian Book of Worship (MBW)* was the primary worship resource
- Liturgy was used in all worship services
- All of the traditional Moravian worship forms were observed.

Every thing was in its proper place. The offering plates and polity during worship were standardized. The pastor was expected to preach from behind the pulpit.

In contrast New Eden Moravian Church was more flexible in worship

- The piano was the primary worship instrument
- The *MBW* and a Gospel hymnal were the primary worship resources
- Liturgy was used, but not always
- All of the traditional Moravian worship forms were observed.

Expectations during worship at New Eden were more fluid. It was not so important that everything was done the same each Sunday as it was that the people were immersed in worship. If a youngster wanted to sing unexpectedly on a Sunday time was made for that to happen. I began to preach in front and later in the middle of the congregation and it was well received. This style was more engaging and there were fewer “sleepers” during my sermons.

One of my challenges beginning this ministry was to keep the congregation fed from past experiences. This meant most times feeding the sheep what they were use to consuming. And most Sunday orders of worship were two somewhat separate efforts, realizing that many hymns that one congregation found inviting were not the same for the other.

### **The challenge:**

Early in 2002 the Immanuel congregation began thinking about merging with New Eden. There had been ample opportunities for the two congregations to get to know each other, and Immanuel’s worship attendance dwindled. The congregation was aging. Members expressed doubts as to whether or not the church could

remain viable. After looking at several alternatives, during a church council meeting, The Immanuel congregation decided to merge with New Eden. Within a short time New Eden also approved the merger.

### **The fun:**

Soon after this decision to merge, people came to me from both the Immanuel and New Eden congregations to ask: “What will worship be like? These folks worship somewhat differently than we do. What will we do with the Immanuel organ? Can we combine our choirs?” My answers (thought out before hand) were quick. “We will sing the first hymn and have the liturgy form the *Moravian Book of Worship*. The following two hymns will be from the gospel hymnal. We will take the organ with us to the combined church.” This seemed to quiet anxieties. Most people were getting most of what they were use to experiencing.

### **The final solution:**

I must confess that I took a wait and see attitude as to how this blended worship planning would be received. The bottom line is that it has worked well. At that time there were some comments about my preaching from the middle of the congregation rather than from behind the pulpit. One Sunday, an issue surrounding the location of my preaching came to a head. I tactfully began my sermon behind the pulpit. I told the congregation that there were some discussions from members of the church as to where they would like the preacher to be preaching. I asked those attending worship to close their eyes. Then I said, “Everyone who would like me to stand behind the pulpit please

raise your hands.” Then I asked “All those who would like me to preach from the middle of the congregation please raise your hands.” I counted the hands.

After walking down from the pulpit and standing in their midst, I remarked, “Open your eyes. The Holy Spirit has spoken.” From that time on I have been preaching from the front to the middle of the congregation. I haven’t heard any snoring and it seems to be engaging for the people and me.

There have been few conflicts. I select the hymns. If the choir knows the hymn then it stays on the order of worship. If not the choir director selects something else. The decision about hymns is not important. What is important is that our congregation comes together, worships from their hearts the living God, and comes to know Jesus as their Savior.

As a testimony to our worship we have reached out to other churches in our neighborhood inviting Antioch Baptist Church and Union Ridge UMC to join us at our Thanksgiving and

Christmas lovefeasts. The response has been great. A couple of years ago upon completion of our Thanksgiving lovefeast a member of the Baptist church asked me, “Can we come again at Christmas?” I assured him that everyone was always welcome. It is an affirming that Immanuel-New Eden is doing something right when the spirit of worship reaches out across denominational boundaries and makes us truly one.

Another Baptist this year remarked. We have you folks figured out. “Moravians are just silent Baptists,” acknowledging their (Baptist) propensity to say “Amen” during my preaching. With all this my conclusion(s) key on two important points. Worship should honor the living God, Jesus Christ and come from the heart. As I reminded a general during a funeral last year, after he identified himself as a Roman Catholic. I said, “You have the Pope and we have chicken pies and we all get to the same place through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Amen. Amen.

*The Rev. Robert M. (Bob) Peek, Sr. is pastor of Immanuel-New Eden Moravian Church, Winston-Salem, N.C.*

## **John Jackman**

I was intrigued by the publication of a new set of liturgies from Sturgeon Bay Moravian Church. The venerable Count Zinzendorf would be pleased at their efforts, but he would be horrified in the larger picture to see how few efforts there have been at new hymns and new liturgy. Zinzendorf felt that hymns and liturgy should always be arising out of the needs and life of the church as it experienced life in Christ. The fact that most of the “new” hymns in the *Moravian Book of Worship* come from non-Moravians should be an embarrassment. Kudos to Sturgeon Bay, and, of course, to Delbridge, Knouse, Henkelmann, Weinlick, and other Moravians whose contributions to *MBW* have enriched our worship.

Clearly, Matt and Bob have put a tremendous emphasis on doing worship well. This commitment to a thoughtful and integrated worship experience makes a huge difference. Whether the music style is traditional or contemporary, planning and thought will always create a more powerful and lasting worship experience for all. Too often I have been to services where the hymns bore no discernable relationship to the sermon topic or liturgy, and the service seemed like a directionless mish-mash.

Sadly, I think that many of our worship leaders also treat the liturgies quite casually, almost as an obligation to be gotten out of the way at the beginning of the service. Every week we gather to speak together words of power, words of peace, words of grace that have shaped the lives of hundreds of millions of Christians. To pray them thoughtlessly or casually is a tragedy.

One story about the power of liturgy done well: while I was in college in Bethlehem, Pa., one of my friends had her boyfriend from Germany come to visit. Like most Germans, he was not religious and did not identify himself as a Christian. But he was interested in touring Bethlehem and learning about the Moravians. His stay extended over Easter, and so I invited them to join me for the Easter service at Central Moravian Church.

During the service, Brother Peter Skelly led the congregation in our great Easter liturgy. He led the reading well and enthusiastically, his voice reflecting the meaning of each word and phrase. The responses of the congregation were equally strong. The young German, was astonished and leaned over to me. “He really believes it!” he whispered in awe. After a few more congregational responses had passed by, he leaned over again and whispered, “And they believe it too!”

At lunch after the service, Hans said that he had been to church in Germany many times, but the services were dull recitations. He had never been to a service like the one he had just experienced. We talked for a while about faith in Christ. I have no idea if Hans later came to know our Savior, but I know that the experience of that morning was a powerful one he would remember and tell his friends about.

One question I would raise about the traditional approach led by the organ is whether it is *actually* ministering to all our members (and potential members) as well as we might think. We are at a stage where nearly all our members who are under sixty (yes, 60!) grew up with, fell in love to, and have been soaked in, rock music.

When they leave church, rock music is what they turn on the radio and what they listen to all week long. Many of the traditional church favorites of an older generation were new, hot hits when they first came out — ranging from Charles Wesley’s hymns to “In the Garden.” Increasingly including other instruments and musical styles into worship is probably long past due for most of our churches.

At Trinity Moravian Church, we have spent the better part of the last year developing a new worship experience. Our new service, Evensong, began out of our awareness that we were not doing well at reaching 20-somethings and 30-somethings in our community. Instead of the knee-jerk response of starting a “contemporary” service, we spent time doing careful research among the age group we wanted to reach. Quickly, one of the topics that emerged was the style of music; but what also emerged was an awareness that they wanted to respect the needs of the many brothers and sisters in their 70s and 80s. So we decided to start a second service; but we wanted to do something that would be authentically Moravian and not just a clone of some non-denominational praise service.

As we extended our research, we found some astounding things about 20-somethings today. One of the first things we found was they aren’t interested in getting up early. So what do most churches do? They schedule their “contemporary service” at 9:00 a.m.! We scheduled ours at 5:00 p.m. instead, and found a name that reflected the time.

The second thing we found is that 20-somethings regard most “contemporary worship” and praise services as pretty passé. Think about

it — Willow Creek Community Church was started in the mid-70’s, before today’s college students were born! I’ve noticed for a while that when church leaders talk about “contemporary” Christian music, they are mostly talking about music that is twenty or even thirty years old — again, older than most college students today. But even more, many of our surveyed 20-somethings said that the “contemporary praise” experience was too much like a concert, they wanted worship they were really a part of.

This led to the most intriguing revelation of our research: younger folks’ strong interest in ancient worship practices and experiential worship. They are interested in tradition — not that of the 1950s, but of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the 12<sup>th</sup> century. They are interested in liturgy — but perhaps not in the way most congregations are doing liturgy. They may want to shake up the music a bit, put in some blues and rap and Emo; and they want liturgy that is a dynamic and powerful prayer experience. And they value community, doing prayer together.

All this research led us to a lot of reading about the emergent church movement. And guess who is a figure in that movement? Matt’s professor, Dr. Robert Webber, who refers to this new movement as “Ancient Future Worship.” It’s led us to ask vital questions about the assumptions that churches make and the direction we’ll be going. Boiled down, we’ll be going “back to the future” with ancient and venerable worship practices. The music will be all over the map, from plainsong and Taizé and Celtic to blues and jazz and rock. We’re making a concerted effort to break the race barrier, and have been initially successful. But what is most intriguing is that

Evensong is shaping up to be attractive not just to 20-somethings, but to multiple generations — including some 80-somethings!

Our adventure into emergent worship is authentically Moravian in character, in Christology, and in its adaptation to the needs and tastes of the people we are ministering to.

In fact, this is the true Moravian tradition. It is only in the past hundred years that we have become quite so stiff and stuck in the past — and it's high time we began to act like Moravian missionaries of the 18<sup>th</sup> century or those radicals of the 16<sup>th</sup> century who had the audacity to have the congregation sing!

*The Rev. John Jackman is pastor of Trinity Moravian Church in Winston-Salem, NC. He is also an award-winning filmmaker and founder of Comenius Foundation.*

## **Last Word: The Authors Responds**

We appreciated very much Rev. Johnson expressing the difficulty of finding the right language to discuss worship. It seems that “contemporary” and “traditional” really are inadequate in trying to convey what we may be doing. For example we see our worship as being “traditional,” but we recognize for many it would seem far from it. Our other pastor Rev. Herrick reminds us that “contemporary” should be any worship which is relevant not just guitar choruses from the 1970s.

We loved her comment: “God deserves excellence.” It is so true. Bob says he still wrestles with “may our imperfect songs and praises . . .” We often feel inadequate to the task.

Sister Melissa was interested by the comment about “not hiding being Moravian.” We wrote this because it is our experience that there are places where we do hide this under the proverbial

basket. Matthew's experience of being trained as a church planter in the 1980's was a time when the conventional wisdom dictated that one should try to remove all things Moravian for the sake of successful marketing. His experience in his ministry settings has indicates that this was a great mistake.

Rev. John Wallace is one of the most prayerful and creative worship leaders we know. Bob was particularly impressed by his words concerning the danger of treating worship leadership as if it is just a job. What a powerful reminder he gives us to all of us that we gather for the Lord and not for our personal agenda for “how” we do it. It is not about getting our way. His story concerning Donald Benedett is inspirational.

We also appreciate Brother John discussing the tensions we have around our traditions. Frankly in many of our churches, tradition has

become either idolatry or a weapon that we use to pummel others into doing things “our way.” The challenge is to practice tradition in order to set the Lord free in our midst and not to shove God into a box.

We applaud and encourage Rev. Routh’s interest in writing new liturgy. One of the main reasons we feel that liturgy becomes “dead” is because we quit recreating it to fit into the ebb and flow of congregational life. Good liturgy is where ritual and reality meets. It was also wonderful to hear how Sister Ramona’s varied experience of worship has enriched her life. Moravians need to be open to listening to such stories and allow the new folks entering into our fellowship feel that we value what they bring into worship.

Rev. Peek’s experience of trying to bring together two congregations into a common worship is a wonderful story. We admire the obvious desire in his heart to bring everyone along together in worship.

It is obvious to us we have a kindred spirit in Brother Jackman. His account of the young man from Germany is truly inspiring. His description of the work being done at Trinity is also very important. The “Ancient-Future” movement has incredible potential in the Moravian Church, and, just as importantly, the Moravian Church has a wealth of the Spirit to contribute to this greater movement, which is alive across liberal, mainline and evangelical churches.

The experience we have had of the 20-30 year olds that are coming to us is that our “traditional” service is often something *new* to them. And we have found that the organ is not a barrier to this age group in our ministry context. Just this past week a newer member who is in his twenties told Bob that after singing “I Love to Tell the Story” in worship the Sunday before that it has become one of his “new” favorite hymns.

It is the Holy Spirit touching us from the most unexpected places that makes worship leadership such a joy.

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## Book Reviews

**Len Wilson and Jason Moore, *Digital StoryTellers: The Art of Communicating the Gospel in Worship*** (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002). Reviewed by Margaret Leinbach.

Wilson and Moore critique both traditional mainline Protestant worship and late 20<sup>th</sup> century evangelical worship through the lens of the Gen X and Millennium “digital” generations. They tell us why our congregations are not attracting these young adults, and what we need to have in our worship services to attract them.

The authors’ generation is dissatisfied with the modern mindset found in their parents’ and grandparents’ congregations because that mindset focuses on objective empirical knowledge as the source of all truth. Gen X and Millennials are “postmoderns” who turn away from the church of their childhood because these churches are still trying to communicate the faith in a modern context—through facts and objective empirical knowledge.

People today now yearn for wonder and mystery, and per the authors, “Modernity kills wonder and mystery.” Also in a modern mindset, the reason to communicate is to pass along information, thus the purpose of technology in worship in a modern mindset is to enhance presentation of sermon points, words to hymns etc.

The authors criticize mainline protestant churches for being “in high culture” not willing to alter or sacrifice their dominant culture identity for the sake of the gospel. By judging some forms of communication as holy, the implication is other

forms of communication are not. The authors assert that art (particularly pictures and hymns) of older cultures draw us not to the subject it represents, but instead to that cultural form. Or said another way, the meaning is lost in the form of the message, with form taking precedent over the substance. For example stain glass once served a powerful role in communicating the gospel story — now it is merely an expensive ornament. “Images and metaphors die when they lose their power to shock us into seeing things a new way.” Hence the complaint that mainline worship is “boring.”

Their criticism for evangelical worship is its emphasis on technical “performance,” passive pew sitters, and weak engagement with the biblical story. In many evangelical churches there is very little Bible present in worship, and if scripture is present, it’s only an exposition on a brief passage, usually an epistle, Old Testament prophet, or psalm. Too many evangelical churches use the Bible as an instruction manual for life instead of using the Bible as “...rich, inspired heritage of stories of God’s movement of love in, to, and through created people...”

The authors remind us that good worship connects people to what God has done, and continues to do for us, so that we may understand and experience the love of God. Yahweh was, and still is, different from other gods in that Yahweh is a God who wants covenant relationship with

people. They assert the best way to connect people to God in worship is through story. “The goal of worship... is to tell the story of the risen Lord and through it to glorify God through proclamation, prayer, and presence, and because of it, to edify each other as the community of Christ.” Stories, not doctrine, form belief. To love God with our heart and soul comes through stories — not just our minds. “Faith in Jesus is about relationship, and the best way to understand that relationship is through the telling and retelling of stories.”

To tell the stories of faith meaningfully, we must adapt to the current culture. The video screen has the potential to be today’s stain glass, a way to use technology to communicate thoughts, ideas, and feelings that touch the heart of worshippers. Art is one of the primary means through which we can encounter God. (Remember Zinzendorf’s life changing experience upon seeing Domenico Feti’s *Ecco Homo?*).

“Art tells stories; it doesn’t make points, and is at its most powerful when it narrates rather than ornaments.” Art can remind us of what is real by stripping away the falsehoods that cloud our lives, and showing us reflections of God in the world. “Through art on the screen, digital worship can recapture the emotive power of wonder and awe of God and the majesty of creation.”

Thus, worship that reaches younger adults focuses on telling the stories of faith in ways that help us detach from our daily lives and see connections and identify archetypes that apply not simply to the story’s characters, but to us and people we know. To do this worship planners and leaders must become “masters of multiple communication forms” in sharing the stories of our faith. We must also update metaphors so that

biblical stories written in the first century can be understood and internalized in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. “Word of God,” “burning bush,” “mustard seed,” Holy Spirit represented as a dove — most of Jesus teaches about faith are conveyed through stories and metaphors, and we must find fresh ways to communicate them to the digital generation.

With a change in mindset from modern to postmodern, technology’s purpose in worship changes from an information tool to a catalyst for communal experience. A “digital mindset” for worship is: true stories, grounded in faith and scripture, presented as Jesus did, in the form of a visual parable. A short video clip, a live reading accompanied by music and a series of graphics, a segment from a film — “all woven together to communicate a single central theme based on Jesus parables on the deep human needs of people in the streets, who have come for an experience of God.”

In a digital mindset, film clips in worship move from being sermon illustrations and teaching tools, to evoking a shared experience and a metaphor that captures the essence of a story. There is a move away from spectator worship to participatory worship where worshippers have the possibility to experience Christ at a deeper level. Worship leaders “encourage an atmosphere of participatory response, whether it is via paraverbals, laughter, applause, or spoken word.”

The book also includes a DVD with several worship clips created by the authors and used in worship. Unfortunately for this aging Baby Boomer, the clips were mediocre home movies whose meaning often wasn’t clear to me. I wholeheartily agree with the authors’ emphasis on

proclaiming the stories of the bible and how the biblical stories intersect with the stories of our lives. THE STORY of the God of Israel (with the story of Jesus Christ as the hermeneutical key) as revealed in scripture should be the interpretive framework within which we live our lives and understand reality. In worship the unchanging

words of scripture ought to be in dialogue with our life stories in ways that deepen our appreciation for the gifts God has given us that calls forth our repentance, praise, and our trust in divine providence. And that is discipleship making worship for all generations.

**Robert Bacher and Kenneth Inskeep, *Chasing Down a Rumor: The Death of Mainline Denominations*** (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2005). Reviewed by Craig Atwood.

For nearly 20 years books, articles, and on-line discussion groups have gleefully promoted the idea that the mainline denominations are dinosaurs doomed to extinction while “post-modern” mega-churches are the wave of the future. Though much of this literature is merely a form of advertising in the religious marketplace, it has often been accepted at face value by leaders in the mainline churches themselves. The imminent death of the mainline churches is the “rumor” that Bacher and Inskeep chase down in this helpful little book. They begin by offering solid evidence that the death of the mainline churches has been exaggerated..

The authors are rightly concerned that the death of the mainline churches will become a self-fulfilling prophecy as churches lose confidence and commitment to their mission. They note that most of the proposals for new types of religious institutions, such as an “apostolic” model of networked congregations, are not at all new. They are part of the historic fabric of American Protestantism, which has always been

more interested in heart-felt personal religiosity than institutional structures. What was genuinely new in 20<sup>th</sup> century religion, according to Bacher and Inskeep, was the development of large, bureaucratic denominational organizations dedicated to building a just society. Rather than abandon this mission, the mainline churches are urged to learn from their mistakes and move forward. What the book fails to acknowledge about this liberal mission is that it always marred by paternalism and elitism.

The authors contrast the mainline churches’ commitment to community and the evangelical focus on personal religion. They offer Reinhold Niebuhr and Norman Vincent Peale as exemplars of each approach. This is oversimplification is at least as great as those criticized by the authors. It was the mainline churches that first embraced Peale’s “power of positive thinking.” Robert Schuller is a pastor in a mainline church (RCA), after all. It was also the mainline churches that redefined pastoral care in terms of therapeutic conversation in the 1950s and 60s. Also, despite

claims to the contrary by both advocates and opponents, the mainline churches were not at the forefront of the fight for social justice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *Chasing Down a Rumor* ignores that the self-conscious identification of mainline churches was with white middle-class America. They were committed to building the type of suburban religious culture that the mega-churches now exploit more adeptly. The decline of the mainline churches is closely connected with demographic and economic changes.

I do question whether the mainline denominations are as modern and rational as the authors suggest. Certainly they tried to adopt rational methods such as strategic planning and bureaucracies, but the organizational structure of most large denominations consists of semi-autonomous boards and agencies subject to Byzantine politics of influence rather than merit. Ironically, the so-called new paradigm churches tend to have more rational structures and are often more centralized than mainline churches. What mainline denomination would dare send out weekly sermons for pastors the way some 'new paradigm' churches do?

*Chasing Down a Rumor* is a self-help book for mainline churches, and many of the practical suggestions are sound. The most helpful is the importance of identity for non-profit organizations, especially churches. Another helpful point is that all programs must be evaluated

regularly and ineffective ones should be discarded. Churches tend to confuse programs with tradition. Perhaps the most helpful aspect of this book is that identifies just what denominational administration does: certification of clergy, holding clergy accountable; providing pensions and health-plans, and producing resources for ministry.

Every bureaucracy works to protect itself even at the expense of its mission. That appears to be the case in this book. If the purpose of denominational administration is to make it easier to build and manage churches, then why hold on to structures that fail to meet those goals? The authors also write like bureaucrats, providing good information, helpful executive summaries, and talking points, but for the most part this book is uninspiring. It is a microcosm of the problem facing the mainline churches.

The most surprising thing about the book is finding the Moravians positively mentioned several times as a mainline denomination. Certainly the Moravians have repeatedly made this claim, but they hardly fit the profile of mainline churches given in *Chasing Down a Rumor*. It is even more surprising that the Southern Baptist Convention, which is practically the established church of the South, was not included as a mainline denomination. In short, there is a lot learn to learn from this book, but use it critically.

## *The Back Page*

Letter to the Editor:

Luke of Prague; what a great lesson I learned when I read Bro. Crews study of the man and his theology! I had, of course, heard of him because Bro. Schattschneider had mentioned him in two paragraphs in his book *Through Five Hundred Years*. Quite possibly Zinzendorf would not have become so involved with the 'Moravians' if they had not had the teachings of Luke (just a thought in passing). What really struck me is that we do not teach anything about Luke of Prague in our Church Schools, or even much about Zinzendorf... Are we following the warning, "Beware of the educated brethren", forgetting that Hus was a highly educated man, Luke graduated from the University of Prague and Comenius is widely known for his educational influence. It seems to me that we are neglecting the education of our future by ignoring history and theology for our high school age youth. Can we change, should we change?

— Bill Mitchell, Lititz

Word from the Editor:

First of all, let me express gratitude for the journal *Expressions of the Heart*, which was a product of the Southern Province Board of Christian Education. The final issue was published recently, and it is sad to see it end. *Expressions* was a good forum for Moravians to write creatively and spiritually about themes that matter. Many times potential writers for *The Hinge* demure on the grounds that their writing is not up to the academic standards of this journal. Nonsense, I tell them. As editor, I do try to keep a high quality for *The Hinge*, but the purpose of this forum is to encourage greater dialog and discussion among clergy and between clergy and laity. This is a journal of Christian thought, but it is not a journal for professional theologians or seminary professors. It is for all of us. I do hope that more people will contribute articles, responses, book reviews, essays, and letters to *The Hinge*. I cannot guarantee that we will publish everything we receive, but we try to use unsolicited submissions whenever we can. Now that *Expressions* is gone, we are even open to poems and short creative works. Take the plunge and share some of your thoughts with the church.

### **Upcoming Issues:**

**13.2 Church Governance: On bringing 'politics' back in.**

**13.3 Moravians Reading Scripture: Moravian Hermeneutics then and now.**

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