

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 18th century or those radicals of the 16th 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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Presenter: Alice M. Caldwell

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