

# Restoring Forgiveness in Moravian Life and Worship

Margaret D. Wilde

Christian churches, including the Moravian Church, have been increasingly divided over religious and social issues in recent years. The debates are widespread in modern American religious culture—some of them are called “culture war” issues—but they are also affecting the traditional beliefs and practices that have made our church a leader in worldwide mission and ecumenical cooperation. For example:

- With *The Ground of the Unity* we affirm that there is no salvation apart from Christ, but we disagree on the scope of his saving power (can he save people outside the church?) and on the conditions for salvation (how must repentance and belief be expressed?).
- We affirm Holy Scripture as the sole standard of doctrine and faith, but disagree on its interpretation and application in everyday life (especially in personal morality), and on the value of other sources of wisdom (such as personal experience, church and cultural tradition, and modern science).
- With the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* we “decline to determine as binding what the Scriptures have left undetermined,”

and hold to the principle “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.” But we disagree on what is or is not essential, and on a charitable process for working out our disagreements.

- And we agree to “faithfully attend the worship services of the Church,” but sometimes withhold participation or financial support as a way of expressing disagreement over its preaching, music, liturgical language, educational programs, and organizational leadership.

## A New “Sifting Time”?

Delegates to the 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church (Southern Province) summed up the situation with a resolution that began as follows:

Whereas, the body of Christ present in the Moravian Church suffers anguished brokenness because of division over matters of doctrine and faith;

Whereas, the brokenness and divisions injure our common witness in a time of great opportunity and open doors for ministry in a world that is itself broken....<sup>1</sup>

*Margaret Wilde is a member of Prince of Peace Moravian Church in Miami and teaches theology at Barry University.*

In 2004, Moravian theologian Craig Atwood compared the recent controversies to the “Sifting Times” of the 18th-century church in Germany and America:

The term Sifting Time in Moravian theology is used to describe times when the community struggles to make sense of itself. It is “sifted” or tested by God. In the process of sifting, some leave the community and others join.... For instance, the first period of Sifting was in the months prior to the August 13, 1727 experience that we continue to celebrate as the rebirth of the *Unitas Fratrum*.<sup>2</sup>

We remember August 13 as a miracle of forgiveness. The refugee community led by Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf on his estate at Herrnhut, Germany, had gotten off to a rocky start with the internal conflicts that Brother Atwood calls the first Sifting Time. But on that day in 1727, the people came together in a communion service that was quickly recognized as an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Estranged members began embracing one another on the way to the church and, as historian Allan W. Schattschneider tells the story:

After the service closed members of the congregation stood around outside talking about the blessing they had received and renewing broken friendships. Zinzendorf suddenly had an inspiration. He sent up to the manor house and had food sent to six or seven homes in the community. In these homes members of the congregation gathered and had simple meals together.<sup>3</sup>

That event, and the spiritual awakening that attended it, gave rise to a wave of missionary zeal in Herrnhut. Over the next decade, mission outposts were established in the Caribbean, North America, and Africa. The simple meals provided that day by Count Zinzendorf became the seed of a Moravian liturgical tradition known as Love Feast.

A look at the months prior to August 13 suggests that Zinzendorf was engaged in conflict resolution, with forgiveness as a spontaneous, Spirit-led outcome. He had seen the feuding as a threat to the community and to his own standing with the Lutheran and Saxon authorities, and systematically laid the groundwork for civil and spiritual reunification. Besides the original Bohemian Hussites there were Lutherans, Calvinists, and members of several dissident sects in the young settlement. The Count intensely disapproved of sectarian division, and hoped eventually to bring them all into the Lutheran fold.<sup>4</sup> In May he reminded them

in kindly but firm tones that they were living on his land. He did not intend, he said, to permit quarreling to break up the settlement. He had therefore, he added, drawn up a set of rules.... Throughout the summer of 1727 he went from house to house, praying with and for each family. He learned at first hand the religious views of the people and tried to show them how important it was that all who professed to love the Savior should love one another also.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the happy outcome was at least partly due to the Count’s administrative and pastoral

work over several months. And its staying power was limited: the Sifting Times lasted into the 1750s, and came to include controversies over devotional imagery and theological language as well as church leadership.<sup>6</sup> Yet that moment was also clearly a work of the Holy Spirit, which not only crowned Zinzendorf's effort with a wave of forgiveness, but also bore fruit in the ensuing missionary movement. So, if we are now living in another Sifting Time, can we do something—not only to resolve the conflicts, but to establish the human conditions in which the Holy Spirit can do its work of forgiveness and inspiration to mission?

### **Conflict Resolution and Forgiveness**

In recent years many of us have felt led, as Count Zinzendorf was, to undertake a ministry of reconciliation. There is growing appreciation in today's churches that conflict resolution methods can be helpful in such a ministry. These methods come partly from the fields of diplomacy, public policy, labor negotiation, and psychological counseling, but some also have biblical roots (e.g., Jesus' instruction on dealing with conflict in the church, Matthew 18:15-17).

The Moravian Church (Southern Province) is now studying a process developed in Mennonite churches, based on Matthew 18 and other scriptures, and designed for use as a congregational covenant. Called *Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love: Commitments in Times of Disagreement*,<sup>7</sup> it is a very good model for church-based conflict resolution. I strongly advocate its use at the congregational and denominational level.

I am coming to believe, however, that conflict resolution is only a partial answer to the challenge we face. As Catholic theologian Robert Schreier points out, "reconciliation is not a skill to be mastered, but rather, something discovered—the power of God's grace welling up in one's life."<sup>8</sup> Conflict resolution is fundamentally a pragmatic, solution-driven process in which the parties come to recognize each other's goals and interests, and negotiate an agreement that meets each one's most important needs. Forgiveness may occur in the process, as either a desired outcome or an unforeseen consequence. But it is not always a priority goal; sometimes the pressure for a negotiated agreement may leave underlying grievances unaddressed, and thereby work against forgiveness and full reconciliation.

Awareness of that drawback has led to a surge of research and action on forgiveness, much of it led by spiritually motivated and theologically informed Christians. In the rest of this article I shall focus on that theme, not as a competing alternative, but as a priority to be upheld in the process of conflict resolution. "The wind blows where it chooses," Jesus said in John 3:8; the Holy Spirit has a logic and a process of its own. By taking care not to close any doors to forgiveness—or maybe calling attention to them when they blow open—I believe we can bring our efforts more in line with the work of God's grace.

### **Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

Let us look first at the meaning of forgiveness and reconciliation in today's world. The two words have different but overlapping meanings;

the authors quoted in this paper sometimes use them interchangeably. Theologian Lewis Smedes summarizes some of the differences:

- Forgiveness is a necessary, but insufficient, condition for reconciliation....
- Forgiving is individual; reconciliation is social.
- Forgiving takes only one person; reconciliation takes two.
- Forgiving is unconditional; reconciliation is conditioned by the offender's response to the forgiver.
- Forgiving can happen without reconciliation; reconciliation cannot happen without forgiveness.<sup>9</sup>

In theology and the social sciences, reconciliation is described as a combination of justice and peace, or the restoration of right relationships. Justice, peace, and right relationships mean different things to different people, and so does reconciliation. As Schreier observes, "Who needs to be involved, what needs to be overcome or undone, what will count for truth and justice in the new situation, and what is deemed to be the end of the process: all of these affect what reconciliation means."<sup>10</sup>

Forgiveness is a necessary step toward reconciliation, but it is also a moral value in its own right. In the words of Mennonite theologian Howard Zehr:

Forgiveness is letting go of the power the offense and the offender have over a person. It means no longer letting that offense and offender dominate.... Real forgiveness, then, is an act of empowerment and healing. It allows one to move from victim to survivor.<sup>11</sup>

Philosopher Joanna North describes forgiveness as "the overcoming of negative feelings (anger, hatred, resentment, desire for revenge) and their replacement with positive emotions (compassion, benevolence, even love)." One stage in that process—often called "reframing"—is to distinguish the wrongdoer from the wrong committed, which "allows us to regard the wrongdoer in a more complete, more detailed, more rounded way."<sup>12</sup>

Even in this secular framework, many questions remain about the conditions for authentic forgiveness (see Insert 1). Defining it theologically is even harder, for it requires us to combine human moral analysis with our understanding of God's will. And we cannot draw a sharp line between the secular and theological frameworks: forgiveness and reconciliation both have deep roots in Judeo-Christian tradition, and much of the recent secular research has been done by Christians.

### **Forgiveness in Scripture**

The ancient Israelites knew God, paradoxically, as "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness ... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty..." (Exodus 34:6-7). They established a system of sacrifice for the atonement of sins; "thus, more than a thousand years before the Christian era, theology and liturgy were in place for repentance, confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation."<sup>13</sup> The prophets later insisted on justice rather than sacrifice as the proper means of atonement (Amos 5:21-24, Isaiah 1:10-17, Hosea 6:6), but the principle of reliance on God's forgiveness did not change.

### **Insert 1: Commonly Debated Questions about Forgiveness**

- **Can we forgive unilaterally, in the absence of repentance?** Most writers agree that since forgiving also helps the forgiver, it should not be ruled out when the wrongdoer is absent, dead, or unrepentant. However, only the wrongdoer's *acceptance* of forgiveness makes *reconciliation* possible. Joanna North reflects a general consensus in saying that acceptance, "if it is to be genuine and of moral value, must involve [one's] being sorry for what [one] has done and determining to reform" (North, 29).
- **Do we have to replace our negative feelings with positive ones, or is it enough to give up the desire for vengeance?** The latter option is often called *forbearance*. David Augsburgur places it beside forgiveness and reconciliation on a spectrum of deepening ethical implications: "Where forbearance requires only tolerance and indulgence in a virtual suspension of ethical issues, forgiveness demands the facing of justice, love, mercy, and the uncomfortable behavior we call repentance. Reconciliation must struggle with deeper levels of all these and the complexities of restitution and restoration" (Augsburger, 115).
- **Can nations or groups forgive, or only individuals?** "Collective forgiveness" is an increasingly popular idea, although some ethicists say that only individuals can be moral agents. Some do support a process of "secondary forgiveness," in which a community apologizes for or forgives injustices committed by earlier generations; this is "an alternative that has power to heal old wounds" (McCullough et al., 222).
- **Does forgiving require us to forget the offense?** Since we cannot forget by choice—and repressing a memory can be harmful—most writers agree that we should not aspire or pretend to forget it completely. As Christopher Marshall describes it, "Forgiveness enables a healing of memories, which is experienced as a type of forgetting. But even here, the memory of the offense does not vanish magically into oblivion but rather is integrated into one's life experience" (Marshall, 273).

From Joanna North, "The 'Ideal' of Forgiveness," in Robert D. Enright and Joanna North, eds., *Exploring Forgiveness* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 15-24; David W. Augsburgur, *Helping People Forgive* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996); Michael E. McCullough, Steven J. Sandage, and Everett L. Worthington, Jr., *To Forgive Is Human: How to Put Your Past in the Past* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997); Christopher Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

That principle took on new meaning in the life and teaching of Jesus. He lived forgiveness in two ways: by joining in table fellowship with sinners (a sign of the Kingdom of God), and by his acts of healing (a sign of God's forgiveness). In both cases he symbolically reversed the order between repentance and forgiveness, which scandalized the religious leaders of his time. New Testament scholar Walter Wink calls this "God's unexpected and unaccountable forgiveness":

[Jesus] audaciously bursts upon these sinners with the declaration that their sins have been forgiven, prior to their repentance, prior to any acts of restitution or reconciliation. Everything is reversed: You are forgiven; now you can repent!<sup>14</sup>

In his teaching, too, Jesus radically recast the meaning of forgiveness. That awesome power, traditionally reserved to God and the temple priests, was now accessible to and even required of Jesus' followers: "if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:15). He made it a condition of participation in worship:

So, when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift [Matthew 5:23-24].

Forgiveness is the key feature in several appearances of the risen Jesus, says Schreier. In the upper room (John 20:19-23), and again after breakfast at the seashore (John 21:9-19), Jesus renews his commission to the disciples who

abandoned him at his trial. In the first case he again gives them the power to forgive sins; in the second he tells Simon Peter to "feed my sheep." In that exchange Jesus has not only reconnected Peter to himself and the community, says Schreier; "he has given him a special charge and task within that community."<sup>15</sup>

Jesus' most dramatic appearance—and commissioning—was to Saul of Tarsus, in the midst of Saul's campaign against his followers (Acts 9:1-9). That appearance led Saul (now the Apostle Paul) to two discoveries that would shape the church's theology and ministry. First he saw what Jesus had already made clear, that God takes the first step: "while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son" (Romans 5:10). Like Jesus, Paul reverses the sequence. In Schreier's words, "We discover and experience God's forgiveness of our trespasses, and this prompts us to repentance."<sup>16</sup>

Second, as Miroslav Volf has noted, for Paul the "horizontal" (social) dimension of forgiveness and reconciliation is as important as the "vertical"; he is not only reconciled to God but also to the Christians he was persecuting, and later to the Gentiles as well. Says Volf:

Though reconciliation of human beings to God has primacy, reconciliation between human beings is intrinsic to their reconciliation to God.... Reconciliation involves a turning away from enmity toward people, not just from enmity toward God, and it entails a movement toward a human community, precisely that community which was the object of enmity.<sup>17</sup>

Thus forgiveness requires both God's grace and a human response; Insert 2 identifies some of the differences between the two. With these in

mind, let us look next at what it would mean to begin laying the conditions for forgiveness, and therefore reconciliation, to well up in our midst.

### **Insert 2: God's Forgiveness, Human Forgiveness**

- Human forgiveness is modeled upon divine forgiveness, says Robert Schreiter, but there are differences between them. God is the forgiver of sin, because God has infinite power and love. "Human forgiveness ... starts from a different point. It is about not being controlled by the past. It is the possibility of having a future different from the one that seems to be dictated by past wrongdoings. Forgiveness is an act of freedom.... For the Christian, divine and human forgiveness intersect at the point of the decision to forgive.... If we acknowledge the pain that wrongdoing has caused ... we must find concrete ways to enter the process and engage God's forgiveness within our own" (Schreiter, 57-58).
- God's forgiveness deals with sin and evil at its worst, says L. Gregory Jones. "In the midst of such brokenness, God's forgiveness aims at healing people's lives and re-creating communion in God's eschatological Kingdom. Even so, such healing and re-creating is not God acting wholly without us. They also invite, and require, our practices, which—by the guiding, judging, and consoling work of the Holy Spirit—enable us to witness to God's forgiving, re-creating work and to be transformed into holy people" (Jones, 163).
- In Matthew 18:12-14, "a man with a flock of 100 sheep goes in search of one sheep that has 'strayed.' Members of the community must be as diligent in seeking to recover to full membership one of their number who has strayed" (Shriver, 42).
- "The doctor does not heal bodies but rather creates conditions under which healing can occur," says Ronald Kraybill. "Similarly, the Christian peacemaker does not 'make peace,' but rather helps to create those conditions" (Kraybill, 18).
- "We are not so much bridge builders as bridge crossers.... The Bridge is already there—our Lord ... the bridge over which we cross to each other, again and again" (South African Klaus Nürnberger, quoted by Wink, 16).

From Robert Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998); L. Gregory Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Donald Shriver, *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Ronald S. Kraybill, *Repairing the Breach: Ministering in Community Conflict* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1980); Walter Wink, *When the Powers Fall: Reconciliation in the Healing of Nations* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).

## **Seeking and Offering Forgiveness in Today's Church**

For Christians, says L. Gregory Jones, forgiveness is a habit that must be practiced over time within the disciplines of Christian community ... the horizons of which are (at least potentially) the whole world. It is in this sense that Christian life calls us to practice forgiveness.<sup>18</sup>

It is not hard to find occasions for practicing forgiveness in the Christian community. The church is a crucible of ideals, motivations, and beliefs, which often create conflict because they are so important.

Schreiter observes that polarization happens “when both sides care deeply about issues, and those issues touch upon our very identity. We do not engage in conflict or stay entrenched in polarization over things we consider trivial.”<sup>19</sup>

A church that is faithful to its mission in the world will be especially exposed to conflict. “The world is a messy, violent, and broken place,” says Mennonite peace theologian John Paul Lederach. “We choose to journey toward and with those who have experienced the deepest division and separation, because this is God’s mission and Christ’s example.”<sup>20</sup> Alan and Eleanor Kreider and Paulus Widjaja add that when we pass on reconciliation to others in this troubled world, some of these other people, by God’s grace, may join us in the reconciled community. This is why the early Christians developed the rite of the “kiss of peace.” It was a means, within their worship, of celebrating the peace of God, and where there

were broken relationships of restoring them, so that the church, as a reconciled body, could offer reconciliation to others.<sup>21</sup>

In ancient eucharistic liturgies the kiss of peace is followed by a plea for divine forgiveness: “Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us.... Lord, I am not worthy to receive you. Speak but the word and my soul shall be healed.” According to Robert Browning and Roy Reed, in Protestant practice these rites have become perfunctory; “we have tamed [them] to the point of dysfunction.”<sup>22</sup>

A remnant of that tradition still appears in Moravian liturgies. Our communion service begins and ends with a “right hand of fellowship,” and the *Moravian Book of Worship* explains (in fine print) how the one at the beginning differs from the one at the end. The first signifies “oneness in Christ and the desire to be at peace with one another”; the second, “renewed dedication and unity of purpose in the service of Christ.”<sup>23</sup> There is a meaningful symmetry here: one is about forgiveness, the other about mission. For worshippers who may not readily notice the difference, the pastor of my congregation makes a point of explaining it at each communion service.

In a more modern expression of penitence, “General Liturgy 2: Reconciliation” calls attention to our need for mutual forgiveness: “Our world is filled with pain and alienation.... We have become strangers to our relatives, and foreigners to our own families.... we humbly confess that we walk in the way of the indifferent.”<sup>24</sup> The modern language may help worshippers reflect on what they are reading, but here again, a few

words from the pastor or liturgist at the start of the service can draw attention to its relevance in day-to-day church life.

Of course being “at peace with one another” cannot be achieved with ritual alone; it means, as L. Gregory Jones insists, “learning to live in community as forgiven and forgiving people.”<sup>25</sup> We have mentioned Jesus’ admonition to reconcile with a brother or sister before offering your gift at the altar. In Moravian tradition that discipline entailed a private “speaking” with the pastor a few days before each communion service, and members were expected to decline communion if they had a grievance with another member. Most American churches have abandoned that tradition, partly for good pastoral reasons, but the spirit it reflects is still worth practicing.

The admonition to “go ... be reconciled to your brother or sister” (Matthew 5:23-24) is different from Jesus’ instructions about conflict

resolution in the church: “If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone” (Matthew 18:15-17). Going to point out a fault is an exercise of authority, even when done lovingly, and usually works against mutual forgiveness: it assumes a confrontational approach, and seems to permit an adversary’s exclusion from the community. Going to be reconciled is about seeking and offering forgiveness. Both are appropriate in different circumstances, but if forgiveness is a priority in our conflict resolution efforts, the two texts should be kept separate—holding Matthew 18:15-17 in reserve for situations where Matthew 5:23-24 has been conscientiously tried and cannot (not just “probably wouldn’t”) work.

Michael McCullough and his colleagues have outlined ways to seek and offer forgiveness in marriages and families; here I have adapted and paraphrased them for use in the church family (Insert 3).<sup>26</sup>

### **Insert 3: Techniques for Forgiving in Marriages and Families (and in the Church)**

- Examine your conscience. Putting yourself in the others’ shoes can help you understand their viewpoint, forgive, and seek forgiveness for the ways you have wronged them.
- Confess first, rather than waiting for others to ask you for forgiveness. Asking first can warm their hearts, and encourage them to examine their conscience and ask for forgiveness in return.
- Don’t make backhanded confessions, dropping hints about the things they should be confessing to you. Acknowledge your own part in the problem, and express your own sorrow; let them figure out what they did wrong.
- If others sincerely confess to you, accept the confession (no matter how imperfect); if you receive a backhanded confession, accept the sincere part. Don’t make them confess twice, and don’t critique the confession; you know how hard it is to do! Use the opportunity to listen, with empathy, to the one who has hurt you.

Mennonite mediator Ron Kraybill often tells church leaders: “If you want to avoid conflict, invite disagreement.” That is, by dealing with small arguments as they arise, we can keep them from corroding the relationships that sustain the community in the more difficult issues of church life and mission. Indeed those relationships can be strengthened by the experience of working together on our day-to-day differences—and learning to seek and offer forgiveness when we have handled them badly. If forgiveness “must be practiced over time within the disciplines of Christian community,” as Jones says, the small hurts of church life are a providential source of exercises with which to practice it.

When it is not an habitual practice, seeking or offering forgiveness can be scary. What if she turns her back on my forgiveness? What if my apology reignites his anger? And why should I go first, if we were both wrong? Our protective instincts against injustice and humiliation, even embarrassment, are deeply rooted. In a moving reflection on Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25-33), Lederach points out that although Jacob makes the journey home in response to God’s direction (31:3), “God does not promise that he will take care of everything and level the road for Jacob. God promises to accompany him, to be present.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Teaching Forgiveness**

“We know from Scripture that we have not been left solely to our own devices to forgive,” say Everett Worthington and his colleagues:

We have divine and human resources that can help us forgive. We have the Comforter, the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:3). We have

Christ in us, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27b). We have the mind of Christ (Romans 12:2). We also have a supportive community (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).<sup>28</sup>

Those resources are important, but attention is needed also to the human skills that can lay the conditions for forgiveness. Some psychologists believe that people discover it on their own, but Robert D. Enright and his colleagues have found otherwise: that “most people need to be taught about forgiveness to begin forgiving.”<sup>29</sup>

Browning and Reed favor incorporating forgiveness in church-based education programs.<sup>30</sup> They recommend a method which Enright developed and is now implementing at schools in Northern Ireland and several U.S. cities, based on a four-stage model of forgiveness (summarized in Insert 4).<sup>31</sup>

The Enright model is partly based on one proposed by Joanna North, which analyzes not only the forgiver’s step-by-step movement toward forgiveness, but also the wrongdoer’s parallel movement toward accepting forgiveness.<sup>32</sup> Since we are concerned with both seeking and offering forgiveness, a church-based method of teaching forgiveness should probably incorporate both in some fashion (as did McCullough’s advice in Insert 3).

Forgiveness education is still a work in progress; the materials cited in this essay are a good place to begin exploring its potential for different pastoral contexts. I also recommend an award-winning, 78-minute film by Martin Doblmeier titled *The Power of Forgiveness*.<sup>33</sup> It was brought to my attention by Moravian pastor Judith

### **Insert 4: Four Phases of Forgiveness**

(Summarized from Enright et al., in *Exploring Forgiveness*, p. 52)

- *Uncovering*: examining the obstacles to forgiveness, such as anger and shame, and thinking realistically about the event that needs forgiveness.
- *Decision*: a realization that the old strategies are not working, a willingness to consider forgiveness, and eventually a personal decision to forgive the offender.
- *The work of forgiveness*: increased understanding of the offender's situation and motives (also called *reframing*); developing empathy and compassion for the offender; acceptance of the real pain involved for the forgiver.
- *Deepening*: finding meaning in the suffering and in the forgiveness process, solidarity and new purpose in the life of the forgiver.

Justice, who used it in 2008 in a Lenten study group. The film features the respective projects of Enright and Worthington, a segment on the Amish community that forgave their children's murderer, and interviews with Elie Wiesel, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Rev. James Forbes.

Other teaching resources can be found on the Internet and in church or secular journals. Some are better than others; I would appreciate recommendations from readers.

I have presented forgiveness here, not as an alternative to more pragmatic conflict resolution processes, but as a goal to be pursued with their help—remembering that the Holy Spirit has its own logic and processes. If our work is crowned by a moment of forgiveness, as Count Zinzendorf's was, it may not be because we got it right but because God has promised to accompany us, as God accompanied Jacob on his way back to Esau.

### **Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Resolution #54 from the 2002 synod of the Moravian Church (Southern Province), available on the internet at [http://mcsp.org/Synod2002/new\\_synod\\_resol54.htm](http://mcsp.org/Synod2002/new_synod_resol54.htm).
- <sup>2</sup> Craig D. Atwood, "Faith, Love, and Hope: The Moravian Theological Heritage," 2004 Moses Lectures at Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem, PA. In *The Hinge: A Journal of Christian Thought for the Moravian Church* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 2004), 3.
- <sup>3</sup> Allan W. Schattschneider, *Through Five Hundred Years: A Popular History of the Moravian Church* (Bethlehem, PA: Moravian Church in America, 1957), 55.
- <sup>4</sup> Truman Lee Dunn, "Preserving the Unity: Community and Conflict in Moravian Church History," Ph.D. dissertation at Union Theological Seminary (New York: 1989), 120-122.
- <sup>5</sup> Schattschneider, 54.
- <sup>6</sup> Arthur J. Freeman, *An Ecumenical Theology of the Heart: The Theology of Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf* (Bethlehem, PA: Moravian Church in America, 1998), 13 n. 16; see also 34 n. 27.

- <sup>7</sup> Available from the Mennonite Central Committee, online at <http://peace.mennolink.org/agree.html>.
- <sup>8</sup> Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), 27.
- <sup>9</sup> Lewis B. Smedes, "Stations on the Journey from Forgiveness to Hope," in Everett L. Worthington, Jr., ed., *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research and Theological Perspectives* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation, 1998), 345-346.
- <sup>10</sup> Robert J. Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998), 13.
- <sup>11</sup> Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1990), 47.
- <sup>12</sup> Joanna North, "The 'Ideal' of Forgiveness," in Robert D. Enright and Joanna North, eds., *Exploring Forgiveness* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 20, 26.
- <sup>13</sup> Robert L. Browning and Roy A. Reed, *Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Moral Courage: Motives and Designs for Ministry in a Troubled World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 76-77.
- <sup>14</sup> Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 266.
- <sup>15</sup> Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, 55 and 91.
- <sup>16</sup> Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, 45.
- <sup>17</sup> Miroslav Volf, "The Social Meaning of Reconciliation," in *Interpretation* 54, no. 2 (April 2000), 166.
- <sup>18</sup> L. Gregory Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 163-164.
- <sup>19</sup> Robert J. Schreiter, "Reconciliation as a Means to Overcoming Polarization," Killeen Chair Lecture at St. Norbert College, De Pere, Wisconsin, February 15, 2007 (manuscript).
- <sup>20</sup> John Paul Lederach, *The Journey Toward Reconciliation* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1999), 165.
- <sup>21</sup> Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider, and Paulus Widjaja, *A Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005), 112, 115.
- <sup>22</sup> Browning and Reed, *Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Moral Courage*, 205.
- <sup>23</sup> *Moravian Book of Worship* (Bethlehem, PA: Moravian Church in America, 1995), 183, 194 and parallels.
- <sup>24</sup> *Moravian Book of Worship*, 13-17.
- <sup>25</sup> L. Gregory Jones, "Crafting Communities of Forgiveness," in *Interpretation* 54, no. 2 (April 2000), 127.
- <sup>26</sup> Michael E. McCullough, Steven J. Sandage, and Everett L. Worthington, Jr., *To Forgive Is Human: How to Put Your Past in the Past* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 208-211.
- <sup>27</sup> Lederach, 23.
- <sup>28</sup> Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Constance B. Sharp, Andrea J. Lerner, and Jeffrey R. Sharp, "Interpersonal Forgiveness as an Example of Loving One's Enemies," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 34, no. 1, 39.
- <sup>29</sup> Robert D. Enright et al., "The Psychology of Interpersonal Forgiveness," in Robert D. Enright and Joanna North, eds., *Exploring Forgiveness* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 52.
- <sup>30</sup> Browning and Reed, 200-202.
- <sup>31</sup> Enright et al., "The Psychology of Interpersonal Forgiveness," 52.
- <sup>32</sup> North, "The 'Ideal' of Forgiveness," 30.
- <sup>33</sup> Available on DVD at <http://firstrunfeatures.com/forgivenessdvd.html>, list price \$25.00.Text.