



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ~ THE MORAVIAN CHURCH

CONTACT GROUP



Anglicans and Moravians

Under the Same Roof

Introduction

In this second occasional paper issued by the Contact Group charged with helping to further the developing relationships between the Church of England and the Moravian Church (Fetter Lane Declaration), seven individuals from different parts of the country tell the story of their experience of worshipping under the same roof.

The first describes the situation in a village with the single place of worship being a Moravian Church where there is a Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome and Commitment.

The second describes an urban situation where a building is shared. The Anglican and Moravian congregations worship at different times. Guidelines to the 1969 Sharing of Church Buildings Act are available from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and are called *Under The Same Roof*, from which this paper takes its name.

The third is an exciting account of a wider ecumenical commitment between churches in a deprived area of Manchester.

The fourth story illustrates a scene in which a Moravian couple has found a spiritual home in the Anglican parish church, one of six places of worship in a large village, none of which is Moravian.

The fifth is a personal testimony by an Anglican who has dual membership in the Moravian Church after many years of experience in a Moravian School.

The sixth is an account by a Moravian schoolmaster of thirty years teaching at a Church of England High School.

The seventh is by the Anglican Principal of the Moravian School at Fulneck.

All seven stories illustrate how in different local situations common priorities and ways have been found of building up together our common life.

In addition you will find a sample Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome and Commitment when the Moravian Church is the only church in a village. An Anglican declaration is available from ccu@c-of-e.org.uk.

In circumstances where a Declaration may be made, it is essential to keep in touch with your County Sponsoring Body, your County Ecumenical Development Officer and neighbouring church leaders of all traditions. We would commend also the suggestions to the host church for breadth and openness in worship.

If you have further stories of the deepening relationship between Anglicans and Moravians, the Contact Group would be pleased to hear from you. Please send your account to one of the co-secretaries, whose details are given at the end of this leaflet.

Terry Garley, County Ecumenical Development Officer: Lancashire 2001

Useful Addresses

If you would like to take some of the ideas outlined in this booklet further in your own local situation, information and advice are available from:

Mrs Jackie Morten, Moravian Church House, 5 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TJ Tel: 020 8883 3409
E-mail: JackieMorten@aol.com

The Diocesan Ecumenical Officer of your Anglican diocese:
Name and address available at your diocesan Church House.

The Revd John Cole, Council for Christian Unity, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ
Tel: 020 7898 1479. E-mail: john.cole@c-of-e.org.uk

Useful Publications

Ecumenical Relations - Canons B43 and B44: Code of Practice (1989) with Supplement (1997) - now available electronically from ccu@c-of-e.org.uk

Anglican-Moravian Conversations: The Fetter Lane Common Statement with Essays in Moravian and Anglican History (1996) (£2.50)

1. The Moravian Church in Brockweir (Gloucestershire)

Because the Moravian Church is the only place of worship in Brockweir, we invite villagers of all Christian persuasions and none to worship with us, and to share in the life and fellowship of this congregation and in the ministry and mission of the church in this community. The wording of our *Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome and Commitment* follows closely the recommendations of the major denominations for such a declaration. (See Appendix A)

Our present membership is drawn from a variety of traditions where people of other denominations have moved into the village and rather than travel out to the towns to retain their denominational links have chosen to worship in the village and support the local Christian community.

The Moravian presence in the village dates back to 1833 when Brockweir was a busy little port with a thriving ship-building industry. The church weathered the decline of the ship-building trade in the 1870's, the coming of the railway in 1874, and the bridging of the River Wye in 1902. But in 1961 the congregation numbers were so low that the church was on the point of closing. The Baptist Church in Monmouth heard of this and undertook to keep the church open. For its day this was a major ecumenical experiment and the Brockweir Moravian/Baptist experience became well known both locally and nationally. By 1993 the church had grown and was able to 'stand on its own two feet' again. During those thirty years the congregation became very flexible in its worship and outlook, relying as it did on Baptist lay preachers, and from time to time on ministers and lay preachers from other denominations. Ministers and lay preachers from other denominations still regularly fill our pulpit and we try to incorporate into our services riches from the worship of other traditions.

This does mean however that at times we have to be economical with the use of our own traditions and with references to Moravian history, incorporating only what is appropriate in our parochial setting and to our ecumenical worship commitment. Also, we have perhaps lost something of the Moravian Church's traditional commitment to and interest in its world-wide Unity, and our members are not as involved in Provincial matters as members in more traditional Moravian congregations. But we have to be mindful of our local responsibilities. The villagers regard this as 'the village church' and support its events and special services much as they would in a parish church, and like a parish church we do try to maintain a pastoral concern for everyone in the village.

But it has to be remembered that this is not the parish church and its private burial ground is not a parish cemetery, which is not always realised or appreciated. We are also subject to the same legal constraints as any other Free Church when it comes to marriages. Our parish church is situated in the next village and whilst we have good relations with each other and clergy and lay-readers are invited to preach in each other's pulpits, we remain two separate churches - an Anglican Church and a Moravian Church, essentially 'ploughing our own furrows'.

The name 'Moravian' does tend to 'put people off' and so we call ourselves 'Brockweir Church', especially when we take our 'welcome packs' to those moving into the village. Once they get to know us we can begin explaining where the name comes from! The important thing is for people to have a place on their doorstep where they can feel comfortable with the worship and find an open and welcoming fellowship.

Jan Mullin, Former Minister of Brockweir

Questions

- ◆ *If your church is the only worshipping congregation in the village, would you be prepared to make the Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome and Commitment?*
- ◆ *What changes might you have to make to your church life to help others feel at home'?*
- ◆ *Who in the neighbouring villages and towns ought you to consult about this step'?*

A Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome and Commitment by a Moravian Church

We, the congregation of Brockweir Moravian Church, are aware that we are the only church offering regular public worship in Brockweir, and therefore we invite all Christians in Brockweir to play as full a part as they are able in the life and fellowship of this congregation.

We invite those of all Christian traditions

- ◆ to worship and share in Holy Communion with us
- ◆ to share in the ministry and mission of the Church in this community
- ◆ to share in the decision-making and leadership of the congregation
- ◆ to contribute to a common fund for the mission and ministry of the wider church in so far as their continued giving to another denomination will allow.

We undertake

- ◆ to give pastoral care to all who desire it
- ◆ to incorporate the riches from the worship of other traditions as appropriate
- ◆ to invite ministers and lay preacher of other denominations to take part in leading worship
- ◆ to consult with other denominations in the area concerning the mission of the church in Brockweir.

2. Coronation Avenue Moravian Church and the Church of the Ascension (Bath)

Background

This situation came about through the initiative of the previous Vicar at the Ascension, Gary Wilton. He approached us with representatives of the PCC, in the wake of the Fetter Lane Common Statement. It did not seem right, they said, that we should be struggling to maintain a second set of premises which was obviously becoming a burden to the small congregation, when the Ascension premises, then being revamped, could provide adequate facilities for both our needs. The Moravian congregation accepted that it made sense and decided to sell its building, and eventually on 10th January 1999 the last service was held in the old church.

Gary unfortunately left just as the ball began rolling in January 1998. He is now training Church Army officers in Sheffield. This was a blow because we felt we knew and trusted each other fully. However, the plan had been laid and the PCC was behind it. We began holding a monthly united service following the pattern of the 'host' congregation, with the 'visiting' congregation providing the preacher and reader. Other members of the Marlbrook Team Ministry were looking after Ascension until September 1998 when Robert Pimm arrived as the new Vicar. We then began to prepare to move.

Where we are

Since then the Moravian congregation has been worshipping at 3:00pm on Sundays. This means we no longer have a morning service in the summer, which had been enjoyable, but as many grow older they find it harder to 'get going' in the morning. It also means however that with services at 3.00pm all the year round, people know where they are. So there are some advantages here. One member who never came at 9:30am now comes regularly but another finds the afternoon is no good on account of family commitments. Four people have started to come regularly since we re-located. Since the choir disbanded, we miss a midweek fellowship.

Our organ, sold (for £1) to Ascension was rebuilt and rededicated in October 2000. This has been a big plus to the worship of both congregations and we now feel even more at home. A Bible Class has been started on Monday nights after Girls' Brigade, which is supported by half a dozen of the girls. Two of these have expressed an interest in Confirmation - the first such enquiries for some years. The Girls' Brigade also has a closer-knit feeling to it, which may well owe something to the greater compactness of the Ascension premises.

Our initial agreement was signed by the Bishop of Bath & Wells and we hope to have a joint notice board outside, as opposed to two, or one with two parts. Inside the porch we will have our own notices. We have also put up a new shed outside at the back basically for Girls' Brigade storage. So we shall gradually begin to lose the feeling of living out of a suitcase.

Being part of a larger enterprise is good. We retain our identity fully, but we do not feel alone in our small corner. There is a genuine feeling of trust between the Anglicans and Moravians and we see our ministries as complementary and not competitive. How that develops remains to be seen, but that is our starting point.

We have agreed to send representatives to Council/PCC meetings once or twice a year. We exchange newsletters and the Moravians are making use of Ascension's hymnbooks.

Practical points

It is of course a relief not to have the worry of property maintenance and repairs. The Ascension premises, as mentioned above, are more compact than our former place, and while we miss the extra space at times it has done us no harm to shed some of the excess baggage and learn to live in a more realistic way. It is also useful to have car-parking facilities available. Being next door to the local school (South Twerton) gives a sense of integration with the community and probably removes any sense of caution such as might be felt initially when entering a "Moravian" church.

There are still things to be done but there is no going back, however wistfully we may look at the old building, which has now been sold and put to good use. Meanwhile we go forward with a feeling of encouragement that, if it is God's will that we continue to serve His Kingdom as a Moravian congregation in this locality, then our present situation offers the best position from which to do so.

Paul Gubi, former Minister of Coronation Avenue, Bath

Questions

- ◆ *What are the possibilities in your area for the sharing of buildings and other resources?*
- ◆ *What impact would such sharing make on the community in which your church is set?*
- ◆ *In which ways could you respond together to the particular needs of the locality?*
- ◆ *Is it possible to invite representatives of your partner church to wider denominational meetings? (For example, Deanery, Chapter Meetings, Moravian Fraternal)*

3. Churches on the Edge

An Anglican, Methodist, Moravian, United Reformed Church Partnership

We chose the name because it seemed to fit our geographical location, five churches strung out along or near to Edge Lane, five churches close to each other but each on the edge of their respective towns and boroughs and diocese. The churches are St. Andrew's Church of England, Droylsden; Edge Lane Methodist Church, Droylsden; Clayton Methodist Church; Wheler Street Moravian Church, Higher Openshaw; St. Matthew's URC, Clayton. But perhaps we felt on the edge in other ways too. The area lacked any real centre and was losing all sense of identity. East Manchester is an area with considerable problems, and as part of the church in East Manchester we can feel weak and marginal to people's lives, yet we want to take spiritual renewal seriously and engage in mission.

So we came together to share problems and strategies. Discussion only took place slowly but it soon became clear that three of the churches were facing major expenditure on their buildings. One Methodist Church had dry rot, the URC building was large and awkward for modern use and very expensive to maintain, whilst the Anglican Church faced a bill of £30,000 for essential repairs. In January 1999 it was agreed that these three churches, Edge Lane Methodists, St. Andrew's and St. Matthew's should commit themselves to finding a common home and develop a new community centred church on the St. Andrew's site.

There are some big questions. Some have to do with the common home. Firstly, to refurbish or re-build? We have consulted extensively, commissioned comparative costings, looked at plans and we are praying. The decision will be taken early in 2001. Beyond that there will still be issues of identity, attachments and belonging as the three congregations come to live and share and worship together.

But the really big question is how do we stop the issue of bricks and mortar taking over? There is an important project to develop a new common home for the three central churches but that is not the whole story. Two churches, Clayton Methodist Church and Wheler Street Moravian Church are both full members of Churches on the Edge and yet feel called to stay in their particular places. They share a real commitment to their localities and a conviction that they should try to live out the gospel there. Both the congregations are developing their mission based upon the particular needs of their areas.

All the churches on the Edge came together with the vision of developing God's kingdom. Small

congregations can become insular and focus upon their own need to conserve what they have. By sharing in this ecumenical group, by sharing hopes and fears and worship, by sharing in bible study and nurture groups we are all enlarged, strengthened and enabled. We all face the really big issues of sacrifice, service, commitment and love and there is a huge way to travel.

We take comfort from Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane: Great things come from not just bold heroism but also from weakness, trepidation and fear. Our steps are tentative, our brows furrowed; yet we keep moving on. We ask not for certainty but for vision, not for strength but for courage, we ask not necessarily to be right but to be faithful. We are very conscious of our weakness but in the coming together of these five churches we are just beginning to glimpse that together we can begin to fulfil our mission.

Ian Blay, Rector of St. Andrew, Droylsden

Beth Torkington, Minister of Wheler Street Moravian Church, Higher Openshaw

Questions

- ◆ *Do you have the opportunity to share your hopes and fears with neighbouring churches?*
- ◆ *What are the strengths and weaknesses of your outreach to the locality, and would it help if, sometimes, others were allowed to act on your behalf?*
- ◆ *How would you begin the process of formal consultation for much closer working together?*
- ◆ *What are the possibilities for Anglicans and Moravians to work within the provisions and permissions of their respective churches?*

4. “But there’s no Moravian Church here”

We were both born Moravians and both were christened at Fairfield, Manchester. After serving as ordained Moravian ministers we retired to live in Littleport, near Ely, Cambs., not far from our eldest daughter, and within easy reach of our other children and grandchildren. Littleport is pleasant and convenient — *but there’s no Moravian Church here!*

When we explored this large village we found six places of Christian Worship, but as the Anglican parish church looked good - a Thirteenth Century stone building with an informative notice board - we attended there on our first Sunday. We were warmly welcomed at the door by two friendly sidesmen, given service sheets, hymn books and printed liturgies, and shown to seats.

Although the pews are uncomfortable, the service was familiar — Anglican Parish Communion from the A.S.B. but with local modifications. The congregation numbered 60 plus, the robed choir numbered 12 plus, the organ and organist were (and still are) good. At that service the new Anglican book, “Hymns Old and New” was introduced and the old green one withdrawn. Then we rejoiced to hear the vicar start the service by proclaiming with great conviction “THE LORD IS HERE”, and the congregation responding with a full-throated “HIS SPIRIT IS WITH US”. The sermon was a Bible-based Gospel message, proclaimed clearly and simply, and the vicar invited visitors to take Communion with the words used by Moravian ministers: “All who love the Lord Jesus Christ are welcome to take Communion”. Sidesmen pleasantly marshalled the congregation in decency and order to go to kneel at the rail to receive the Bread and Wine or, for children, a blessing. After the service tea and coffee was served in the parish room, where several folk spoke to us and made us feel welcome. Altogether this was a very satisfying and welcoming act of worship.

We have, of course, long been familiar with Anglican worship - our first two years in Tanzania were spent on an Anglican mission station with the Dodoma Alliance Secondary School, and we have always worked with local councils of churches in England because we believe profoundly in true ecumenism.

So after this first visit to the parish church, Shelagh was ready to make it her “spiritual home”, whereas Dick wanted to “try out” the other five Christian groups. These, he found, were all good, too!

He hesitated for some time to commit himself to one group, fearing that it would mean turning his back on the many other sincere and loving Christians in the village, but he finally committed himself to Shelagh in the Anglican church, as we felt it important to worship together. For about two years we have attended the parish church very happily. Not only do we appreciate the good evangelical sermons preached by the Vicar and the Readers, but also the way lay leadership is encouraged and responsibility wisely delegated. This depends on the wisdom, insight, leadership (yes, and whim) of the local vicar, and it is clear that the Church of England can learn much about democratic procedures from the Moravian Church, but we do not want to criticise because the system here works well, and we have been received so warmly.

We have both been put on the Electoral Roll (which numbers about 100); and have both been called on to read lessons from the Bible. Both take part in Prayer and Study Groups (weeknight). Shelagh takes her turn to lead the Intercessions, and is a member of the Mothers’ Union and also on its committee, while Dick is a member of the choir and is hardly ever faced with an unknown hymn to sing.

Although there is no Moravian Church here we feel thoroughly “at home” in the local Anglican Parish Church, because the ministers and congregation are fellow Christians who “put Christ first”. This is much more important than “a similar style of worship” or even an Agreement ratified by both synods. When Christians acknowledge Christ as Head of His Church and know Him personally as their Saviour, they have fellowship with another, a fellowship that overcomes the differences between denominations because it owes all to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Dick and Shelagh Connor Retired Moravian Ministers

Questions

- ◆ *Is your church aware of the presence of members of the congregation who come from other denominations or traditions?*
- ◆ *In making such people feel more welcome, how might you go about learning from their experiences of church life?*
- ◆ *If changes in your own situation mean that you had to consider regular attendance at a church of another denomination, what would help you to feel “this is where I now belong”?*

5. A Very Warm Welcome

I was baptised and confirmed in the Anglican Church and I have been an active member of this tradition for over 70 years. For over 10 years, before I retired, I worked in Fulneck Girl's School, looking after the boarders in their out of school hours. We took them twice each Sunday to the Moravian Church which is at the heart of the Fulneck Settlement, near Leeds, West Yorkshire.

Just before I retired I needed a home, and was fortunate to be offered a flat in Fulneck, overlooking the beautiful agricultural valley, and well-kept school's and resident's gardens — facing south.

When I retired, I continued to worship in the Anglican parish of my girlhood days, St John the Divine, Menston, in the diocese of Bradford: but also attended Moravian services.

Recently, I was invited (by the retired Headmistress, Miss Joan Mort) to think of becoming a Moravian. The minister, the Revd. David Dickinson, kindly suggested the idea of dual membership, retaining my Anglican allegiance and also becoming a Moravian.

This, I did, finding my acceptance by the Moravians to be a privilege. I was received into the Moravian Church on Easter Day at their Lovefeast and Holy Communion. They gave me a very warm welcome. I find the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit to be present in both of these traditions.

Nona Harvey, Retired Housemistress

Questions

- ◆ *In what circumstances are there advantages in a form of "dual membership"?*
- ◆ *For Anglican churches, what are the opportunities provided for in the provisions of Canon B15a and also in The Church Representation Rules 1995?*
- ◆ *What do you think lies at the heart of a "very warm welcome" to a member of another denomination?*

6. A Teacher's View

As a member of the Westwood Congregation from the age of two, I have been a Moravian for almost sixty years. I recently retired from my teaching post at Crompton House Church of England High School, Oldham, after serving thirty years and where since 1980 I have been Deputy Headmaster. I have also had long spells as a governor and my own children attended the school. I can therefore claim to have devoted a large part of my life and career to this Church of England school, having been closely involved in its development at senior management level.

In view of the closer links between our two denominations I have been asked to comment on my experiences as a Moravian occupying a senior post in a Church of England establishment, by considering to what extent it has been possible to fulfil the Fetter Lane Declaration to "commit ourselves to share a common life and mission." For my part this has presented little difficulty on a professional and personal level. I refer to our school aims as listed in the prospectus where significantly, "Church of England" is mentioned once while "Christian" occurs four times. The first two lines of the school motto are "Loving God" and "caring for each other". This order and balance of priorities, which is indeed reflected in the ethos and practice of the school, stands up well, I think, to any Moravian scrutiny. When it come to "things essential" we have complete unity of purpose. I have always felt comfortable with the school's Christian ethos and its mission statement to which I have made a contribution. I applaud the vision of its founders (it was the gift of a local mill owning family in the 1920s) and the integrity of its governors, both Anglican clergy and lay workers, who are charged with the task of taking it forward. All this has been firmly rooted in the Christian faith as expressed through the endeavour of Anglican brothers and sisters at local and diocesan level. I can witness that He has indeed given us "faithful men to lead", especially in our own times of need when the school was unpopular and in crisis.

The school has borne fruit and we are now a popular and well known Beacon school, and according to external and national indicators, successful. Examination results are the best in the LEA and the school is placed high in the national league tables for A Level and GCSE. But this achievement is very much a by-product of the Christian values which have always underpinned the curriculum and of which the following features are characteristic:

- A pastoral system which is the cornerstone to everything else and which is funded accordingly

- Religious Studies is an additional core subject for all pupils up to GCSE level
- Great importance is placed on daily worship and regular communion services with input from many denominations
- The giving and sharing of time and talents in voluntary activities over a wide extra curricular programme
- There is a ready made task force of pupils trained by their congregations from an early age in raising money for charity and the 1001 other things that a church upbringing provides.

Staff appointments take account of these qualities and the governors do not insist on Anglican staff, but that they should support the beliefs of the Church of England. This encourages a broad sweep of Christian influences of which this Moravian presence is only one.

On a personal level, from my side of the relationship I have followed the Fetter Lane Agreement and learned “to appreciate and draw out the distinctive gifts” of the tradition in which I have been working. I hope the appreciation has been mutual. I suppose I have had the opportunity to expose many cohorts of non-Moravian youngsters to some of the great stories and anecdotes from our rich history at numerous morning assemblies, and I would like to think that some of the intangible influences that have been absorbed from contact with great Moravians during my life would in turn find their way into the consciousness of others. However I am sure I have received far more than I have given, and on this I can be quite specific. Over the past fifteen years the school has become more overtly Anglican in many ways, not least in the frequency and importance of Holy Communion and the depth and experience of worship generally. We have an outstanding music department with choirs, orchestra and organ combining to achieve a wonderful repertoire of religious music. We have established links with Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham Cathedrals and York Minster, where we have performed choral evensong on many occasions. As a boy in the choir at Westwood, I was introduced to some of the great religious choral works, and having the opportunity to join our school choir and sing them once again in such magnificent settings has been the highlight of the latter years of my career and a spiritually enriching experience. I became a reluctant conscript organist at Westwood some years ago, a task I have come to appreciate and enjoy though marked more by enthusiasm than talent. Regular contact with Church music at the highest level has challenged my own standards and hopefully added something to our worship at Westwood.

The more formally Anglican the school has become the more ‘at home’ I have felt with my

Moravian roots. This is testimony to the acknowledgement in the Fetter Lane Declaration of our common traditions of liturgy, texts, canticles and prayers.

My experience therefore has been both professionally and personally almost completely affirmative. However it is only fair to mention one discordant note. The only time I have felt like an outsider is when confronted by the political face of the Church of England. The tension between faith and internal politics has never been evident to me in our small, democratically oriented Moravian Church. In a large organisation like the Church of England things are different. I accept that authority and hierarchy and secular support structures are necessary because of the sheer size. This can seem to give it a hard edge. At best it is about tough but compassionate decision making, but it can sometimes be perceived as indifference. I am made aware of this each year with the annual scramble for admission. In common with most Church schools applications greatly outnumber places, making selection necessary. It is at this point that division arises within the Christian community. It is a problem that we do not solve by compassion, but by law, and the last word is not to be found in the New Testament but in the Trust Deed of our founders.

In spite of this, within our school community Christian values flourish and grow. Thanks to a team of colleagues of all denominations working within the influence of the Church of England it is not difficult to see “God’s glory shining through” not just in the great moments and special occasions but in the minutiae of day to day educational life.

Wright Platt
Retired Deputy Headteacher

Questions

- ◆ *If you have a Church of England school in your area, how do you share with partner churches in extending its work?*
- ◆ *How can Anglicans and Moravians work together for young people at school in your locality?*
- ◆ *Could you join with your partner church to share common Sunday school work?*

7. On the outside looking in?

My first visit to a Moravian church was in 1996 just prior to taking up my appointment as Principal of Fulneck School. To be honest, - like many of my prospective parents and their pupils, I had never even heard of the Moravians, though somewhere in the past when I trained to be a teacher I had learnt about Comenius and his views on education which still underpin our philosophy. Assured at my interview that there was no connection with either Mormons or Moonies and that traditional Methodist views on alcohol would not necessarily apply after a hard day at the "chalk face", I accepted the post. I also learnt with interest of the Moravians' venture into my native Scotland, to Ayrshire in particular. So they couldn't be all that strange

As an Anglican I was reassured to find much in the orders of service that I recognised and immediately felt 'at home' with, and in the hymn books familiar and much loved hymns (though there were some, like rarely performed operas, best left alone (!), with rather dull melodies and interminable verses). I like the rather old fashioned wording of the liturgies: they stand the test of time, though I fear they are off putting to the young, with largely inaccessible language for the youngster of 2001.

Personally I miss the opportunity to sing set services in the church choir as I did before and some of the music in particular, magnificent settings of canticles, anthems etc, and in the sung Eucharist that opportunity for quiet contemplation and prayer during the communion itself, as music is sung in the background. I am, however, cheered up by the splendid Hosannah Anthem - certainly proof that the devil does not have all the best tunes! I was pleased to see "God be in my Head" as part of one order of service regularly used at Fulneck.

Music I know is an important part of Moravian worship. Special moments for me include hearing - for I cannot yet join in - a group of Moravians sing grace before a meal, worshipping in the sunrise service on Easter Sunday outside, led into the graveyard God's Acre by the brass band, standing by the (horizontally placed) gravestones amidst the bluebells and sharing in the community breakfast in school afterwards. Attending a Moravian baptism service with the ladies in traditional robes and gradually growing accustomed to the terminology of "brothers" and "sisters" also made an impression.

Of course my experience is limited to Fulneck and to one or two neighbouring Moravian churches where I have taken the Education Sunday services, but I have also attended two Synods and spoken at the Moravian Women's Annual Conference. I

worry about the lack of young people, though I know this is a problem all churches have to cope with nowadays. I was pleased therefore to hear that a Youth Officer had been appointed.

Most of all I have been struck by the quiet, unassuming way the Moravians conduct their worship and go about their business, which is almost in contrast to some Anglican churches and congregations. There seems to me a quiet, strong sense of belief and sense of community and friendship to one another, which are rather special.

Particular mention must be made of the Christingle Service. It is my pleasure and privilege every year at Christmas to lead the senior School Christingle services in Fulneck church and to take part in the Junior ones. Of course we 'had' Christingles in the Church of England, but not like this! The sight of the illuminated Moravian star in the belfry on a dark winter's night and the glow of the candles in church when the lights go out and we sing "Morning Star" is very moving - the highlight of our school year. I had never heard "Morning Star" before, far less sung it, and it was when George Hamilton IV, himself a Moravian, came to do a concert/service of Christmas Music, that I realised it could also be sung antiphonally (very effective it was too!)

So - some thoughts on what it has felt like for an "an outsider looking in" - except I don't feel like one! Not only do I feel equally 'at home' here in the Moravian Church, but the community has reinforced that by the extending of the hand of friendship. I do miss the Holy Communion Service - though perhaps the Lovefeast will 'grow on me'.

And I have to confess nothing beats Sung Evensong in one of the great Anglican cathedrals - or Matins!

Honorée Gordon
Principal of Fulneck School

Questions

- ◆ *Which aspects of the worship of your tradition do you treasure and long to share with others?*
- ◆ *If you worship in a partner church regularly, what do you miss most about your tradition?*
- ◆ *How has working or worshipping with a partner church changed your view of your own tradition?*