

MORAVIAN MOMENT #48...

The Advent Star

We are in the Advent season and as Moravians we look forward to the return of Jesus Christ. The word Advent means, the coming. In the Moravian Church, the Advent Star is lighted throughout the entire Christmas season up to Epiphany (6th January). Over the years, persons have asked, where did it originate? What's the significance of it? What relevance does it hold for our Christian faith? Are Moravians the only ones who have this tradition?

A **Moravian star** ([German](#): *Herrnhuter Stern*) is an illuminated piece of [Advent](#) or [Christmas](#) decoration popular in [Germany](#) and in places where there are Moravian congregations. The first [Moravian](#) star is known to have originated in the 1830's at the Moravian School in [Niesky](#), Germany, most probably as a geometry lesson or project. The first mention is of a 110 point star at the 50th anniversary of the *Paedagogium* (classical school for boys) there in Niesky. Around 1880, Peter Verbeek, alumni of the school, began making the stars. His son Harry later founded the [Herrnhut](#) Star Factory, which was the main source of stars until [World War I](#). Although damaged at the end of World War II when the Russians burned down the town of Herrnhut, the Star Factory resumed manufacture of stars soon afterwards. Briefly taken over by the Communist DDR government in the 1950s, the factory was returned to the Moravian Church owned Abraham Dürninger Company which continues to make the Stars in Herrnhut. Other star making companies and groups have sprung up since then especially in North America.

Although the Star originated in the church's schools as a geometry lesson, it was soon adopted throughout the Moravian Church as a beloved [Advent](#) symbol. All of life was formed by their [Christian](#) faith and there was no distinction between secular and sacred even in their daily activities. All of life was considered worship. So it was that the Advent Star went effortlessly from a pastime for boys into the Congregation. Properly called the "Advent Star" the Moravian Star remains a beloved symbol of the [Advent](#), [Christmas](#) and [Epiphany](#) seasons. They are often seen in Moravian [nativity](#) and [putz](#) displays as a representation of the [Star of Bethlehem](#). For Moravians the Star recalls the Creator, Who said "Let the light shine in the darkness". It also recalls the messianic promise of God to Moses that "A Star shall arise out of Jacob". The Advent Star reminds Moravians of the star followed by the 3 Wiseman from the East to find the Infant Jesus in Bethlehem. The Advent Star also reminds Moravians of the Risen Christ Who said "I am the bright and Morning Star".

The challenge is for Moravians not only to talk of the symbolic nature of the Star, but to allow Jesus Christ to be the Star who shines brightly from our lives. The Star that will convict, convince and convert men and women to walk in the light of God. As the Star burns brightly in our Sanctuaries and Homes may it illumine our lives so that we will be able to point others to the Lamb of God, who is Jesus Christ.

16TH December, 2007