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preach the other; they are inseparable.’ He asks for clarification of Sider’s statement: ‘Jesus’ death was also a decisive victory over the disordered, rebellious structure of our socio-historical existence’. Stott wants to insist that ‘the Kingdom of God in the New Testament is a fundamentally [p. 88](#) Christological concept and it may be said to exist only where Jesus Christ is consciously acknowledged as Lord’.

3. The principalities and powers. John Stott questions the increasingly popular view that Paul’s principalities and powers are not personal angelic or demonic agencies so much as structures of thought, tradition and society. He traces this view from Gordon Rupp’s *Principalities and Powers* (1952) to today. He suspects its origin goes back to the embarrassment of accepting Biblical angelology and demonology. He asks: ‘When Paul refers to the creation of principalities, is he really talking about the divine institution of structures?’ He questions Sider’s interpretation of [Ephesians 3:10](#), since the context is ‘in the heavenly places’.

He concludes with a note of appreciation for the initiative and leadership that Dr. Sider gives in understanding the partnership of evangelism and social action.

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Community and Mission: the Moravian Model

by Professor J. M. VAN DER LINDE

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Does the Moravian movement founded 250 years ago have any relevance for the renewal of our contemporary mission theology and methods, and point to a more Biblical way to social service and justice for the poor and oppressed? This article makes illuminating reading.

Editor.

COUNT NNICOLAUS LUDWIG VON ZINZENDORF, born in 1700 and who died in 1760, was descended from high Austrian nobility. His grandfather sided with the Reformation and had to emigrate to Germany. As a boy, Zinzendorf was brought up and educated in the best Lutheran pietistic circles. Philip Jacob Spener was his godfather and he attended a boarding school in Halle led by another spiritual giant, namely August Hermann Francke. As pastor, professor and practical organiser, Francke inspired the young Zinzendorf deeply.¹

Zinzendorf’s rank as a count of the Empire proved to be both a help and a hindrance to his calling. His family would not allow him to become an ordinary theologian, pastor or missionary. He had to devote himself to the service of the State, and accordingly he

¹ John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (New York-Nashville, 1956). Erich Beyreuther, *Zinzendorf*, 3 Vols, 1957–1961.

studied law and for some years filled a post at the Saxon court. However, the arrival in 1722 of refugees from Moravia seeking asylum on his estate helped him find his true vocation, so that Zinzendorf developed into a pastoral and missionary leader with few equals in any age.

These Moravians were members of the underground church of the 'hidden seeds' in Czechoslovakia, which was established in 1457, but whose origin can be traced back some 50 years earlier to p. 90 the Reform movement started by John Hus in Prague.² This church was so violently persecuted by the Counter-Reformation in Czechoslovakia that in the end nearly all the remaining members fled to Germany. There, people from various churches and sects joined them to establish a settlement on Zinzendorf's estate in Saxony which was given the name of *Herrnhut* (under the Lord's care). As a fellowship of believers from many denominations this new settlement became a local realisation of the universal Church. As a political unit it became a republic of Christ, a Christocracy. Although those who had actually come from Moravia formed a minority, their spiritual and missionary contribution was so great that to this day the movement in five continents still carries the name Moravian.

Zinzendorf was the landlord of this new community and both he and his wife devoted their possessions and their many talents to building up a local government which should reflect the Lordship of Christ. Strict church discipline was introduced together with a constitution that combined both democratic and authoritarian principles. The private property of all the members was devoted to furthering the religious cause. *Herrnhut* soon became a centre of the pietistic movement second only to Halle.

Zinzendorf, as a member of the Lutheran Church, had no intention that *Herrnhut* should become a new denomination. His vision was that members from many denominations would join in special groups for fellowship in faith and work without relinquishing membership in their own native churches. Through pluriformity would be manifested the unity of the Church of the Lord. However, the original Moravians, coming as they did from a church that had undergone a reformation a century before Luther wished *Herrnhut* to become an expression of the renewed unity of the Moravian brethren, the *Unitas Fratrum* that had come into existence in Moravia in 1457, and so it happened.

A PLACE WHERE HEAVEN AND EARTH MEET

The renewed unity of the Brethren of Moravia became something unique in the history of mission. 'The whole life of the P. 91 community served only one purpose: to be at the disposal of the Saviour for His plan in the world under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.'³ A small but entire church was dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel: 'mission was the very reason of its being'. The dynamic and strength of this new phenomenon in Protestant Christianity was a strict Christocentric theology. Renewal of man meant renewal in Christ. Zinzendorf was not a Christomonist. He believed in God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but for him, the message of the New Testament revolved around the fact that, in Christ, God had come to man and had become one of them.

Inwardly and outwardly, daily life in *Herrnhut* and the many later settlements in other countries came to be defined by this Christocratic ideal. The 'lot' was cast to ascertain the guidance of the Lord. Every morning 'watch-words', Biblical texts or hymns, were passed

² Edward Langton, *History of the Moravian Church* (London, 1956) J. Taylor Hamilton, Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church; The Renewed Unitas Fratrum, 1722-1957* (Bethlehem (Penn), 1967).

³ Bernhard Kruger, *The Pear Tree Blossoms. The History of the Moravian Church in South Africa* (Genadendal, 1966), p. 14.

on from house to house as daily paroles for the ‘warriors’ (*streiter*) on guard for the Lord. Since 1731 these watch-words have been printed as daily textbooks and today they are translated and used in many countries. In order to facilitate pastoral guidance and instruction, the congregation in Herrnhut and the other Moravian settlements in Europe were divided into groups called ‘choirs’ according to age and sex. As such, these choirs had nothing to do with singing, but divided the church into groups of married brethren, married sisters, single brethren, single sisters, boys and girls. Besides the choirs, the congregation was further sub-divided into bands. Zinzendorf came upon this idea after hearing a sermon about the visit which Mary, the mother of Jesus made to Elisabeth the mother of John the Baptist. These bands were again divided into brothers and sisters and the object of these small groups was to deepen the love of the one for the other and so to stimulate the inward growth of the congregation. As Zinzendorf expressed it, these bands were to consist of people ‘who converse ... on the whole state of their hearts and conceal nothing from each other, but who have wholly committed themselves to each other’s care in the Lord .. cordiality, secrecy and daily intercourse is of great service to such individuals and ought never to be neglected.’⁴ p. 92

John Wesley learned much about the band system during his visit to Herrnhut in 1738. On August 8th of that year he recorded in his journal: ‘The people of Herrnhut are divided .. into about 90 bands, each of which meets at least twice, but most of them three times a week, to confess their faults to one another, that they may be healed.’⁵

FOCUSSED THEOLOGY

Zinzendorf did not draft a system of Christian doctrine. Karl Barth paid him the compliment of calling him an ‘irregular theologian’, and one of his biographers has written: ‘Zinzendorf has given utterance to ideas’. Zinzendorf did include theology in the hymns he wrote, in the addresses he gave, in the meetings he attended in many countries with many different churches, in the synods, in his missionary instructions, in the church order he helped to formulate, in the letters he wrote, and so on. He was truly a man-in-mission, his wife was a woman-in-mission, and the Moravian congregations formed a church-in-mission.

Zinzendorf simplified and brought to a focus traditional orthodox theology. Not out of laziness, but because he wanted ordinary men and women to live at the nerve-centre of God’s salvation. He wrote: ‘We believe that the whole theology needed to enable us to stand before the holy angels without shame can be written in big characters on an octavo sheet. Anyone who neglects this basic theology fails to experience salvation’. His reduction went even further. Not theology on an octavo sheet only, but theology concentrated on one point: that of justification. He called that *the point* (*das Puntchen*). ‘We must be witnesses to that one central point of theology around the world. Not morality, nor philosophy, and still less an orthodox-scholastic system of doctrine, but “the simple doctrine of Jesus’ suffering and death” and the eternal ransom through Jesus Christ our reconciliation.’

Saving theology, that is, a theology for life and work, was for Zinzendorf always specific and never general. Betterman called Zinzendorf’s theology ‘A theology of concreteness’. It could be p. 93 summed up in one name, the Name of Jesus. Zinzendorf’s

⁴ A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf, the Ecumenical Pioneer* (London, 1962).

⁵ John Wesley, Journal II, August 8, 1738. Clifford W. Towlson, *Moravian and Methodist Relationship and Influence in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1957).

missionary instruction read simply: 'Tell the story of the Lamb'. To tell the name of Jesus was not enough. It was necessary to witness to Jesus Christ crucified, but the Cross must not become an abstraction. Jesus Christ crucified means the Lamb, and that in turn means blood and wounds. Again, blood and wounds point to the foolishness of the Gospel of the Cross ... that the Son of God should need to shed his blood to deliver man. All philosophising was thus put to shame.

'The Pietists of Halle were God's grammarians; they looked at their own sins first and then through their tears at the cross. Zinzendorf taught the Moravians to be God's troubadours; they looked first to the cross and rejoiced because they found there a covering for all their sins.'⁶ For a time Zinzendorf concentrated his theology on the *pleura* or 'side wounds' of Jesus. In a hymn he wrote for the congregations at home and the missionaries abroad he expressed this feeling as follows: 'We all feel well in the side wound of Jesus. In Europe up to the North Pole, In the Indies, and in Asia and Africa, be Jesus with us'. 'To be saved is to be in the *pleura*. Where are the Christians? In the whole wide world. They find their freedom to be world-citizens in this specific symbol. Concentration of faith liberates for universal cosmopolitanism. Christians are free for the world because they are rooted and anchored in something very specific; the wound in the side of one man.'

This type of Johannine reduction and concentration of theology was to some extent a protest against the rationalistic and orthodox-scholastic frame of mind of the time. The message of blood and wounds which exalted the suffering Saviour was highly effective in winning converts and this approach brought about the most creative period of the Moravian movement. But it was also open to morbid distortions and a decade later led to a regrettable episode in Moravian history.⁷ Zinzendorf turned from these extravagances and devoted himself to a contemplation of Christ. He was convinced that true religion is not rooted in knowledge, but in a sense of Jesus' presence and love. For him, loving fellowship p. 94 with the Saviour was the essential manifestation of religion. 'What is the sum-total of the Gospel, which one must seek in all things and on which all fellowship in the spirit must be based? I call this, in my manner of expressing myself, a personal relationship with the Saviour.'

THE RENEWAL OF MAN

Herrnhut was convinced that the renewal of man begins and is continued in a genuine fellowship grounded in the Gospel of Christ crucified. Such a renewed life must necessarily express itself and multiply in valiant witness and service.⁸ 'Herrnhut and the Moravians in the other settlements received in a few years the strength to send out itinerant messengers to awaken the "sleeping" in other churches in Europe and to provide them with a focal point of co-operation in the Diaspora movement. They made plans for all denominations to discover each other and to be enriched by mutual service.' A mere ten years after their beginning the first missionaries were sent to the West Indies. 'In the workshop of Herrnhut, the pattern of modern Christian witness and extension was being shaped.'

⁶ J. C. Hoekendijk, *Zinzendorf*. An unpublished manuscript.

⁷ John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (New York-Nashville, 1956), p. 116.

⁸ A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer* (London, 1952), p. 61.

By their living in Christ and through the power of the Spirit, those at Herrnhut sought only to be used in God's service. One of their hymns runs as follows:

*Herrnhut will exist only as long
as the works of your hand
rule unimpeded within its community.
Let love be the sacred band
till ripe and found worthy for Thee
we as good salt may be scattered
so that the earth may thereby be bettered.*

A place therefore where heaven and earth join for the sake of this world. *The earth must be bettered* and Christians, as those who have been renewed, have to be used as *good salt*. Zinzendorf placed much emphasis on fellowship as the basis of being *p. 95* used in this way. For him there was no Christianity without fellowship.

*Members—on our Head depending,
Lights—reflecting Him our Sun,
Brethren—His commands attending,
We in Him, our Lord, are one.*

Nevertheless this represented only one aspect of the Moravian community. The basis of the community life and its evangelistic strength was the emphasis on Christian religion as something personal and individual, directly related to the Saviour. Zinzendorf stressed that man stands alone before God. Each individual is unique and constitutes a whole and unrepeatable person. According to him, 'God is adapting Himself to the varied ways of each man, woman and child, going His specific ways with them in each place and according to the different conditions of continents and countries, cultures and traditions'. Encounters between the living God and real persons always transcend our schemes of conversion and regeneration. 'It is not in accord with the Gospel to prescribe rules or methods to which souls must adhere, or to desire among all the same spiritual attitudes.' Leave to Christ 'the way in which He can and wishes to approach Souls'.

In his stress on religious individualism, Zinzendorf could go as far as to say: 'There are as many fashions of belief as there are faithful souls.' He opposed any pressure to conform to a normal type of piety, and added that 'in the congregation everybody must remain himself and nobody has to conform to others'. 'On this individuality, my brothers and sisters, must we be attentive, and in this respect everyone must have his or her private relation with the Lamb.'⁹

So the life of the renewed community at Herrnhut was centred round the adoration of the Lamb that had been slain. Zinzendorf and the brothers and sisters at Herrnhut let the scandal and the offence of the Cross of the Lamb that had been wounded and slain shatter the deistic composure of 18th century established Christianity and the varnished decorum of polite society. Every brother *p. 96* and sister had his own special way of living with the Lord, but at the same time all shared the same base. No spiritual uniformity but a 'spirit of community'. Zinzendorf defined this 'spirit of community' as the 'Spirit of the Lord, and the Spirit of Wisdom to receive the specific point of religion'.

Zinzendorf with his hitherto unknown accent on the individuality of believers had at the same time an undoubted genius for fellowship. He organised the community life in the Moravian settlements along lines which were old as well as new, including the 'Night

⁹ Peter Baumgart, *Zinzendorf als Wegbereiter historischen denkens* (Lubeck-Hamburg 1969), p. 47.

Watch' as hourly intercession, and the 'Love Feast' (*agape*) as it existed in the early Church. We have already spoken of the 'choirs' and the 'bands' and, in addition, there were the many forms of worship, the foot-washing, the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the abundance of singing and music in all the services. Unlike the Pietists who looked for a painful conviction of sin in every conversion, Zinzendorf and the Moravians found no cause for pity or sorrow in the Cross but only a feeling of intense gratitude which made them ever ready—

*heerfully to testify
How our spirit, soul and body
Do in God our Saviour joy.*¹⁰

This missionary theology, full of joy, worship and service, created new types of Christians. 'We must carry an image of our incarnate God in our hearts and whoever is too refined and philosophical for this, is an unconverted person and an alien from God's household.' All the pomp of man's possessions, his class prejudice, his intellectual pride and denominational bigotry must collapse before this image of the Lamb. All that separates man from man and Christian from Christian must be laid at the foot of the Cross.

While crossing the ocean on his journey to Georgia, John Wesley was deeply impressed by the example of the Moravians on board who in the midst of a terrible storm sang their hymns joyfully and without fear because it was time for their sung service. Happiness freed these people from the fear of death. They did not go into mourning at the death of a loved one, but sang hymns of triumph and to this day the Moravian funeral processions move towards God's acre to the accompaniment of trombones. Adoration of the Lamb created an 'Easter people'.

MISSIONARY THEOLOGY AND METHOD

Zinzendorf found the focus of his concentrated theology in the adoration of the Lamb and in the message of the Kingdom of God. His contribution to missionary theology is his insight that the Kingdom of God and the inhabited earth are interrelated. They are in fact destined for each other. According to Zinzendorf, the Kingdom of God was the 'permanent action of God by means of angels and chosen people to universalise salvation, to facilitate the present order of salvation, to prepare for the third coming of the Saviour, to make people long for Him and to bring their hearts into an attitude pleasing to Him'.¹¹

Jesus Christ is the subject of the apostolate. All initiatives are his, and he is the only leader of the Unity in the home countries and on the mission fields. The concentrated, simplified theology of Herrnhut was held to be the theology for all continents. At the same time, Zinzendorf tried to prevent the exportation of European denominations and sects to other continents. The concept of a simplified theology that could be written on an octavo sheet in big characters would enable indigenous churches in other continents to come to an interpretation of the Gospel which would be meaningful in their own context. In this Zinzendorf was far ahead of his time. He permitted the introduction of Herrnhut organisation and discipline in Moravian missions, but warned against 'applying the Herrnhut yardstick'.

Native helpers were enlisted as soon as possible, but in many cases there was considerable delay because the Moravians chose to work in the very difficult slave areas

¹⁰ A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer* (London, 1952), p. 73.

¹¹ O. Uttendorfer, *Die wichtigsten Missionsinstruktionen Zinzendorfs* (Herrnhut, 1913), p. 6.

of the Caribbean where converts among the slaves were not free to attend church. Indeed the Colonists feared the Moravians as a revolutionary people and a danger to the sugar economy.

The missionary theology of the Moravians was developed by Zinzendorf in conjunction with the brethren on the field, as they p. 98 wrote their diaries, sent each other letters, and exchanged their experiences. As has been stated above, Zinzendorf paid attention to the particularity of the Lord's dealings with each individual, and recognised the importance of the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who were to be reached. Zinzendorf's missionary instructions contained the following precept: 'Do not direct your work towards a heathen whom you do not find disposed towards righteousness, because Christ is sending His messengers to those of the same nature as Cornelius and the official of queen Candace.' Thinking of his time at the Saxonian court where nobody could enter the presence of the king without being invited, or could even knock on his door loudly, Zinzendorf drew a parallel with missionary work. 'We can only scratch on the door,' he said; 'the people who have been rightly disposed by the Spirit will hear and we shall find them.' 'Missionaries do not make new people, but they find them. God is in permanent action and we only have to follow Him.'

How should the people be approached by the missionaries? In a hymn, Zinzendorf indicates that he prefers the Emmaus approach. Jesus joined the travellers and started a friendly conversation with them. As Jesus disclosed what had happened, their hearts were set on fire in an 'Emmaus' fashion (*Emmauntisch heizen*). In a missionary catechism, Zinzendorf indicates what missionaries should do. 'All heathen know that God exists. The Gospel tells them His name. Faith in Jesus is all that is needed to be saved and everyone who teaches more than that before they come to a saving knowledge of the Saviour hinders their conversion by their very teaching.'

Question: 'Who made man?'

Answer: 'The Lord God.'

Question: 'What is His name?'

Answer: 'Jesus Christ.'¹²

In other words, there was to be no preparatory teaching or precatechism, but one had to go straight to the name of God-in-service (*Amtsgott*), namely Jesus Christ. p. 99

THE REFORMATION OF THE WORLD

Zinzendorf's missionary theology of the renewal of man differs from Comenius' universal philosophy both in its method and its perspective. In a workpaper, Comenius sketched a plan for the universal improvement of human affairs. It amounts to a worldwide programme to educate all men in all places for a renewed life in God. Comenius' missionary theology sought to achieve a theocracy for the whole world. Schools, churches and governments are there to serve the universal return of mankind to God's holy order of eternal joy.

Zinzendorf never wrote any system of doctrine nor any plan for the renewal of the world. At the same time, Herrnhut knew that the earth had to be bettered and that Jesus Christ was the firstborn of the new creation. Christians are everywhere the firstfruits of the harvest of the final Kingdom. There could be no justification without sanctification and sanctification is more than a by-product of justification. I do not think that Herrnhut aimed directly for world reform, but Moravians both by their life and their work made a contribution for reform *in* the world, and even in certain instances attacked bad and unjust structures. I will mention three points:

1. In the Middle Ages, monasteries and the new towns played a significant role in the renewal of society. The monks lived holistically and in the course of teaching man his way to God, they changed and reformed the structures under which men were suffering. New towns also had a special significance. They breathed the atmosphere of freedom. In the country, slavery and serfdom was possible but not in these new towns, in which new economic forms, trade patterns and industrial enterprises were being developed. Paradise was not yet at hand, but the monasteries and the new towns opened a door towards greater participation of man in his own destiny. In some degree, the Moravian settlements combined the life of the monasteries with that of the new towns. There was community life, a community spirit, and participation of all members in problems and in their solutions. There was also pastoral care and an early form of a small responsible society. If there was p. 100 no work for newcomers, work was created for them. These settlements were small republics of Christ, where people lived in security from birth to death. In an old rough society, where everyone had to fend for himself, but only a few could do so, they represented tokens of a new, sanctified and ordered life.

2. Slavery. The Moravians had the courage to undertake mission in areas where they were very unpopular. Western European countries profited considerably from slavery and the slave trade, and the churches they established in areas where slavery was rife were in effect commercial churches that had to provide pastoral guidance for the officials, soldiers and merchants there. As such, these churches were, or were supposed to be, on the side of the slave-masters. Only free churches could be on the side of the slaves. The Moravians were the first free church in the Caribbean. Directly they could do nothing to change the kingdom of king sugar.¹³ What they were able to do was to establish a state within a state in which Europeans and blacks could live a sanctified, renewed life together in the Lord. The feasts of worship, the choirs and the bands, the love feasts and the many other spiritual channels the Moravians provided for the slaves gradually placed the Kingdom of God over against the kingdom of sugar.

The Moravian missionaries taught the Christian faith first, and then, as far as possible (because they liked impossible things), reading and writing. 'Religion with letters' was feared and forbidden in the colonies in those days. The Moravians called the slaves brothers and sisters and, to the extent that they were admitted to the plantations, shared their life. In case where they were not admitted they either bought their own plantations, or worked as carpenters, doctors or in some other capacity alongside the plantations. Most of the Moravians were laymen and this constituted their strength. It also gave them flexibility and placed them in the middle of everyday life. They started workshops for young slaves and educated them to work and carry responsibility. Education for spiritual freedom first, in the hope and expectation that total liberation would follow. In Surinam and also in other countries, the Moravians did a wonderful work which today receives national recognition.

¹³ J. M. van der Linde, *Herrnhuter im Karibischen Raum, Unitas Fratrum* (Utrecht, 1975), pp. 41–60.

3. The liberation of Baltic peasants from feudal servitude. At the end of 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, Moravian laymen came to Estonia and Latvia and worked among the rural population which was still largely in feudal servitude. They were helped by the fact that some of the Baltic noblemen had attended Moravian boarding schools in Germany and favoured the expansion of their communities.

The Moravians brought their characteristics of simplified theology, pastoral guidance, worship, music, and song with them, and their forms of piety proved to be outstandingly suited to the national character of these Baltic people. The educational contribution made by the Moravians helped to make them self-confident and independent. As in the case of slavery in America, the Moravians never elaborated a theory of education for liberation and independence. In many respects, Zinzendorf and the Moravians were as conservative as the Lutherans and did not revolt against the social and economic *status quo*, but they had already achieved important social and economic changes in their own community. Nobleman, peasant, scholar and labourer were equals in the congregation and also in the life of the settlement. Long before the French Revolution, the Moravians had broken through the middle wall that separated the social classes. External disparity had largely been submerged by spiritual equality. Labourers from the beginning had been leaders in the congregation and members of the nobility and other persons of high rank had willingly submitted to their leadership.

The education which some of the Baltic noblemen had received in Moravian boarding schools helped them to adopt a less severe attitude towards the peasant serfs. The Moravians taught obedience to the authorities but at the same time they led these serfs to spiritual and social emancipation. They helped to develop various trades among the Estonians and Latvians, and this in turn sharpened their intellect, their behaviour and their sense of responsibility. By means of voluntary gifts, the Baltic Moravians built chapels which were outstanding examples of national architecture. These chapels became symbols of their potentiality in [p. 102](#) national self-assertion and independence. Spiritual and social self-improvement went hand in hand in such a way that the Moravian Church became the first nationalist movement among Estonians.

I am sure that many more examples could be told of how the Moravian Church in the 17th century laid the basis for social reform, but here we must stop and put the question: Can the cases related above be considered a fulfilment of the saying of our Lord: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you'?

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Christian Spirituality

An Article Review

by ROBERT M. YULE

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