

Brethren and Moravians in Colonial America

by

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In 1749 the *Unitas Fratrum* was officially recognized as an "ancient Protestant Episcopal Church" by act of the British Parliament. According to the language of the action, the name of the religious movement was the "Church of the Brethren."¹ In 1708 a small group of Radical Pietists in the county of Wittgenstein, Germany covenanted to become followers of Jesus Christ. Like so many similar groups, they wished to be known only as the "brethren" and were unhappy with designations such as *Neutäufer* or *Schwarzenau Täufer* or *Taufgesinnten* by which they were called by contemporaries. Two hundred years later (1908), the religious movement (by then centered in the United States of America) chose as its legal name the "Church of the Brethren."² This parallelism in nomenclature has not only made for confusion between the two but also suggests the question about the relationship between them. Are there direct historical linkages? Are there theological affinities? How, in fact, are the two "brethren" movements linked in history? To

¹ Printed in *Anno Regni Georgii III. ... At the Parliament begun and holden at Westminster, the Tenth Day of November, Anno Dom. 1747. ... And from thence continued ... to the Twenty ninth Day of November, 1748 ...* (London: 1749), 636; the act was sanctioned on May 12, signed by the king on June 6, 1749 and made effective on September 20, 1749. See Daniel Benham, *Memoirs of James Hutton* (London: 1856), 206-220 and G.A. Wauer, *The Beginnings of the Brethren's Church in England* (London: 1901), 106. A painting by Johann Valentin Haidt memorializes the signing: see Monroe H. Fabian, "Some Moravian Paintings in London", *Pennsylvania Folklife*, 17 (Winter, 1967-1968), 20-23. The standard history in English is J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Renewed Unitas Fratrum, 1722-1957* (Bethlehem, PA, and Winston-Salem, NC: 1967).

² Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., *Church of the Brethren: Yesterday and Today* (Elgin, IL: 1986); *The Brethren Encyclopedia* (Philadelphia, PA, and Oak Brook, IL: 1983-1984), 3 vols.

reduce the scope of the inquiry to reasonable length, the focus will be restricted to the 18th century, in which the Schwarzenau movement was founded and the Unitas Fratrum became known as the Renewed Moravian Church. Most attention will be directed toward the area of predominant contact, the American colony of Pennsylvania.

European Connections

According to present knowledge, there were no direct contacts between the Schwarzenau Brethren and the Moravian Brethren in Europe. The major Brethren group left Wittgenstein in 1720 for Friesland and left Europe in 1729.³ Therefore, when Count Nicolas Ludwig von Zinzendorf sought contact in 1730 with the Radical Pietists in Wittgenstein (Schwarzenau and Berleburg) the earlier adherents of Alexander Mack, Sr., had already left.⁴ It is possible that the count learned of their former presence; many of the Wittgenstein radicals who knew them had remained. The baptisms of the Schwarzenau Brethren during and after 1708 had been sufficiently notorious that their presence would not have been forgotten. There is also evidence of considerable communication between Pennsylvania and Wittgenstein, which included news about the *Täufer*.⁵

After Schwarzenau, the largest Brethren congregation was in the Marienborn area, near Buedingen. This is in the Wetterau, where the Moravian headquarters were established at Herrnhag. Again, there seems to be no direct connection between the two groups, because the Brethren left the area in 1715 for the friendlier areas of Krefeld on the Lower Rhine. One of their Marienborn converts, Gottfried Neumann, who left them for the

³ Friedrich Nieper, *Die ersten deutschen Auswanderer von Krefeld nach Pennsylvania* (Neukirchen/Moers: 1940), 121-133; Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., *European Origins of the Brethren* (Elgin, IL: 1958), 281-320.

⁴ Friedrich Wilhelm Winckel, *Aus dem Leben Casimirs, weiland regierenden Grafen zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg* (Frankfurt/Main: 1842); Werner Wied, "Berleburg und Herrnhut. Der Besuch des Grafen Zinzendorfs in Berleburg im Spiegel des Tagebuchs des Grafen Casimir v. Berleburg," *Wittgenstein*, 45 (1981), 95-116.

⁵ Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., *The Brethren in Colonial America* (Elgin, IL: 1967), 24-41; see also "Two Early Letters from Germantown," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 84 (1960), 220-233.

Community of True Inspiration (Inspirationists), joined the Moravians. He was noted for his contributions to Moravian hymnody.⁶

Contacts in America

The first Moravian efforts in continental North America were in the colony of Georgia in 1735. Although there is some mention of an early *Täufer* congregation in Georgia in the 1730s, it is unlikely that there was then contact of Moravians with Wittgenstein Brethren. The major settlements of this group had been in Pennsylvania, in 1719 and in 1729. It was not until Moravians from Georgia moved to the colony founded by William Penn that the two groups met. The linkage was provided by August Gottlieb Spangenberg, or "Brother Joseph," as he was known to the religiously-minded in Pennsylvania. Spangenberg had been sent to colonial America by Count Zinzendorf to guide the colony in Georgia but soon moved to Pennsylvania. There his predominant assignment was to draw close to the Schwenkfelders; it was hoped that this would enable a close connection of the formerly Silesian group with the Unity. What had not happened when the Schwenkfelders were given hospitality in Saxony might well be possible in the freer confines of the New World.⁷

This involvement soon brought relationships with the Brethren. Spangenberg made his Pennsylvania base with Christoph Wiegner, who had arrived in the colony in September, 1734. By the end of October, Wiegner had established contact with the Brethren meeting in Germantown. The correspondence of Wiegner and Spangenberg with Moravians in Germany and the recently transcribed and published journal of Wiegner provide numerous references to the *Täufer* in Germantown and surrounding settlements. These

⁶ Gottfried Neumann, "Historische Erzählung," in *Unterschiedliche Erfahrungs-volle Zeugnisse* (Himbach: 1715), 50-51; see Durnbaugh, *European Origins* (1958), 179-182.

⁷ Levin T. Reichel, *The Early History of the Church of the United Brethren (Unitas Fratrum) in North America* (Nazareth, PA: 1888); Gerhard Reichel, *August Gottlieb Spangenberg: Bischof der Brüderkirche* (Tübingen: 1906); Howard W. Kriebel, *The Schwenkfelders in Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, PA: 1904).

descriptions also give considerable space to the Ephrata community, the roots of which lie with the Germantown Brethren.⁸

Spangenberg and Wiegner, with colleagues, organized a shared farm community in the Skippack region. This semi-communal endeavor was well suited to accommodate their many religiously-inclined visitors. It also allowed each of them to travel to visit their friends in several religious denominations. Both met quite often with the Brethren in Germantown and particularly with a meeting of young Brethren men in that area.

The Schwenkfelder Wiegner found the meetings of the Germantown Brethren to be edifying. A typical journal entry reads: "On the next Sunday, the 22nd [of January, 1735], I went to the Anabaptists gathering where I felt things went according to a proper manner. I received an impulse to pray. After the meeting, one of them, by the name of Valentine Ma[c]k, took me home to dinner and asked me much concerning our fellowship, individual points of dogma, the Lord's Supper, and similar matters. I answered him in a friendly manner. After dinner they took me to the gathering of the young men. There I also sensed true earnestness among them."⁹

In a letter written in February, 1735, Wiegner passed on a "warm greeting to the Herrnhut congregation" from the Brethren, encouraging Count Zinzendorf and other members to resettle in Georgia. They were aware of difficulties then being experienced by the Moravian Brethren with Saxon officialdom. Although Wiegner did not agree with the views of the Brethren on baptism, he did find that they explained their positions on the ordinances and on brotherhood very well. For their part they permitted him to speak in their open meetings.¹⁰

Spangenberg's descriptions of the Brethren was also rather positive. According to him, they held to the point of view of the Mennonites in opposing infant baptism and baptizing no one "until he is able to formulate a confession of faith." In addition, the Brethren considered immersion to be "an essential part, and therefore they consider all those as unbaptized who have not been dipped under water during their baptism."¹¹

⁸ Peter C. Erb, ed., *The Spiritual Diary of Christopher Wiegner* (Pennsburg, PA: 1978); Durnbaugh, *Colonial America* (1967), 267-268.

⁹ Erb, *Diary* (1978), 95-96.

¹⁰ Erb, *Diary* (1978), 100-102.

¹¹ August Gottlieb Spangenberg, *Leben des Herrn Nicolaus Ludwig Grafen und Herrn von Zinzendorf und Pottendorf* (Barby: 1772-1775), 5: 1379-1383; see also Durnbaugh, *Colonial Brethren* (1967), 279-281.

Association

In 1736 Johann Adam Gruber called for a series of meetings of those in Pennsylvania interested in religious renewal and association.¹² Gruber was a Germantown separatist who had been active in Germany in the Community of True Inspiration along with his father Eberhard Ludwig Gruber (co-leader with Johann Friedrich Rock of the Inspired). His call, like many which followed, pointed out that the religious toleration made possible in Pennsylvania - which was so much appreciated - had a negative side as well. This was that there was a temptation to and danger of religious inactivity and carelessness. Without pressure from the authorities mandating religious observance, many residents became satisfied with the absence of spiritual activity. This attitude was called, according to Spangenberg, the "Pennsylvania religion" - that is to say, no religion at all.¹³

Gruber's call met with response particularly among those with whom Wiegner and Spangenberg had been in discussion. A number of concerned people, often called the Associated Brethren of the Skippack, began to meet regularly to discuss ways to revive religious interest and to increase religious toleration. In 1741 the continued concern was heightened when one of Gruber's colleagues, a German Reformed laypreacher named He[*i*]nrich Antes, issued a call by printed proclamation to a series of meetings. All those interested were urged to attend a foundational meeting to be held at Germantown on New Year's day, 1742 (OS).¹⁴

¹² Johann Adam Gruber, "Gründliche An- und Aufforderung an die ehemalg erweckte hier und da zerstreute Seelen...", (1736), later published with slight changes by the Moravian Brethren (Philadelphia: 1742), and reprinted in *Büdingische Sammlung* (Büdingen: 1744), 3: 13-39. The original MS was reprinted in Johann Philip Fresenius, *Bewährte Nachrichten von Herrnhutischen Sachen* (Frankfurt/Main and Leipzig: 1747-1748), 3: 329-351. The most complete information on J.A. Gruber is found in Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Johann Adam Gruber: Pennsylvania-German Prophet and Poet," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 83 (1959), 382-408.

¹³ Spangenberg, *Leben* (1772-1775), 5: 1383; Gruber had a different interpretation of the "Pennsylvania Religion:" that is "Go a little, give a little, live and let live" - John Joseph Stoudt, *Sunbonnets and Shoofly Pies: A Pennsylvania Dutch Cultural History* (New York: 1973), 49.

¹⁴ The story of the Associated Brethren of the Skippack has often been told. See among others, Don Yoder, "Christian Unity in Nineteenth-Century America," in Ruth Rouse and S.C. Neill, eds., *A History of the Ecumenical Movement* (London:

Count Zinzendorf

As is well known, this first of what became known as the "Pennsylvania Synods" coincided with the arrival in Pennsylvania of the energetic leader of the Moravians, Count Zinzendorf, on his second trip to North America. The call to it had come after consultation by Antes with the count. Zinzendorf's arrival changed dramatically the course of the synods, both to its advantage and disadvantage. He was quickly named the president ("Syndicus") of the synods and easily dominated their proceedings. His participation guaranteed public interest and increased participation. However, on the negative side, it also brought with it controversy, which had already swirled around the count in Germany.

The stated purpose of the synods was to form the "Church of God in the Spirit" (*Gemeine Gottes im Geist*). Zinzendorf's unique concept of ecumenical relationship, it was hoped, could be realized in the freer confines of Pennsylvania, where there was no state or established church. Denominational groupings could be accommodated within what came to be called the *Trope* concept, thereby retaining desired specific loyalties yet demonstrating within the broader church of God in the Spirit the winsome qualities of unity and tolerance.

Historians disagree in their assessment of the difficulties which the synods experienced. Some of the participating factors were: 1) the presence of critical reports about Zinzendorf and the Moravians derived from European correspondents; 2) the resistance of the democratically-inclined Americans to the domination of the synods by the sometimes imperious count; 3) the vocal attacks on the endeavor by local separatists, such as the influential Germantown printer Johann Christoph Sauer, because of their distrust of all religious organizations; 4) the fear felt by members of several denominations that the synods were primarily a device by the Moravians to seize control of Lutheran and Reformed congregations and to attract members of these and other groups to the Moravian fold; 5) the use of distinctively Moravian practices, such as the lot (sortilege) in reaching decisions; and 6)

1954), 229; S.H. Gapp, ed., *A History of the Beginnings of Moravian Work in America, being a Translation of Georg Neisser's Manuscripts ...* (Bethlehem, PA: 1955); John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (New York and Nashville: 1956), 156-157; and A.J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf, The Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity* (Philadelphia: 1962), 138-160.

the nature of the ecumenism presented by Zinzendorf, which was more advanced than many Christians were willing to accept.

That specifically Moravian interests were also at work may be deduced from the increasing use of the synods to hear reports of Moravian missions, the ordination of four men by a Moravian bishop, and, especially, by the evaluation and judging of all Pennsylvania religious bodies in the seventh synod and in Count Zinzendorf's farewell addresses. The synods continued to be held after the seven in which Zinzendorf participated; at many of these meetings non-Moravians were in attendance. After 1748, however, they became stated and official governing sessions for the life and work of the Moravian Church in America.¹⁵

Brethren and Ephrata Participation in the Synods

Representatives of the Brethren were present at the first synod and remained active through the third synod. They included Andreas Frey, Joseph Müller, Johann Peter van Laschet, Abraham Dubois, and George Adam Martin. These do not seem to be of the first rank of Brethren leadership. They are said to have been official delegates, but given the informal nature of Brethren polity at this time, this may not have been the case.¹⁶

¹⁵ Jacob John Sessler, *Communal Pietism Among Early American Moravians* (New York: 1933, 20-71; John Joseph Stoudt, "Count Zinzendorf and the Pennsylvania Congregation of God in the Spirit," *Church History*, 9 (1940), 366-380; Ernst Benz, "Zinzendorf in Amerika," in *Zinzendorf-Gedenkbuch*, eds. Ernst Benz and Heinz Renkewitz (Stuttgart: 1951), 140-161; Charles H. Glatfelter, *Pastors and People: German Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Pennsylvania Field, 1717-1793* (Breinigsville, PA: 1981), 68-81; Weinlick, *Zinzendorf* (1956), 158-167 and "Moravianism in the American Colonies," in *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*, ed. F. Ernst Stoeffler (Grand Rapids, MI: 1976), 123-163. Stoeffler, in *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: 1973), 156-158, suggests that "fellowship" be used as the English translation for *Gemeine*.

¹⁶ The complete transactions of the first seven synods (during which Count Zinzendorf was involved) were published for the Moravians by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia; they are listed in biographical detail in C. William Miller, *Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia Printing: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Philadelphia: 1974), 151-154. Excerpts from the synods were published in the *Büdingische Sammlung* (Büdingen: 1743), 12: 721-818 and *Pennsylvanische Nachrichten von dem Reiche Christi, Anno 1742*. The latter is conveniently found in Erich Beyreuther and Ger-

Delegated leaders from Ephrata were also actively involved. They included the prior Israel Eckerlin, Conrad Wieser, Johannes Hildebrand, and Heinrich Kalckgläser. Significantly, the Ephrata leader, Johann Conrad Beissel, could not be induced to attend. It seems evident that Count Zinzendorf was quite eager to bring Ephrata into closer relationship. Historians believe that the sabbatarian pattern followed in the Bethlehem colony in the early years (no physical labor on Saturdays) was influenced by sabbatarian Ephrata practice. The count himself undertook a trip to that monastic compound in what is now Lancaster County following the second synod, although he failed to see the founder Conrad Beissel, known as the "Superintendent" or "Brother Friedsam." Each leader stood on his dignity, expecting the other to come to him, so no meeting took place. Zinzendorf's daughter made a distinct, if controversial, impression during her later visit to the sisters' house.¹⁷

Two issues surfaced in the synods which proved to be unbridgable. The Schwarzenau Brethren were offended by the form of baptism used by the count with three Indians who came to the third synod desiring the sacrament. (The form was decided by lot.) The protocol of the synods reveals that Count Zinzendorf was quite aware of the possibility of offense and attempted to placate the Anabaptists by his theological discourse. Another was marriage. One of the questions of the second synod asked: "Is it true that the Moravian Brethren make too much of marriage, and the Ephrata people too little?"

For these and some lesser reasons, both the Brethren and their schismatic Ephrata associates had departed from the synods by the end of the third synod. In a pattern similar to that of other involved denominations in Pennsylvania, the ecumenical adventure of the Pennsylvania Synods led to increased denominational consciousness. By widely-accepted account, the first Brethren conference was held in 1742 specifically to discuss and counter the

hard Meyer, eds., *Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf Hauptschriften: Bd. II, Reden in und von Amerika* (Hildesheim: 1963), along with other important contemporary documents.

¹⁷ Lamech and Agrippa [pseud.], *Chronicon Ephratense: A History of the Community of Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata, Lancaster County, Penn'a*, trans. J. Max Hark (Lancaster, PA: 1786), 145-156. The only known copy of the original (Ephrata, PA: 1786) in Europe is located in Herrnhut. See also Gapp, *History* (1955), 97-100 and Julius F. Sachse, *German Sectarians of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: 1899-1900), 1: 445-451.

problems brought about by the Moravian presence and the synods. George Adam Martin reported: "After my return home [from the Oley conference] I ... said that I looked upon the Count's conferences as snares, for the purpose of bringing simple-minded and inexperienced converts back to infant baptism and church-going, and of erecting the old Babel again. We consulted with each other what to do, and agreed to get ahead of the danger, as some Baptists [Brethren] had already been smitten with this vain doctrine, and to hold a yearly conference, or as we called it, a Great Assembly, and fixed at once the time and place. This is the beginning and foundation of the Great Assemblies of the Baptists." This pattern has continued to the present as the central institution defining and preserving Brethren identity.¹⁸

Ephrata's reaction took on more polemical form. A number of publications were directed specifically at the Moravians from Ephrata pens and, eventually, from the Ephrata press. The most active controversialist was Johannes Hildebrand, who had participated in the synods. Although many of his writings were later destroyed (because of conflict between Beissel and Hildebrand), those that have been preserved demonstrate his harsh evaluation of Zinzendorf and his colleagues.¹⁹

Representatives of other religious orientations in Pennsylvania were also eager to counter the efforts of the count and his associates. These include the Swiss Reformed separatist Samuel Guldin, the German Reformed Johann Philipp Boehm and Jakob Lischy, and the recently-arrived German Lutheran leader Heinrich Melchior Mühlenberg. Much of this opposition was publicized in Germany by the senior pastor in Frankfurt/Main, the Lutheran Johann Philip Fresenius, who sought any material to discredit the Moravians. His collection of anti-Moravian documents was called *Bewährte Nachrichten von Herrnhitischen Sachen* (1748); volume three contains hundreds of pages on American developments. In a few cases, knowledge of these incidents has been preserved solely by this publication.²⁰

¹⁸ Lamech and Agrippa, *Chronicon Ephratense* (1889), 245.

¹⁹ A recent discussion is in E.G. Alderfer, *The Ephrata Commune: An Early American Counterculture* (Pittsburgh: 1985), 77-85. See also Walter C. Klein, *Johann Conrad Beissel: Mystic and Martinet* (Philadelphia: 1942), 100-107.

²⁰ On Böldin, see Rudolf Dellsperger, "Kirchengemeinschaft und Gewissens Freiheit: Samuel Guldins Einspruch gegen Zinzendorf's Unionstätigkeit in Pennsylvania 1742," *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, 11 (1985), 40-58. On Boehm, see William J. Hinke, ed., *Life and Letters of the Rev. John Philip Boehm* (Philadelphia: 1916). On Guldin, Boehm, and Lischy, see William J. Hinke, *German Reformed Congregations in*

For that matter, a consistent Moravian strategy to counter its critics was to document all of its activities in voluminous publications and to leave no criticism unanswered. The Pennsylvania struggles can, therefore, also be followed in Moravian publications, particularly in the three-volume *Büdingische Sammlung einiger in die Kirchen-Historie einschlagender sonderlich neuerer Schriften* (1742-1745). In some cases the documents are identical with those collected and published by Fresenius, but understandably, the anthology include more of Zinzendorf's defenses and explanations.²¹

Pennsylvania Publications

Because of the widespread interest in things Moravian, many of the Pennsylvania printers and publishers rushed material to the presses. Catalogers of American imprints have tracked the bulge of publications derived from the visit of the Count Zinzendorf, the Pennsylvania Synods, and later developments. Of these, notice will be given here only of those directly referring to the Brethren.²²

Although the Sauer press of Germantown was at first open to Moravian material (printing for example their first American hymnal - 1742), his stance of doubt and criticism of the movement soon led to difficulties with the count and his supporters. A revealing episode involved the efforts of

Pennsylvania and Other Colonies (Lancaster, PA: 1951), 1-13, 31-37, 255-265 and Glatfelter, *Pastors and People* (1980), 1: 21-22, 49-50, 83-84. On Muhlenberg, see Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein, eds., *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg* (Philadelphia: 1942), reprinted in 1982. See also Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer: Pennsylvania-German Printer: His Youth in Germany and Later Relationships with Europe," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 82 (1958), 330-337.

²¹ Materials in the Fresenius and Moravian collections pertaining to the Pennsylvania situation are conveniently listed in Emil Meynen, *Biobliography of the Colonial Germans of North America* (Baltimore, MD: 1982), 154-160; the work was originally published bilingually as *Bibliography on German Settlements in Colonial North America, especially on the Pennsylvania Germans and their Descendants, 1683-1933* (Leipzig: 1937).

²² Many of the polemical tracts are listed in Miller, *Franklin* (1974), 155-160 and Oswald Seidensticker, *The First Century of German Printing in America, 1728-1830* (Philadelphia, 1893), 14-23; the latter bibliography is being revised by the staff of the University of Göttingen Library.

He[i]nrich Antes to have printed a defense of the Moravians against the published attack by Hildebrand. Sauer was noted for being willing to publish only what he himself believed to be true. This proved unfortunate for Antes, because Sauer believed portions of the MS to be inaccurate.

The Germantown printer was offended in particular because of what had been said about Ephrata (which received the most vitriolic mention in the final synodical proceedings). The concluding statements of the seventh synod called down God's wrath upon them: "May the Lamb crush this satan to death soon!" Sauer pointed out that the synod, under the influence of Count Zinzendorf, had maintained that the best members of the Brethren had left them and joined the Ephrata movement. "If the best people left the Brethren and if the Sabbatarians are a pack invented by the devil, what does that make the remaining ones, those who are the worst, who are not as good as the pack?"

Sauer also took Antes to task for claiming that the true sign of which of the religious groups involved was the true congregation of God would be revealed by seeing which increases in membership the most. Sauer argued that would mean that Islam would be the truest for they have grown most rapidly. He also asserted that the Brethren increased their membership by fifty since Count Zinzendorf left for Europe.²³

Two Brethren visit Germany

When Zinzendorf left the somewhat inhospitable shores of America for the homeland early in 1743, he took with him a number of people. Among them were two who had been active in the synods, both of Brethren background. They were Andreas Frey and Joseph Müller. Frey had been chosen by lot as one of the three trustees of the conferences; Müller was noted for admonishing the count for his angry spirit during the synods, whereupon Zinzendorf asked him to lay his hands upon him and pray for greater meekness. There is some evidence that the count thought they might be useful in contacting some Brethren still residing in Europe, especially in the Netherlands. In Müller's autobiography are references to visiting Brethren and Mennonites in Friesland, the Palatinate, and Switzerland. Both men later returned to North America after several years residence in Germany.

²³ Durnbaugh, *Colonial America* (1967), 315-319.

The two - Frey and Müller - could not have had more contrasting experiences. One, Müller, became a dependable figure in Moravian affairs; the other, Frey, became an outspoken critic of the Moravians. His expose of the Moravian practices in the Wetterau was printed in Pennsylvania, reprinted in Germany, and published in translation in England. Frey's *Account* became one of the staples of anti-Moravian documentation, being used as late as 1950 as a portrayal of Moravian eccentricity.²⁴

It so happened that Frey's stay in the Herrnhag colony coincided with the height of the "Sifting Time," when the Moravian emphasis upon the grace of God and the blissful state of justification approached antinomian excess. It is not hard to picture the bewilderment and developing disgust of the serious-minded Frey about the lightheartedness and playfulness of the Wetteravians. Along with this emphasis, paradoxically, went an extreme Emphasis of Moravian devotion upon the sufferings of Jesus during his crucifixion, centering upon the spear-created wounds in his side. Knox, the British writer, called Frey credulous, eccentric, "something of a prig," and yet an honest observer; if his co-religionists sometimes played tricks upon him for the fun of shocking him, still his account was to be trusted.²⁵

After Andreas Frey left Herrnhag to return to Pennsylvania, Müller wrote to one of Frey's relatives, evidently to head off the negative reports about the Moravians which could be anticipated from the disillusioned visitor. Müller reported that Frey had concluded that "from the times of the

²⁴ *Andreas Frey seine Declaration, oder: Erklärung, auf welche Weise und wie er unter die sogenannte Herrnhuter Gemeine gekommen; und warum er wieder davon abgegangen* (Germantown, PA: 1748); reprinted: (Frankfurt and Leipzig: 1749). *A True and Authentic Account of Andrew Frey. Containing the Occasion of his coming among the Herrnhuters or Moravians, his Observations on their Conferences, Casting Lots, Marriages, Festivals, Merriments, Celebrations of Birth-Days, Impious Doctrines, and Fantastical Practices; Abuse of Charitable Contributions, Linnen Images, Ostentatious Profuseness, and rancour against any who in the least differ from them; and the Reasons for which he left them; together with the Motive for publishing this Account. Faithfully translated from the German. ...* (London 1753). "Frey, Andreas, dessen wichtige Schrift," in A. Volck, *Das entdeckte Geheimnis des bosheit der Herrnhutischen Secte* (Frankfurt and Leipzig. 1760), 4: 373-436, with annotations. See also Albrecht Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus* (Bonn: 1880-1886), 3: 400 and R[onald] A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion with Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries* (Oxford: 1950), 408-416; reprinted (Westminster, MD: 1983).

²⁵ Knox, *Enthusiasm* (1950), 414.

apostles there has not been in the world so profane a sect as the [Moravian] Community;" Frey told Müller that the Moravians were "in every respect ... of a piece with the New Born in Oley." This was an antinomian group in Pennsylvania founded by Matthias Baumann of the Palatinate, who believed that truly converted Christians could not sin. In the letter Müller also admitted that Frey had been teased in Herrnhag. "I am ready to believe that he has been treated by some of the brethren as a 'Merry Andrew' should be treated, at which afterwards they were displeased. They know no better way how to deal with an old Pennsylvanian saint. They were ignorant that by often beating an old head so stuffed with *devotion* and *self-denial*, it falls to pieces."²⁶

The Moravian historian Hutton at one time "could not resist the conviction that Frey had overdrawn his picture" but changed his view when he learned that a number of the Single Brethren had confessed to Spangenberg that "scandals at Herrnhag were ten times as bad" as Frey recounted. Frey objected to the wasteful illuminations and festivities in honor of the count and his family, to "gluttony, pride, and idolatrous confusion." He accused the young people of being "wanton, laughing, sporting, jesting, leaping, throwing one another on the floor, and struggling until they were quite spent ...". When Frey complained in writing to Count Zinzendorf, the reply was critical of his "small and great errors;" the Moravian community was not like the Brethren who fed people "with legal coercions, though at the same time they are without regenerate hearts."

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist societies, whose connection with and indebtedness to the Moravian Brethren is well known, commented on Frey's account, after its publication in English translation in 1753. He noted in his journal that he was aware of the problems that occasioned Frey's disillusioned departure from Herrnhag but found the manner of criticism too harsh: "I pity them too much to be *bitter* against them." Nearly four years later, he included in his journal the report of a troubled Moravian deacon, who attested that Frey's account of the "levity and frolicsomeness" at Marienborn was accurate.²⁷

²⁶ Durnbaugh, *Colonial America* (1967), 291-302.

²⁷ James Hutton, *A History of the Moravian Church* (London: 1909), 414-415; *The Journals of John Wesley* (London: [1909], 4: 88. 232. See also L. Tyerman, *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield* (London: 1877) 2: 308; L. Tyerman, *The Oxford Methodists* (New York: 1873), 136. There is mention of Frey in the well-balanced

If Frey turned away in sorrow from the Moravians, Müller returned to America with an assigned or self-initiated intent to see what could be done to reconcile or restore the Brethren to relationship with the Moravians. Müller corresponded with Brethren leaders to seek such reconciliation. The extensive letter of rebuttal and reproach signed by the entire leadership of the colonial Brethren is a revelation of differences, both theological and cultural, between the Brethren and the Moravians. The Brethren leaders criticized Moravian marriage practices, use of musical instruments, infant baptism, perverse doctrine, and frivolity. Although the elders were undoubtedly affronted by what they understood as a shameful attempt, they did point out that Müller could redeem his standing. This he could do by begging forgiveness and casting away his newly-found beliefs and practices, although the language does not indicate a lively expectation that could indeed happen. And it did not, for Müller finished his days as a loyal Moravian, acting as a physician and educator for the Moravians at Bethlehem and Nazareth.²⁸

Later Relationships

There was considerable contact of the two groups in North Carolina, following the establishment of the Moravian colonies in 1752/1753. This can be followed in the published records of the Bethabara, Salem, and other communities. Many of the Brethren came to these colonies when their unprotected locations on the frontiers put them into jeopardy during Indian troubles. Another series of contacts occurred through Dunker settlement near the colonies. These cannot always be distinguished easily in the printed records. The unpublished diary of Rev. George Soelle contains numerous references to Brethren (Dunkers), often in the context of denominational rivalry.²⁹

discussion, Clifford W. Towson, *Moravian and Methodist: Relationships and Influences in the Eighteenth Century* (London: 1957), 130, 143, 252.

²⁸ Durnbaugh, *Colonial America* (1967), 302-315. An oil portrait of Müller wearing Dunker costume is preserved in Herrnhut; see page opposite 304.

²⁹ Adelaide L. Fries and others, eds., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (1922-1969); not all of the references to Brethren are listed in the index. "Diary of the Rev. George Soelle, March 23, 1771 - April 12, 1773," trans. Kenneth G. Hamilton; located in the Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, NC.

During the American Revolution the two groups shared similar difficulties, because of their nonresistant principles. Some of the legislation issued by the new states lump the two along with the Quakers in matters of conscription and taxation. One of the best descriptions of this experience is found in the article published by Moravian bishop Johann Friederich Reichel in the Göttingen *Staats-Anzeiger* in 1783-84. He was responding to an inaccurate report which accused the Mennonites in America as being insurgents and rebels and, thus, a very dangerous body. Reichel had visited North America between 1779 and 1781 and was in a good position to ascertain the truth. He reported that Pennsylvania was "full of Quakers, also of various kinds of *Tauf-Gesinnten* and other denominations who hold that they dare not bear arms with a good conscience. All of these groups have remained true to their principles from beginning until end. No Dunker, no Quaker took up arms." Although Moravians softened their nonresistant position in the face of Indian attacks during the 18th century, they still made common cause with the other peace groups during this period.³⁰

Conclusion

Though the relationships between the Schwarzenau Brethren and Moravian Brethren in the North American colonies were not all that warm, it is still possible to distinguish some religious concerns that they held in common. Both were largely influenced by Pietism in their beliefs, although the Anabaptist strain communicated to the Schwarzenau group through the Mennonites led to a different and somewhat stricter ethic. Both were non-resistant, although the Moravians modified their position on this during the later 18th and early 19th centuries. The account of their interaction in the 18th century is instructive, although not always edifying. Interestingly, in the 20th century they have moved more closely together - in relief work with refugees in West Germany after World War II and in joint mission work in Ecuador. In 1963-1964 the two churches in the United States entered into exploratory dialogue to consider the possibility of union. Although this did not develop, the fact that such discussion took place at all is significant. In a modern context of

³⁰ Richard K. MacMaster and others, eds., *Conscience in Crisis: Mennonites and Other Peace Churches in America. 1739-1789. Interpretations and Documents* (Scottsdale, PA, and Kitchener, Ontario: 1979); Durnbaugh, *Colonial America* (1967), 349-351.

ecumenism, harmonious relationships are now possible, despite an earlier history of distrust and tension.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Ebenso wie die Brüdergemeine hat auch die "Kirche der Brüder" in den USA (Church of the Brethren, wie sie sich seit 1908 nennt) ihre geschichtlichen Wurzeln im 18. Jahrhundert. 1708 schloß sich eine kleine Gruppe radikaler Pietisten um Alexander Mack d.Ä. in Schwarzenau (Grafschaft Wittgenstein) zu einer Gemeinde zusammen. Von den Zeitgenossen wurden sie - wegen der von ihnen geübten Erwachsenentaufe - als "Neutäufer" oder "Schwarzenauer Täufer" bezeichnet, wollten aber selbst einfach "Brüder" genannt werden. Ihre Hauptverbreitungsgebiete waren das Wittgensteiner Land und das Gebiet um Marienborn in der Wetterau.

Als Zinzendorf 1730 Kontakte zu den radikalen Pietisten in diesen Gebieten aufnahm, gab es dort keine Schwarzenauer Brüder mehr, wenn auch die Erinnerung an sie noch lebendig war. Die meisten waren nach Nordamerika ausgewandert und hatten sich in Germantown und Umgebung angesiedelt. Ein ehemaliger Neutäufer, der zu den Inspirierten übergewechselt war und sich dann der Brüdergemeine anschloß, war Gottfried Neumann in Marienborn.

Zu Kontakten zwischen Herrnhutern und Schwarzenauer Brüdern kam es erst auf amerikanischem Boden. Spangenberg und der Schwenckfelder Christoph Wiegner, die ein positives Bild von den Schwarzenauer Brüdern gewannen, knüpften zu ihnen engere Beziehungen. Der Aufruf des Inspirierten Johann Adam Gruber zu einer brüderlichen Verbindung fand breite Resonanz unter den Erweckten in Pennsylvanien. Der reformierte Laienprediger Heinrich Antes initiierte 1741 die "Pennsylvanischen Synoden". Zinzendorf, der soeben in Amerika eingetroffen war, wurde schnell zur dominierenden Gestalt dieser Versammlungen; sein Auftreten führte aber auch zu Spannungen und Trennungen. Das Ziel einer "Gemeine Gottes im Geist", das Zinzendorf im Sinne seiner (später sogenannten) Tropenlehre verwirklichen wollte, wurde nicht erreicht. An den ersten drei Synoden nahmen auch Vertreter der Schwarzenauer Brüder und der von ihnen herkommenden Ephrata-Gemeinschaft teil. Die von ihnen nicht gebilligte Art und Weise der Taufe von drei Indianern durch Zinzendorf sowie dessen Bewertung der

Ehe boten die Anlässe zum Zerwürfnis. Insgesamt führte das ökumenische Abenteuer der Pennsylvanischen Synoden zu einem wachsenden Selbstbewußtsein der beteiligten Gruppen und zu verstärkter Abgrenzung.

Die scharfe Polemik gegen den Grafen und die Herrnhuter kam in zahlreichen Streitschriften zum Ausdruck. Der Frankfurter Senior Fresenius veröffentlichte eine Reihe davon im III. Band seiner Bewährten Nachrichten von Herrnhutischen Sachen; Zinzendorf reagierte mit Gegendarstellungen in den Büdingischen Sammlungen.

Die Erfahrungen zweier Täufer-Brüder, die Zinzendorf nach Europa begleiteten und später nach Amerika zurückkehrten, waren höchst gegensätzlicher Art und spiegeln die fortdauernden Konflikte. Andreas Frey, der in Herrnhag die Sichtungszeit auf ihrem Höhepunkt erlebte, wurde zum scharfen Kritiker der Brüdergemeinde und seine mehrfach gedruckte Schilderung zum Arsenal ihrer Gegner. Joseph Müller blieb ein loyaler Herrnhuter; er wirkte als Arzt und Erzieher in Bethlehem und Nazareth. Seine Versuche, die Beziehungen zwischen Herrnhuter und Täufer-Brüdern wiederherzustellen, scheiterten; täuferische Kritikpunkte waren die Herrnhuter Heiratspraxis, der Gebrauch von Musikinstrumenten, die Kindertaufe, Irrlehre und Frivolität.

Auch im weiteren Verlauf des 18. Jahrhunderts gab es zahlreiche Berührungen zwischen Herrnhutern und Täufer-Brüdern, doch blieben sie überschattet von dem fortdauernden Gegensatz und der Rivalität zwischen den beiden Denominationen. Während der Amerikanischen Revolution bekamen beide Gruppen Schwierigkeiten wegen ihrer pazifistischen Grundüberzeugungen. Obwohl die Herrnhuter ihre Haltung angesichts der Indianer-Angriffe modifizierten, machten sie in dieser Zeit doch noch gemeinsame Sache mit den anderen pazifistischen Gruppen.

Trotz der gespannten Beziehungen zwischen Schwarzenauer Täufern und Herrnhutern in den nordamerikanischen Kolonien, lassen sich doch gemeinsame religiöse Interessen feststellen. Beide Gemeinschaften waren in ihren Überzeugungen nachhaltig vom Pietismus geprägt, wenngleich der täuferische, von den Mennoniten vermittelte Einfluß bei den Schwarzenauer Brüdern zu einer von den Herrnhuter Auffassungen unterschiedenen rigoroseren Ethik führte. Beide lehnten ursprünglich den Kriegsdienst ab, wenngleich die Herrnhuter im späteren 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert ihre Haltung modifizierten.

Erst im 20. Jahrhundert sind die Moravian Church und die Church of the Brethren wieder einander nähergekommen, z.B. bei der Betreuung von Flüchtlingen nach dem II. Weltkrieg und bei der gemeinsamen Missionsar-

beit in Ecuador. 1963/64 traten beide Kirchen sogar in einen Dialog ein, um die Möglichkeiten eines Zusammengehens zu prüfen. Obwohl diese Gespräche nicht zum Erfolg führten, ist doch die Tatsache, daß sie überhaupt stattfanden, von Bedeutung. In dem heutigen ökumenischen Kontext sind harmonische Beziehungen möglich - trotz der zurückliegenden Geschichte von Mißtrauen und Spannungen.