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"An Instrument for Awakening": The Moravian Church and the White River Indian Mission

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"AN INSTRUMENT FOR AWAKENING":
THE MORAVIAN CHURCH AND THE WHITE RIVER INDIAN MISSION

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

Scott Edward Atwood

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APPROVAL SHEET


This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

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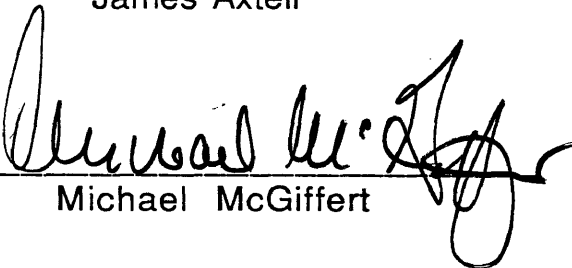


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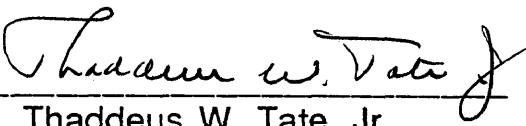
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James Axtell



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ABSTRACT

The Moravian church was an evangelical Protestant church that had its roots in the fifteenth century, nearly fifty years before the advent of the Reformation. It was characterized by a strong Christocentric emphasis and strict community discipline. After gaining substantial numbers of members during the Reformation, religious opponents repressed the church so that few remnants of the original Moravian church remained by the 1600s.

In 1727, the church reemerged under the leadership of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf's Lutheran pietist beliefs were combined with the original emphases of the Moravian church to form a religion that emphasized emotional faith and the supremacy of Christ above all else. These aspects of the Moravian church were vividly displayed in the church's most visible endeavor, missionary work.

The Moravians began missions outside of Europe as early as 1732. By the 1740s, the Moravians had reached North America and initiated work among the continent's indigenous peoples. They achieved some success in their work with the Delaware Indians, a group that whites were progressively forcing farther westward from their eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey homeland. By the early 1770s much of the Delaware nation was under the sway of Christianity, but circumstances arising from the American Revolution reversed the trend. Work among the Delawares was discontinued and the Moravians were unable to establish another mission among the main Delaware nation until 1801.

The new mission, on the White River in Indiana, displayed the many problems that the Moravians faced when attempting to convert the Indians to Christianity, not the least of which was their own deficiencies. The Christocentric emphasis allowed the Moravians to disregard difficult theological beliefs peculiar to their church, but it still was not enough to overcome a native population that never seemed to welcome the Moravians' arrival. A nativist religious revival soon after the missionaries' arrival complicated matters and the poor behavior of the Indian converts that accompanied the Moravians made the church's efforts fruitless. In September 1806 the mission was abandoned without a single convert accompanying the missionaries.

"AN INSTRUMENT FOR AWAKENING":

THE MORAVIAN CHURCH AND THE WHITE RIVER INDIAN MISSION

INTRODUCTION

The Moravian church and missionary work are inextricably connected. The church is an evangelical, Christocentric, Protestant denomination with roots dating back to the fifteenth century. After a series of purges that reduced membership to a few scattered congregations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the church reemerged in 1727 in the village of Herrnhut in present-day eastern Germany.

Influenced by the pietist movement in Protestantism, the Moravian church, or United Brethren, almost immediately launched an evangelical program in Europe. By 1732 the first Moravian mission outside Europe was established.

Moravian missionaries differed from those in most other denominations because they frequently lacked any formal theological training. The church rejected the notion of religious dogma and instead stressed "heart religion," which essentially placed emotion above reason. Consequently, most of the church's missionaries were simply people chosen for their faith who were expected to provide a good example for potential converts. This philosophy was highly successful in the eighteenth century as the Moravians expanded their activities throughout the world.

In 1735 the United Brethren launched their first missionary enterprise in America. The venture ended in failure, but a new settlement in Pennsylvania was more successful. The potential for proselytizing in America was greatly enhanced because of the presence of the native peoples of the land. Virtually none of the

various Indian nations had espoused Christianity to any significant extent, and the Moravians, like most other evangelical denominations, sought to bring about the Indians' conversion.

After a number of failed efforts with various Indian groups, the Moravians finally began to gain influence with the Delaware Indians in the 1760s. Whites had forced the Delawares progressively westward from eastern Pennsylvania, so that they lived mostly in western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio by the time that they came into contact with Moravian missionaries.

For a brief period in the early-to-mid-1770s, a large part of the Delaware nation flocked to Christianity. But numerous problems bequeathed by the American Revolution reversed most Indians' desire to adopt the "white man's" religion. For twenty years the Moravians were frustrated in their attempts to reestablish a mission near the main body of Delawares. But in 1801 the Moravians finally initiated a new mission among the Delawares, who were by then living on the White River in Indiana. The mission lasted less than six years, however, and was abandoned in September 1806.

This study will examine the Moravian church's White River Indian mission and draw conclusions about why the settlement miscarried. The paper will begin by tracing the historical development of the Moravian because understanding the religious foundation of the Moravian missionaries makes their problems on the White River more comprehensible. Similarly, an examination of the Delaware nation between 1801 and 1806 will be synthesized with the mission's internal trials. This multi-

dimensional approach should shed light on the mission and the shortcomings that eventually led to the White River mission's dissolution.

CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MORAVIAN CHURCH

He that hath the Son of God, hath life.

-- John V:11-12

Smoke bellowed into the air, hanging ominously over the dense forest. Below, another dark chapter in the history of Indian-white relations in America was being written. The Delaware village of Gnadenhütten was in flames -- soon to claim the lives of ninety Indians. The event was all the more appalling because the town was a Moravian Indian mission. The Christian converts were pacifists and had remained neutral throughout the American Revolution. But in 1782 the Americans nevertheless chose to attack them. Feigning friendship, the Americans collected the Delawares, then accused them of treason. The soldiers beat them with copper mallets and the butts of muskets and set fire to the buildings. Amazingly, the Indians did not resist. Instead, they accepted their fate and prayed.¹ Though missions were a relatively new addition to the Moravian church, persecution had followed it since the church's inception. Yet

¹ Elma E. Gray, *Wilderness Christians: The Moravian Mission to the Delaware Indians* (New York, 1956), 73.

the membership persevered and upheld the faith. A knowledge of the history of the church and an understanding of its fundamental doctrines make it far easier to explain why the Moravians became perhaps the most successful missionaries among the Indians in the eighteenth century.

The Moravian church, or *Unitas Fratrum*, had roots dating back to the reformer John Huss (1372-1415), a Roman Catholic priest in Bohemia whom the Catholic church scorned because he questioned its use of elaborate devotional rituals. The Catholics, he posited, had fallen prey to human vanity and had lost touch with the true spirit of Jesus' teaching. Huss also believed that the laity should be more involved in the devotionals. He proposed using the native tongue of the people in both preaching and the Bible.² For his refusal to recant these ideas he was burned at the stake in 1415, allegedly requesting only that, "O Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy on me."³

After Huss's death his followers broke into two divisions known as the Taborites and the Utraquists, or Calixtines. The latter group was far more moderate and survived better when the Catholic church increased persecution of the schismatic sects. In 1457 a Calixtine splinter group led by Gregory the Patriarch broke with the Hussites and established The Brethren of the Law of Christ in Künwald, Bohemia.⁴ They adhered to a simple life

² Chester Davis, *Hidden Seed and Harvest: A History of the Moravians* (Winston-Salem, N. C., 1959), 2.

³ E. H. Gillett, *The Life and Times of John Huss . . .* (Boston, 1863), 72.

⁴ John R. Weinlick, *The Moravian Church Through the Ages* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1966), 30.

centered on the Bible, the "source of all religious truths." Their settlement was close-knit and strictly regimented.⁵

The Brethren were the most radical Hussite sect and consequently became the Catholic church's chief object of persecution. The threat of death sentences forced the Brethren into the wilderness, where they were sometimes referred to as *Grubenheimer*, or pit dwellers.⁶ The 1507 Edict of St. James, which forbade the Moravians from meeting and ordered the destruction of their churches and books, was typical of their treatment during this period.⁷ Despite the possibility of punishment, however, the Moravian church secretly gained a large following.

Martin Luther's posting of his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517 began a period of Moravian resuscitation because the Reformation ushered in the acceptance of Protestant, or non-Catholic theology. The Moravians attempted to coalesce with Luther but found that they differed on one vital doctrinal point. Luther believed that spiritual faith in Christ was sufficient for salvation, whereas the Moravians considered community discipline essential to final redemption.⁸ Despite periodic purges that occurred when Catholics regained control of certain regions, the Moravians

⁵ F. Ernest Stoeffler, *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, 1973), 137; Edwin Albert Sawyer, *The Religious Experience of the Colonial American Moravians* (Nazareth, Pa., 1961), 14-15.

⁶ Gillett, *John Huss*, 558.

⁷ Edward Langton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Story of the First International Protestant Church* (London, 1956), 39.

⁸ Langton, *History*, 42. For a detailed examination of this topic, see John Halko, Jr., "The Relations of the Moravian Brethren with Martin Luther" (M.A. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1928).

flourished during the Reformation. An estimated 200-300 Moravian congregations existed in Moravia, Bohemia, and Poland at the height of the Reformation.⁹

The Counter-Reformation swiftly reversed the fortunes of the *Unitas Fratrum*. In 1609 King Rudolph of Bohemia granted religious freedom to the Catholics, who comprised less than ten percent of the population. In effect he denied the same standing to Protestant leaders. The Jesuits especially took advantage of their new status and obtained political offices, which they used to undermine Protestant denominations. The repression reached full fruition in 1618 when Protestant leaders rebelled and sparked the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). All Protestant denominations suffered during the war, but the Brethren in Bohemia were virtually wiped out. Between 1624 and 1628, known in Moravian history as the "time of dispersion," over 36,000 Brethren families fled Bohemia. The Bohemian population on the whole decreased from three to one million during the same period.¹⁰

Those who fled Bohemia and settled in Moravia, Silesia, or Poland were far from gaining religious tolerance. Most areas reinstated Catholicism as the official religion, forcing Protestants to practice their faith surreptitiously. The Moravians saw no relief at the end of the war either. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 was a concession to Protestants, but it

⁹ One estimate predicted that the Moravians had up to 400 congregations with over 200,000 members at the beginning of the Reformation. Davis, *Hidden Seed*, 6; Weinlick, *Moravian Church*, 44.

¹⁰ Davis, *Hidden Seed*, 8.

only provided free exercise of faith for the Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists.¹¹ Repression of the Brethren continued and they once again disappeared as an organized church. The faith did manage to stay alive, however, due mainly to a "hidden seed" of believers who secretly retained its traditions and passed them on to their children.¹²

John Amos Comenius, a bishop in the Moravian church from 1632 to 1671, strove to maintain the bishopric and formalized much church doctrine. Comenius's voluminous writings, especially *Exhortation of the Discipline and Constitution of the Church of the United Brethren*, provided a firm foundation for the hidden seed. Like Huss, he believed that both laymen and the elite should understand the basic tenets of Christianity. Education, Comenius claimed, was one way to avoid misunderstandings about Scripture. Thus he supported the establishment of schools and universities to teach people to read and comprehend. Unfortunately, Comenius died without seeing his church officially reestablished.¹³

Oppressed church members did not begin to reassemble until the eighteenth century, and even then they were but a tiny remnant of the original *Unitas Fratrum*. The hidden seed were so widely dispersed that it was impossible to keep track of the secret membership. There were pockets of Moravian activity, but

¹¹ Peter C. Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings* (New York, 1983), 7.

¹² Jacob John Sessler, *Communal Pietism Among Early American Moravians* (New York, 1933), 5.

¹³ A. J. Lewis, Zinzendorf, *The Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity* (London, 1962), 43-44.

for the most part adherents remained independent. In addition, many offspring of the original churchmembers had opted for state-recognized denominations, which further diminished the Moravians' numbers. Nevertheless, a strong movement for the renewal of the Brethren began about 1715 near Fulneck, Moravia. The town of Sehlen soon became the hotbed of the movement because it was the home of the most important actors in the reestablishment of the church.¹⁴

Christian David was the primary instigator of the movement. Moravian church histories have traditionally enjoyed drawing the parallels between David and Biblical figures. For instance, they note that, like Christ, his vocation was carpentry. His conversion from Roman Catholicism was also reminiscent of the Apostles seeing the true path to salvation. The histories do not attribute godlike powers to David, but they see God's choice of Christian David as the restorer of the Moravian church as exemplifying Lord's love for them.¹⁵

Born in 1690, Christian David was raised in the Roman Catholic church. Upon striking out on his own the young man spent time working on a farm whose owners were evangelical Christians. They proselytized him, claiming that the Catholic ceremonies were human creations and therefore profane. The farmers' arguments swayed David into their fold, and he determined to become a member of the Lutheran church. Conversion was more difficult than he thought. The carpenter

¹⁴ Langton, *History*, 57.

¹⁵ Davis, *Hidden Seed*, 12.

was repeatedly denied admission to any of the officially-sanctioned Protestant denominations because stiff penalties, including jail sentences, awaited the minister who accepted the conversion of a Roman Catholic.¹⁶

In 1715 David's trips brought him to the town of Sehlen, where the Moravian religious revival had begun. Through interaction with some of the members of the hidden seed, especially the Neisser and Nitschmann families, he became acquainted with their doctrines. The Moravians also desired to remove to a religious haven. They had been unable to find such a place and asked David to inform them if he found an asylum.¹⁷

On May 24, 1722 Christian David returned triumphantly with news that he had found a sanctuary. A sympathetic count he claimed, had given the Moravians permission to settle his estate in Upper Lusatia, Saxony. David spoke of the count in glowing terms and quickly convinced some of Brethren to join him at the new location. Three days later David and ten others set out for Upper Lusatia with the intention of having others join them if the situation appeared adequate.¹⁸

The name of the Moravians' benefactor was Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760). Since early childhood he had displayed a predilection for religion, claiming that "I can say with truth that my heart was religiously inclined as far back as I can remember." His father died when he was six weeks old, and

¹⁶ Langton, *History*, 57.

¹⁷ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 34.

¹⁸ Langton, *History*, 58.

he remained with his grandmother and aunt after his mother remarried a Prussian field marshal two years later. Both of these women were intensely religious and undoubtedly had a profound effect on the psyche of the young count.¹⁹

Zinzendorf's grandmother, the Countess of Gersdorf, was a leading German benefactor of religious philosophes. The pietist movement popularized by Spener and his protégé Francke particularly influenced her thinking. Consequently, theologians of this school of Protestant thought were constantly entertained at the countess's estate.²⁰

Most pietist ideas emanated from Jacob Spener's *Pia Desideria*, or Pious Wishes. He attacked the spread of orthodoxy to Protestantism, by which he meant a reliance upon a "precise theological methodology and vocabulary."²¹ Spener proposed the renewed study of the Bible, the increase of lay participation in the church, the creation of group meetings to strengthen faith, the deemphasis of doctrinal disputes between denominations, and most important, the practice of personal piety based on feeling rather than doctrine.²² August Francke, Spener's student, embraced and expanded these goals and probably preached these ideas to the young count more than once.

¹⁹ F. F. Hagen, *Old Landmarks: or Faith and Practice of the Moravians, at the Time of Its Revival and Restoration in 1727, and Twenty Years After* (Bethlehem, Pa, 1886), 120.

²⁰ J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Unitas Fratrum, 1722-1957* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1967), 17.

²¹ Erb, ed., *Pietists*, 3.

²² Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia, 1964), 16.

When Zinzendorf was ten years old he entered the university at Halle. Halle was the center of the pietist movement, and under the tutelage of Francke he became intimately involved in religious activities. "It was not long before I had made a covenant," he recalled, "with all those who were of the same mind with me to consecrate ourselves fully to God." He remained at university from 1710 to 1716, in the process founding a number of religious societies with his schoolmates.²³

Zinzendorf left Halle against his will in 1716 to study law in Wittenberg. His uncle, a Lutheran opposed to the pietists, insisted that Zinzendorf leave Halle in order to prepare for a secular life. Wittenberg was the bastion of Lutheran orthodoxy, and, to put it mildly, the transition was difficult. Zinzendorf felt entirely out of place in the new environment, but contrary to the hopes of his uncle, he did not abandon the theology learned at Halle. Rather, he withdrew from his classmates and cultivated a deeper faith in Pietism.²⁴

Even the traditional Grand Tour of Europe did not persuade him to pursue a secular life. In fact, his travels further confirmed the incorrectness of Lutheran orthodoxy as he met leaders of other churches. Reformed leaders in the Netherlands and Jansenist Catholics in France, especially Cardinal de Noailles, made favorable theological impressions on the young man. By the end of the journey Zinzendorf returned to Saxony convinced that denominationalism was one of the greatest evils plaguing

²³ Hagen, *Old Landmarks*, 122.

²⁴ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 27.

religion. He believed that minor disagreements over points of doctrine were keeping the various religious groups from seeing the true issue -- that of the greatness of Christ. He resolved to work toward anti-denominational faith and considered accepting an offer to become a Bible instructor at Halle.²⁵

At that point even his grandmother intervened and urged the count to relegate his religious fervor to personal piety. His nobility engendered numerous expectations, one of which was that he would hold a high secular position. He was free to patronize theologians, engage in debate, and even to follow a pious religious regiment, but not at the expense of a secular career. Without maintaining such posts, the Zinzendorf family would lose substantial political power, power that allowed them to be pietist benefactors. Despite personal reservations, he acceded to his grandmother's pleas and took a position in 1721 with the Saxon Court at Dresden.²⁶

Zinzendorf was miserable with court life and repeatedly implored his grandmother for permission to leave Dresden. His cohorts probably would not have been upset with his departure. He recounted with pride that he "soon convinced the noble gentlemen at Court by my not taking much interest in politics and other frivolous things -- and by holding (from the first to the last day of my stay in Dresden) meetings for religious edification --

²⁵ Laurids Kristian Stampe, "The Moravian Missions at the Time of Zinzendorf: Principles and Practice" (M. A. Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1947), 16-17; Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 27-28.

²⁶ Stampe, "Moravian Missions," 18.

that I was ill-suited for companionship with them."²⁷ Still, he retained the court position until 1727, when an indefinite leave of absence allowed him to turn his energies completely toward religious matters.²⁸

In reality the count was intimately involved with religious matters throughout his tenure at Dresden. He purchased an estate known as Bethelsdorf from his grandmother in 1722 in the hope of attracting different religious groups that he could eventually convince to accept his idea of an antidenominational, Christ-based religion.²⁹

It was to Bethelsdorf that Christian David led the Brethren in 1722. Zinzendorf was at the Saxon court, and so the immigrants appealed to his grandmother, whose own estate was located not far from Bethelsdorf. She reluctantly gave them a letter of support, undoubtedly believing that an influx of religious dissidents would drive the count from secular commitments and possibly create problems with outside authorities.³⁰

Zinzendorf's estate overseer, who was more interested in the fact that the Moravians would increase revenues on the estate, was far more hospitable to the new arrivals. He quickly established them on a road just outside Bethelsdorf, maximizing their trading impact. They named the new village Herrnhut (Under

²⁷ Hagen, *Old Landmarks*, 124.

²⁸ Gillian Lindt Gollin, *Moravians In Two Worlds: A Study of Changing Communities* (New York, 1967), 26.

²⁹ Hamilton, *History*, 22.

³⁰ Davis, *Hidden Seed*, 12.

the Care of the Lord) and rapidly built a crude but livable settlement.³¹

The count later indicated that he did not intend to establish the religious haven so soon; rather, he planned to follow through with his plan once relieved of his duties at Dresden. Zinzendorf met with Christian David because he empathized with the Moravians' plight. He promised to search for an asylum for them but "did not think it would fall on me." Instead, he had been thinking primarily of Count Reuss of Kostritz or a number of other nobles who shared his pietist views. After being informed that the Moravians had settled on the estate, however, he did nothing to remove them.³²

Zinzendorf had no knowledge of the Moravians' early history when they settled at Herrnhut. He believed that they were simply another dissident Protestant sect suffering from persecution. He had no intention of resurrecting the *Unitas Fratrum* denomination, largely because such action was completely contrary to his goal of a single, non-denominational church. In a more practical sense, Zinzendorf did not want to get into a tussle with the Saxon court. Lutheranism was the only accepted church, and he was immune from punitive action as long as he kept the religious groups that he sheltered ostensibly under the care of the Lutheran parish in Bethelsdorf.³³

³¹ John R. Weinlick, "Moravianism in the American Colonies," in F. Ernest Stoeffler, ed., *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1976), 127; Hamilton, *History*, 24.

³² Vernon H. Nelson, ed., *Christian David: Servant of the Lord* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1962), 14.

³³ Weinlick, *Moravian Church*, 70.

For the first two or three years the Moravians did not resist the count's rules. He allowed them to practice their own faith as long as they attended the Lutheran church, led by John Rothe, in Bethelsdorf. Beginning in 1724, however, the Moravians pressed for individual status as strict members of the hidden seed converged on Herrnhut. Much to the count's chagrin, they began to absent themselves from Rothe's services, preferring instead to worship on their own in Herrnhut.³⁴

The Brethren also increased their efforts to bring adherents remaining in Moravia to Herrnhut. After a number of angry protests from the Saxon court, Zinzendorf urged Christian David and other leaders to refrain from this practice. But despite these pleas the Brethren continued the journeys to Moravia and Bohemia, resulting in over three hundred people in Herrnhut by 1727.³⁵

Zinzendorf then began to believe that the Moravians had legitimate roots predating Lutheranism. He credited Christian David with enlightening him to this point. David found a copy of Bishop Comenius's *History of the Brethren Church* in a library at Hartmannsdorf and in turn gave the book to Zinzendorf for a proper translation. Once done, both he and the community at Herrnhut knew that the Moravians were far more than a dissident sect. In Zittau the count also discovered *Ratio Discipline*, a 1616 text that set down the doctrinal stance of the Brethren³⁶

³⁴ Nelson, ed., *Christian David*, 17-18.

³⁵ Langton, *History*, 72.

³⁶ Nelson, ed., *Christian David*, 20; Weinlick "Moravianism," in Stoeffler, ed., *Continental Pietism*, 129.

Zinzendorf still did not want to grant the Moravians independent status, but Brethren resistance made the decision to renew the old *Unitas Fratrum* unavoidable.

On May 12, 1727, Zinzendorf called the inhabitants of Herrnhut together to propose his *Brotherly Agreement of the Brethren from Bohemia and Moravia and Others, Binding Them to Walk According to the Apostolic Rule*, or, *Brotherly Agreement* (See Appendix B).³⁷ He acknowledged their existence as an ancient Protestant church but urged them to maintain the appearance of remaining within the Lutheran church. Article I of the Agreement, for instance, stated

It shall be forever remembered by the inhabitants of Herrnhut that it was built on the grace of the living God, that it is a work of his own hand, yet not properly intended to be a new town, but only an establishment erected for Brethren and for the Brethren's sake.³⁸

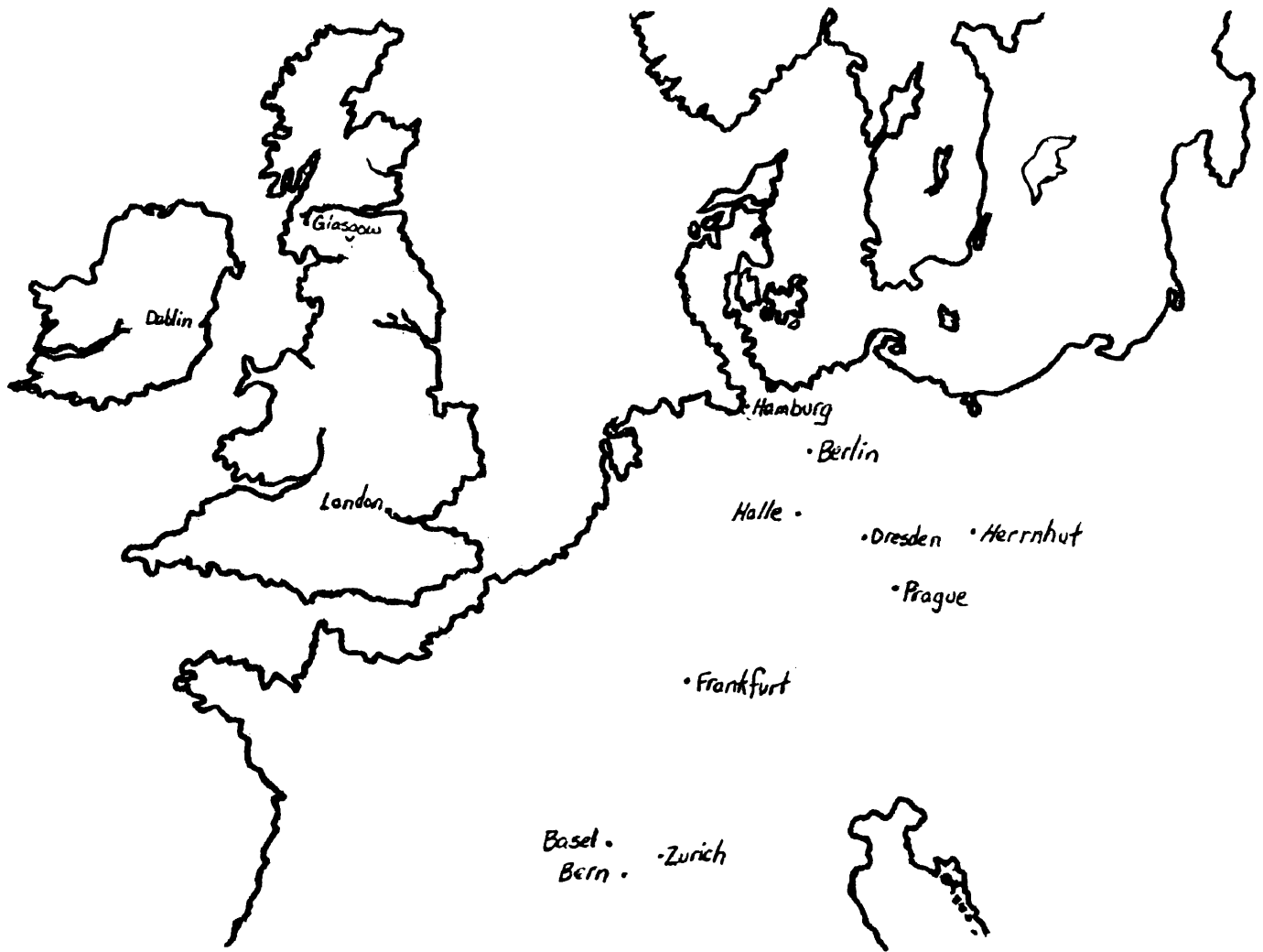
Zinzendorf believed this article would both assuage the Saxon court and keep the Herrnhutters from expanding the Moravian faith beyond the village.

A summer of spiritual examination and reflection followed, during which the count imparted many of his pietistic beliefs to the Herrnhutters. Events culminated during one particularly emotional evening service on August 13. Participants later

³⁷ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 53.

³⁸ Erb, *Pietists*, 325.

EUROPE



Source: Adapted from J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G.
Hamilton, History of the Moravian Church: The Unitas
Fratrum, 1722-1957 (Bethlehem, Pa., 1967).

stated that they felt the presence of God during the service and were convinced that God had given them a sign that the Moravian church should be resurrected. Zinzendorf could do nothing to stop its reestablishment, and had he attempted to the Brethren would probably have just moved somewhere else.³⁹ The count must have been pleased to see, however, that many of his beliefs became the foundation of the invigorated denomination.

The main import from pietism was the concept of "heart religion." Much of the church's character derived from this belief, as shown in the intense emotionalism connected with Moravian religious services. The members achieved dizzying lows and highs of emotion as they alternately mourned the suffering of Jesus or praised his benevolence for giving his life to save humankind. Heart religion directly contradicted orthodox Lutheranism, where closeness to God was measured in terms of understanding the Bible through theological examination. Zinzendorf repeatedly justified the use of heart religion -- primarily by noting the deficiencies of reason in religion. In 1732 he expostulated

1. Religion can be grasped without the conclusions of reason; otherwise no one could have religion except the person with intelligence. As a result the best theologians would be those with the greatest reason. This cannot be believed and is opposed by experience

³⁹ Weinlick, "Moravianism," in Stoeffler, ed., *Continental Pietism*, 124.

2. Religion must be a matter which is able to be grasped through experience alone without any concepts. If this were not so a deaf or a blind or a mentally deficient man or a child could not have the religion necessary for salvation. The first could not hear the truth, the second would lack sense to awaken his mind and stir his thoughts, the third would lack the ability to grasp concepts to put them together and to test them.⁴⁰

Heart religion dominated all aspects of Moravian church life. For instance, they advocated education, but stressed catechismal learning over theological. The count's assertion that "Reason weakens experience(feeling)" periodically led to doctrinal extravagances, but for the most part the Moravians stayed within the Protestant theological mainstream.⁴¹

Moravian church doctrine also encompassed the pietist beliefs of a Christ-based religion and a need for a conversion experience. As usual, Zinzendorf made alterations to these ideas, which proved to be the among the count's most radical and the church's most fundamental doctrines.

The Moravian view of Christ has been referred to as Christocracy - or rule by Christ. Traditional theology accepted the concept of the Holy Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father was God, the creator of the universe and its supreme being. His son was Jesus Christ, who was incarnated as man to

⁴⁰ Erb, *Pietists*, 7, 291.

⁴¹ Erb, *Pietists*, 292.

save humankind. Father and Son were not one; rather, Christ was subservient to God.⁴²

The Moravians believed that Christ was the manifestation of everything that had been revealed to humankind as the work of God. Hence, he was the creator and supreme being of the world. Father and Son were one in the Trinity, Christ being the head because he was what humans associated with God. The traditional roles of Father and Son were consequently switched. Jesus, and not God, had to be accepted for salvation.⁴³

The Brethren position on conversion and final redemption reflected the great emphasis placed on Christ. Pietism taught that after a conversion experience one "begins to move from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God."⁴⁴ This new birth could only be achieved after a prolonged recognition of and sorrow over past sins, followed by a tearful repentance.⁴⁵ Zinzendorf, who believed that he had been converted despite never enduring personal agony, rejected pietist contentions. The renewed Moravian church thus adopted the stance that conversion was a joyful experience. One simply had to accept Christ as Lord and faith would daily grow inside the person. This course was possible because Christ had died for man, thus taking away all suffering associated with the atonement.

The Moravians concluded that Christ lived as a man because he wanted to provide a blueprint for future generations. Only

⁴² Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 147.

⁴³ Sessler, *Communal Pietism*, 139-154; Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 147-149.

⁴⁴ Erb, *Pietists*, 9.

⁴⁵ Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 144.

Christ had lived without sin, but a converted person could attempt to live in his image and daily become more like Jesus. This viewpoint drew sharp criticism from most other denominations, which generally believed a person should only follow Christ's teachings.⁴⁶

The Moravians accepted most of Zinzendorf's theological standpoints at least in part because they were not in direct conflict with their older doctrines, mainly church discipline. Theocratic government and regimented daily routines constituted the main aspects of such control. The 1727 Brotherly Agreement established a council of twelve elders who oversaw virtually all village activities at Herrnhut. In 1729 most of the elders' authority was transferred to a larger Helpers Conference, which was more in line with heart religion. A court of justice regulated all economic matters, including restrictions on competition.⁴⁷ The old church discipline, however, fervently supported diligence and good works for the sake of the community. Zinzendorf seized upon this idea and even went so far as to claim that "he who does not perform them (good works) is not really saved."⁴⁸

By 1729 the Moravians extended community discipline to include living arrangements. In 1728 the village faced a severe housing shortage.

⁴⁶ Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 145.

⁴⁷ Gollin, *Two Worlds*, 27.

⁴⁸ Gollin, *Two Worlds*, 17.

All of the single men were needed for labor and it was wasteful to have them all living under separate arrangements. Consequently, they decided that the single men would live together. The Moravians quickly noted the practicality of such communal living and the next year made the decision to separate the entire community in this manner. Single men and women, widows and widowers, married couples, and children each occupied separate dwellings, which they termed the choir system.⁴⁹

Zinzendorf supported the choir system mainly because he believed that the people would be better able to devote themselves to God. God sanctioned love and sexual relations, but lust was sinful because it was solely the product of man. Needless fraternization of the sexes, therefore, promoted lust and was to be avoided. Zinzendorf's influence was enough to maintain the choir system long after the economic need for it had dissipated.⁵⁰

Strict community discipline proved vital in the early 1730s, when both Herrnhut and Count Zinzendorf were constantly under attack from detractors. The Saxon court persisted as a physical threat to the Moravians because they were under suspicion of not following Protestant theology closely enough. Zinzendorf did not help matters when he allowed a group of ultra-radical

⁴⁹ Gollin, *Two Worlds*, 76.

⁵⁰ Lewis, *Zinzendorf*, 68

Schwenkfelders to settle on the estate in 1733, but hostilities against the Moravians were primarily confined to print.⁵¹

The count had been subjected to harsh criticism almost from the time that the Moravians settled in Herrnhut. His project particularly peeved the Hallian pietists, who saw a major threat to their hegemony over the strict pietists. In a 1724 visit to Halle, even Francke received Zinzendorf coldly, and Francke's death in 1726 exacerbated matters. Francke's son, a philosophical opponent of Zinzendorf's, took over and led the pietists into what the count believed was theological orthodoxy. After 1733 the two sides were completely estranged, and Zinzendorf drifted closer to the Moravian church.⁵²

Despite Zinzendorf's overwhelming influence in the renewal of the Moravian church, one thing never changed; he did not want the group to develop into a widespread denomination. Moravian activists such as the Nitschmanns later convinced him to support the expansion of the church, but he certainly stifled the early development of the Moravians. Zinzendorf's anti-denominational stance was perhaps most lucid in the Moravians' most visible endeavor -- missionary work.

The pietists were responsible for Zinzendorf's interest in missionary work. They relied on a passage in the Bible that stated, "go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name

⁵¹ Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 163-164.

⁵² Stampe, "Moravian Missions," 25.

of the Father, Son , and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 23:19-20).⁵³

The Hallians had established a mission at Tranquebar in 1705, which was still in operation while Zinzendorf was a student at the university. The count later cited Tranquebar as the motivation for a pact he made with a friend in 1715 someday to convert "heathens" to Christianity. While at Wittenberg he also established the Witnesses of Christ Society, which placed great emphasis on missionary work among the Jews and heathen. The count believed that evangelicalism should only be used to strengthen the faith of Christians or to convert nonbelievers, not to spread Moravianism. Subsequent missionary ventures reflected that mentality.⁵⁴

As early as 1727 the Moravians sent traveling evangelists throughout Europe. The preachers were often uneducated and attempted to convince only by deep emotional conviction. The preachers were not to attempt conversion to the Moravian faith but just to bring the message of heart religion. The count claimed that if Christians changed from the denominations they grew up with, they would ultimately be less faithful because memories of earlier religious experiences would remain and confuse them. Thus, the Moravians were to act as an "instrument for awakening," which would merely strengthen faith in God.⁵⁵

⁵³ A. G. Spangenberg, *Exponents of Christian Doctrine*, trans. B. LaTrobe (London, 1779), 293.

⁵⁴ Stampe, "Moravian Missions," 11-14.

⁵⁵ Weinlick, *Moravian Church*, 82.

The opportunity to expand the missionary programs outside of Europe came in 1731, when Zinzendorf traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark to petition the new king, Christian V, for a position as court preacher. Though unable to procure the appointment, he did make the acquaintance of a black slave from St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies. The slave's claim that the slave population on his island would welcome conversion to Christianity favorably impressed the count. Upon his return to Herrnhut, Zinzendorf informed the community of the information that he had received. A few weeks later the slave himself came to Herrnhut and made a plea for help. After much debate, the question was put to the lot. The answer came up in the affirmative. Two men were selected as missionaries and arrived in St. Thomas in December 1732.⁵⁶ Ventures to Greenland, Lappland, and Turkey followed soon thereafter as the Brethren set out across the world spreading the beliefs of Christianity.⁵⁷

British North America was an inevitable mission site. Numerous Protestant sects resided there, making the British colonies an ideal location for the realization of Zinzendorf's single church of God. He believed that the new continent relieved some of the cultural restraints holding Europe back from uniting its religious organizations. The Moravians could thus mediate an arrangement under which minor doctrinal differences could be forgotten and the true purpose of the groups - mainly, faith in

⁵⁶ Hamilton, *History*, 43-44.

⁵⁷ Sessler, *Communal Pietism*, 17.

Jesus Christ as Lord - would become the glue holding them together.⁵⁸

On a less grandiose scale, the American missions could convert the continent's indigenous people, the Indians. Initially, the Indians appeared to be the lesser of the two goals, but after the Moravians failed to unite the various Pennsylvanian sects in the early 1740s, they placed their full emphasis on Indian missions.⁵⁹

Moravian work in America began quite inauspiciously. In 1735 ten Brethren arrived in Savannah, Georgia, and established a mission near the town. Twenty-five more Moravians soon joined the first contingent. But Georgia was a hostile environment, both climatically and politically. Heat and disease caused five deaths in the first year. More important, was the political situation. The ministers already established in the colony, mostly pietists who shared Halle's views, resented the Moravians and attempted to defame them at every possibility. Public opinion then turned against the pacifistic Moravians when war broke out with the Spanish in Florida. Conceding as well that missionary attempts among the Creek Indians had failed, the Moravians transferred the colony to Pennsylvania in 1740.⁶⁰

The American evangelist George Whitefield invited the Moravians to settle on his estate, approximately fifty miles north of Philadelphia. But after a dispute over doctrine,

⁵⁸ Sessler, *Communal Pietism*, 21.

⁵⁹ Sessler, *Communal Pietism*, 21.

⁶⁰ William N. Schwarzze and Samuel H. Gapp, eds., *A History of the Beginnings of Moravian Work in America* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1955), 5-8, 16.

Whitefield ordered the missionaries to leave his land.⁶¹ They purchased land nearby and immediately began to build homes at the new settlement that they named Bethlehem.⁶² Bethlehem soon became the center of the Moravians' American missionary activities.

First, the town had to overcome the difficulties associated with creating a new town. Just as in Herrnhut, Bethlehem's neighbors were not particularly interested in seeing the Moravians succeed. Economic necessity forced the entire congregation to live together in one house for the first winter, but the utilitarian choir system soon became the town's model. This decision saved much effort. The Moravians were then free to develop industries rather than build individual homes.⁶³

The congregation drew up its own Brotherly Agreement in 1742 and created a community, which, though based on Herrnhut, was a true utopian project. Since the primary function of Bethlehem was the conversion of Indians, there were specific provisions made for a wandering missionary community. The town was broken into two groups -- the home community and the mission community. The home community ran the local industries and earned the funds for the provision of the missionaries. Thus, the missionaries simply rested and recouped when they came in from the field.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Whitefield rejected the Moravian contention that all humankind could be converted. Schwarze and Gapp, eds, *Beginnings*, 21-22.

⁶² Gollin, *Two Worlds*, 6.

⁶³ Gollin, *Two Worlds*, 79.

⁶⁴ Gollin, *Two Worlds*, 39.

A system known as the Economy was introduced to maximize the town's output and extended communal ideas to economics. The entire community owned all businesses and retained all profits. No industry could be started without permission from the council and competition was forbidden. Despite some of the Economy's natural shortfalls, it was for the most part an extremely successful scheme, due in no small part to the single-mindedness of the Moravians who chose to come to America. The town prospered so well that it was able to fund not only its missionaries but also other missions and the financially-struggling first congregation, Herrnhut.⁶⁵

Economy funds paid for the creation of a missionary school. It familiarized the future missionaries with the ideas that should be stressed to potential converts, but it was not a philosophical seminary. The missionaries also learned Indian languages and cultures so they could better interact with the native population. In addition, they believed that the message of God would come across stronger if it was transmitted in the Indians' native tongues.⁶⁶

The first Moravian Indian mission from Bethlehem was among the Iroquois, or Six Nations, of New York in 1747. But repeated attempts to win over the Iroquois were fruitless. Other denominations' missionary ventures had left a sour taste in the Indians' mouths, which prompted them to reject the Moravians

⁶⁵ Sessler, *Communal Pietism*, 81-84.

⁶⁶ Stampe, "Moravian Missions," 42-44.

out of hand. Some progress was made with them, but the Seven Years' War forced the Moravians to abandon the project.⁶⁷

Perhaps the most significant thing that can be said about the Iroquois missions is that they provided a training ground for the most influential of the American Moravian missionaries, David Zeisberger. His leadership and charisma often made the difference between an Indian nation adopting or rejecting Christianity. His talents were especially visible among the Delaware Indians, the next Moravian conversion target.⁶⁸

The Delaware Indians were indigenous to New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania. But by 1740 a succession of shady land deals such as the Walking Purchase of 1737 forced the Delawares westward to the Susquehanna Valley in central Pennsylvania.⁶⁹ Some members of this Indian nation still lived near Bethlehem when the Moravians arrived and gained the attention of the German missionaries.⁷⁰

Zinzendorf, who visited America from 1741 to 1742, was particularly interested in the Delawares.⁷¹ He favored a mission among them, but the Delawares were not overly receptive to the Moravians. Like the Iroquois, Europeans had been attempting to

⁶⁷ Gray, *Wilderness Christians*, 34.

⁶⁸ Gray, *Wilderness Christians*, 34.

⁶⁹ The Delawares roundly castigated the Walking Purchase, which had supposedly meant the distance a man could walk in a day. The unscrupulous Pennsylvanians, however, used a number of men who virtually ran until they dropped of exhaustion.

⁷⁰ A. G. Spangenberg, *A Concise Historical Account of the Present Constitution of the Unitas Fratrum . . .*, trans. B. LaTrobe (London, 1775), 20.

⁷¹ George Henry Loskiel, *History of the Mission of the United Brethren Among the Indians in North America*, trans. Christian Ignatius LaTrabe (London, 1794), 19-24.

convert them since the seventeenth century. The Delawares saw nothing but dissension and loss of identity as the by-products of adopting Christianity. One Delaware leader indignantly asked a Presbyterian missionary in 1744 why he

desired the Indians to become Christians, seeing the Christians were so much worse than the Indians are in their present state. The Christians, he said, would lie, steal, and drink, worse than the Indians. It was they first taught the Indians to be drunk: and they stole from one another, to that degree, that their rulers were obliged to hang them for it . . . he said, they would live as their fathers had lived, and go where their fathers were when they died.⁷²

Yet the Moravians were to succeed where other groups had failed. Their brand of evangelism was a refreshing departure from the overbearing nature of their European predecessors. The Moravians did not appear to transmit cultural superiority or aloofness. For instance, the first missionary to work among the Delawares was a blacksmith. He provided the Indians with a valuable commodity, and they responded by giving him respect within the community. The missionaries followed the strict model of life adopted in Herrnhut, including participation in labor, and placed themselves above reproach. In time the pious

⁷² William W. Newcomb, *Culture and Acculturation of the Delaware Indians*, Anthropology Papers, X, (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1956), 86.

lifestyles of the Moravians endeared them to a large segment of the Delawares.⁷³

But the continual westward migration of the Delawares severely hindered Moravian efforts. The movements disrupted community life and tempted the converts to return to their native habits. After each move the missionaries reported that they had to begin again almost from scratch.⁷⁴ In addition, hostilities with the white population increased the power of those within the nation who opposed the Moravians. Leaders such as the Delaware Prophet in the 1760s called for a complete return to traditional tribal religion. They found increasing sympathy for their ideas during and after the Seven Years' War, when the American colonists brutally attacked a number of their villages. Granted, the attacks were in response to earlier Delaware strikes, but in all matters the Delawares believed that the colonists were responsible for the bloodshed.⁷⁵

Following the Seven Years' War the Delawares opted to move west of the Ohio and Allegheny Rivers in order to avoid conflict with white settlers. Much of the nation had moved there as early as 1754. The remainder, including the Moravian converts, had chosen to remain in the Susquehanna Valley until their position became untenable.⁷⁶

⁷³ Gray, *Wilderness Christians*, 50.

⁷⁴ Kenneth Gardiner Hamilton, *John Ettwein and the Moravian Church During the Revolutionary Period* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1940), 102.

⁷⁵ Newcomb, *Delaware Acculturation*, 94-95.

⁷⁶ C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, N. J., 1972), 286.

The Moravians followed the Delawares to the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers and established Lawunakhannek in 1767. Reunion brought with it an increased attempt by the Indian religious leaders to undermine the Moravians. The new mission eventually had to be abandoned, but the Moravians returned five years later at the invitation of the Delaware chief Netawatwees, or Newcomer.⁷⁷

The period between 1772 and 1775 was the high point of Moravian endeavors among the Delawares. Christian Delawares were permitted for the first time to retain their membership in the tribal council and David Zeisberger, leader of the Delaware mission, was named a member of the Delaware Council. These two moves gave the Moravians enormous influence over the Delaware nation. The selection of White Eyes to succeed Newcomer in 1774 further strengthened the Moravians' position with the Delawares. He was not a Christian but was a Moravian supporter nonetheless.⁷⁸

As had the Seven Years' War, the American Revolution split the Delaware nation. The Moravian missions found themselves increasingly isolated from both the Indians and the whites. For six years the Delawares allied with the Americans, but numerous events, including the death of White Eyes and American militia depredations, convinced the Delaware Council to side with the British in 1781.⁷⁹ The Moravians remained in the Ohio Valley

⁷⁷ Westlager, *Delaware Indians*, 284.

⁷⁸ Westlager, *Delaware Indians*, 288-297.

⁷⁹ Westlager, *Delaware Indians*, 306-312.

when the rest of the nation removed to Sandusky in present-day Ohio.

Late in 1781, however, the Moravian missionaries and their converts were brought forcibly to Sandusky, where they remained until the end of the war. The only return trip the Indians made was during the winter of 1781-82 to retrieve supplies that had been left behind. These unfortunate people made up the ninety victims killed by American militia at the Gnadenhütten massacre.⁸⁰

The tragedy at Gnadenhütten was a serious blow to Moravian efforts because the Delaware nation was unwilling to deal further with whites. Many of those who had converted to Christianity returned to their traditional upbringing. Despite this setback, the Moravians managed to salvage a fair number of their converts. But constant Indian-white warfare in the Ohio Valley forced the Moravians to move constantly. They established three temporary towns between 1782 and 1795 before settling on a British grant in Canada, which they named New Fairfield.⁸¹

Still, the Moravians wished to return to the Ohio Valley. The United States government offered them land in Ohio, but the Christian Delawares were unconvinced that the area was safe. Once hostilities ceased following the Indian defeat at Fallen Timbers in 1794, some Christian Indians were willing to return to the Ohio Valley. After some negotiation the American

⁸⁰ Gray, *Wilderness Christians*, 69-73.

⁸¹ Gray, *Wilderness Christians*, 75-267.

government gave the Moravians a piece of land on the Muskingum River, just a few miles from the site of Gnadenhütten. David Zeisberger led a contingent south to the plot in 1795 and named it Goshen.⁸²

The new mission roused the interest of the Delaware Indians, who were then mostly settled along the White River in Indiana. Small parties began to frequent Goshen, some merely to satisfy their curiosity, others to visit relatives, and some actually to hear the Gospel. The Moravians, ever willing to spread the Word of God, responded favorably and welcomed the Indians to stay as long as they desired.

In 1799, the Moravians made their invitation official when Hockingpomska, one of the most prestigious Delaware leaders, passed through Goshen while returning from a trip to Congress in Philadelphia. William Henry Killbuck, the son of a Delaware chief who had given up his position during the American Revolution to join the Moravians, informed Hockingpomska that the Moravians had returned to preach Christianity to the Indians. To place weight behind the statement, Killbuck reminded the Delaware chief that the great chief Netawatwees's deathbed wish was that the Delawares accept Christianity. The Brethren, he added, had returned to provide the Delawares with the opportunity. Killbuck urged them to visit Goshen often in order to learn about the

⁸² Westlager, *Delaware Indians*, 48-49.

Savior. Hockingpomska promised to extend the invitation to the Delaware Council and continued his journey homeward.⁸³

Almost a year later, in April 1800, the Brethren received a reply from the Delaware Council. The Delawares welcomed the Moravians back to the region and said that they were eager to maintain close relations. But the Delaware reply contained an unexpected twist. The Indians transposed the Moravian invitation into a Moravian request to settle among the Delawares on the White River--a request to which the Council readily agreed! The Indians stated that there was plenty of land available and so the Moravians would be placed on a tract of land where they would remain undisturbed in their endeavors.⁸⁴ The stage was set for the establishment of yet another Moravian Indian mission.

⁸³ Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Moravian Indian Mission on the White River: Diaries and Letters, May 5, 1799 to November 12, 1806* (Indianapolis, 1938), 23.

⁸⁴ Gipson, *White River Mission*, 29.

CHAPTER II

THE WHITE RIVER INDIAN MISSION

Come, ye sinners poor and wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore,
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and pow'r;
He is able, He is willing; doubt no more.

-- Moravian hymn, 1793¹

On 8 January 1801, two Christian Indian messengers informed the Delawares that the Moravians had accepted their offer to settle among them on the White River and that a small congregation would arrive in late summer or early fall 1801. In response, the Delaware Council announced that it had selected a fertile area, known as Woapiminschijek , "where the chestnuts grow," for the new settlers to establish their mission.² David Zeisberger, the veteran missionary who headed the Goshen congregation, rejoiced upon learning of the Council's reply and

¹ [], *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the Protestant Church of the United Brethren* (London, 1789), 79.

² Lawrence Henry Gipson, ed., *The Moravian Indian Mission on the White River: Diaries and Letters, May 5, 1799 to November 12, 1806* (Indianapolis, 1938), 53, 55, 56.

announced triumphantly that a mission had never been established with so much promise at its inception.³

A group of eighteen settlers--fifteen Christian Indians and three Moravians-- subsequently left Goshen in five canoes on 24 March 1801 and headed toward their new home in Indiana. The Indian contingent was composed of thirteen Christian converts and two boatmen, the latter not intending to remain with the Moravians. There were eight adult converts: two married couples (John Thomas and Catherine, Jacob and Mary), a widow and a widower (Abigail and Joshua), and two single Brethren (Christopher and Anna Salome). John Thomas and Catherine also brought their three children, and Abigail her two grandchildren.⁴

The Moravians John Kluge, Anna Kluge, and Abraham Luckenbach led the mission party and were to serve as "teachers" of Christ at the new mission. In his early thirties, John Kluge had some missionary experience in South America but had never worked among the North American Indians.⁵ Kluge, however, assumed the primary role in the mission because Abraham Luckenbach had never done missionary work. Twenty-four years old, Luckenbach was a teacher from Bethlehem whose only knowledge of the Delawares derived from books.⁶

None of the Moravians were prepared for what lay in store for them on the White River, but they were dedicated to spreading the Gospel to the Indians. The Moravians believed that it was

³ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 59.

⁴ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 67.

⁵ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 586.

⁶ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 595.

their duty to spread the Word to all who may not have heard it; whether or not the heathen accepted the Gospel was something over which only God had control.⁷

The missionaries hoped to find the entire Delaware nation willing to embrace the Lord, but they feared that in actuality there might not be a great deal of support for Christianity. Since the Moravians had received the Delawares' invitation in April 1800, this had been a concern for the Moravian leadership. Some members of the church worried that the Delawares had no interest in the spread of Christianity but only desired the consolidation of their people. Once the Christian Indians were again near their relatives, critics argued, the Delawares would make every attempt to convince them to abandon the Moravians.⁸ These critics almost certainly pointed to the example of Mary, the first Indian baptized at Goshen. Her children traveled from the White River to Goshen and attempted to convince her to return with them. She resisted at first but then wavered when she saw her children departing. Only the strong exhortation of Zeisberger convinced her to remain among the Moravians, but her faith was somewhat suspect after the incident.⁹

Nowhere in the Delaware Council's original address were the missionaries specifically mentioned, so some Brethren feared that this omission could be used against the missionaries if relations ever deteriorated. Once their legitimacy was

⁷ A. G. Spangenberg, *Exponents of Christian Doctrine*, trans. B. LaTrobe (London, 1779), 152, 193, 196.

⁸ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 32, 34.

⁹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 27-29.

questionable, the missionaries would be powerless against attackers. But a representative from the Delaware Council claimed that the subject had arisen in the council and that the consensus opinion had been that the converts did not move anywhere without their teachers; therefore, any invitation extended to the Christian Indians included the Moravians.¹⁰ In February 1801, a few months before the mission was to commence, the Moravians sent two Indian Brethren messengers to the White River to reaffirm the Delaware statement. The Delawares immediately replied that "they had nothing against it that they [the converts] would bring along their teachers."¹¹

Although the Delawares may not have completely convinced the Moravians, the missionaries accepted the explanation. The fact that this offer was the most propitious turn in Moravian missionary efforts since the American Revolution certainly influenced their stance. Goshen had been unsolicited; this possible new settlement would be established with the full blessing of the Delawares.¹²

In the final analysis David Zeisberger's influence was the determining factor in the church's decision. A veteran of forty years of work among the Delawares, Zeisberger knew that the Delawares may not have harbored widespread affinity for Christianity. But he was quite optimistic about the chances for a White River mission, since he believed that the invitation

¹⁰ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 30.

¹¹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 56, 601.

¹² Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 31.

emanated mostly from the council's fear that many Delawares would migrate to Goshen if the Moravians were not on the White River.¹³

Zeisberger based his opinion on two pieces of information. First, the numerous reports from visitors who claimed that the Delawares often discussed Goshen and many were considering moving to the mission and, more important, the persistent rumors that a number of baptized Delawares wanted to hear the Gospel. At the end of the American Revolution most converts had chosen not to follow the missionaries to Canada and instead accompanied the majority of the nation west, eventually to the White River in Indiana. In the process most of them reverted to native religious practices. These previously baptized people, the Moravians believed, would be especially receptive to a mission among them.¹⁴ Such action implied that Christianity had taken root among the Delawares and that now was the time to seize the opportunity to save the entire population.

Zeisberger also believed that at least two Delaware chiefs--Tedpachsit and Buckongahelas--were not averse to Christ and might protect and encourage the mission. He deemed Buckongahelas, whom he estimated as commanding the same sort of respect accorded George Washington in the United States, a particularly good ally.¹⁵ Since Buckongahelas had long been an opponent of Christianity, Zeisberger's analysis seems somewhat

¹³ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 24.

¹⁴ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 26, 58, 600-601..

¹⁵ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 32-33.

strange. In fact, during the American Revolution Buckongahelas had urged the Christian Indians to abandon the Moravians because he was sure that continued adherence would lead to their deaths. The Delaware chief blamed the Moravians for the tragedy at Gnadenhütten and believed that the whole Delaware nation would perish if it accepted the Gospel.

Nevertheless, the Moravian party arrived at the White River on May 25, 1801, with a mixture of hope and trepidation. At a very early juncture there were indications that the mission would not live up to Zeisberger's expectations. Problems arose even before the mission party reached the White River. Many of the Delawares who accompanied the Brethren for much of the journey from Goshen were relatives of the converts. Frequently intoxicated, these disruptive Indians caused concern among the missionaries that the entire Delaware nation might be addicted to alcohol.¹⁶ The Brethren lamented that "the evil one [Satan] has already begun with all his strength to oppose our good intentions, before we had reached the place of our labors." More distressing, however, was the converts' predilection for joining their Indian relatives in their drunken revelries. This obvious weakness in the Christian Indians' faith concerned the Moravians, but they optimistically concluded that the problem could be overcome once they were settled in their new homes.¹⁷

Upon their arrival at the White River, however, the Moravians immediately encountered another problem when the

¹⁶ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 93-97.

¹⁷ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 96.

Delaware Council somewhat reneged on its land grant promise. It still provided the Brethren with the promised fertile, high-ground location, but the plot lay just off the road connecting all the Delaware towns along the White River. Although the missionaries wanted a location with good agricultural possibilities so that the mission could be relatively self-sufficient, they considered separation from the Indian population as vital to the mission's success.¹⁸

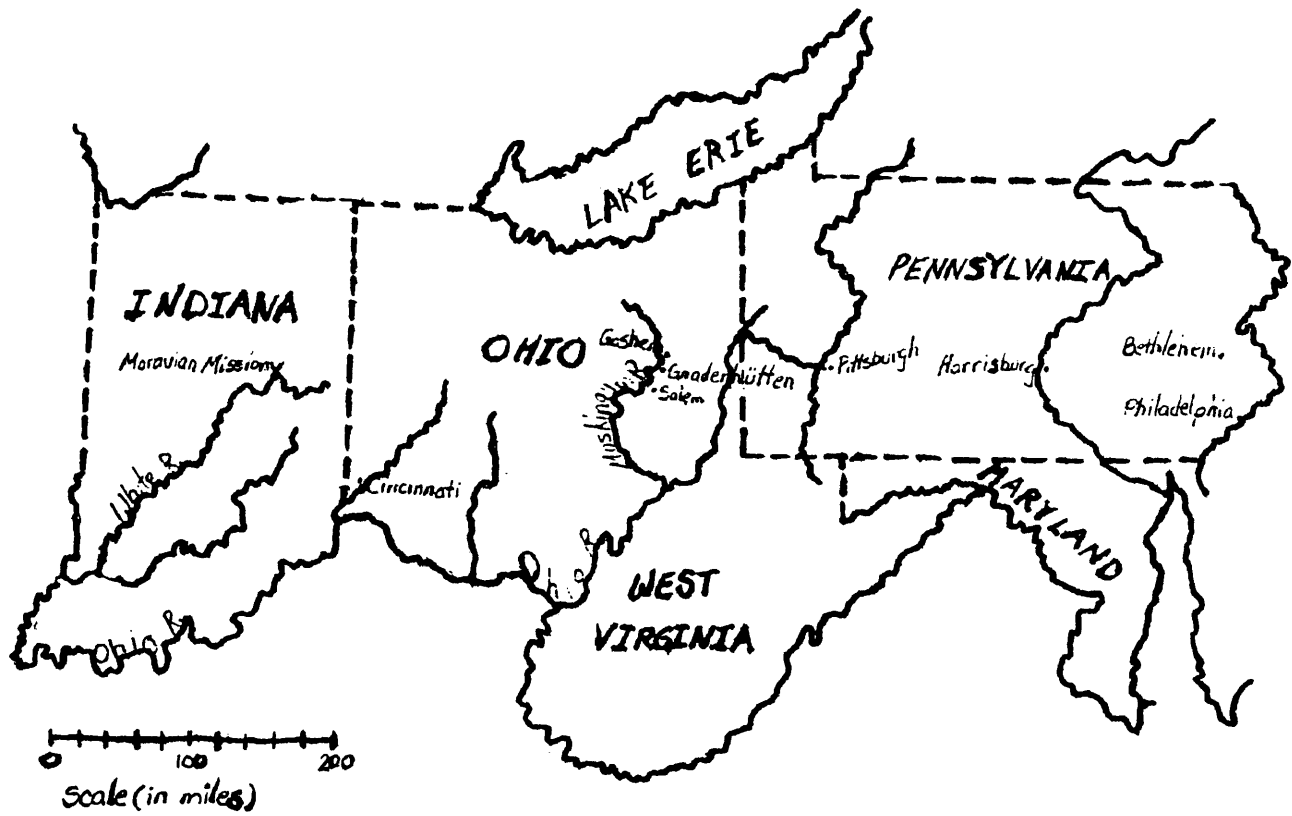
Moravian tradition played a part in this practice. The church's tenets held that separation of believers from nonbelievers was the best way to promote spiritual development. In fact, a number of Brethren settlements, such as Herrnhut and Bethlehem, were established under this concept. Societies that already had a Christian tradition could also adopt Zinzendorf's antidenominational stance and simply become better Christians.¹⁹

In their work with the Indians, however, the Moravians had discovered that the separation of the Christian Indians from their heathen counterparts was not only desirable but also virtually necessary. Unlike whites who adopted Moravian theology, the converted Indians had to reject the whole foundation of their

¹⁸ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 476-477.

¹⁹ John R. Weinlick, *The Moravian Church Through the Ages* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1966), 82; A. G. Spangenberg, *A Concise Historical Account of the Present Constitution of the Unitas Fratrum . . .*, trans. B. LaTrobe (London, 1775), 2; Ralph Mark Radloff, "Moravian Mission Methods Among the Indians of Ohio" (Ph. D. diss., University of Iowa, 1973), 136.

INDIANA REGION



Source: Adapted from Henry E. Stocker, History of the Moravian Mission Among the Indians on the White River in Indiana (Bethlehem, Pa., 1917), frontispiece.

culture. Very few things in the Indians' daily regime were deemed neutral enough to be non-heathen.²⁰

Moravian experiences at other missions had shown that the converts' faith was too weak to resist "heathen" temptations. Even long-time converts were not immune to native overtures because they always retained some residual connections with the Indian culture. In many respects, this view was similar to Zinzendorf's belief that baptized Christians should remain with their church rather than joining the Moravians, since the old views interfere with the new. But despite the grudging acknowledgment that the Christian Indians were unlikely to reject their native culture completely, the Brethren hoped that the converts would at least renounce Indian values after they took Christ into their hearts.

After repeated Moravian solicitations, the Council agreed to keep Delaware villages four to six miles from the mission. Kluge preferred at least ten miles but accepted the compromise. That way the settlement was still close enough for interested parties to visit, yet far enough away to keep away the casual passers-by whose only purpose was mischief.²¹ Soon thereafter, the Moravians received assurances from Tedpachsit and Buckongahelas that the mission would remain unmolested and that the Council would not restrict any of the Delaware people

²⁰ Radloff, "Ohio Missions," 78-84; Kenneth Gardiner Hamilton, *John Ettwein and the Moravian Church During the Revolutionary Period* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1940), 102-103.

²¹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 466-467.

from visiting the Brethren to hear the Gospel.²² Thus some of the initial tensions were eased and the missionaries regained some of their earlier optimism. With renewed vigor, the Moravians began the arduous task of creating a town from scratch.

The missionaries' construction efforts were complicated by their ignorance of carpentry. Typical of Moravian practice, they had been selected because of their faith. From his South American experience, Kluge was used to adversity, but that still did not mean that he could build a sound log cabin. They were at even more of a disadvantage because the Indian Brethren helped little. They were either too old or too busy with their own homes to aid the missionaries in the construction of either a home or a meetinghouse.²³ Consequently, during most of the first months of the mission's life the Moravians worked all day on their homes or in the fields and then conducted an evening prayer service with the Christian Indians and any unconverted Indians who attended.²⁴

The missionaries immediately established a daily routine for the mission's inhabitants. They wanted to replicate the strict discipline of the church even in the nascent stages of the town because they hoped it would settle the converts and make a good impression on the Delawares. In a great many ways, the new town's regulations mirrored traditional Moravian settlements, but they adapted to the situation as well. The missionaries conducted two prayer services a day, morning and evening, in

²² Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 108, 109.

²³ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 105, 115.

²⁴ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 113.

which they read scripture and sang hymns. Occasionally services were cancelled when the Indian Brethren were off hunting or when an interpreter was unavailable.²⁵ Every six weeks the services were particularly emotional because the missionaries administered communion to the eligible Brethren.²⁶ Unlike many other Christian denominations, the Moravians did not allow the Indians to take communion as soon as they were baptized. Only the most dedicated partook in the ritual. Consequently, few of the Indian Brethren were communicants. In this respect, the Moravians followed the same regulations as the traditional church.²⁷

In their attempts at conversion, however, the missionaries broke significantly from the church's theology. Over the years, the Moravians had discovered that the finer points of their religion confused the Indians. Rather than lose potential converts, the Moravians streamlined their lessons and stressed the acceptance of Christ as Savior above everything else.²⁸ In essence, they were following Zinzendorf's teaching that denominationalism should be subordinated to Christ's lessons.²⁹

²⁵ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 111, 150.

²⁶ See for example, Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 266.

²⁷ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862* (Louisville, Ky., 1965), 57.

²⁸ Hamilton, *John Ettwein*, 108; George Henry Loskiel, *History of the Mission of the United Brethren Among the Indians in North America*, trans. Christian Ignatius LaTrobe (London, 1794), 21; Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 50.

²⁹ Laurids Kristian Stampe, "The Moravian Mission at the Time of Zinzendorf: Principles and Practice" (M. A. Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1947), 16-17.

Consequently, the missionaries never mentioned Moravian peculiarities such as a Christ-headed Trinity, limited the number of special feasts, and restricted the use of the lot.³⁰

The Moravians were considerably stricter in the mission's rules. They adopted a set of regulations that paralleled Herrnhut's Brotherly Agreement, albeit with alterations adapted to the environment (See Appendixes A and B). Much of the burden for establishing a proper daily regime, however, lay with the missionary. In this area, Kluge and Luckenbach showed that they were not ideal for the White River venture. Both were certainly dedicated workers, but they were severely deficient in their understanding of the Indian mind. During their six-month stay in Goshen they had begun to learn the Delaware language and had undoubtedly been given some introduction to Indian culture, but neither prepared them for life among the Delawares.

The missionaries' ignorance of Delaware culture was glaring in their dealings with their converts. Disgruntled with the disproportionate share of the workload that they shouldered, the missionaries propagated the myth that Indians were lazy. They repeatedly complained that the Indians only did as much work as they absolutely had to, which would eventually cause food shortages.³¹ Much of the problem stemmed from cultural differences. A primary cause of miscommunication was Brethren theology that celebrated a version of the Protestant work ethic.

³⁰ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 119, 134, 158. The missionaries did not employ the lot until August 1801, when they were considering readmitting Anna Salome to communion.

³¹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 113, 117, 123.

The Moravians believed that work was a way to show Christ's glory. By toiling the earth, they reasoned, they would show the wonders of the Lord's creation. But when proselytizing among the Indians they were also pragmatic: persons constantly toiling would have little opportunity for temptations of the flesh (i.e. Indian culture) to draw them away from Christianity.³²

Conversely, Indian culture taught that humans were not made solely to toil the land; rather they should also reap the fruits of the earth by gathering, hunting, and fishing. The Indians therefore resisted the Moravians' contentions that agriculture should be the basis of the society. Even though the Moravians were dealing with Indians who had espoused Christianity, the Indian rejection of manual labor was an obstacle difficult to overcome. Moreover, the Moravians altered the Indian gender roles by requiring that the men to work in the fields, an exclusively female occupation in native society.³³

To be fair, the Moravians may have been victims of their own church's propaganda. The Indian mission diaries were read in every congregation so that the Brethren could learn of the spread of the Word among the heathen. Those diaries certainly did not say that everything was easy, but the Kluge and Luckenbach undoubtedly inferred that the Indians would be willing to work in the same communal manner as Bethlehem's Economy system.

³² A. G. Spangenberg, *Christian Doctrine*, 89.

³³ William W. Newcomb, Jr., *Culture and Acculturation of the Delaware Indians*, Anthropological Papers, X (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1956), 20-21; C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, N. J., 1972), 62-63.

Numerous entries in the mission diary from 1801, however, lamented that the Indians were not working alongside them in the manner that they had been led to believe; times had changed from the pre-Revolutionary Moravian missions.³⁴ Most of the adult converts were elderly and unable to put forth the sort of effort that the Moravians sought. Furthermore, neither Kluge nor Luckenbach had the charisma of a Zeisberger and so did not command the total respect of either the converts or the Delawares.

This inability to regulate extensively the Christian Indians' actions caused persistent dilemmas for the Moravians. They considered the Christian Indians vital to the mission because the natives were to act as examples of what Christ could do for a person who had accepted Him. Ideally, the Delawares would see how content and prosperous the Christian Indians were and would also decide to convert. With this idea in mind, the Moravians urged the converts to observe "strict faithfulness toward the Saviour so that the object of our journey to this place might be fulfilled."³⁵

The converts, however, did not seem to understand the plan. During the summer of 1801, they frequently went to the Delaware towns and got drunk with their friends or relatives. In doing so, the Indian brethren ignored the mission's prohibitions against intoxication and leaving the mission without permission from a missionary. The Moravians chided the Christian Indians for their

³⁴ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 113, 117, 119, 123.

³⁵ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 105.

actions but were unable to put an end to such behavior.³⁶ The Moravians were even more concerned with converts' predilection toward nativist recidivism. They regarded the relapses as the work of the devil and urged the Christian Indians to resist temptations-- ultimately to no avail. The converts, especially in times of adversity, repeatedly returned to native practices. The converts' religious ambivalence also suggests that none was completely convinced that Christ was the only source of salvation. For instance, only a month after the establishment of the mission the missionaries learned that Joshua, their interpreter, had taken his sick son to a Delaware shaman. The missionaries immediately rescinded his communion privileges and explained to him why it was so bad for him to place confidence in the Delaware religion. The Moravians' lecture seemed to affect him, but his offense was indicative of the deep-seated problem that the missionaries faced.³⁷

Despite all these negative factors, the Moravians remained optimistic throughout 1801 that they would succeed in converting large numbers of Delawares to Christianity. They pointed with pride to the steady flow of Delawares who attended daily services, with particularly good turnouts on Sundays.³⁸ Still, the mission's reception did not meet expectations. There had not been a wholesale rush of previously-baptized Delawares to readopt Christianity. Some visited the mission, but none

³⁶ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 114, 130.

³⁷ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 113, 114.

³⁸ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 106, 111.

rejoined. The Moravians found similar reactions from the general population. By mid-August 1801, they had yet to gain their first convert and noted despondently that the desire for Christ among the Delawares remained very weak. "In the meantime," they rationalized, "we will sow the seed in hope."³⁹

The mission finally gained its first convert in November 1801, but the occasion was bittersweet. The woman, Jacob's daughter, was sick when she came to the mission and died the day after she was baptized.⁴⁰ Less than a month later, the Brethren baptized another woman, but she was old, infirm, and blind.⁴¹ Much to the missionaries' dismay, no young Delawares had yet expressed a serious interest in Christianity. Purely pragmatically, the Brethren wanted young men to help in hunting, farming, and construction.⁴² They hoped to cultivate a thriving Christian presence on the White River, but this could only be accomplished if some warriors accepted Christ's calling. Otherwise, the mission would enjoy little prestige within the Delaware nation.

Still, sizable numbers of Delawares continued to attend services. On Christmas eve 1801, the missionaries joyfully announced that fifty-six Indians were in attendance. They realized, however, that many Delawares attended the services simply because they were curious. The Christmas vigil was visually impressive (each child was given a wax candle to light at

³⁹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 121.

⁴⁰ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 128, 129.

⁴¹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 133, 134.

⁴² Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 132, 135, 232.

the end of the service), and the traditional emotionalism of a Moravian service (singing and praying interspersed with weeping) reached a height that only the Easter service achieved.⁴³ The promise of a large meal for all the visiting Indians undoubtedly lured many others. Whatever the Indians' reasons for attending, the Brethren hoped that "many of those present may have carried away a deep impression that they may be converted to God."⁴⁴ Unfortunately for the Moravians, their efforts failed to foment any substantive Christian movement among the Indians.

In addition to the mission's internal shortcomings, there were many other factors weighing against the Moravian cause. The Delawares acted lukewarmly toward the missionaries from the start, which indicates that their intentions may have been what many Brethren had feared from the beginning. Since the consolidation of the tribe in the 1760s, Delaware leaders had sought to keep the nation geographically united. They promoted the resettlement of the Delawares from the Susquehanna to the Ohio Valley in the 1760s. This goal was also the main reason that the pro-Christian faction in the Delaware Council was able to convince the nativists to invite the Moravians to the Ohio Valley in 1767. At that time, however, the invitation also indicated growing Delaware support for Christianity, a sentiment that blossomed exponentially from 1772-75.⁴⁵ But in 1801 there

⁴³ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 134.

⁴⁴ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 134, 106.

⁴⁵ C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians*, 284-297; Anthony F. C. Wallace, "New Religions Among the Delaware Indians, 1600-1900," *Southwest Journal of Anthropology*, XII (1956), 10.

appeared to be little popular support for Christianity. Thus, by bringing the Moravians to the White River the Council reduced interest in Goshen. It seems logical, therefore, to conclude that the council believed that once on Delaware lands the mission would be rendered ineffective, and the Indian converts might be persuaded to spurn Moravian teachings. Even if this conclusion is somewhat inaccurate, tribal cohesion was certainly a primary reason why the council invited the missionaries to the White River.⁴⁶

The Brethren also had to contend with the overwhelming fear and hatred that most Delawares had for whites living on Delaware lands. The missionaries were the scapegoats for problems such as encroachment and frontier "justice". For over one hundred years whites had forced the Delawares westward, so that by 1800 they lived nearly fifteen hundred miles west of their native lands. Nevertheless, the whites seemed determined to push the Indians even farther west.

White Kentuckians regularly hunted on Indian lands and depleted the game for the Delawares, who remained primarily a hunting and gathering people. Also, a number of frontierspeople attempted to settle on Delaware territory--all of which created animosity and the potential for bloodshed. Indiana Governor William Henry Harrison attempted to appease the Indians by issuing proclamations that prohibited whites from hunting, surveying, or settling on Indian lands, but he noted that the

⁴⁶ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 32.

proclamation was virtually useless because as yet no definite boundary between American and Indian territory existed. At the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, the defeated Indian Confederacy ceded the entire Ohio Valley and much of Indiana to the United States, but the Indiana cessions had never been surveyed.⁴⁷

One-sided "justice" also inflamed the Delawares. In 1801 whites killed six Delawares, including one particularly brutal slaying of a woman and her child, but not a single settler was convicted for the crimes even though the assailants were usually identified.⁴⁸ Harrison commented that "All these injuries they have hitherto borne with astonishing patience," and that another war was inevitable "unless means are made use of to conciliate them." The government's reach was limited, however, and the situation grew progressively worse as more whites entered the region.⁴⁹

Many Delawares perceived the Moravians, with their "love thy neighbor" attitude, as employing yet another white man's method to "tame" and then to destroy the Delawares completely. They pointed to the tragedy of Gnadenhütten and warned that the same plight awaited any Delaware who accepted Christianity.⁵⁰ The missionaries found this opinion extremely difficult to overcome and were never able to refute these arguments adequately.

⁴⁷ Logan Esarey, ed., *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, 1, 1800-1811* (Indianapolis, 1922; rpt., New York, 1975), 24, 26-27.

⁴⁸ Esarey, ed., *Harrison Letters*, 25.

⁴⁹ Esarey, ed., *Harrison Letters*, 26.

⁵⁰ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 131.

In light of the many obstacles that the mission faced, it is therefore surprising that, in terms of members, the Moravians had their most productive year in 1802. The blind woman and Joshua's son died early in the year and one family returned to the Delawares, but thirteen people moved to the mission. At year's end twenty-three Christian Indians remained--seven more than in 1801.⁵¹ The Brethren also completed construction of the town. Each missionary and individual family had a house, and a meetinghouse adorned the mission.⁵² Moreover, mild weather resulted in a bountiful harvest as the Moravians took advantage of their first full growing season on the White River.⁵³ Everything appeared positive, but the picture was largely illusory.

Delaware males continued to avoid the mission or to politely deflect the Moravians' invitations to accept Christianity. Consequently, the new adult arrivals remained exclusively women, usually elderly, who carried no prestige. They would not spark a Christian movement in the Delaware nation. Furthermore, seven of the thirteen new inhabitants were children.⁵⁴ In one sense children were the ideal objects for conversion because they shed Indian culture far easier than adults. The negative side of having children in the mission, however, was that their presence depended on the parent or parents remaining. If the parent returned to the Delawares, the children would almost certainly

⁵¹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 147-148, 157, 197, 206.

⁵² Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 152, 143.

⁵³ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 191.

⁵⁴ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 206.

revert to their former beliefs, thus making them a poor foundation for a mission.

The missionaries also expressed concern that even though the mission was completed, they still had not gained a great deal of control over the Brethren. They implored the Indians to look to Christ in times of trouble, but the converts continued to display erratic behavior. One day John Thomas wept openly and said that he recognized his sins, "for I am weak"; a few months later, he committed adultery.⁵⁵ Joshua, their interpreter, also remained problematic. After his son died in April, he went to the nearest Delaware town and got drunk to drown his sorrow.⁵⁶

The Moravians were unsure about how to deal with such matters.⁵⁷ They could expel the Indian from the mission or withdraw privileges from the congregation members, although expulsion was extreme and could backfire as it almost did in the case of John Thomas. He almost succeeded in convincing his wife and children to leave as well because she forgave him before the Moravians did.⁵⁸ The Moravians encountered yet another dilemma dealing with Joshua; he begged forgiveness. Though they did not believe he was sincere, the missionaries could not deny him reentry because "there is mercy with the Lord for every sinner who seeks Him with his whole heart." They did not want the converts to believe that if they partook of heathen practices they only had to apologize to the missionaries. At the same time, the

⁵⁵ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 146, 163.

⁵⁶ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 159.

⁵⁷ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 173,

⁵⁸ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 163, 170.

Moravians could not reject their pleas for readmittance if the apologies appeared heartfelt. Only Christ knew what the person truly believed, the missionaries concluded, and so they merely warned Joshua that it was as sinful to lie about repentance as it was to commit the actual sin.⁵⁹

The Delawares certainly did not allay the Moravians' anxieties. By late spring 1802 the novelty of the newcomers had worn off and attendance at services dropped steadily. Delawares continued to visit the mission but were progressively less interested in hearing the Gospel.⁶⁰ In essence, the Delawares unofficially adopted a policy of polite indifference. The missionaries sensed this change and as early as April 1802 posited that "the Lord will have to work miracles if any good is to come of our labors."⁶¹

That summer the Delaware nation was awash in alcohol. The consequences were severe: people were killed in drunken brawls, crops and hunting were neglected, and anything of value was sold to buy more whiskey. In April, for instance, the missionaries reported that the Delawares had brought eighty gallons of whisky to a nearby town. The men were off hunting, and so the women and children drank the entire batch within the day. Such occurrences were not unusual for either the Delawares or surrounding Indian tribes. Governor Harrison estimated that

⁵⁹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 160, 161. They might have echoed Spangenberg's statement that Christ "thoroughly knows their hearts . . . woe unto such who with unconcern, rashly pursue their wicked ways." *Christian Doctrine*, 72.

⁶⁰ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 181, 182.

⁶¹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 157.

along the Wabash River (the White River is a tributary of the Wabash) there were six hundred warriors who consumed more than six thousand gallons of alcohol per year. Both Harrison and the American federal government attempted to place restrictions on the sale of alcohol to the Indians, but for the most part failed to put a dent in the trade.⁶² The mission, meanwhile, was never the scene of a drinking binge, but the missionaries often remarked that they could hear intoxicated Delawares in nearby towns singing and hollering. Not surprisingly, the converts occasionally failed to resist the temptation.

The repercussions of the summer's events extended far beyond the converts. The most important development was the resurgence of native religion. Nativist revivalism had precedents in Delaware history, occurring virtually every time the nation faced adversity. In the 1760s, for instance, white encroachment forced the Delawares to move west from the Susquehanna Valley to the Ohio Valley. The uncertainty of the period gave rise to religious figures such as the Delaware Prophet and Wigonend. Numerous other minor religious leaders, many of them women, also called for the cleansing of Delaware culture.⁶³ No strong figures emerged in 1802, but religious zealotry began to increase. Thus, the conflict between the two religions increasingly became the focal point of the mission, with the native religion steadily gaining the upper hand.

⁶² Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 158; Esarey, ed., *Harrison Letters*, 29, 31, 59.

⁶³ Newcomb, *Delaware Indian Acculturation*, 94-95; Wallace, "New Religions," 8-10.

This phenomenon resulted in the stagnation of the mission's progress over the next two years (1803-1804). A few more old women accepted Christ and were baptized, but by the end of 1803, the population of the mission had dropped from twenty-three to thirteen.⁶⁴ That statistic, however, somewhat skews reality; there was no perceived exodus from the mission. Two losses were from children's deaths. Another departure involving five people was initially characterized by the Moravians as positive. John Thomas and his family, claiming they had been too tempted to revert to heathen ways while on the White River, decided to return to Goshen. The missionaries agreed and applauded the move, informing Catherine that "we regard you now as a brand plucked from the fire." But the family never reached Goshen because the Delawares convinced John Thomas that he should remain with them.⁶⁵ Ultimately, only three women openly left the mission--and two returned within a year.

In 1804 the mission experienced no losses and actually gained two members with the return of the renegades from the year before. Nevertheless, at the close of the year only fifteen Indians lived with the Moravians; seven were baptized and only four were communicants.⁶⁶ Other than the converts, Indians hardly ever attended Moravian prayer services. The Lord's flock had changed personnel since 1801, but it had not grown at all.

⁶⁴ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 271.

⁶⁵ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 260, 267.

⁶⁶ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 325-326.

Considering the sentiment of the Delaware nation, it was surprising that even fifteen Indians remained with the Moravians. Spurred by the religious revival, Delaware indifference metamorphosed into hostility. In mid-1803 the Moravians noted that the Delawares were taunting the converts and claiming that the Delaware shamans, not the Moravians, were the true teachers of God. "These are the very poisonous arrows of the Wicked Enemy which he shoots at our poor Christian Indians," the missionaries complained, adding "This and similar talk on the part of the heathen has had an evil effect on many of our poor people, so that they are often ashamed to witness boldly before the heathen to the grace and salvation which a sinner through faith in the Saviour enjoys, and in consequence are held in contempt and slandered by the heathen."⁶⁷ As the year progressed these charges became more prevalent. In addition, the Brethren heard rumors that the Delaware Council had prohibited the nation from attending Moravian prayer services, a move that the Moravians understatedly concluded "augers badly for us and for the cause of the Saviour."⁶⁸

When the missionaries confronted Tedpachsit with this news, the chief denied the validity. He claimed that although he did not promote Christianity, he had not forbidden the Delawares to listen to the Word.⁶⁹ Buckongahelas also claimed that no such restrictions existed but then made his disdain for the Moravians

⁶⁷ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 219-220.

⁶⁸ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 229.

⁶⁹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 244.

quite clear. In 1802 he had relinquished his position as a head chief, and so he was undoubtedly less concerned with appearing diplomatic.⁷⁰ The old warrior told the missionaries that the Gospel did not apply to the Indians because "Had God desired that we should have the teaching of the white people, He would have given it to our fathers too. But He did not so desire, and he wants us to live as we are living now, and believe nothing else." God gave the Delawares their own religion, he argued, so it would be wrong to adopt the white man's faith. The chiefs' replies were disconcerting to the missionaries. They knew that the continued operation of the mission depended on the Delaware leaders' good will since the majority of the nations already opposed their presence, but now even the chiefs' nominal support had apparently waned.⁷¹

Tensions rose steadily as the native religious revival gained momentum, and the Delaware nation fell further into disarray. Alcohol and disease decimated the nation, especially during the summer of 1804. Concurrently, the American government initiated efforts to move the Delawares west of the Mississippi River. The mood was right for a radical revolt against the white culture, and the Moravians were caught in the middle.

The treaties of Vincennes and Fort Wayne in August and June 1804 resulted in the blossoming of native revivalism that, in turn, prompted a steady downturn in the mission's fortunes.

⁷⁰ Roger James Ferguson, "The White River Indiana Delawares: An Ethnohistoric Synthesis, 1795-1867" (Ph. D. diss., Ball State university, 1972), 52.

⁷¹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 256.

Delaware representatives at Vincennes agreed both to cede a large parcel of land to the United States government and to accept American aid in converting the Delaware nation into an agriculturally-based society.⁷² When the Delaware people learned of the pact they reacted angrily. Many perceived adopting yeomanry as cultural suicide. In their opinion, it was better to die proudly while guarding Indian traditions than to adopt the white man's culture.

In response, the Delaware delegates to the Vincennes conference claimed that the Americans deceived them. The delegates denied ceding any lands to the United States and claimed that they merely accepted recompense for some horses stolen by whites.⁷³ But the validity of this argument is doubtful. Most of the Delaware contingent at Vincennes spoke some English, and several apparently spoke it with near fluency. The government conducted the entire treaty in public and explicitly showed the Delawares a map that marked off the area being ceded.⁷⁴

Whether the Delawares lied or not, the leaders' posture was politically shrewd because the Delawares harbored deep-seated fears of whites. A good example of this paranoia occurred in August 1803 when the Delaware Council received information indicating that Kentuckians were about to attack. The entire nation (including the Christian Indians) immediately began

⁷² Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 297; Esarey, ed., *Harrison Letters*, 121, 141-145.

⁷³ Esarey, ed., *Harrison Letters*, 117, 121.

⁷⁴ Esarey, ed., *Harrison Letters*, 76, 141-145.

preparations to flee the White River. The news was false, but the fear was not.⁷⁵

The backlash from the treaty also aided the cause of Delaware religion, which made unprecedented gains and enveloped the entire nation. Almost immediately after the news of Vincennes reached the White River, an old woman had a vision in which her ancestors spoke to her. They told her that the Delawares should forsake their evil ways, prohibit alcohol, and place renewed faith in their religion. Visions were a foundation of the native religion. They were a person's conduit to the supernatural world, in which a "guardian spirit" provided guidance and, occasionally, prophesies. Most guardian spirits appeared in the form of animals or birds but could actually be the spirit of a departed relative. The Delawares diligently followed the directives of visions because they feared serious negative repercussions for failure to obey.⁷⁶

The Delawares certainly did not ignore the visions. This first one was followed by two more in the early 1805 and they succeeded in transforming the nation into a hive of religious activity. All the Indian villages held feasts to hear the seers recount their visions and to offer sacrifices to the Great Spirit.⁷⁷ The activity centered on one theme--the purification of the Delaware nation through readoption of traditional values.

⁷⁵ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 248, 250.

⁷⁶ Newcomb, *Delaware Acculturation*, 60-61; Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, , 403, 612.

⁷⁷ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 333, 339.

One result of the purification process was the repudiation of the nation's top leaders, who supposedly had led the Delawares into depravity and self-destruction. Consequently, 1805 also marked the beginning of a political revolution of sorts. Most of the established leaders were upbraided and eventually replaced. Frequently they were even accused of witchcraft. Among the casualties of the turnover was Tedpachsit who was accused of using witchcraft to cause Buckongahelas's death.⁷⁸

The upheaval directly affected the Moravians. Under the old leadership the Moravians and the mission were left virtually unmolested. But the new leaders sought to undermine the Brethren by linking them with the nation's social and economic woes. These men owed their political fortunes to nativism; thus, it was only logical that they would attack the Brethren.

The Delaware leadership subsequently initiated efforts to drive the missionaries from the White River. The Council forbade any Delaware from attending services at the mission, but by that point the regulation was a fait accompli. The Delawares also began to shower the missionaries, not just the converts, with verbal abuse. They openly expressed their contempt for Christianity and white culture.⁷⁹ Finally, the Indians began to inch their towns progressively closer to the mission. By May 1805 the missionaries were complaining that hostile Indians were even moving into the confines of the mission.⁸⁰ The

⁷⁸ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 358; Ferguson, "White River Delawares," 76-78.

⁷⁹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 374, 396.

⁸⁰ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 352.

unwanted settlers not only disrupted the Brethren's daily routine but also pushed the few remaining converts toward nativist recidivism.

The missionaries strove to keep their small congregation (seven baptized Indians at the end of 1804) from completely dispersing but it was difficult. The converts wavered in their dedication to Christ, and many repeatedly shuffled between the mission and the Delaware towns.

The experiences of three converts, all original members of the mission, vividly display the Christian Indians' dilemma in 1805. John Thomas's wife Catherine, who returned to the mission in December 1804 after her husband's death, had the weakest faith of the remaining converts. Acknowledging that fact, she decided to return to Goshen so that she would not be drawn away from Christianity. But she got no farther than the first Indian town that she encountered, because of either prior intent or native coercion.⁸¹ Another convert, Mary, also left the mission permanently, but her departure shocked the Moravians because she had been one of the most devout converts. In 1805, she became sick and was in constant great pain. The Moravians informed her that they could do nothing for her, but her relatives told her that a Delaware shaman would cure her. Desperate to live, Mary left the mission and embraced native religion. She died anyway in May 1805 while still among the Delawares.⁸² Finally, Jacob caused the missionaries repeated problems. He frequently went to the

⁸¹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 323, 349.

⁸² Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 346, 356.

Delaware towns, and for much of 1805 he rejected Christianity. During that time he participated in Delaware religious ceremonies, including Mary's burial. But in November he became ill and returned to the mission. He died an apparent Christian in January 1806.⁸³

In each case, the converts' non-Christian relatives and friends pressured them to return to the Delaware towns. The Christian Indians had found it difficult to resist the temptation before the Delawares became polarized against the Moravians, and the native religious revival merely compounded their anxieties. The Indians (especially those who began to reside in the mission) constantly fulminated against the converts and told them that the Moravians were evil men out to destroy the Indians. Apparently not wishing to find out which religion was wrong, Christian Indians' recidivism rose markedly in 1805, but only Mary and Catherine permanently left the mission.

The missionaries persisted because they retained hope that more Indians would accept Christianity. Indeed, they were heartened when another old woman converted in December 1805. Even in such terrible times, the missionaries noted with pleasure, Christ continued to show Himself to some.⁸⁴ But the missionaries also perceived the reality of the situation. The Indians had turned against them and made the mission essentially a lost cause. Yet the Helpers' Conference in Bethlehem had not sent permission to abandon the outpost. Such decisions were not

⁸³ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 356, 363, 375, 384, 400.

⁸⁴ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 395, 396.

to be made by men, and until the Helpers deferred to Christ and put the question to the lot, the missionaries believed that it was their duty to remain on the White River. They resigned themselves to the threat of death, claiming that they would accept whatever fate the Lord had in store for them.⁸⁵

The risk of death increased dramatically during the winter of 1805-06. A charismatic Shawnee known as Tenskwatawa, or the Prophet, arrived on the White River and quickly became the most influential seer. He claimed that the Great Spirit had given him the power to save the Indians and to perform miracles. Like the other vision seers, the Prophet told the Delawares that they had to readopt their traditional lifestyle. He scorned Christianity and alcohol and urged renewed commitment to sacrifice, family, and hunting. Specifically, the Prophet wanted Delaware men to shave their heads in the old manner, parents to stop hitting their children, and everyone to do away with cattle. The last directive was buttressed with the argument that the Great Spirit had placed deer just under the surface of the earth and would reveal them if the Delawares listened to the Prophet. The seer also informed the Delawares that they should build a town in Ohio--a town that he claimed would last for one hundred years. His rhetoric appealed to the Indian's cultural pride and solidified the Delaware nation behind him.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 372, 404, 542.

⁸⁶ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 392, 393, 402; Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 343.

The Prophet's message turned bloody in the spring of 1806 as he initiated his own purges to purify the Delaware nation. Like his predecessors, he also wanted to eradicate white influences, but he blamed witchcraft for most of the nation's woes. The Shawnee seer claimed that he could identify witches because the Great Spirit had given him the power to see into people's hearts to determine if they were evil. The Delawares deeply believed in and greatly feared witchcraft, and so his claims had a profound effect on the population. He announced that the Delawares should have a number of sacrificial feasts to celebrate the resurrection of the nation. At these feasts the Prophet examined every Delaware, including women, for traces of evil. In this way dozens of people were indicted and killed for the crime of witchcraft.⁸⁷

The Moravians believed that the Prophet was a "well-known evildoer" and a "lying prophet," which is hardly surprising.⁸⁸ In their view, the Prophet was only out to establish himself as the leader of the Delaware nation and cared nothing for the spiritual well-being of the people.⁸⁹ The indictment of most of the old leaders, including Tedpachsit, convinced the Moravians of the Prophet's evil intentions.⁹⁰ More probably, the intense faith in God that the missionaries carried with them to the White River precluded them from seeing that the Prophet was as devout in his religion as they were in theirs. This type of intransigence and

⁸⁷ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 413, 451.

⁸⁸ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 413, 420.

⁸⁹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 420-421, 447.

⁹⁰ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 412, 413, 444.

misunderstanding of the Delaware culture had time and again alienated the Moravians from the White River Delawares.

The missionaries lived in constant fear for their lives while this upheaval reached its peak in the first half of 1806: The Moravians still had not received any instructions from Bethlehem ordering the abandonment of the White River effort, and so they did not entertain serious thoughts of leaving. They did, however, begin to search for another location nearby that would place some distance between them and "these troublesome and inimical heathen."⁹¹

The new Delaware leaders were angered when they learned of the Moravians' activities. They did not want them there, but wanted them to leave of their own volition, probably so that the native religion could be proven to have triumphed over Christianity. They therefore prohibited the Moravians from moving the mission. When the missionaries attempted to obtain an audience with the Council, the chiefs refused and informed them that

We now have found something new. We are busy with that now and have no time to bother with anything else. The old no longer has any weight because the old people no longer have anything to say. The young people now rule.

⁹¹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 409, 541.

Just as the missionaries had feared in 1800, the Delawares also claimed that they had never invited the Moravians, only the Indian converts. Not in a position to argue, the Moravians stopped their surveying.⁹²

Then in March 1806 the situation that the missionaries most feared occurred. Joshua, the last of the original fifteen Christian Indians who had made the journey to the White River in 1801 and the mission's interpreter, was forcibly removed from the mission and brought to a Delaware town to stand trial for witchcraft. Charges against Joshua were dropped after his accuser reneged on his claims, but the Prophet found the convert guilty on the grounds that he had an evil soul that was capable of hurting others. Subsequently, he was beaten, bludgeoned with a tomahawk, and burned alive.⁹³ When the Moravians learned of Joshua's murder two days later, they considered a hasty retreat from the mission since only three sickly women remained under their supervision. But once again, their faith in the Lord's will kept them on the White River.⁹⁴

Soon thereafter the murderous events of the spring halted and the hysteria slowly subsided.⁹⁵ But the Delawares continued to harass the Christians by controlling most of the mission, claiming that Christ was only a white man's God, and placing the blame for the massacre at Gnadenhütten on the Moravians. It had been almost two years since the last time that any but the

⁹² Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 410, 411.

⁹³ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 401, 412, 416, 417.

⁹⁴ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 417.

⁹⁵ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 420.

occasional Indian had attended Moravian services. Essentially, the Delaware nation had ostracized the Moravians. Still, the missionaries continued to preach the Word of God any time they could work it into a conversation.⁹⁶ They remained dedicated proselytizers of their religion, while the Delawares "believe that their way is the right way and that it leads straight to Heaven."⁹⁷

On 2 August 1806 the missionaries finally received word from the Helpers' Conference ordering their immediate recall and promptly began efforts to liquidate their assets.⁹⁸ After haggling with the Delawares over who should receive the mission's wares, the Moravians agreed to give them one-half of its contents. The other half went to a French trader, who gave the missionaries four horses in return.⁹⁹ Six weeks later all preparations for the dissolution of the mission were complete, and about noon on 16 September, "with a feeling of shame and sadness in our hearts," the Moravians left the White River. Not a single Indian convert accompanied them.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 421, 422, 436, 438, 440, 441.

⁹⁷ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 451.

⁹⁸ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 443.

⁹⁹ Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 446, 452, 453.

¹⁰⁰ The Moravians left two baptized old women behind. Gipson, ed., *White River Mission*, 628.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the best conclusion that a reader can draw from this study is that the failure of the White River mission cannot be attributed to a single factor. All of the participants--missionaries, Indian converts, and unconverted Delawares--contributed to the mission's downfall. At two ends of the spectrum were the Moravians and the Delawares. Both misunderstood and loathed the other's culture, while maintaining the belief that their way of life was best. Caught between the two groups were the converts, whose persistent waverings in faith represented the most visible display of the Moravians' inability to diminish the vitality of Delaware culture.

The decision to send Kluge and Luckenbach to the White River was undoubtedly not the Helpers' Conference's wisest one. The two men were virtually ignorant of Delaware culture--or at least had little sympathy for it--and, even after five years at the mission, never achieved real competence in the Delaware language. After repeated failed attempts to convert the Delawares, the Helpers should have selected someone with experience among the Indians. A more seasoned missionary might have understood Delaware culture better and been better able to cope with convert transgressions and other difficult situations. A veteran would still hold the same theological underpinnings as did Kluge and Luckenbach but would have been more likely to adapt to situations with tact. The two neophytes simply failed to understand that the Delawares were not whites. In doing so, they

stopped looking like Moravians, whose mission precepts specifically warned against treating heathen as inferiors. Thus, severe deficiencies in training made the missionaries themselves a major element in the mission's woes.

The resilience of Delaware culture further exposed the Moravians' shortcomings. It is quite likely that there was only a modicum of support for the missionaries even upon their arrival in 1801. Mistrust of whites and the negative reputation of the Moravian church as a result of the Gnadenhütten tragedy certainly accounted for much of this antipathy. As Delaware society progressively deteriorated, due in large part to the influence of alcohol, the Moravian mission became synonymous with white culture, which the Delaware nation steadfastly refused to adopt.

Not surprisingly, the subsequent nativist revival seriously affected the mission's prosperity because it provided the Indians with cultural pride and a renewed sense of personal worth. The Moravians received the unfortunate role of playing foil to the resurgent native church. Rather than telling the Delawares that their culture was inherently evil, native religion soothed people's fears and blamed the nation's problems on the move away from traditional Delaware culture.

In many respects, the converts inadvertently aided the nativists' cause. They frequently disregarded Moravian teaching and returned to the Delawares. The missionaries wanted them to act as shining examples of Christianity's purifying effect on the soul, but instead the converts came to represent the mission's shortcomings. Nativists certainly claimed victory when converts

repeatedly deserted the Moravians to participate in Delaware religious feasts. Likewise, the converts' weakness of faith must have acted as "proof" to many Delawares that accepting Christ was not the way to obtain eternal salvation.

Either the Christians or the Delawares individually probably could have caused the demise of the mission. One could argue that the Delaware revival was the motivating factor in the mission's demise. A similar case, however, could be made for Moravian incompetency. But to accept a single reason would ignore reality. The Moravian Indian mission on the White River failed because of a confluence of several negative factors. In the end, the mission and its workers simply could not overcome both their own and the Delaware nation's problems and consequently suffered the same fate as all previous Moravian efforts among the Delawares.

APPENDIX A

STATUTES AGREED UPON BY THE CHRISTIAN INDIANS AT
SCHONBRUNN IN AUGUST 1772

I. We will know no other God but the one only true God, who made us and all creatures, and came into this world in order to save sinners; to Him alone we will pray.

II. We will rest from work on the Lord's Day, and attend public service.

III. We will honor father and mother, and when they grow old and needy we will do for them what we can.

IV. No person shall get leave to dwell with us until our teachers have given their consent, and the helpers (native assistants) have examined him.

V. We will have nothing to do with thieves, murderers, whoremongers, adulterers, or drunkards.

VI. We will not take part in dances, sacrifices, heathenish festivals, or games.

VII. We will use no *tshapiet*, or witchcraft, when hunting.

VIII. We renounce and abhor all tricks, lies, and deceits of Satan.

IX. We will be obedient to our teachers and to the helpers who are appointed to preserve order in our meetings in the towns and fields.

X. We will not be idle, nor scold, nor beat one another, nor tell lies.

XI. Whoever injures the property of his neighbor shall make restitution.

XII. A man shall have but one wife--shall love her and provide for her and his children. A woman shall have but one husband, be obedient to him, care for her children, and be cleanly in all things.

XIII. We will not admit rum or any other intoxicating liquor into our towns. If strangers or traders bring intoxicating liquor, the helpers shall take it from them and not restore it until the owners are ready to leave the place.

XIV. No one shall contract debts with traders, or receive goods to sell for traders, unless the helpers give their consent.

XV. Whoever goes hunting, or on a journey, shall inform the minister or stewards.

XVI. Young persons shall not marry without the consent of their parents and the minister.

XVII. Whenever the stewards or helpers appoint a time to make fences or to perform other work for the public good, we will assist and do as we are bid.

XVIII. Whenever corn is needed to entertain strangers, or sugar for love-feasts, we will freely contribute from our stores.

XIX. We will not go to war, and will not buy anything of warriors taken in war. [Adopted during the Revolutionary War]

Source: Edmund De Schweinitz, *The Life and Times of David Zeisberger: Western Pioneer and Apostle of the Indians* (Philadelphia, 1870; rpt., New York, 1971), 378-379.

APPENDIX B

BROTHERLY UNION AND AGREEMENT AT HERRNHUT, 1727

1. It shall be forever remember by the inhabitants of Herrnhut, that it was built on the grace of the living God, that it is a work of his own hand, yet not properly intended to be a new town, but only an establishment erected for Brethren and the Brethren's sake.

2. Herrnhut, and its original old inhabitants must remain in a constant bond of love with all children of God belonging to the different religious persuasions--they must judge none, enter into no disputes with any, nor behave themselves unseemly toward any, but rather seek to maintain among themselves the pure evangelical doctrine, simplicity, and grace.

3. The following are the characteristics of a true member of Christ's body, and these we, the inhabitants of Herrnhut, who simply adhere to the foundation built on the Word of God, deem to be the most sure. Whosoever does not confess that he owes his awakening and salvation exclusively to the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and that he cannot exist without it for one moment of his life, that the greatest perfection in life (were possible to attain to it, without the intercession of the Mediator, urged by the plea of his blood and merit) would be of no avail in the sight of God, while it is made acceptable in the beloved; and whoever does not daily prove it by his whole conversation, that it is his full

determination to be delivered from sin, through the merit of Jesus, and to follow daily more after holiness, to grow in the likeness of his Lord, to be cleansed from all spiritual idolatry, vanity, and self-will, to walk as Jesus did, and to bear his reproach and shame: such a one is not a genuine brother. But whosoever has this disposition of heart, though he maintain sectarian, fanatical, or at least defective opinions, shall not on that account be despised among us, nor in case his even separating himself from us will we immediately forsake him, but we will rather follow him in his wanderings, and spare him, and bear with him in the spirit of love, patience, and meekness. But whosoever is not fully established on the above-named fundamental principles, though he do not wholly forsake them, shall be considered as a halting and wavering brother, and be reclaimed in the spirit of meekness.

4. It is laudable in itself for the Congregation to devote certain days to the special remembrance of the faithful leading of our God, celebrating them with fasting and prayer, or thanks and praise. Such days, for instance, as that of the emigration of the first Brethren on the twelfth of May, on which day in different years many remarkable events have taken place. In like manner every individual may consecrate those days, which to him are the most memorable, to the Lord, spending them as above with his intimate brethren and friends. But in both cases care must be taken that this appropriation of certain days does not degenerate into mere lifeless custom.

5. Those who, with an unfettered conscience, acquiesce in the present external regulations of the church will not hesitate to declare the ground of their acquiescence, to wit, that they do not consider human regulations and customs as an unalterable part of divine worship, but make use of them, agreeably to the dictates of Christian liberty, in a spirit of meekness, love, and obedience, till the Lord himself brings about a change. Should in after times any particular order of things be introduced among us, in respect to the outward form of devotional rites, simplicity and edifications must be aimed at exclusively.

6. Whoever has not been used to auricular confession, or has conscientious objections in his mind against it, shall not be forced to submit to it at Berthelsdorf; yet no one shall be permitted to go to Holy Communion without the previous knowledge of the minister at Berthelsdorf, in order that all confusion and levity may be prevented.

7. No one is to enter into confidential intercourse with people that are notoriously wicked, or altogether worldly minded, lest offense should thereby be given; yet it is proper that such people should be treated as much as possible in an equitable and unassuming manner, and none should allow themselves in any vehemences against them.

8. Everyone should be careful to comprehend the true foundation of the saving doctrine on which we are agreed, so that we may be able to give an answer to all our adversaries in meekness, yet with wisdom and power, and all may mutually defend and support one another.

9. When any traces of a good work begin to show themselves in one soul or another, no premature judgement concerning them should be formed; but it is expedient to wait with patience till the fruits begin to appear, while we must feel thankful to God for the good beginning which is to be traced, and promote their welfare as much as lies in our power.

10. In general, we consider it an abominable practice for anyone to judge or condemn his neighbor rashly, and without clear and full evidence, and without previously using all the acknowledged and scriptural degrees of brotherly correction. Whoever, therefore, is guilty of this unjustifiable proceeding subjects himself to well-merited censure.

11. Ministers, laborers, and all whose official incumbency it is to care for and watch over the souls of others must be at full liberty to hold frequent and full intercourse with one and the other, and no suspicion is to be cast on them on that account.

12. As the conversion of souls is the chief object of most of the present inhabitants of Herrnhut, everyone must be permitted to choose those with whom he would, for the time being, be more intimately connected, than he could be with others; and to alter his choice according to circumstances without fearing to give offense.

The intercourse between single persons of both sexes must have its restrictions, and the elders are empowered to prevent it whenever in any case scruples arise in their minds against such intercourse, though the apparent aim of it may be ever so laudable.

13. Envy, suspicion, and unfounded prejudices against the brethren must be most carefully guarded against. As everyone is at liberty to cultivate an intercourse with others, no one ought to take it amiss if another should appear more familiarly acquainted with the elders than he.

14. For the sake of the weak, no light conversation is to be allowed concerning God and spiritual things, but such subjects ought always to be treated with the greatest reverence.

15. Agreeably to the practice of the primitive church, the Brethren are called upon to exert themselves in every possible way for the benefit of those who are of the same household of faith; and to all others they are to do as they would wish that others should do unto them.

16. Whosoever has received the needful gift for it is to speak, the others to judge.

17. Those who seem to be best suited one to the other may, without hesitation, live in the habit of close familiarity, join in prayer, and act in all respects as intimate friendship requires; yet such preference given to any individual must by no means be to the prejudice of cordial brotherly love toward all others; and it becomes the duty of those who are particularly acquainted one with the other to lend each other a helping hand as it regards doctrine, admonition, reproof, direction, yea, their whole spiritual course.

18. No brother is to enroll himself as a member of any particular trading or handicraft association without first

acquainting the others of his design. And no business carried on among us is to be looked upon as in itself mean and despicable.

19. No one shall , even in the smallest way, overreach his neighbor, much less defraud him.

20. No marriage is to be contracted without the knowledge and approbation of the elders, and no promise of marriage is to be given and received, except in their presence, and with their consent.

21. No son shall require his father or mother to move from his house as long as they have mind to continue there is peace and quietness.

22. All superstitious notions and practices are inconsistent with the character of true brethren; and idle tales of apparitions, omens, and so forth, must be looked upon as foolish and hurtful.

23. As there are those who more particularly stand in need of daily admonitions--there shall be daily opportunities given for exhortations and edification at Herrnhut; yet no one can be considered obliged to attend on these occasions, unless the whole congregation should be expressly called to assemble together.

24. If anyone should be overtaken in a fault, he must not consider it disgraceful to be spoken to on the subject, or to receive admonition or reproof. He ought to take it in good part, and not allow himself to retort, much less think himself warranted on that account to withdraw from the fellowship of the fellowship of the Brethren. All matters of this kind should be judged and decided exclusively by those whose official incumbency requires their interference.

25. Whosoever spreads any unfounded report against another is bound to declare to the elders the reason of his allegations, and afterward to recant the report, whether required to do so in consequence of the complaint of the person injured thereby or not.

26. Whenever in public companies anything is said to the disadvantage of anyone not then present, everyone is authorized to acquaint the person alluded to of it, yet without naming the offender.

27. It is the special duty of some brethren to visit, from motives of self-denying charity and love, those fellow members of the congregation who are afflicted with sickness and ailments, and attend to their wants. And as long as we shall be favored to have a physician who is one of us, every inhabitant of Herrnhut should speak to him and ask his advice about any ailments or illness of his before he seeks the counsel from others. No one who is not properly qualified for it should venture to undertake the cure of others.

28. The names and circumstances of the patients are to be immediately mentioned to the sick-waiters of both sexes; and the prescriptions of the physicians, as well as the directions of the sick-waiters themselves, ought to be carefully observed both by the patients themselves and by those who are about them.

29. Everyone must conscientiously keep to himself what has been confidently, and as a secret, entrusted to him.

30. No one is to harbor anything in his mind against another, but rather immediately, and in a friendly and becoming

manner, mention what may have offended him, without respect of persons. Complaints which have been purposely suffered to accumulate must not even be listened to, but quarrels, envy, and willful dissensions ought to be abominated by all, and those who are guilty of these things be looked upon as unbelievers.

31. A mechanic or tradesman ought to be most punctual in fulfilling the promises he has made; and in case circumstances should prevent his doing so, it is his duty to mention, in due time, the cause of his not being able to act according to his promise.

32. All judicial interference is to be grounded in the plain commandments of God, on these statutes, and on natural equity and justice.

33. Every effort shall be made to reclaim the erring by friendly reproof and discipline, but should this fail the offender is expected and required to leave the place.

34. The elders shall hold a conference every Saturday, and if any be cited to appear before that conference he is to obey the summons, and in case of reiterated and obstinate refusal he must leave the place.

35. The watchers are to sing a verse from a suitable hymn, at the change of the successive hours in the night, with a view to encourage and edify the Congregation.

36. The doctrine and example of Jesus and his apostles shall be the general and special rule of all our ministry and instruction.

37. Whosoever perseveres in an open course of levity and sin, though often before warned and admonished, shall be excluded

from our brotherly fellowship, nor can he be readmitted till he has given sufficient proof of his being an altered character.

38. All the young people at Herrnhut who shall confess their faith in Christ are to be confirmed, after which these statutes are to be given them for their consideration.

39. No magisterial person, minister, elder, or warden, nor anyone else who may in this or the other respect have authority over others, shall use the power possessed by him, otherwise than to be helper of the joy of those over whom he is placed, and to comfort them in sufferings, trials, and wants.

40. All who are influenced by the love of God must keep up a friendly and cordial fellowship with all who are like-minded, making in this respect no exceptions.

41. Everyone shall be at liberty in love to admonish and rebuke his brother, whether there be ground for it or not. But this must be done with great modesty, and all vehemence on either side be carefully avoided. If an explanation or exculpation be offered, the person who gave the admonition ought either to be satisfied with it or refer the case to other Brethren.

42. Should we be called to suffer persecutions, everyone should consider them precious and most useful exercises; love those that persecute us, treat them respectfully, answer their questions with modesty and simplicity, and cheerfully submit to what may befall us, according to the confession we make before God and man.

Source: Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, "Brotherly Agreement and Agreement at Herrnhut, 1727," in *Pietists: Selected Writings*, ed. Peter C. Erb (New York, 1983), 325-330.

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