

Section Two: The Beginning of the Modern Missionary Movement

Lesson Three: The Moravians

Introduction: - Count Zinzendorf and Herrnhut

1. Revival at Herrnhut

- July 16, 1727 Prayer at Herrnhut
- August 13, 1727 Moravian Pentecost

2. Missionary Movement from Herrnhut

- 1732 First Missionaries go to West Indies
- 1733 – 1737 Missions begin in Greenland, South America, North America, and South Africa.
- 1752 Mission to Labrador

3. The Moravians influence upon John Wesley

- Wesley initial encounter with Moravians.
- Peter Bohler – Wesley's conversion

Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760)



Count Nicholas Ludwig Zinzendorff was born in Dresden and brought up as a Lutheran Pietist.

Religion had become for many in his day mere intellectual assent for particular doctrines.

Zinzendorff preached the need for a personal relationship with Christ.

When approached by Christian David, he allowed the Moravians who wanted to stay on his land, he gave his permission (1722).

They called the place Herrnhut (The Lord's Watch).

Count Zinzendorf

He wanted only to know Jesus in closer relationship.

He summed up his life in these words
"I have one passion, tis Jesus, Jesus only"

Zinzendorf was greatly moved when he saw a painting of Jesus by Domenico Feti.

The painting was displayed at the Dusseldorf Art Gallery. At the bottom of the painting are the words written in Latin:

"This have I done for you; What have you done for Me?"



Christian David (1690 – 1751)

1690 Born December 31st in Senftleben, Moravia.

Brought up a Roman Catholic.

1710 Protestants preached salvation by faith in Christ alone

Sought for truth - Read through the Bible; Sought instruction from Jews

Eventually left Catholic Moravia and joined Lutherans in Berlin.

Disillusioned by Orthodox Lutherans joined Prussian Army

1715 In army during war with Sweden. Discharged from army.

Christian David (1690 – 1751)

1717 Heard Pietist preachers – Schafer and Schwedler

Schwedler visited him daily during 20 week illness – came to faith in Christ

Married member of Schwedler's congregation.

Lived in Gorlitz for 5 years – went to Moravia to preach

Known as the Bush preacher – revival in Moravia.

1722 Requested permission from Count Zinzendorff for Moravians to stay on his estate at Berthelsdorf.

John Wesley was impressed by the sermons of Christian David when he visited Herrnhut in 1738.

The beginning of Herrnhut

June 8, 1722 First Moravians arrive at Herrnhut led by Christian David.

1724 Christian David goes to Moravia encourages more to come.

Steady influx of Moravians.

Others join the company at Herrnhut.

Pietists, Anabaptists, Calvinists,

The larger number of people caused problems:

1. Dissention over doctrinal issues (Predestination and freewill).
2. Poverty caused bitterness towards one another. Fought over business.
3. Lack of joy caused complaining
4. Criticised each other – saw each others faults.
5. Influenced by a religious fanatic, Krüger, who criticised the Lutheran Church and Count Zinzendorf. Many at Herrnhut were influenced by him. He ended up in an asylum.

Herrnhut - Moravian Revival 1727

Count Zinzendorf had previously left the Herrnhutters alone, but on the 12 May 1727 he made a covenant:

1. To emphasise points of agreement
2. Dedicate themselves to service of the Lord.

Prayer

16 July 1727 Zinzendorf mighty prayer with tears – community began to pray with power

22 July 1727 covenanted to meet often for prayer and worship.

13 August 1727 Moravian Pentecost. Many were baptised with the Holy Spirit at Herrnhut

Over the next 25 years 100 Moravians were sent out from Herrnhut as Missionaries.

The Moravian missionary movement developed through prayer at Herrnhut



August 26, 1727
Twenty four men
and twenty four
woman covenant to
pray for one hour
day and night.

August 27, 1727
Continuous prayer
began.

Numbers increased
to seventy seven
praying

Continuous prayer took place at Herrnhut for 100 years. Like the fire on the altar in the tabernacle that never went out, the Herrnhutters kept the incense of prayer continuously offered up to God.

Beginning of the Moravian Missionaries Movement.

1731 Zinzendorff met converted slave, Antony Ulrich, in Copenhagen at coronation of Christian VI. Brought Ulrich to Herrnhut. After hearing his testimony Leonard Dober and David Nitchmann went to St. Thomas to live and work among the slaves.

Moravian Missionaries

Missionaries went from Herrnhut to Danish West Indies (1732), Greenland (1733), Dutch South America (1735), North America (1736), South Africa (1737), Labrador (1752), Russia.

Moravians in Denmark

Moravians formed a society in Stepping in 1732

1745 Base for Moravian work in Jutland and Fyn.

1771 Moravians purchased land at Tystrup

1773 First buildings at Christiansfeld.

Moravians in North America

The Moravians went to North America to

1. Evangelise the Native Americans
2. Establish a homeland free from persecution.

1735 Moravian Missionaries went to Georgia, North America. They were led by Bishop August Spengenberg.

1736 Twenty-five Moravian missionaries travelled to Savannah.

Moravian Missions to North America began 1736



Moravian missionaries worked among the North American Indians during the time of British rule.

Zinzendorff visited North America (1741-43). He stayed 14 months.



John Wesley's Journal

The Moravians are fearless in the face of great danger

Sunday January 25, 1736.—At noon our third storm began. At four it was more violent than before. At seven I went to the Germans. I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behavior. Of their humility they had given a continual proof by performing those servile offices for the other passengers, which none of the English would undertake; for which they desired and would receive no pay, saying, “it was good for their proud hearts,” and “their loving Saviour had done more for them.” And every day had given them an occasion of showing a meekness which no injury could move. If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth. There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger and revenge.

In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sang on. I asked one of them afterward, “Were you not afraid?” He answered, “I thank God, no.” I asked, “But were not your women and children afraid?” He replied, mildly, “No; our women and children are not afraid to die.”

John Wesley's Journal 1739 Wesley meets the Moravians in London

Friday February 3, 1738. - Hereby God has given me to know many of His servants, particularly those of the Church of Herrnhut [the Moravians].

Tuesday February 7, 1738.—(A day much to be remembered.) At the house of Mr. Weinantz, a Dutch merchant, I met Peter Bohler, Schulius Richter, and Wensel Neiser, just then landed from Germany. Finding they had no acquaintance in England, I offered to procure them a lodging and did so near Mr. Hutton's, where I then was. And from this time I did not willingly lose any opportunity of conversing with them while I stayed in London.

Peter Bohler preaches 'justification by faith alone' to the Wesleys.

Saturday March 4, 1738.—I found my brother at Oxford, recovering from his pleurisy; and with him Peter Bohler; by whom, in the hand of the great God, I was, on Sunday, the fifth, clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved.

Immediately it struck into my mind, "Leave off preaching. How can you preach to others, who have not faith yourself?" I asked Bohler whether he thought I should leave it off or not. He answered, "By no means." I asked, "But what can I preach?" He said, "Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith."

Peter Bohler (1712-1775)



Founded many Moravian settlements in Pennsylvania.

Ordained as the Moravian Bishop to North America

Preached among the slaves and the North American Indians.

One of the first to teach basic education to the black slaves in North America.

Founded Moravian work in London.

Through Bohler's teaching John and Charles Wesley came to have faith in Christ alone for salvation (February – May 1738).

John Wesley remained a friend of Peter Bohler but John and Charles Wesley separated themselves from the Moravians over doctrinal differences.

Bohler appears to have believed in the erroneous doctrine of ultimate universal redemption. (See reply of George Whitefield to John Wesley regarding 'Free Grace')

John Wesley's Journal 1739

Accordingly, **Monday, March 6**, I began preaching this new doctrine, though my soul started back from the work. The first person to whom I offered salvation by faith alone was a prisoner under sentence of death. His name was Clifford. Peter Bohler had many times desired me to speak to him before. But I could not prevail on myself so to do; being still, as I had been many years, a zealous assertor of the impossibility of a deathbed repentance.

Monday May 1, 1738.—The return of my brother's illness obliged me again to hasten to London. In the evening I found him at James Hutton's, better as to his health than I expected; but strongly averse to what he called "the new faith."

This evening our little society began, which afterward met in Fetter Lane.

Wednesday May 3, 1738.—My brother had a long and particular conversation with Peter Bohler. And it now pleased God to open his eyes so that he also saw clearly what was the nature of that one true living faith, whereby alone, "through grace, we are saved."

Thursday May 4, 1738.—Peter Bohler left London in order to embark for Carolina. Oh, what a work hath God begun since his coming into England! Such a one as shall never come to an end till heaven and earth pass away.

John Wesley (May 24, 1738)

‘In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans.

About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation ; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

I then testified openly to all there what I now felt in my heart.'



Plaque outside the London Museum with the words from John Wesley's diary. This is very near to the location where this event took place.

John Wesley visited Herrnhut after his conversion (1738)

John Wesley was impressed by the sermons of Christian David (1690 – 1751) when he visited Herrnhut for 3 months in 1738.

John Wesley's journal (January 1, 1739)

Love feast with Moravians in Fetter Lane, London.

'M^r Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hichins, and my brother Charles were present at our lovefeast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his majesty, we broke out with one voice, "We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord"