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## INTRODUCTION

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WORKING WITH THE SPRINGPLACE DIARY involves entering two spheres that were as different from each other as they are from twenty-first-century America. The Moravian Church, or the Unity of the Brethren, predated the Protestant Reformation and had a history of persecution for its objections to armed violence, the swearing of oaths, and the machinery of church and state.<sup>1</sup> The other sphere, that of the Cherokees, emerged from a centuries-old Mississippian tradition that imbued the physical world with spiritual meaning. Their very rocks and streams held life, transcending the secular Anglo-American world that would displace the Cherokees during their forced removal in 1838–39.

While the diaries contain a great deal of Cherokee ethnographic information, they reflect a distinct Moravian point of view. The Moravians emerged from German Pietists and remnants of Czech Hussites, followers of fifteenth-century martyr Jan Hus. Under the leadership of Saxon Count von Zinzendorf, the Unity of the Brethren faced considerable oppression for their pacifism and unorthodox practices in the Lutheran Church.<sup>2</sup>

To avoid persecution and possible extinction, many Brethren became missionaries. The Moravian missionary impulse had its origins in Saxony, in the hills and valleys of Bohemia, and along the Moravia River in what is now the southeastern Czech Republic. In Colonial America and the Early Republic, Moravian missionary enterprises stretched along the eastern seaboard and into the interior as far west as present-day northwestern Georgia, where they ministered to the Cherokees in the early nineteenth century.

In 1799, two years before they began to build the Springplace Mission in present-day northwestern Georgia, the Moravians came together in Salem, North Carolina, at the annual meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen to consider a mission among the Cherokees.<sup>3</sup> They wanted information about the “mind and circumstance” of their Cherokee neighbors who lived some three hundred miles distant.<sup>4</sup>

When the congregation queried Brother Abraham Steiner about his extraordinary enthusiasm for a mission among the Cherokees, he answered by saying that the New Testament command “Go ye into all the world” did not include the clause “if they call you.”<sup>5</sup>

Undeterred, the Brethren’s commitment to evangelizing the “heathen” resulted from a sense of their unique place in history that germinated from a common past of oppression.<sup>6</sup> By the early fifteenth century, dissenting voices, though few in number, reverberated throughout Europe and particularly in the present-day Czech Republic and Slovakia. Political and religious transformation took on a life of its own through the influences of two powerful and charismatic leaders, Englishman John Wycliffe and Bohemian Jan Hus. The Wycliffe writings and the 1415 martyrdom of Hus at Constance led Czech reformers to denounce the current state of church and temporal affairs.<sup>7</sup>

Taking stances against armed combat and swearing of oaths, many of the followers of Hus, called Hussites, and others that sought modification in church and political dogma gained momentum in Czech circles of apostates. So by 1457, influential reform seekers and vestiges of Hussites gathered in the Barony of Lititz on the border of Silesia and Moravia and renewed their loyalties to political and moral reform. Professing the purity and piety of Hus and calling themselves the Bohemian Brethren, they formally broke with the Roman Catholic Church. In 1467 the Brethren created their own order of bishops by requesting a member of the Bohemian colony of Waldenses to consecrate one of their own.<sup>8</sup>

The Waldensians, a pre-Reformation group who had also endured persecution for their stands against bloodshed and the accumulation of worldly goods, had surfaced in the late twelfth century through the sway of wealthy Lyon merchant Peter Valdès.<sup>9</sup> Although they opposed church-state unity, Waldensians insisted on their right and duty to preach within the confines of Catholicism. Therefore, at this time the Waldensians kept their ties to the Roman Church. So the Brethren sought out Waldensian Brother Michael of Rome to ordain their priests. Through this ordination process, the Brethren elected Czech Brethren Matej of Kunwald, Elias of Chrenovice, and Tume Preloucsky to the priesthood.<sup>10</sup>

The Brethren declared that their own priestly order undeniably assured them that the origin of the Unity embodied the essence of an apostolic church and the “divine revelation of God.”<sup>11</sup> Gradually, by 1494, the Brethren’s leadership fell upon Lukas of Prague, whose pervasive influence patterned the characteristics of the church for years to come. Until his death in 1528, Lukas led the separation of the Brethren from the Hussite Church

because of what he claimed to be “moral insufficiencies” of the clergy. As time went on, the church’s branches in Bohemia, Moravia, and Poland united under one name, *Unitas Fratrum*, or the Unity of the Brethren, permitting the Unity to become a distinct but “hidden” church.<sup>12</sup>

When in 1517 Martin Luther began to preach against the sale of indulgences and the errors of Rome, culminating in his nailing the ninety-five theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, an estimated four hundred Unity societies existed in Bohemia and Moravia, with a total of two hundred thousand communicants.<sup>13</sup> Luther once said he had held a strong prejudice against the Unity, but after perusing their writings he changed his mind, knowing that the pope had declared them heretics.<sup>14</sup>

Despite chaotic conditions, the spiritual and educational life of the Unity continued, though in seclusion, for the next one hundred years. Guided by the *Ratio Disciplinae* of John Amos, called Comenius because his birthplace was Komma in Moravia, the Brethren sustained their faith in secret. This work, translated from Latin into German in 1616, set forth the constitution, ministry, ritual, and discipline of the *Unitas Fratrum*. Never losing hope for the Unity’s revival, legal and educational scholar Comenius predicted the reestablishment of the Brethren’s church.<sup>15</sup>

While the Brethren mainly worshipped in secret and remained a “hidden seed,” they withstood oppression, particularly from the Jesuit order when the Counter-Reformation began about 1560. In addition, they faced the ravages of religious wars, especially the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48), which left parts of Europe in such chaos that the Swedish ambassador to the Netherlands, German-born Ludwig Camerarius, described those who did not survive: “Happy are they who in this wretched time are already asleep in the Lord.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1648 the Treaty of Westphalia ended the war, settled religious rivalries among Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists by permitting imperial princes to decide the faith of their constituents, and kept the Holy Roman Empire intact.<sup>17</sup> Later in the century, the demoralizing havoc wrought by both war and disease caused some Protestant clergy to address the disordered state of affairs by fostering a movement called Pietism.<sup>18</sup> Pietism led to a resurgence of personal Christian commitment through stances on nonviolence and the promotion of mission work. Pietistic influence eventually connected the Brethren with their German sympathizers and gradually gave rise to the Renewed Church of the Unity, or the Moravian Church,<sup>19</sup> which Comenius in the century before had predicted would surface.<sup>20</sup>

Pietism’s influence was particularly felt in some German-speaking areas of Central Europe due to the spiritual leadership of Phillipp Jacob Spener

and his successor, August Hermann Francke.<sup>21</sup> Spener wanted to strengthen persons spiritually after the cataclysmic effects of war and disease. Because Christianity had survived these catastrophes, Spener thought that the Lutheran Church should renew itself in various secular, philanthropic avenues and social missions as well as in spiritual matters. At the outset, Pietists promoted an individual journey toward holiness and personal conversion with the hope of infusing life into a cold, lifeless church. In 1676 Spener published the influential treatise *Pia Desideria* (Pious Desires) defending the need for *collegia pietatis* (home gatherings for Bible devotions). He emphasized the use of conventicles or *ecclesiolae in ecclesia* (little churches within the church) to reach communicants spiritually on an individual basis. These conventicles caused supporters of Lutheran orthodoxy to accuse Pietists of separatism. Detractors viewed these clusters as a “fourth species of religion” banned by the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, which had permitted only Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists freedom of worship, though dictated by imperial rulers of some three hundred principalities.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of the adversarial positions of some Lutheran adherents, a few German royal courts permitted Pietism to flourish. Gradually Pietism drew supporters, and their numbers increased particularly in Saxony and Prussia. Because of population growth, Pietist and jurist Christian Thomasius convinced Prussian Elector Frederick III to open a fourth university at Halle in addition to the ones already erected at Duisberg, Königsberg, and Frankfurt an der Oder. Eventually, the Spener-Halle movement received more credibility than Lutheran orthodoxy in Berlin court circles, and consequently, Pietists filled scholarly positions at Halle. Spener’s influence increased when Francke joined him, and both envisioned a renewal of life through the *collegia pietatis* whereby these associations exhibited a similar pattern of Jesus Christ’s “flock, family, and husbandry.”<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the influence of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s missionary treatise, *Novissima Linica*, and Leibniz’s views on international peace, led Francke to conceive the idea of spreading missions overseas. In 1706 he sent Bartholomäus Ziegenbalz of Saxony and Heinrich Plütschar of Mecklenburg to the Danish East Indies.<sup>24</sup>

With missionaries and missions in place, the Francke-Halle connection took on a life of its own. The popular appeal of Pietism entered a new epoch through the influence of Count von Zinzendorf, born in 1700 in Dresden, Saxony. His father, George Ludwig, died when he was two, and his mother, Charlotte Justine, remarried and moved to Berlin. Zinzendorf spent his childhood under the pietistic persuasion of his grandmother, Countess Henrietta Catharina Gersdorf, poet, hymn writer, and Spener’s personal

friend. As a child, Zinzendorf wrote notes to his Savior and told him how his heart felt toward him; he threw the pieces of paper out of the window in the hopes that Jesus would find them.<sup>25</sup>

Zinzendorf enrolled in Francke's school, or *Pädagogium*, at age ten. While dining at Francke's table, Zinzendorf heard firsthand reports about Halle missionaries Ziegenbalz and Plütschar. At times, Ziegenbalz and some of his converts from Malabar visited Halle, where they inspired Zinzendorf to go among the "forgotten peoples of the earth."<sup>26</sup>

In 1715 Zinzendorf made a covenant with two fellow students concerning the conversion of the "heathen" through the establishment of small religious societies known as "the Order of the Grain of the Mustard Seed," or "spiritual knighthoods." They studied ways God could direct and help them carry the gospel to the heathen overseas.<sup>27</sup> After he received a law degree from the University of Wittenberg, Zinzendorf became legal councilor to the elector of Saxony and king of Poland, Augustus II the Strong, which obligated him to reside in Dresden. In 1720 he married Countess Erdmuth Dorothea von Reuss of Ebersdorf, and in 1722 he bought an estate known as Berthelsdorf, near Hennersdorf in Upper Lusatia, in the neighborhood of his grandmother.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1717, the "hidden seed" of the *Unitas Fratrum* surfaced in the Moravian villages of Fulneck and Lititz through the families of Neisser and Nitschmann. They heard about Count von Zinzendorf through the Reverend Melchior Schaeffer of Goerlitz, pastor of the Holy Trinity Church, who told them that the count might allow these families to resettle near him in the electorate of Saxony. In 1722 Melchior Zeisberger,<sup>29</sup> John Toltschig, and three persons by the name of David Nitschmann settled in Herrnhut (which means "the Lord's Watch") on the count's estate.<sup>30</sup> Uncertain about their theology, Zinzendorf went to the library at Zittau, near the border of Saxony and ancient Bohemia, and found an edition of Comenius's treatise on the Unity of the Brethren's constitution. He discovered that this document attested the validity of their long heritage as well as their adherence to Lutheran beliefs.<sup>31</sup> Gradually, Zinzendorf incorporated into his life as a Pietist nobleman an unyielding devotion to these exiles. Because of his aristocratic influence, personal wealth, charisma, and organizational skills, Zinzendorf became the uncontested founder of the Renewed Moravian Church.<sup>32</sup>

Spiritual as well as secular struggles faced these settlers. In addition to building new lives at Herrnhut, the Moravians addressed the problem of setting up a church discipline for the *Unitas Fratrum* that would not violate the law of Saxony and the Treaty of Westphalia. Guided by Zinzendorf and Lutheran pastor Johann Andreas Rothe, on August 13, 1727, the Brethren

adopted forty-two statutes, including “Manorial Injunctions and Prohibitions” and “Brotherly Agreement of the Brethren from Bohemia and Moravia and Others, Binding them to walk according to the Apostolic Rule,” creating a milestone in the history of the *Unitas Fratrum*.<sup>33</sup> At this time, the congregation felt spiritually bonded to one another, and they claimed this day as the birthday, or the spiritual baptism, of the Renewed Moravian Church. By 1731 four hundred persons from Bohemia and Moravia, including German Pietists, had asked for refuge at Herrnhut.<sup>34</sup>

Through these asylum seekers, the count discovered ways to express his pietistic beliefs. In all activities surrounding the community of Herrnhut, the prevailing atmosphere prompted the query, “Is the Lamb in your thought?” He wanted these Herrnhuters to deliver the “Lamb and Blood” evangelical message to receivers of salvation. The wounds and torture of Christ became the centerpiece of Zinzendorfian theology, which permeated liturgy, hymns, Moravian festival days, and interpersonal relationships. With their “Lamb and Blood” theology, Moravians energized their bonds with one another both through worship and exchanging personal spiritual testimonies. As he preached the brotherhood of mankind, the count demanded that his retinue convey the story of the “slaughtered Lamb” to the poor and “heathen.”<sup>35</sup>

A close-knit people, the Brethren attained trust in one another and used their courage and confidence to establish distant colonies. Reinforcing their sense of community, Moravians created an intensive personal society where every person was a “brother’s keeper.” The Brethren carefully selected members whose occupations met community needs, and those chosen for the missionary field enjoyed the greatest prestige.<sup>36</sup>

Consequently, internally motivated by an impulse to proselytize, Moravians established foreign settlements. But they bowed to external pressures as well. Oppression and the threat of persecution prompted them to emigrate overseas, and as a consequence of migration, they spread the gospel to the heathen. Their success in colonizing resulted from their stimulus to evangelize “forgotten peoples” and their impressive and resolute zealotry.<sup>37</sup> Historically, Moravians struggled to assist “backward peoples to overcome their handicaps by means of psychological and economic regeneration.”<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, since Zinzendorf believed that all humanity had worth, he conceptualized the term “heathen” as denoting cultural, not racial, differences. His first contact with a heathen convert since his days at Halle came in 1731 when he attended the coronation of Danish King Christian VI. He heard a baptized African slave, Anthony Ulrich, relate that he had a sister in St. Thomas, “one of the Carybee islands belonging to the Danes, who wanted very much to learn Christianity.”<sup>39</sup> Implementing his plans to

organize missions among “neglected people,” he told this story to his band of exiles. Zinzendorf sent the first set of Brethren missionaries, David Nitschmann and Leonard Dober, to St. Thomas in 1732 to preach among the African slaves.<sup>40</sup>

As he developed his missionary theology, Zinzendorf admonished his followers to let the Holy Spirit guide and direct the heathen. Conversion came not through human enterprise but rather through the workings of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the Holy Spirit discovered the “single souls” Christ chose for membership into his community. Zinzendorf thought these persons would be the ones who would embrace missionary preaching. Missionaries therefore became merely agents of the Holy Spirit, and the count exhorted them to preach the crucified Christ. No one could know God without Christ, as Christ was God in the flesh. Teaching and preaching that Christ had died for sinners meant that *all* peoples had sinned because of the Fall. Before Zinzendorf’s death in 1760, two hundred missionaries won an estimated three thousand converts.<sup>41</sup> Missionaries employed very serious means to determine the sincerity of conversion before administering sacraments, especially Holy Communion.<sup>42</sup>

One of these methods was *das Sprechen* (the Speaking), in which communicants, including heathen converts, had to reveal the condition of their hearts. Spiritual leaders encouraged members to expose a contrite heart, and unlike Catholic confession, divulge information beyond personal transgressions. Failure to succumb to the demands of the Speaking resulted in severe admonishments. In the case of a heathen convert, the punishment for a first offense was reproof; the second, suspension from Communion; the third, expulsion from the congregation. These Speakings promoted a stern system of moral discipline over the community by monitoring the membership’s behavior.<sup>43</sup>

Additionally, Zinzendorf found that the Pietist idea of Spener’s “little churches within the church” could be implemented by the Brethren. Consequently, idiosyncratic to the Moravians was the systematic use of the choir, a Greek term meaning “band.” Zinzendorf divided the congregation into ten choirs: single men, single women, older boys, older girls, little boys, little girls, married men, married women, widowers, and widows. Each choir had its own annual feast day that Moravians celebrated in addition to already recognized Christian holy days.<sup>44</sup>

Zinzendorf believed that the choir system corresponded to the stages of the Savior’s life from infancy to manhood. Christ became the model for most phases of human life except marriage, as Moravians applied his meritorious sacrifices to their earthly existence.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the choir system

had utilitarian purposes. It expedited travel, lessened Zinzendorf's financial outlay, and called for less land on which to live. For example, all married couples lived in their respective choirs and a small corridor connected the Married Men's Choir with the Married Women's in these dwellings.<sup>46</sup>

Choirs also served educational needs because they trained and educated the youth. Moravian offspring became property of the church, and the congregation expected them to assist the spiritual institution that had nurtured them in childhood and adolescence. These pervasive practices grew out of the belief that the Moravian Church had first claim on members' destinies. Even though these demands diluted the family circle, training and sending communicants to foreign mission fields met little or no resistance.<sup>47</sup>

In 1728 Zinzendorf also instituted the Lot, which decided the fate of every individual.<sup>48</sup> Pieces of paper marked *Ja* or *Nein* or left blank were put in a box. If a spiritual leader drew a blank, it meant the decision was deferred. The Lot managed almost every detail of congregational life from career choices to marriage partners. The church used this arbitrary system not only to assign persons to various positions in the community, but also to determine community policy, accept new arrivals into the community, and change professions. When Moravians went into the mission field, the Lot settled questions involving whether to accept Indian converts into baptism, what to name mission outposts, whether to abandon old settlements, and where to settle the Indians in Christian missions.<sup>49</sup> Because they left major decisions up to the Savior, Moravians had little appreciation for human frailty or temporal affairs.

Meanwhile, Herrnhut attracted enemies, who called the Moravians papists because of their obsession with wound liturgy and their quasimonastic choir system, and fomenters of rebellion because of their pacifism. External pressures began to mount on the Brethren as other emigrants left Bohemia and the archbishopric of Salzburg.<sup>50</sup> As early as 1731, Hapsburg animosity forced Protestants and other nonconformists out of royal hereditary territories.<sup>51</sup>

Movements of considerable numbers of peoples concerned governments in Upper Lusatia and Prussia. Consequently, the Berthelsdorf estate received official inquiries between 1731 and 1736 from the Saxon court questioning the Brethren's orthodoxy. In 1732 a royal edict directed the count to sell his lands, which he did by transferring all his property to his wife, Countess Erdmuth Dorothea. Zinzendorf's relationship with the Saxon government became further strained when the court decreed that the Moravian exiles could remain in Saxony only if the Brethren comported themselves quietly and peacefully.<sup>52</sup>

When Zinzendorf opposed the sale of troops to Holland and England for the defense of Dutch and British overseas colonies, the court forced him to resign his government post as king's councilor at Dresden. In 1736 a second Saxon visitation accused him of "harboring fanatics and promoting a Separatist movement," and a royal edict banished him from Saxony for ten years.<sup>53</sup> He was exiled to the castle Ronneburg in the principality of Wetteravia, some thirty miles east of Frankfurt am Main.<sup>54</sup> In exile, Zinzendorf continued to direct the activities of the Herrnhut followers and also of his migrating parishioners.<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1733, in the midst of controversy, the count received his Lutheran theological degree from the University of Tübingen in order to lessen tensions with Prussian King Frederick William I, who had heard unfavorable reports about him. He advised Zinzendorf to seek ordination as a bishop, and the king ordered Bishop Daniel Ernest Jablonsky, grandson of Comenius and dean of the king's chapel at the Berlin court, to confer this title on him. Zinzendorf also agreed to undergo examination for his Lutheran orthodoxy whereby authorities concluded he taught only what was "evangelic" in the church.<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, Zinzendorf's reputation as a provider for religious exiles grew, and followers of Silesian Reformation theologian Casper Schwenckfelder appealed to the count for sanctuary from Lutheran and Jesuit harassment. With increased tensions in the area, the kingdom of Saxony decreed that the Schwenckfeldians, Anabaptist mystics, had to leave by April of 1733. Zinzendorf, in response to advertisements by reform-minded General James Oglethorpe, suggested to them that they settle in the newly established colony of Georgia. The count sent his agent, Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg, to London to arrange for a grant of five hundred acres. The Schwenckfeldians got as far as Holland, where they heard rumors that the Georgia colony debtors would actually sell them as slaves. They changed their destination to Pennsylvania.<sup>57</sup>

When the Schwenckfeldians defaulted, Zinzendorf, with his Brethren poised to go abroad and evangelize the heathen, arranged for Moravians to emigrate with the following concessions from the Georgia trustees: free exercise of religion and the right to preach the gospel to the heathens. Because of their pacifist stand, they had to pay a double tax during times of war. In 1734 the Lot determined how the Brethren should immigrate to Georgia: "Shall we go to Georgia only as colonists or as missionaries?" The proposal came back "as missionaries also."<sup>58</sup>

The Georgia trustees promised Zinzendorf a grant of five hundred acres. If the Moravians improved their holdings, the trustees assured them

they would allot each Moravian an additional twenty acres.<sup>59</sup> Ten persons set sail to Georgia, including Spangenberg himself.<sup>60</sup> When the Moravians began to settle British North America, the count's idea of a congregation in diaspora also appealed then Saxon elector and Polish king Augustus III, because some of the members would operate mainly outside Saxony's borders. To protect his Pilgrim Congregation from further oppression, he sought out governments that were tolerant or indifferent to their beliefs.<sup>61</sup> Implementing his mission design for North America, the count sent missionaries to evangelize the Creeks.<sup>62</sup> While self-preservation brought them to the New World, reaching out to Indians induced them to remain.<sup>63</sup>

Zinzendorf instructed his followers to teach the heathen to fend for themselves and to earn their own living. In addition, Zinzendorf told his flock to earn esteem among the heathen with humility. Lastly, he informed them to wear blinders and remain blind to every danger, snare, and conceit.<sup>64</sup>

Oglethorpe, anxious to attract colonizers with evangelical enthusiasm, knew of some desire among the Creeks for a mission. The general related that a "little Indian Nation" about fifty miles from his camp had expressed to him the desire to learn about the Christian religion. He also reported that a group of Lower Creek Indians lived within a half mile of Savannah, and the "king" came to church occasionally with his nephew and expressed a desire to learn English.<sup>65</sup> The Georgia trustees agreed to pay for the construction of the schoolhouse at their mission, Irene, which stood one mile above Savannah.

Husband-and-wife team Peter and Catharina Rose went among the Lower Creeks to learn their language and to teach the English alphabet to both Indian boys and girls.<sup>66</sup> At first everything about the mission was encouraging, as Creek children readily learned to read and write English and older Indians looked on with wonder and approval, stimulating the missionaries to master the Creek language. The Creeks lent them five acres of land for a garden that Peter Rose cleared and planted. Hearing about the success of the mission, the count wrote from Germany to Tomochitti, chief of the Creek town that hosted Irene, commending him for his interest in the Christian message and urging him to accept the "Great Word." Spangenberg recorded that Tomochitti "is a grave wise man, resembling one of the old Philosophers."<sup>67</sup>

It is unknown whether any Creeks converted, but by 1736 there were thirty-one Moravian missionaries in Georgia.<sup>68</sup> War clouds began to gather in the fall of 1739, and Tomochitti died in October of that year. England commenced hostilities against Spain, and the War of Jenkins's Ear (1739–42) ensued. The Moravians refused to bear arms and enter military service for the