

IV.3.a MoraviansThe Moravians

The Moravian bodies included traces of evangelicalism in the Reformation period. Their great interest was in piety of life and as such they were often introspective and mystical. They embodied a true sense of community, after the Mennonite pattern to some degree, and showed a great interest in the needs of others. Mystical ideals, in terms of modern merchandising, look well on the shelf but do not always sell well to others, so the movement remained in itself rather small but in its influence very large. The persons influenced by the Moravian ideal far outnumbered the actual fellowship. The Moravians quickly came to the new world and this part of the country soon saw two of their pioneer communities (Bethlehem and Emmaus, etc.) while another body settled in North Carolina (Salem...today, Winston-Salem). Their missionaries were just about everywhere...particularly in the harder Indian regions and lesser travelled places.

Count Zinzendorf

Zinzendorf (1700-1760) was not a Moravian in the proper sense, but in a public sense he embodied most of their goals. A Saxon of noble birth, he was marked by a Pietistic background from which he wandered until experiencing a real salvation and then a return to the general faith of his forebears. He was a man of strong character, not unreasonable in spirit, but rather determined in a course of action and as with men of that sort, the determination increased with age rather than diminished. Having inherited a vast estate in Saxony, Herrnhut, Zinzendorf opened it to the religious pilgrim Moravians. They settled on his property and founded a community. The essential leader, Christian David, had a profound influence on Zinzendorf and the unpretentious Moravian economies of living likewise became favored by the Count.

The movement grew from 1722 to 1727 and more or less gained its separate entity status at the later year. Zinzendorf, however, was a Lutheran and did not favor a separate church...he tried to sell the Moravians on the idea of forming a "church within a church" (ecclesiola in ecclesia) and thereby reforming Lutheranism. It was an idea shared by Wesley, incidentally, but did not work well for either. Zinzendorf was accordingly in a strange bind...wanting to remain a Lutheran but admiring and encouraging the Moravian ideal.