Compass Life Adult Sunday School

Pastor Pete

May 3, 2020

**“The Men Who Brought Christ to America”**

**Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf**

**I. Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760)**

The Zinzendorf family belonged to one of the most noble families in the German States. At the Reformation they became \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Zinzendorf's father was in the service of the Saxon Elector at Dresden at the time of his youngest son's birth. He died six weeks later and the child was sent to live with his maternal grandmother and an aunt. His parents were very interested in pietism and actually had Philipp Jakob Spener appointed as his godfather. His mother married again when he was four years old, and he was educated under the charge of his pietistic Lutheran grandmother, who did much to shape his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. His school days were spent at Halle where Pietism was strong, and in 1716, he went to the University of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to study law so as to be ready for a diplomatic career. Three years later, he was sent to travel in the Netherlands, in France, and in various parts of Germany, where he made the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of men distinguished for practical goodness and belonging to a variety of churches. He bought the Berthelsdorf estate from his grandmother, as he wanted to demonstrate practical application of Spener's Pietist ideals. Zinzendorf sought to create a Christian association that would feature biblical preaching, by distributing tracts and books and by demonstrating practical benevolence might awaken lifeless Lutheranism.

**II. Herrnhut (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)**

The estate he purchased was used as a refuge for Christians from Bohemia and Moravia who were fleeing persecution from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ church. In 1722 the Brethren took refuge at Zinzendorf ’s estate. Although the Moravian church did not become a separate denomination until the 1740s, it has roots in the fourteenth century Hussite movement associated with the dissenter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Often cited as a pre-Reformation Protestant, Jan Hus was one of the earliest critics of abuses that were present in Roman Catholicism at that time. Hus’s followers eventually formed a movement known as the Unity of the Brethren, which continued as an early “Protestant” movement. However, the movement was often persecuted and existed primarily as an underground movement. These thoughts took a practical turn from his connection with remnants of the Bohemian Brethren (Unitas Fratrum). Zinzendorf offered asylum to a number of persecuted wanderers from Moravia and Bohemia (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_), and permitted them to build the village of Herrnhut, on a corner of his estate of Berthelsdorf. Most of the initial refugees who came to this asylum were recruited by Christian David and came from areas where the early Protestant groups such as the Unitas Fratrum had been dominant prior to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ War. The Moravian missionary movement arose out of a seventeenth-and eighteenth-century movement known as Pietism. Pietism was a renewal movement that emphasized \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Bible study, sermons, and the role of the \_\_\_\_\_\_. Many of the key themes of Pietism are found in Philip Jacob Spener’s classic work Pia Desideria (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_), published in 1675. Sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation did not produce any missionaries. Under the guidance, itinerancy, and mobilization of Zinzendorf—who in 1737 was consecrated as the bishop of the church—the Unitas Fratum, now known as the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, become a major force for world evangelization. They eventually sent hundreds of missionaries all over the world, including the Caribbean, North and South America, the Arctic, Africa, the Middle East, and India. The Moravians were deeply committed to pray for the evangelization of the world. The dramatic move of God in their midst on August 13, 1727, was so profound that they continued taking turns in maintaining a prayer vigil. This prayer vigil was maintained twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for more than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years. The entire “great century” of Protestant missions is birthed out of the fervent prayers of the Moravians at Herrnhut. The Moravians were the first modern group of Christians to fully recognize that the missionary enterprise was the primary work of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not just a few selected specialists.

**III. Zinzendorf Comes to America**

Zinzendorf's interest in missionary work was sparked by meeting two Inuit children converted by Hans Egede’s mission in and a freed slave, Anthony Ulrich, who told of terrible oppression among the slaves in . In 1732, the community began sending out missionaries among slaves in the Danish-governed West Indies and the Inuit of Greenland. Zinzendorf's personal and familial relation to the court of and to King Christian VI facilitated such endeavors. Because of their history of persecution and displacement as refugees, the Moravians were accustomed to adversity and travel. Therefore, they made excellent missionaries. They mobilized the laity in big numbers and refused to accept the idea that ministry should only be done by . The Moravians were self-supporting missionaries*.* The Moravians understood that a professionalized missionary force would require extensive financial and logistical support to maintain. To support full-time professional missionaries would require up to of the church to remain home in order to generate sufficient disposable income to support the missionaries. Instead, the Moravians opted for a lay mission force that would be completely self-supporting through the practice of their own trade. The missionary work in the West Indies had been hugely controversial in Europe, with many accusing Zinzendorf of simply sending young missionaries off . Zinzendorf decided to place himself on the line, and in 1739 left Europe to visit the mission work on St. Thomas. Convinced that he himself might not come back, he preached his "last sermon" and left his with his wife. The visit was a huge success, however, and enabled him to free some of the missionaries who had been illegally jailed. However, the missionaries' mistreatment by the plantation managers established their credibility with , and after Zinzendorf's visit the mission work was much more successful. In 1741, Zinzendorf visited Pennsylvania ( ), thus becoming one of the few 18th century European nobles to have actually set foot in the Americas. In addition to visiting leaders in Philadelphia such as , he met with the leaders of the Iroquois and, with the assistance of Conrad Weiser reached agreements for the free movement of Moravian missionaries in the area. The relationship between Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) and the Moravians began through his work as a printer. Franklin owned a print shop in Philadelphia where many of the early Moravian publications were printed. When Count Zinzendorf visited America between December 1741 and January 1743 he held meetings with representatives of different religious groups. These were the so-called Pennsylvania Synods. Benjamin Franklin and the minutes of these conferences. Missionary colonies had by this time been settled in the West Indies (1732), in Greenland (1733), amongst the North American Indians (1735). The Moravians were most successful in Pennsylvania, where the charter of the colony provided religious freedom. The towns of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Emmaus, and Lititz were all founded by Moravians. A large tract of land was named die Wachau, or Wachovia (Winston-Salem). In 1741, Zinzendorf’s mission found a community on Christmas Eve, and named it Bethlehem, after the biblical town in Israel. In 1749, Zinzendorf leased Lindsey House, a large manor in Chelsea built on the estate of Sir Thomas More to be a headquarters for work in England. He lived there until 1755.

**V. Later Years**

The Moravian missionaries were the first large-scale movement. They sent out the first missionaries when there were only 300 inhabitants in Herrnhut. Within 30 years, the church sent hundreds of Christian missionaries all over the world. They were the first to send as missionaries, and the first Protestant denomination to minister to . The community in Herrnhut, from which almost all these colonies had been sent out, had no money of its own, and Zinzendorf had almost exclusively furnished its expenses. His frequent journeys from home made it almost impossible for him to look after his private affairs; he was compelled from time to time to raise money by loans, and about 1750 was almost reduced to bankruptcy. Four years later, on 17 June 1756 he lost his wife Erdmuthe Dorothea, who had been his counselor and confidante in all his work. On 27 June 1757 Zinzendorf married Anna Nitschmann, with whom he had been very close for many years. The marriage was not publicized broadly since Anna was a . Three years later, overcome with his labors, he fell ill and died (on 9 May 1760), leaving Bishop Johannes von Watteville, who had married his eldest daughter Benigna, to take his place at the head of the community. His wife, Anna, died 12 days later.

**5/10 “The Men Who Brought Christ to America (John Witherspoon)”**