

To Cover, Uncover, Discover, and Recover Theology

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In a sense, my title for this essay is playing with words. But in another sense this is what often happens as the church gains insights, calls them into question because of new options and changing historical and cultural contexts, and then (if there is persistent value in them) uncovers and discovers their value, and recovers their meaning. Recovery is never mere repetition of the past, but if it happens it usually does so with renewed vitality born of a recovered sense of relevance and with transformation into a living component of the present rather than a mere relic of the past.

Covering and Recovering Moravian Theology.....	1
The Old Brethren, 1457-1495.....	4
Period of Lutheran Orientation, 1531-1546.....	4
Era of Matthian Cervenka and John Blahoslav, 1546-1571	5
The Last 50 Years in Bohemia and Moravia, 1571-1620.....	5
The Exile and Comenius, 1620-1721	5
Era of Zinzendorf, 1722-1760	5
The Modern Period, 1857-Present.....	7
The Authority of Scripture: A Paradigm of the Recovery of Theology	9
Appendix A	13
The Theological Task A paper of the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission The Theological Task As Understood Within the Moravian Tradition.....	13
The Moravian Perspective.....	13
Historical Background.....	14
Appendix B	17
The Ground of the Unity	17

Covering and Recovering Moravian Theology

The Moravian Church in North America is in the process of recovering its tradition from both the Ancient Moravian Church and the Zinzendorffian period.¹ The appreciation of the heritage of the Ancient Moravian Church was twice removed for most North Americans. The first is the 100 years gap between the Ancient and Renewed Moravian Church, which made it seem as if everything had really begun in the time of Zinzendorf. Second is the separation Americans felt from Europe, which made the Ancient

Church seem most remote. The Ancient Church was joined to the Renewed Moravian Church by the emigration of persons with its heritage from Moravia to Saxony and then by the amazing thread of the continuing existence of a few congregations in Poland and the Episcopacy. But even with the presence of those from Moravia in Herrnhut (Saxony), the recovery of this heritage within the Renewed Moravian Church became a matter of uncovering and rediscovering what was there. Those from Moravia had limited awareness of their own tradition. And then they had to intentionally seek a way to retain its values within the broader Renewed Church which was, as a whole, in the process of discovering itself, strongly drawing upon Lutheran and mystical traditions.

After the Zinzendorf period there was a century of control of the North American Provinces from Europe until 1857. This management limited Moravian growth in North America and left an unpleasant taste. Zinzendorf and his ideas were often wrongly seen as the cause for the slow growth of the Church, rather than post-Zinzendorf conservatism. Even within my lifetime I heard older ministers and even bishops lay the blame on Zinzendorf for the smallness and limits of the Moravian Church. After World War I there was also a gradual decline of those who could read German and who could evaluate Zinzendorf's thought on their own. It is telling that while two lives of Zinzendorf are available in English, only nine sermons have been translated into contemporary English and my study of Zinzendorf, *An Ecumenical Theology of the Heart*, is the first systematic presentation of his theology in English.

Following the death of Zinzendorf in 1760 the Church entered upon a time of restructuring and preparing for a future without his leadership. The Synods of 1764 and 1769 (known as constitutional synods) sought both to preserve and modify Zinzendorf's insights in "more acceptable" directions. They reorganized and centralized leadership and separated the finances of the Church from the finances of the Zinzendorf family -- thus assuming responsibility for considerable debt. The Synod of 1775 continued the process of centralization and passed a limited doctrinal statement that retained the essential of the heart relationship with the Savior while indicating five chief doctrines. Unfortunately these five chief doctrines were translated into English as "essentials" and for a long time caused confusion in N. America about the traditional Moravian view of the essential being the relationship with God. The Moravian Church continued to adhere to the Augsburg Confession as its primary creed, which also gained it acceptance in its largely Lutheran context. A. G. Spangenberg published his *Exposition of Christian Doctrine* in 1779, a statement which was intended to present to Moravians a scheme of Christian doctrine expressed in biblical language and to vindicate them before the public. In 1775 he published his *Life of Zinzendorf* which somewhat tamed Zinzendorf's emphases but also provided the Church with a knowledge of his life and contributions. Christian Gregor's hymnbook, published in 1778, was an important revision of Moravian hymnody. Samuel Lieberkühn produced a catechism. The Moravian Church could now approach its future for it had revised and made explicit its heritage in ways considered appropriate and acceptable within its context. But this process both uncovered and covered Zinzendorf.

Europe soon entered some difficult years marked by nationalistic rivalries, economic competition, and war, much of it involving England and France. The continent was swept up in the Seven Years War, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic period. In North America there were the French and Indian Wars and the American Revolution. The Industrial Revolution, which began in the latter half of the 18th century, was producing economic change. This affected viability of the production of goods in the Moravian settlements. Rationalism was challenging religious faith. In times of uncertainty and change religious conservatism often dominates. Faith and religious experience for many seemed less important and religious institutions, rather than serving religious reality, became the reality to be served. A case in point is the Moravian Synod of 1801.

Any attempt to introduce innovations was seen as revolutionary. Laypersons seeking a voice were opposed and played a minimal role, which was contrary to the role of laity during the time of Zinzendorf. Disappointment with the quality of life in the Choirs (groupings of men, women, and children, by age and marital status, providing pastoral care, living and economic arrangements) and quality of life within congregations resulted in attempts to control this by more rigid discipline. Central to this process was the development of the concept of a faithful group within the church, constituting its spiritual core and maintaining its spirituality. The Synod of 1818 further developed the idea of the faithful group into seeing the Church as two concentric circles. The outer circle may be called the Moravian Church, and into it members enter by birth, baptism and confirmation and into it applicants are received. This outer circle receives Communion four times a year. But then there is an inner circle of persons who give evidence of a more earnest religious disposition. They would take Communion more frequently, have a special fellowship of prayer, and membership in the church council and on the boards would be limited to them. Some even suggested that the Seminary be closed and theological training be secured through apprenticeships with pastors. Fortunately the latter was rejected and the Seminary was retained, becoming not only a place of theological education, but a place where the Moravian heritage might be recovered and expressed for a new day.²

The Moravian Church of the 19th century in America went through an especially important transition. Constitutional changes begun at the Synod of 1841 and concluded in the Synod of 1857 granted the North American and British Moravian Provinces full autonomy, a shift that took place without fracturing the unity of the wider church. These changes meant that Moravians in the United States were now permitted to manage their own affairs.

In the North American Provinces Church extension, suitable to their context, was evolving since the 1830s, following immigrants with Moravian connections. Now the American Moravians could follow where they understood the Savior called them and in 1849 the Bethlehem Home Mission Society was formed. In the 1850s church leaders decided to end congregational industries and exclusive communal settlements, such as Bethlehem and Lititz, thus opening these communities to non-Moravians. With these new directions in N. America the past was valued very little and the church's history and theological tradition was seen more as a hindrance than a resource.

Eventually in the 20th century it was often said that the Moravian Church did not have a theology, that what was important was only the relationship with Jesus. The evangelical religious movements in N. America became the climate from which Moravians adopted their views. If a church is without a theology, it usually receives one from outside itself without conscious choice, even if the theology is only implicit.

Thus the process of the Moravian theological tradition is like a familiar form of African sculpture. It is a carving of a person standing upon the ancestors, evidently a traditional subject. No life is really a solitary life, even for those who would reject their tradition. The hands of one are over the eyes of another. The hand of another seems to poke into the eye of one. One near the bottom is bowed under the weight of someone who stands on his head. Some seem to have no idea they are being used to support others, but one breaks into a broad smile. Their interrelationships are approached with appreciation, but also humor. I do think a "lightness" is crucial in approaching the ancestors so that through them one gives birth to new and living forms. The pyramid of ancestors in the sculpture reaches up until one stands at the pinnacle who someday will provide the shoulders on which the next generation may stand, only he does not know that yet. He only glances slightly down to see from whence he came.

The process of the covering, uncovering, discovering and recovering of the Moravian tradition would look something like the historical outline that follows. With the Moravian understanding of the single

“essential” as relationship with God, the shifting of theological perspectives from time to time seems rather natural as the Church moves from one age and context to another. Following the outline, I conclude the essay with a discussion of the process in 1993-5 that recovered the Moravian understanding of Scripture in the face of the understanding of it which had developed in the North American Context.

The Ancient Moravian Church

The Old Brethren, 1457-1495

The Old Brethren were inheritors of more radical (Taborite) forms of the Hussite Reformation and the teaching of Petr Chelčický. This was the era of Gregory (Rehor) who sought a "true" Christianity in separation from society and obedience to the Sermon on the Mount. They first called themselves "Brethren of the Law of Christ," later adopting the Latin name *Unitas Fratrum* (Unity of Brethren). In 1467 ministerial orders were secured from the Waldensians. By 1494 there was a serious division between those who wished to remain separated from society and those who sought more relevance to their culture. One of the distinctive elements of the theology developed by the Ancient Moravian Church was the division of the elements of Christian faith and life into *essentials*, *ministerials* (that which served the essentials), and *incidentals* (the way things were done). The essentials were the Triune God who offered relationship to be responded to in a triune way: faith, love and hope. Although the components of this may be described as essentials, it was really one Essential: the believer's relationship with God. All else was ministerial and incidental. These distinctions have in varying degrees been maintained down to the present. I would call this an epistemological distinction which defines the nature, possibilities and limits of what can be known

The Era of Brother Lukáš, 1495-1531

Lukáš was a most significant and formative theologian for the Ancient Moravian Church and his theology continued to play a significant role throughout the Ancient Moravian Church's history.³ He helped the Church move from a rural sect into its society and cities and encouraged opening the door of the Church to the nobility. He formulated a theology which affirmed the distinction of things essential for salvation and those helpful for salvation (ministerials). The essentials were in the hand of God and cannot be within the power of people or church. He placed a greater emphasis on the benefits of the Lord's coming to earth and his passion and thus on grace, and with this balanced the moralistic and perfectionistic concerns of the Old Brethren. However, his expressions were scholastic and he still retained the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. Lukáš also initiated contacts with the "Second Reformation" of Luther and Calvin, although he maintained his independence.

Period of Lutheran Orientation, 1531-1546

Following the death of Lukáš contacts with the Lutheran Reformation flourished. Under the leadership of John Roh and John Augusta the Moravian Church was strongly influenced by the Lutheran Reformation, establishing contacts with Luther and producing a Confession in 1535, informed by Lutheranism, to which Luther himself wrote a Preface in 1538. During this time it was decided that the writings of Lukáš were not to be binding.

Era of Matthian Cervenka and John Blahoslav, 1546-1571

Pupils of Melanchthon, Luther's successor, advocated a return to Lukáš and less passive attitude to society. At this time members of the *Unitas Fratrum* moved into Poland and East Prussia because of persecution in Czech lands. Greater contacts also developed with the Reformed tradition. The Sendomir Consensus between the Moravians, Reformed and Lutherans was developed in Polish-Lithuanian territory in 1570.

The Last 50 Years in Bohemia and Moravia, 1571-1620

The Czech nobility was influential in leadership during this era. There was a stronger turn to Calvinism, greater appreciation of the Old Testament, publishing of the Kralice Bible (equivalent in importance to the Czech language as Luther's translation of the Bible into German), and a relaxing of ascetic attitudes to life. The horrendous Thirty Years War, which began in 1619, brought the institutional existence of the Ancient Church to an end, although it continued to some extent in Poland to the time of its renewal by Zinzendorf.

The Exile and Comenius, 1620-1721

This is often called the time of the "hidden seed" when the Moravian traditions were maintained in secret. Bishop John Amos Comenius (Jan Amos Komenský - died 1670) dedicated much of his life to keeping the heritage of the Ancient Church alive, preserving it for such as Zinzendorf who would rediscover it in the future. Comenius worked on improving education as a theologian. He sought to bring together Scripture, reason and emotion to solve the questions of his time. For him faith in Christ as king was central and he saw this as soon to be expressed in the near end of time. Because of the nearness of Christ's second coming, he saw no period of church history as standard for all. Only the age to come provided the paradigm of the church. In 1662 Comenius published the last Confession of the Unity.

It is important to note that theology in the Ancient Moravian Church was more of a communal rather than an individual enterprise. This was also true of the Renewed Church after Zinzendorf. Historian Rudolf Ríčan observes:

Whether or not the Unity of Brethren in the course of its history ... had enough theological leaders with creative powers of thought, it still had in all periods of its development, a unique quality in that it appreciated theology as a congregational, communal function of the whole church. It was properly a function of all servants of the Word. Because of this, their theological statements time and again are for the most part those of synods and sessions of the Inner Council rather than the result of individual speculative effort.⁴

The Renewed Moravian Church

Era of Zinzendorf, 1722-1760

At first the Renewed Moravian Church would be best described as a fellowship of committed persons from Berthelsdorf and Herrnhut, under the guidance of the Lutheran pastor and under the oversight of Zinzendorf. This fellowship came to include persons from Lutheran, Moravian and Reformed traditions. Zinzendorf was a Lutheran Pietist who sought to forge creative answers to questions posed by the Enlightenment. The Moravian members of this community, who began their migrations to Zinzendorf's estate in 1722, insisted on the revival of the ancient traditions which Zinzendorf, with

great hesitation, ultimately came to feel was God's will. While they seemed to bring with them a Reformed orientation, they brought with them more of a dawning awareness of their history than their former creeds.

The Renewed Church needed to sensitively relate itself to the existing creeds and catechisms of the state churches. Consecration of Moravian bishops was received through the last remaining bishops of the *Unitas Fratrum*. This was an extremely creative period, during which the Moravian Church spread to many lands. Zinzendorf's ideas, his own blend of Pietism, Luther and Mysticism, are formative for this period, though not always fully understood or accepted. Bishop Spangenberg, his historian and apologist, sought to present Zinzendorf as more orthodox Lutheran than he was (though clearly Zinzendorf was committed to the Augsburg Confession and the doctrine and meaning of justification by grace).

Zinzendorf's significant interest in Roman Catholicism and mysticism has been played down. His acceptance of historical criticism regarding Scripture creates discomfort. Thus it has been left to the 20th century to rediscover the breadth of his interests. He used the developing Moravian Church as a lab in which to experiment with his theological understandings and pietistic concerns for the creation of a true Christian community, what he came to call "*Gemeine of God in the Spirit*".

Zinzendorf developed an interesting approach to theological language. One may speak the language of a particular tradition, but when one speaks out of the reality about which one would speak, this is *Gemeintheologie*. *Gemeintheologie* is theology which arises out of a religious community which seeks to express the reality which lives within it. Within this community various theological languages or systems of description can be utilized without being inappropriate or contradictory as would be the case if one felt that language had a precision, referring to a system of thought, rather than a more mystical reality.

Otto Uttendörfer notes:

That is the miracle of community theology (*Gemeintheologie*) which humans cannot understand, i.e., how such a countless number of opinions can be under one hat and be brought into a system and still people, who have their origin in a particular understanding, do not therefore need to change all their opinions and styles of speaking, but perhaps to present the matter in various ways, yet to believe, feel and have the same thing. We know from experience that all people whose ideas are gathered in their heart, think out of one principle and speak from one mouth.⁵

Reorganization, Stabilization, Expanding Influence, 1760-1857

The Synods of 1764 and 1769 (known as constitutional synods) after Zinzendorf's death sought both to preserve and modify Zinzendorf's insights in "more acceptable" directions, reorganized and centralized leadership in the Church, and separated the finances of the Church from the finances of the Zinzendorf family, assuming responsibility for considerable debt. The Synod of 1775 continued the process of centralization and passed a limited doctrinal statement. The Moravian Church continued to adhere to the Augsburg Confession as its primary creed, which also gained it acceptance in its largely Lutheran context.

Various persons provided resources for the future. Bishop A. G. Spangenberg published his *Idea Fidei Fratrum* in 1779 (a doctrinal statement) which was intended to present to Moravians a scheme of Christian doctrine expressed in biblical language and to vindicate them before the public. In 1775 he

published his *Life of Zinzendorf*. Gregor's hymnbook was published in 1778 as an important revision of Moravian hymnody. Samuel Lieberkühn produced a catechism.

Moravian schools flourished. There were pressures to modernize and the great settlement congregations, the communal form of church life, gradually declined. Such a noted theologian as Friedrich Schleiermacher, who called himself a "Moravian of a higher order" and attended Moravian Schools, expressed a critical reaction to this period as does Hans-Walther Erbe in his work on the Moravian Settlement of Herrnhag and the creativity of the "Sifting Time" (a name given to a period of mystical excess). Erbe describes the losses experienced in the transition to the post-Zinzendorffian period:

The Moravians, who previously had spread abroad so much noise, so much excitement and unrest, the Church which had been like a volcano, now became - it is scarcely to be believed - the "*Welt der Stillen im Lande*" (the world of the quiet in the land), a piece of German Biedermeier, middle class and noble, closed in upon itself in its Settlement Congregations, these quiet and proper villages, simple and distinguished, separate from the greater world, at the same time intimate and world-wide, with its culture in life-style and the arts worthy of respect, in constantly new realizations of community (*Gemeine*) shaped by its focus upon itself.⁶

The Modern Period, 1857-Present

As noted earlier, at the General Synod of 1857 decentralization of Church government took place that gave Moravian Provinces in Great Britain and North America more autonomy. The two North American Provinces (Northern and Southern) were constituted at this time. This autonomy also meant, however, that England and North America were no longer bound to the Augsburg Confession. The desires of the N. American Provinces to engage in home mission activities were also now acknowledged.

North American Moravians often wrongly blamed Zinzendorf for the conservative period after his death and what interest there was in his theology waned with the loss of the use of German. On the European continent there was a new interest in Zinzendorf in the last quarter of the 19th century, exemplified in Hermann Plitt's *Zinzendorfs Theologie* and the development by the 20th century of a vast body of secondary literature. It is only recently that the North American Moravian Church is now developing its own cadre of Zinzendorf scholars. Those who are working on Zinzendorf are finding more than they expected, views that were not much discussed, and are realizing that the conservatism of the Church in the Post-Zinzendorf era was not due to Zinzendorf.

Significant matters with which the Church had to deal are the development of liberal theology, the ecumenical movement, two world wars, developing secularism and pluralism, the decline of the position and influence of established Christianity, and the development of modern technology. Decentralization and the barriers of language have frequently allowed the Provinces to undergo indigenous theological developments only vaguely in touch with the heritage of the Ancient Church or Zinzendorf. Since the Second World War the former mission Provinces have been granted status equal to those in Europe, England and North America, and the majority of Moravians are now in the developing world. Unity Synods, the governing body of the international Moravian Church, are strongly influenced by this developing world. The Church in Tanzania alone is much larger than the Moravian Church in North America, Europe and Great Britain together.

Various issues produced greater attention to theology in the N. American Provinces in the 20th century. Beginning with an attempt to verify the theological unity of the N. American Provinces after a failed attempt at union, an Interprovincial Theological Commission produced a statement in 1979 indicating the two provinces to be in theological agreement. In 1987 the two Provinces established an Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission which was initially asked:

1. To draft a response to the Northern Provincial Synod request (1986) on the overlapping issues of Baptism, Confirmation and Communion.
2. To inform the Interprovincial Hymnal Revision Committee of the implication of proposed changes for the preparation of corresponding liturgies.
3. To assist Provincial and Interprovincial agencies in the development and printing of corresponding instructional materials on the basis of proposed changes.
4. To enable our provinces to continue a response to the W.C.C. [World Council of Churches] Faith and Order Commission's Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.
5. To develop a more inclusive network for our provinces with N.C.C. [National Council of Churches] and W.C.C. Faith and Order Commissions and other ecumenical agencies.

From the work of Faith and Order came the position paper: "The Theological Task As Understood Within the Moravian Tradition" (1990). Because of its importance much of it is affixed at the end as Appendix A. Its authors hoped that this would provide the Commission with guidelines for doing theology in the future in harmony with Moravian methodology. This paper states:

Although it has often been said that the Moravian Church does not have a theology or is not theologically inclined, it is our understanding that it has a very definite theology. In its long history it has variously had its unique stance, also being influenced by the theological expressions of the other theological traditions: in the late 16th and early 17th century the Ancient Church was decidedly affected by the Reformed tradition, while in 18th Century Germany the Renewed Church was quite Lutheran, affirming the special role of the Augsburg Confession.

Generally, sometimes more and sometimes less consciously, there has been an awareness of epistemological issues which has decidedly affected the position of the Moravian Church on theology. It is well expressed in the statement on theology in 1979 by the Joint Theological Commission of the Northern and Southern Provinces, U.S.A.:

Theological reflection in the Moravian tradition is not to be understood as an attempt to arrive at final answers but is a way of thinking about God and His relationship to us so that He can, through His Spirit, draw us to Himself, and to His Son, and we can know Him as the Source of our living. Such reflection should lead to sharing of ideas and experiences, articulation of our faith, new levels of trust toward each other as persons through whom God partially discloses Himself in various ways, stimulation of the Christian life and our attentive waiting upon God for His clarification of our understanding.⁷

We should also recognize that, as in much of Moravian history, Moravian theology has been defined in dialogue with others. Such a dialogical process discovers commonalities, points up distinctives, and enables refinement. The Moravian Church has been represented on the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches for some years. In December of 1992 the two North American Moravian Provinces began a Bilateral Dialogue with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) which sought to explore a relationship with the Lutheran tradition that existed for much of our European history. The Consensus paper, entitled "Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion" is

available from Augsburg Press. This has now been approved by the two Moravian Provinces and by the Church-wide Assembly of the ELCA. To dialogue Moravian Theology with the careful theology of the Lutheran tradition was understood to be an important part of the recovery of our heritage. The Moravian Church in England recently concluded a Dialogue with the Anglican Church (called The Fetter Lane Agreement), and there are now the beginnings of a Dialogue with the Episcopal Church in North America.

It has been my own hope to do my share in making available to English speaking Moravians the Moravian and Zinzendorffian heritage. In my own case it took my professor at Princeton during my graduate studies to introduce me to the theology of Zinzendorf, something the Moravian Church did not do for me. I have spent now some 40 years working on the good Count and have been privileged to publish the first treatment of his theology in English. It is interesting that my book is also being translated into German. Though there is vast Zinzendorffian scholarship on the Continent, to which I am deeply indebted, I understand that part of what has drawn Europeans to my work is that my studies are not so much purely historical but deal with relevance and the reshaping of the tradition for contemporary usage.

The Authority of Scripture: A Paradigm of the Recovery of Theology

In a preliminary way the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission of the Moravian Church had raised the question of the nature of Scripture's authority in its 1990 position paper on "The Theological Task."⁸

I would like now to share the process the Moravian Church went through in 1993-1995 to recover its understanding of Scripture and to change its doctrinal statement the *Ground of the Unity*. This will illustrate in a very specific way how the insights of our tradition became covered and recovered.

The doctrinal statement *The Ground of the Unity*⁹ originated in the European Continental Province of the Moravian Church after World War II and during the Communist control of East Germany. The Synod of 1954 appointed a committee which reported to the Synod of the two continental Districts in 1956 before the Berlin Wall went up. It was then returned to the Provincial executive to be taken to the first General or international Synod since the War, to be held in Bethlehem, PA, in 1957. After the tragedy of the War there was a real need for a statement of faith that would weld together the international Moravian Church. It also expressed the desire to prevent the identification of Christians with any political system, such as the German Christians with National Socialism during the Hitler period. The section on God's Word and Doctrine stated that "The Holy Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament are and abide the only source and rule of faith, doctrine, and life of the *Unitas Fratrum*." Never before had Moravians identified Scripture as the "only source." A more usual statement was the wording of the Synod of 1782: "Holy Scripture is the ground of our teaching and the only rule of our faith and life." The word "only" is descriptive of "rule" and the word "source" does not appear.

At the General Synod of 1957 the statement from Europe was modified and approved, and named the *Ground of the Unity*. As I explored the origins and intent of the *Ground of the Unity* I was amazed to learn that its history had never been written. There was still one living member of the European committee that had formulated its draft, and he was able to provide information on the developments prior to the General Synod as was the Bethlehem Archives on the process of this doctrinal statement at the General Synod.

The statement of the *Ground* regarding Scripture, read from an evangelical or fundamentalist perspective in the North American context, indicated Scripture as our only source of religious knowledge, eliminating tradition, reason and experience. The Europeans indicated that this had never been its intent.

The nature of Scripture's authority was becoming a sensitive issue in North America because of its relationship to the Church's perspective on homosexuality. The Provincial Elders Conference of the Southern Province, its executive body, had requested the Faith and Order Commission to examine the issue of the ordination of homosexuals, and it was determined that the nature of Scripture's authority should first be discussed. After the Commission reported to the Church what it "could and could not say" on the issue of homosexuality, debate began to appear in the Moravian magazine in letters which raised the question of faithfulness to the Moravian statements about Scripture. The September 1993 issue of the *Moravian* was dedicated to perspectives on the nature of the authority of Scripture. In response to this debate the Bishops of the Northern Province in 1993 issued a Pastoral Letter which called the Church to unity, affirmed the role of Scripture, and suggested the use of "primary source" instead of "only source." For those unfamiliar with the function of bishops in the Moravian Church, they are elected for life to ordain and function as pastors of pastors and pastors of the Church, not to administrative positions. Thus they function as an independent and respected source of wisdom and caring, within the Church but not representing its ecclesial system.

In August of 1994, just before the Northern Province Synod, the Bishops of the two North American Provinces met and recommended the Pastoral letter which had already been included in the Synod papers. A group of Moravians with an evangelical perspective had sent a letter to the Bishops and I had prepared historical materials on the Moravian view of Scripture. Another Moravian theologian presented a paper from a neo-orthodox perspective and several of the evangelicals presented a Memorial to Synod to retain the present form of the *Ground of the Unity*.

Though at times the debate became heated and a group called Moravians for Renewal formed in the Southern Province to preserve what they considered essential, most of those involved in the debate struggled to retain personal relationships as a context for the debate. It has often been suggested that for Moravians to break relationship is the greatest of heresies. We fought for our relationships as well as our principles.

Though expecting the debate at Synod to be long, the present rewording was decided in a Subcommittee of Faith and Order in the process of a day, and passed the Committee on Faith and Order and the Synod without dissent. In the process of arriving at the new statement, we first discovered that there was common agreement that Scripture was to be our *only rule for doctrine*. Then we discovered that there was common agreement that when we spoke of the ultimate *source* of Christian faith and life, this was God God's self and that Scripture itself was not this source, but rather attested to God as source. Then we concluded that though the Moravian Church has a valued Christocentric heritage, we must affirm all of *the Trinity* as the source of the church's and the Christian's life. The traditional Moravian emphasis on Christ and the word of the cross were sufficiently treated in paragraphs 2 and 3 of section 4 "God's Word and Doctrine." For Scripture's function in relationship to *doctrine and personal faith*, we came to prefer "*sole standard*", not using the word "rule" because we felt that Scripture's relationship to this was profound and "rule" might be misunderstood as implying merely "rules," thus oversimplifying this relationship. We were aware that "rule", "norm", and "standard" were really alternative ways of translating the German term long in use in the Moravian Church which meant "plumbline".

Finally, with regard to the role of Scripture in defining the *Christian life*, we recognized the difficulty of arriving at moral rules from Scripture that all could accept and that living the Christian life was more than rules: it is a living out of the life of Christ with the empowerment and guidance of the Spirit. We were also reminded that historically the church has recognized a relationship between doctrine and life: what we believe defines and shapes our life. Attention was called to Rom. 12:1 and the word "therefore" which Paul used to connect the doctrinal chapters 1-11 with the ethical concerns in the remaining chapters. The

term “*Scripture*” was used instead of “*Scriptures*,” because we wanted to connote the Canon of the Bible as our authority, and not just the individual books or the Old and New Testaments seen separately. All of this was part of our discussion and we tried to express this in the new wording recommended:

The Triune God as attested to in the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is the only source of our life and salvation; and this Scripture is the sole standard of our doctrine and faith and therefore shapes our life.

In reflection on what happened among us, some compared this to the spiritual experience in a Communion Service on August 13, 1727 (the celebration of which was approaching), which is regarded as reconstituting the Moravian Church. This experience also followed a time of conflict. Many expressed that what happened and the statement which was produced was God’s miracle. Persons with differing perspectives embraced with joy, for our coming to a common solution was also a reaffirmation of personal relationships. We came to the realization that debate and difference about important issues could be a creative and spiritual experience.

To the changes effected by the Northern Province Synod, in the Spring of 1995, the Southern Province added a statement on tradition. Then in August of 1995 this statement came before the Unity or international Synod in Tanzania. I had taught in Tanzania that summer and so was able to receive the suggestions of the faculty of our Theological College in Mbeya and was able to interpret the recommendations from the two North American Synods to the international Synod. The faculty also suggested some changes, as did the Synod, thus making the revision truly an effort of the international Unity. And the resolution was passed without dissent.

The final result was:

The Triune God as revealed in the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is the only source of our life and salvation; and this Scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith of the *Unitas Fratrum* and therefore shapes our life.¹⁰

The *Unitas Fratrum* recognizes the Word of the Cross as the center of Holy Scripture and of all preaching of the Gospel and it sees its primary mission, and its reason for being, to consist in bearing witness to this joyful message. We ask our Lord for power never to stray from this.¹¹

The *Unitas Fratrum* takes part in the continual search for sound doctrine. In interpreting Scripture and in the communication of doctrine in the Church, we look to two millennia of ecumenical Christian tradition and the wisdom of our Moravian forebears in the faith to guide us as we pray for fuller understanding and ever clearer proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But just as the Holy Scripture does not contain any doctrinal system, so the *Unitas Fratrum* also has not developed any of its own because it knows that the mystery of Jesus Christ, which is attested to in the Bible, cannot be comprehended completely by any human mind or expressed completely in any human statement. Also it is true that through the Holy Spirit the recognition of God’s will for salvation in the Bible is revealed completely and clearly.¹²

The differences within our Church did not go away with the resolution of this debate, just as the differences did not go away after the memorable unifying experience of August 13, 1727 (the “Moravian Pentecost”). But the process left us with a statement on which all could agree and on the basis of which we could support our churchly life and the methodology of our theological reflection. And, wonderfully, it is a statement which in the fashion of our traditions calls us first to the God of the tradition rather than the

tradition of God. And amazingly, in the process we did not lose each other. It was not a process without argument, pain, and conflict, and we knew that these would of necessity be part of the process.

For Zinzendorf the Lord's Supper belongs in the category of Mystery, that which in Scripture and life manifests a spiritual reality but is not sufficiently defined so that we cannot make binding definitions. I would like to suggest that Scripture itself is also such a Mystery. We know that it is God's Word to us, but if we must all agree on *how* this is so and what is said in it before we can come together around it, we would never be able to come *together*. We would be prevented from hearing God's Word *together*. How tragic that would be, for Scripture mediates the mystery of the Christ who is the common source of our life (John 5:38-40).

We need to respect each other's perspectives and then gather together around God's Word to hear what God would say to us, but more to hear *the God* who might say different and personal words to different persons who might hear in personal and different ways. Thus we may not all hear the same things from Scripture. To exclude each other from gathering together around Scripture because we have different views and hear different ways would be like excluding persons from the Lord's Table because they understood Communion differently.

To cover, uncover, discover, and recover is a normal process in the church's handling of its tradition(s). It is the way tradition becomes living and relevant. If we only could regard this as normal, we would then constantly be examining and rediscovering our tradition rather than waiting for moments of crisis to force this upon us. And theology would become an exciting process in which relevance and its character is rediscovered and in which, through concepts and argumentation, we enter into relationship with the One who is the Source of it all.

Appendix A

The Theological Task

A paper of the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission The Theological Task As Understood Within the Moravian Tradition

The attempt here will be to provide some perspective on the Moravian understanding of theology from which the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission of the Moravian Church in America might formulate its perspective and task.

Though one is always selective in developing a perspective or principles from a 500 year tradition, involving intentional neglect or rejection of some parts of the tradition which in one's attempted objectivity do not seem to represent the major thrusts of the tradition, we would like to attempt a statement of the Moravian perspective which is relevant for the Moravian Church today and the task of the Commission.

The Moravian Perspective

1. The theological task always revolves around the fostering of the "essentials", understood as relationship with God/Christ and the receiving of God's grace and salvation. All else is "ministerial" to this. This is why worship and devotional practice are crucial to theology. The theological areas with which the Commission deals should then be contributory to relationship with God.¹³
2. Theological reflection is for the sake of creating the possibilities of Christian life, action and mission -- it is not merely an abstract and intellectual enterprise.
3. Christianity is only to be identified with concepts, liturgies, church order, etc., in a secondary way. All such expressions are historically and culturally conditioned, and so they should be to be relevant. They are to be treasured, but not finalized. Thus all doing of theology is limited and not identical with God's truth.
4. Theology must rigorously use the gift of the intellect in the continuous search for truth. However, doing theology is also a devotional exercise. Openness to the formative influence of God and God's Spirit is crucial. Prayer is then important to doing theology. Theologizing is partially planned and structured by human effort, but is also formed by a following after and openness to God. Thus one must see where theologizing takes one.
5. The Moravian Church has most often been in conversation with other great theological traditions and has never understood itself as having all wisdom.
6. Though theology is often a response to the present and its issues, it is also rooted in a tradition which is variegated rather than uniform. It is a tradition of wisdom and mistakes out of which one should live much as a person lives out of the varied experience of

personal history. To live only with the past is to cease to live, but to live without a past is to be amnesiac, to have nothing to live and act from.

7. Though the Moravian Church has at times made statements about Scripture being the only basis of faith, life and practice, this is not true of the special insights of the Moravian tradition. In the Ancient Church Scripture was a ministerial, not an essential. For Zinzendorf the Spirit was crucial, leading the church to what it should do in the present. Scripture as the only authority is derived from the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura* and was characteristic of more conservative periods of the Moravian Church. In its present statement of *sola scriptura* the Moravian Church is out of harmony with the statements of many churches which provide a role for the Spirit, God's on-going revelatory activity (some also provide a role for natural revelation and human wisdom). This is a crucial issue for it affects how we formulate our theology and whether we think, as Jesus states in John 16:12ff, that the Spirit may say things that the historical Jesus did not say to his disciples.

8. In theological reflection there will always be differences. This is what happens when differing individuals reflect theologically. These differences are even manifested in the New Testament. One must find ways of sharing and expressing differences without destroying relationship and trust. There should also be confession of the heart relationship of those whose expressions differ. Conflict should not be averted, for without open sharing of differences views are not heard and reflection suffers. Creative tension contributes to new understanding of truth. To differ openly together and hear each other is a developed skill.

9. For the Renewed Moravian Church the cross has been central as a way of understanding the Christian message and mission. The amazing truth about God is especially expressed in God's giving of God's self in the crucifixion. Zinzendorf believed that Christ carried his crucified humanity with him in his resurrection, always remaining the crucified Saviour. It is in the crucifixion, according to Zinzendorf, that the Creator of all souls renounces the use of power and promises gentleness as he works his plans for each. The theology of the cross is in contrast to what is traditionally called "the theology of glory", a sort of triumphalism. Zinzendorf believed that the cross was the paradigm for understanding the nature of all things Christian.

Historical Background

Although it has often been said that the Moravian Church does not have a theology or is not theologically inclined, it is our understanding that it has a very definite theology. In its long history it has variously had its unique stance, also being influenced by the theological expressions of the other theological traditions: in the late 16th and early 17th century the Ancient Church was decidedly affected by the Reformed tradition, while in 18th Century Germany the Renewed Church was quite Lutheran, affirming the special role of the Augsburg Confession.

Generally, sometimes more and sometimes less consciously, there has been an awareness of epistemological issues which has decidedly affected the position of the Moravian

Church on theology. It is well expressed in the statement on theology in 1979 by the Joint Theological Commission of the Northern and Southern Provinces, U.S.A.:

"Theological reflection in the Moravian tradition is not to be understood as an attempt to arrive at final answers but is a way of thinking about God and His relationship to us so that He can, through His Spirit, draw us to Himself, and to His Son, and we can know Him as the Source of our living. Such reflection should lead to sharing of ideas and experiences, articulation of our faith, new levels of trust toward each other as persons through whom God partially discloses Himself in various ways, stimulation of the Christian life and our attentive waiting upon God for His clarification of our understanding."

One may say that the theological views which are particular to the Moravian Church were formed by an awareness that Christianity at its heart was relational and devotional, not conceptual; that the fostering of Christian life was central, without which concepts had no "coinage"; and that conceptual, liturgical and institutional expressions were shaped by historical contexts. The understanding of the Ancient Church was particularly formed by its dividing all theological and ecclesial matters into: essentials, ministerials and incidentals. In the Zinzendorfian period we have the emphasis on Basic Truths, or Fundamentals, and Heart Religion-- somewhat equivalent to the Essentials of the Ancient Church. This is a very explicit theology, though it is not a "systematic" theology. Zinzendorf, for example, did not write a systematic theology because he theologically believed that it was not possible -- one cannot know and express God that way. Any attempt to systematize understanding of God will always have gaps because of human limitations. One needs to accept that the only Christian system is Christ, the historical expression of the PERSON of God. As Zinzendorf has God say in a poem that expresses his epistemology, "My nature, which no one sees, has built itself a body".¹⁴ Zinzendorf's belief that Heart Religion¹⁵ was the basis of all Christian religion, allowed him to recognize that creeds and theologies may be adhered to as legitimate cultural incarnations of Christianity, valid for their context. Thus Moravians of the Renewed Church in different countries adhered to different creedal formulations, yet all belonged to the same *Brüdergemeine* (Congregation of Brethren). In the 18th century Moravian Church separate membership lists were even preserved for Moravians, Reformed and Lutherans within the *Brüdergemeine*. Thus the treasures of each would not be lost.

The Moravian Church then is inheritor of a particular approach to theology and a particular understanding of Christianity about which it has not always been adequately conscious or articulate. It is also inheritor of a variegated 500 year heritage. It is not a Church without creeds or a theology, nor is its theology expressed (in a definitive sense) in the Easter morning liturgy, as is so often said.¹⁶ The Ancient Church had its creeds. The Renewed Church accepted the great creedal expressions of Christianity as indigenous expressions of faith while affirming that Christianity was not primarily conceptual/creedal.

[At the conclusion there is an outline of the Moravian Theological Tradition much as included above.]

Revised and accepted for use by the Interprovincial Faith and Order
Commission of the North American Moravian Provinces on July 13, 1990.

Appendix B

The Ground of the Unity

(Originally accepted by the Unity Synod held in Bethlehem, PA, USA, Aug. 13- Sept. 10, 1957. Revised by the Unity Synod held on Antigua, West Indies, July 3-15, 1988, and by the Unity Synod held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Aug. 13-25, 1995.)

#1. The Lord Jesus Christ calls His Church into being so that it may serve Him on earth until He comes. The Unitas Fratrum is, therefore, aware of its being called in faith to serve mankind by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It recognizes this call to be the source of its being and the inspiration of its service. As is the source, so is the aim and end of its being based upon the will of its Lord.

The Belief of the Church

#2. With the whole of Christendom we share faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe and confess that God has revealed Himself once and for all in His Son Jesus Christ; that our Lord has redeemed us with the whole of mankind by His death and His resurrection; and that there is no salvation apart from Him. We believe that He is present with us in the Word and the Sacrament; that He directs and unites us through His Spirit and thus forms us into a Church. We hear Him summoning us to follow Him, and pray Him to use us in His service. He joins us together mutually, so that knowing ourselves to be members of His body we become willing to serve each other.

In the light of divine grace, we recognize ourselves to be a Church of sinners. We require forgiveness daily, and live only through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. He redeems us from our isolation and unites us into a living Church of Jesus Christ.

Personal Belief

#3. The belief of the Church is effected and preserved through the testimony of Jesus Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit. This testimony calls each individual personally, and leads him to the recognition of sin and to the acceptance of the redemption achieved by Christ. In fellowship with Him the love of Christ becomes more and more the power of the new life, power which penetrates and shapes the entire person. As God's Spirit so effects living belief in the hearts of individuals, He grants them the privilege to share in the fruits of Christ's salvation and membership in His Body.

God's Word and Doctrine

#4. The Triune God as revealed in the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is the only source of our life and salvation; and this Scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith of the Unitas Fratrum and therefore shapes our life.

The Unitas Fratrum recognizes the Word of the Cross as the center of Holy Scripture and of all preaching of the Gospel and it sees its primary mission, and its reason for being, to consist in bearing witness to this joyful message. We ask our Lord for power never to stray from this.

The Unitas Fratrum takes part in the continual search for sound doctrine. In interpreting Scripture and in the communication of doctrine in the Church, we look to two millennia of ecumenical Christian tradition and the wisdom of our Moravian forebears in the faith to guide us as we pray for fuller understanding and ever clearer proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But just as the Holy Scripture does not contain any doctrinal system, so the Unitas Fratrum also has not developed any of its own because it knows that the mystery of Jesus Christ, which is attested to in the Bible, cannot be comprehended completely by any human mind or expressed completely in any human statement. Also it is true that through the Holy Spirit the recognition of God's will for salvation in the Bible is revealed completely and clearly

Creeds and Confessions

#5. The Unitas Fratrum recognizes in the creeds of the Church the thankful acclaim of the Body of Christ. These creeds aid the Church in formulating a Scriptural confession, in marking the boundary of heresies, and in exhorting believers to an obedient and fearless testimony in every age. The Unitas Fratrum maintains that all creeds formulated by the Christian Church stand in need of constant testing in the light of the Holy Scriptures. It acknowledges as such true professions of faith the early Christian witness: "Jesus Christ is Lord!" and also especially the ancient Christian creeds and the fundamental creeds of the Reformation*.

*Note: In the various Provinces of the Renewed Unitas Fratrum the following creeds in particular gained special importance, because in them the main doctrines of the Christian faith find clear and simple expression:

- The Apostles' Creed
- The Athanasian Creed
- The Nicene Creed
- The Confession of the Unity of the Bohemian Brethren of 1662
- The Twenty-One Articles of the unaltered Augsburg Confession
- The Shorter Catechism of Martin Luther
- The Synod of Berne of 1532
- The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England
- The Theological Declaration of Barmen of 1934
- The Heidelberg Catechism

The Unitas Fratrum As A Unity

#6. We believe in and confess the Unity of the Church given in the one Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. He died that He might unite the scattered children of God. As the living Lord and Shepherd, He is leading His flock toward such unity.

The Unitas Fratrum espoused such unity when it took over the name of the Old Bohemian Brethren's Church, "Unitas Fratrum" (Unity of Brethren). Nor can we ever forget the powerful unifying experience granted by the crucified and risen Lord to our fathers in Herrnhut on the occasion of the Holy Communion of August 13, 1727, in Berthelsdorf.

It is the Lord's will that Christendom should give evidence of and seek unity in Him with zeal and love. In our own midst we see how such unity has been promised us and laid upon us as a charge. We recognize that through the grace of Christ the different churches have received many gifts. It is our desire that we may learn from each other and rejoice together in the riches of the love of Christ and the manifold wisdom of God.

We confess our share in the guilt which is manifest in the severed and divided state of Christendom. By means of such divisions we ourselves hinder the message and power of the Gospel. We recognize the danger of self-righteousness and judging others without love.

Since we together with all Christendom are pilgrims on the way to meet our coming Lord, we welcome every step that brings us nearer the goal of unity in Him. He Himself invites us to communion in His supper. Through it He leads the Church toward that union which He has promised. By means of His presence in the Holy Communion He makes our unity in Him evident and certain even today.

The Church As A Brotherhood

#7. The Church of Jesus Christ, despite all the distinctions between male and female, Jew and non-Jew, white and colored, poor and rich, is one in its Lord. The Unitas Fratrum recognizes no distinction between those who are one in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to testify that God in Jesus Christ brings His people out of "every race, kindred and tongue" into one body, pardons sinners beneath the Cross and brings them together. We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of race or standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Church As A Community of Service

#8. Jesus Christ came not to be served but to serve. From this, His Church receives its mission and its power for its service, to which each of its members is called. We believe that the Lord has called us particularly to mission service among the peoples of the world. In this, and in all other forms of service both at home and abroad, to which the Lord commits us, He expects us to confess Him and witness to His love in unselfish service.

Serving Our Neighbor

#9. Our Lord Jesus entered into this world's misery to bear it and to overcome it. We seek to follow Him in serving His brethren. Like the love of Jesus, this service knows no bounds. Therefore we pray the Lord ever anew to point out to us the way to reach our neighbor, opening our heart and hand to him in his need.

Serving the World

#10. Jesus Christ maintains in love and faithfulness His commitment to this fallen world. Therefore we must remain concerned for this world. We may not withdraw from it through indifference, pride or fear. Together with the universal Christian Church, the Unitas Fratrum challenges mankind with the message of the love of God, striving to promote the peace of the world and seeking to attain what is best for all men. For the sake of this world, the Unitas Fratrum hopes for and looks to the day when the victory of Christ will be manifest over sin and death and the new world will appear.

Conclusion

#11. Jesus Christ is the one Lord and Head of His body, the Church. Because of this, the Church owes no allegiance to any authority whatsoever which opposes His dominion. The Unitas Fratrum treasures in its history the vital experience of the Headship of Christ of September 16 and November 13, 1741.

The Unitas Fratrum recognizes that it is called into being and has been sustained hitherto only by the incomprehensible grace of God. Thanksgiving and praise for this grace remains the keynote of its life and ministry.

In this spirit it awaits the appearing of Jesus Christ, goes forward to meet its Lord with joy, and prays to be found ready when He comes.

¹ The history of the Moravian Church is divided into three distinct periods. The Ancient Moravian Church began in 1457, founded by those who sought to preserve the insights of the Czech reformer John Hus, martyred in 1415. At first its approach was to create a community somewhat withdrawn from public life, following the Sermon on the Mount, but after some 40 years it reoriented itself towards development as an institution, affirmed its public role, and related to the developing Reformations.

During the 30 Years War, and following the Peace of Westphalia, it lost its right to exist. Bishop John Amos Comenius, considered the father of modern education, dedicated much of his life to its possible future. This begins the second period, known as The Hidden Seed, when some of the Church went underground for 100 years while a few congregations survived in Poland. 1722 marks the beginning of the third period and the Renewed Moravian Church under the leadership of a Lutheran Count, Nicholas von Zinzendorf, who led the remnants of the Moravian Church in the recovery of its history and the discovery of its thought and mission.

² For example, Johanness Plitt and later Hermann Plitt produced new theological resources, the latter publishing significant works on the Moravian understanding of the church and a three volume work on Zinzendorf's theology; see Hermann Plitt, *Zinzendorfs Theologie*, Drei Bände (Gotha: F.A. Perthes, 1869) and *Die Gemeinde Gottes in ihrem Geist und ihren Formen* (Gotha: Verlag von Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1859).

³ I call attention to a treatment of his theology by C. Daniel Crews, "Luke of Prague, Theologian of the Unity," presented as the W. V. Moses Lecture at Moravian Theological Seminary, 24 April 1997.

⁴ Rudolf Rícan, *The History of the Unity of the Brethren*, trans. by C. Daniel Crews, (Bethlehem, Pa.: The Moravian Church in America, 1992) 400.

⁵ O. Uttendörfer, Nikolaus Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf *Evangelische Gedanken*, Hilfe für Amt, Band 14, (Berlin: Christlicher Zeitschriftenverlag, 1948), from *Vier und Dreißig Homiliae über die Wundenlitanei*, p. 110ff, (June 11, 1747), p. 172.

⁶ Hans-Walter Erbe, "Herrnhaag - Tiefpunkt oder Höhepunkt der Brüdergeschichte," *Unitas Fratrum*, Heft 26, (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1989), 45-46.

⁷ See Appendix A for the whole of the position paper "The Theological Task As Understood Within the Moravian Tradition."

⁸ See item 7 in Appendix A, below.

⁹ See Appendix B, below, for the whole of the *Ground of the Unity*.

¹⁰ . This paragraph is essentially what was recommended by the Northern Province Synod, North America, with the following changes: "attested to" was changed to "revealed in" and the words "of the Unitas Fratrum" were inserted after "doctrine and faith." These changes had been suggested by faculty at the Theological College in Mbeya, were communicated to the Faith and Order Committee, and accepted. The review of the suggested changes at Mbeya were facilitated by discussions with the faculty while I taught there in June-July 1995

¹¹ . Here the Committee changed "Scriptures" to Scripture to fit the use of the singular in the first paragraph which then presented Scripture as having authority as a whole, as a Canon.

¹² . The Southern Province suggestion of the addition of the second sentence in the paragraph, as interpreting the first, was accepted by the Committee with some modification. The word Scripture here was also changed to the singular. One amendment was made on the floor, adding to the last paragraph, the next to the last sentence, the words "by any human mind or expressed completely in any".

The Northern Province suggested changes in the first paragraph. The Southern Province accepted the recommendation of the Northern Province and also suggested changes in the third paragraph. The Committee on Faith and Order of Unity Synod then introduced additional revision. Thus the resulting statement has had the participation of the international Unity. (This paragraph, footnote from the original Report.)

¹³ . The above describes the way the essentials were understood in the Ancient Moravian Church and during the Zinzendorffian period. The General Synod of 1879 gave a more detailed definition in terms of eight "leading doctrines" (sometimes called "essentials"), while recognizing that the "cardinal truths" were "the doctrine of the fellowship of believers with one another in Christ Jesus, the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord in glory, and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead unto life or unto condemnation." See, J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church*, (Bethlehem, PA: Interprovincial Board of Christian Education, 1967), 319. Here the essentials are defined in terms of "beliefs". The older definition tended to define essentials in terms of relationship with God and the experience of salvation. In 1957 General Synod set a statement on "The Ground of the Unity" (see Appendix B, above) at that place in the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum* where the eight "essentials" had previously been listed. "The Ground of the Unity" describes the Moravian tradition as one in which relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ is central and essential.

¹⁴ . "Allegegenwart," *Graf Ludwigs von Zinzendorf Teutscher Gedichte*, Erster Theil, (Herrnhuth, 1735), 106-108.

¹⁵. Zinzendorf defined "Heart" as the inner person which had five senses as did the outer person. The "Heart", especially when it has been brought to life by the Holy Spirit, can perceive the Savior objectively and directly. In modern terms we might speak of this as "intuition" or "extra sensory perception." Zinzendorf's approach is very similar to Teresa of Avila's "intellectual vision." One knows one has seen and experienced, but this is not dependent on images or emotions. The best evidence for the Heart relationship with the Savior is changed life. There are several biblical examples of "Heart Religion" which Zinzendorf liked to cite. One was that of John and Jesus' mother gathered at the cross. Another was the objective perception of Jesus by John the Baptist while he was still in his mother's womb (Luke 1). See, *Einige seit 1751 von dem Ordinario Fratrum zu London gehaltene Predigten in Dreyen Haupt-Abtheilungen edirter*, Erster Band, (London and Barby: 1756), Abth. II, (1/17/53), 153-156.

¹⁶. The Easter Morning Liturgy was developed originally in the 18th century German context of the Moravian Church and uses a great deal of Luther's *Shorter Catechism*. Thus it is a confession of faith among others, but does not necessarily embody unique Moravian insights. It is true, however, that theology and worship are married in the Moravian approach.