

THE MORAVIANS

Extending the Dialogue—Storyformed Way Week 8: The Mission and Power

The Moravian church in Europe started out as a small community of Christian refugees in love with Jesus. Simple, heartfelt emphasis upon Christian experience, the gospel work of Christ, deep spirituality, and unique living arrangements characterized their community.

In 1727 the Moravians, now living on the estate of and under the protection of their pastor, Count Zinzendorf, experienced an outpouring of the fire of the Holy Spirit in a revival. The Moravian people started a 24-hour prayer meeting after God came and set their souls flaming with compassion for the lost. That prayer meeting lasted over 100 years. Over the years, from this small community of faithful believers, thousands of Moravian brothers went out to the farthest reaches of the globe, suffered unspeakable hardships, toil and death to bring Jesus to the lost.

In 1732 the first two Moravian missionaries left the Copenhagen harbor bound for the Dutch West Indies. John Leonard Dober, a potter and David Nitschman, a carpenter, were both willing to be sold into slavery to reach the slaves of the West Indies. This was the only way that the slave owner would allow these men onto his plantations. He had vowed to never allow missionaries or “religion” to come and upset things among his slaves. So John and David sold themselves to the man as slaves to cover their passage over to the island.

These men were not going on a nice short term mission to the Caribbean, but they sold themselves into slavery to answer the call 'come and minister the gospel to us'. They became slaves in order to have the opportunity to *reach* the slaves of the West Indies for their Lord. Their life's purpose was to follow the Lamb who had given His life for them and for all the souls of the world. Their mission statement was “Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him.”

One of the men left his wife and children begging on the wharf for him to reconsider and stay. But the call and heart of God for these slaves in the West Indies was even greater than the pull of home. As the ship pulled away from the docks the men lifted a cry, ***“May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of his suffering”*** which became the resonating heartbeat of the Moravian Missions movement.

The men felt their sacrifice paled in comparison to the sacrifice of their Saviour. They loved Jesus with everything they were and did, and desired to walk in obedience, knowing that the God who called them is the God who gives the courage, grace and anointing for the task. Even to spend a life of hard toil, with meager provisions and hardship.

They experienced and modeled the truth of Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Today their call still goes out to believers around the world...

May the Lamb that was slain receive the rewards of his suffering!