

4

Community of pilgrims:
Moravian itinerancy and the Promotion of Sentimental Piety

As the previous chapter outlined, Zinzendorf’s presence in North America sparked immediate controversy and a quick response from Gilbert Tennent. Despite such resistance, however, the Moravian enterprise gained momentum. Zinzendorf spent the entire year of 1742 in the middle colonies laying the groundwork for a permanent settlement in the “forks” of the Delaware River as well as orchestrating ecumenical activity and overseeing the start of *diasporawerk* in North America.

The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate that Moravian activities in the greater-Philadelphia region were not localized or isolated. Rather they were part of an organized, extensive and international program of expansion that was built largely on the practice of itinerancy. Anglo-Moravian itinerants ranged from the Susquehanna River to the eastern seaboard and from Maryland to Connecticut. If the extent of Moravian activity had been limited to the traveling and preaching of Zinzendorf alone, tensions between Moravians and Tennentists might have been insubstantial. But the “threat” that the Moravians represented to other Protestants, including evangelical revivalists, was fueled by the extensive program of visitation and preaching carried out by Moravian itinerants. This chapter begins by describing itinerancy as rooted in the Moravian ideals of pilgrimage and Christian unity. It then outlines the mechanics and geographic networks of itinerant activity, including those of John Okely, an English speaking Moravian itinerant who worked in the greater-Philadelphia region. Okely’s diaries specifically illustrate the competition that existed between Moravians and Tennentists.

The Pilgrim Ideal and the United Gemeine

In the context of the Great Awakening, itinerancy was not unique to the Moravians. It was, in fact, a primary feature of New Light efforts as well. It was always controversial, no matter which party employed it. As Timothy Hall has argued, itinerants represented a new order of ministerial mobility within the marketplace of religious choices colonial persons were beginning to enjoy. Traditional settled ministers, however, especially in New England, resented traveling preachers who encroached on their parishes and drew their people away and into the sway of disorderly “field preachers.”

Although many colonial revivalists traveled frequently, Moravians had cultivated a system of itinerancy even more developed than that of New Lights – having employed it for well over a decade since beginning *diasporawerk* on the European continent. In North America, this tradition continued unabated. Moravian itinerancy was more than simply a pragmatic endeavor. It represented the Moravian ideal of the wandering pilgrim. The itinerant preacher and missionary were important fixtures in the Moravian world. Most importantly, their lives of sacrifice represented piety and devotion to Christ. In addition to this, they served as the primary mechanism for expanding the united *Gemeine*.

Itinerancy, for Moravians, was rooted in the sentiment that pilgrimage was a fitting metaphor for the Christian’s life on earth and could be embodied in the act of physical travels. Found in various Christian traditions, the pilgrim ideal was especially common in Pietism and reflected the desire to be unencumbered by attachments to worldly life. Rejecting worldly attractions, pietists cultivated a deep and pervasive longing to permanently commune with the beloved *Heiland* (Savior) in the hereafter and often pursued a regimented life while they waited. Many pietists sought to live out the ideal of a pilgrim, or “wayfaring” (*Nachfolge*) existence through a disciplinary life of meditation

and exercises – a lifestyle that was especially promoted in English devotional literature and German mystical writings of the seventeenth century.¹

Beyond a metaphorical ideal, however, pilgrimage could take the form of an actual journey, especially if it was interpreted as having spiritual significance. Gerhard Tersteegen, for example, a prominent radical Pietist of the eighteenth century who included strong themes of pilgrimage in his writing, found that his followers were inspired to make pilgrimages to meet with him. Spiritual seekers might also travel to any one of a handful of “Pilgerhütte” (pilgrim huts) that emerged in Germany, in part from Tersteegen’s influence.² An illustrative account of a “pilgerreise” from the eighteenth century is the devotional work, “Die Pilgerreise zu Wasser und zu Lande” (The Pilgrim’s Trip over Water and Land) of pietist Johann Christian Stahlschmidt published in 1799. The autobiographical work chronicles Stahlschmidt’s travels in Europe and America, describing how his physical travels were tied inseparable to his spiritual journey of piety.³

Like other pietist movements, Moravian spirituality had strong themes of pilgrimage. The desire to remain free from worldly attachments and commune with Christ was a strong desire for eighteenth century Moravians and was reflected in their liturgy, hymnody and the “blood and wounds” theology for which they became known. As intense and even erotic as their communion with Christ was on this earth, it paled in comparison to the experience of communion to which the Moravians looked forward in the hereafter. In heaven, their union with Christ would finally and permanently be realized. Earthly life, then, was a temporary and transitory experience. To be a Christian, was to be a pilgrim.

¹ Carter Lindberg, “Introduction,” in *The Pietist Theologians* 10-12. See also Stephen O’Malley, ed. *Early German-American Evangelicalism: Pietist Sources on Discipleship and Sanctification* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 1995) 143-65.

² O’Malley, 151.

³ J. Stephen O’Malley, “Johann Christian Stahlschmidt (1740-1825): The Man of God’s Pilgerreise” in *Early German-American Evangelicalism*, 107-41.

Zinzendorf, who in his early twenties referred to himself as a “pilgrim in the world,” became a perfect exemplar of the wayfaring life as he was increasingly on the move, providing pastoral care to the members of the diaspora and, at times, in political exile.⁴ Indeed, Zinzendorf’s close traveling companions became the first *Pilgergemeinde* soon after authorities forced him to leave Herrnhut in 1736⁵ Zinzendorf believed himself to be in good company, however, noting in his “Berlinische Reden” that God himself, in the incarnate Jesus, lived also as a kind of pilgrim on earth.⁶ Many other Moravians acted out the pilgrim ideal in real ways as well. Bands of missionaries and itinerants traveled constantly. They sailed back and forth across the Atlantic, traveled to and from mission stations and itinerated frequently throughout Europe and North America. For many Moravians, therefore, earthly life was not only a symbolic pilgrimage, but a literal one as well. Voyages were often called “Pilgerreisen” and travelers, including itinerants, were routinely referred to as “pilger”. As pilgrims, Moravians were unsettled, willing to give up their homes and spiritual families for significant periods of time.

Itinerants, then, embodied the spiritual ideal of pilgrimage and Zinzendorf defended it as a high calling. He was well aware of the prejudice against wandering preachers – that itinerants were often derided as vagabonds or disparaged by comparisons to the ingenuous literary character, Don Quixote. (The “Wandering Spirit” of enthusiasm referenced earlier was described as a “Don Quixot turn’d saint Errant” and James Logan, the prominent Philadelphia Quaker had once compared Zinzendorf himself to Don Quixote, calling him “a mere knight-errant in religion.”) Zinzendorf defended his

⁴ Zinzendorf’s self-ascribed pilgrim status can be found in Spangenberg’s biography of Zinzendorf, which was translated into English by L.T. Nyberg in 1773. See Nyberg, *The Life of Nicolas Lewis, Count of Zinzendorf and Pottendorf*, vol II (Bath: T. Mills and S. Hazard, 1773) 27.

⁵ Hamilton and Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 64-5.

⁶ “Berlinische Reden” 58 (English edition 44). Zinzendorf refers to God as “ein *gast* in der welt.” Although this can commonly be translated as “guest,” it can also mean “stranger” or “visitor” and is translated as “pilgrim” in the English edition.

own itinerancy and that of other Moravian preachers against these popular criticisms.⁷ The pilgrim life was, Zinzendorf believed, an honorable estate based on New Testament precedent in the letter to the Hebrews.⁸ In an undated document among Zinzendorf’s papers in the Bethlehem Archives, Zinzendorf asserted that the book of Hebrews presented itinerant preaching as a “venerable” enterprise with great heavenly reward. He no doubt was referring to chapter 11, verses 32-40 which states that certain prophets traveled from place to place experiencing persecution:

Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated – the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.⁹

The Epistle to the Hebrews presents wandering prophets as heroes of piety and devotion, sacrificing home and comfort for a greater reward. Zinzendorf therefore used this passage to defend the Moravian practice of itinerancy. Like the wandering prophets of the Bible, and even their sojourning Savior, Moravian pilgrims faced the hardship of travel and of religious persecution. Even if they did not face death, Moravian itinerants often felt the tension of being outsiders in the midst of competing religious communities – something that Aaron Fogleman has documented well. They often traveled through regions where people were at best indifferent to their message and at worst, hostile to their presence.

In some ways, the ideal of the transient pilgrim wandering over the countryside and detached from society may seem to contradict the Moravians’ strong sense of

⁷ See William C. Reichel, ed., *Memorials of the Moravian Church* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co, 1870) 65; for the reference to Logan’s comment, see footnotes on page 65 in Reichel.

⁸ Undated document signed by Zinzendorf. It is preserved in the Moravian Archives, Zinzendorf correspondence IX, 5a.

⁹ Hebrews 11: 36-38.

community. The two ideals were complementary, however. Hardly solitary or isolated, itinerants were the connective tissue that preserved the unity of the *Gemeine* and expanded the work of gathering in the awakened. In this way, itinerancy ensured that congregations formed in North America were included in a large network that comprised an international and universal *Gemeine*.

As Jon Sensbach has demonstrated, the Moravians truly exemplified the notion of a “transatlantic” community. Their separate societies and congregations were knit together in a system of communication and personal contact.¹⁰ In an effort to maintain a real sense of unity, Moravians became prolific communicators – their diaries and letters were copied and recopied, sometimes translated, and circulated throughout the many Moravian settlements for others to read, thus informing and encouraging their brothers and sisters. (See Figure 1) Monthly *Gemeinetagen* (congregational days) were established for the formal and communal reading of the dairies and correspondence.

Itinerants played a critical role in this web of communication. Their diaries comprised a significant part of the shared communication and news. Itinerants also functioned as mail carriers. (While individuals called “postilians” were appointed to carry the mail between Bethlehem and Philadelphia, no formal system was organized in other places. Itinerants, then, sometimes served in this capacity.)¹¹ Beyond this, Itinerants linked the societies and villages by word of mouth, carrying not only official information, but words of spiritual encouragement for friends and loved ones, family news and announcements. Itinerancy then, provided more than pastoral care and gospel preaching.

¹⁰ See Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*.

¹¹ *Bethlehem Diary* vol. I, 40. Bethlehem authorities stipulated that the runners should leave Bethlehem each Monday and lodge overnight at Falkner’s Swamp (near present Quakertown, PA). They were to reach Germantown by Tuesday evening and Philadelphia by Wednesday. Picking up the mail, they were to repeat the trip and be back in Bethlehem on Friday evening – a round trip of approximately 130 miles.

It made significant contributions to the work of extending and preserving the *Gemeine* throughout the globe.

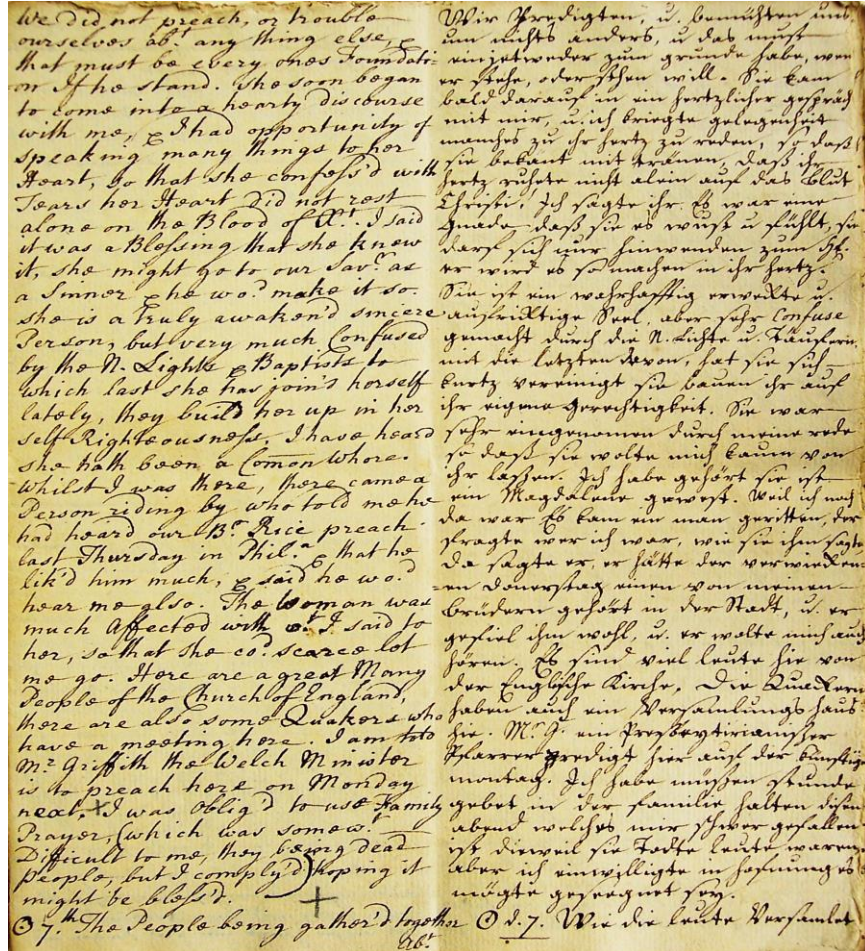


Figure 1: Bilingual page from John Okely's itinerant diary.

Okely traveled between Philadelphia and Lewistown (Lewes), Delaware in August of 1742. While Okely kept his diary in English, this copy is preserved among his papers. It was made for distribution among both German and English speaking Moravians. Source: Moravian Archives, used by permission.

Itinerants in North America were conscious that their individual work was linked to a larger, international enterprise. Itinerant Johann Philip Meurer, a German speaking

native of Ingweiler, Alsace, was a prolific diarist who carried out many itinerant functions, including mediating the “Confusion at Tulpehocken.”¹²

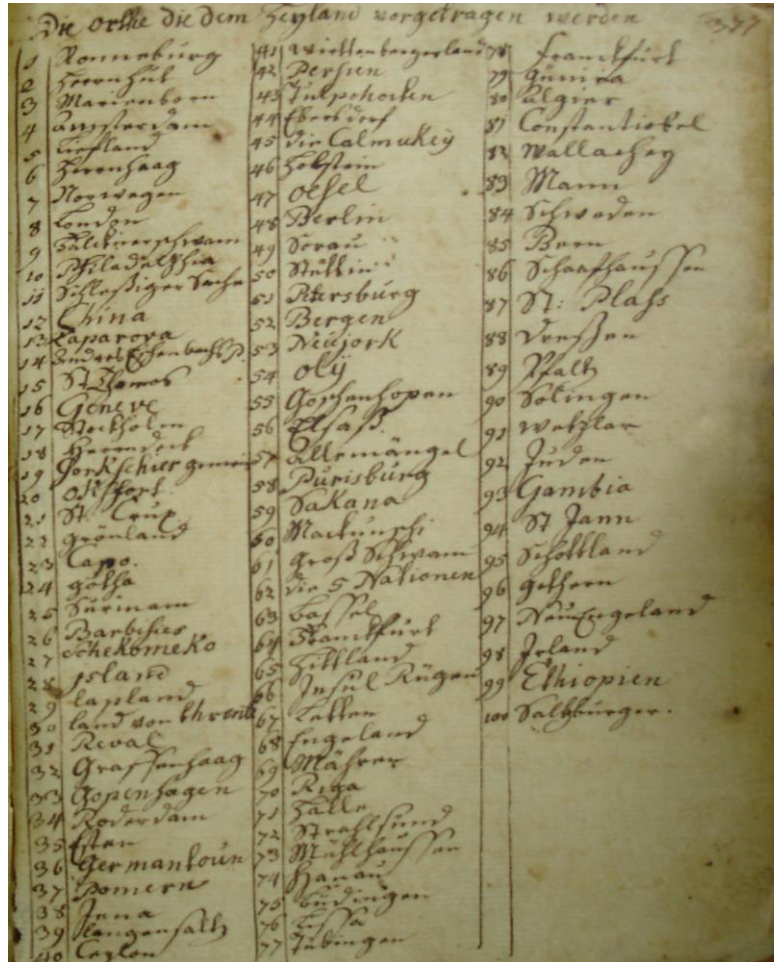


Figure 2: Final page from the personal diary of Johann Phillip Meurer

Meurer lists “Die orthe die dem Heyland vorgetragen werden.” (The places which are laid before the Savior) Source: Moravian Archives, used by permission.

In 1747, Meurer concluded one diary by including a prayer list he entitled, “Die orthe die dem Heyland vorgetragen werden.” (The Places which are laid before the Savior) He included exactly 100 locations including Moravian congregations in back

¹² On Meurer, see Neisser, *History of the Beginnings*, 179-80.

country towns such as Oley, Tulpehocken, Great Swamp and Allemangel with larger cities and settlements on both sides of the Atlantic including New York, Philadelphia, Berlin, Copenhagen, London, Herrnhut, Herrnhag and Marienborn. He also included "die 5 Nationen" of the Iroquois Indians, various missionary settlements and even distant places such as China, Ethiopia, Scotland, Sweden, Constantinople and Greenland. (See figure 2) Meurer's list reflects the Moravian sentiment that remote colonial societies and congregations were as much a part of the global work of God as were official centers such as Herrnhut and Marienborn. Colonists from a rural piece of swampland in Penn's Woods, therefore, were linked with members of Native tribes as well as with Africans and Chinese.

The sense of a unified network of locations was made explicit in several drawings. In one piece of eighteenth century Moravian artwork, globally scattered Moravian settlements were shrunk down, symbolically comprising a single landscape. (See figure 3) The universal Gemeine was also made explicit through an illustration depicting the many Moravian societies and congregations as branches on a vine. (See figure 4) Additionally, reports from various places were sometimes included or attached to itinerant diaries indicating that the diaries were being integrated into more comprehensive reports or that the itinerants themselves carried the written reports with them in order to disseminate news among other interested persons. Included with the 1755 Pennsylvania diaries of English-speaking itinerant Jacob Rogers, for example, are several "Accounts of the Children" taken from numerous Congregational diaries from Europe, including Herrnhut, Niesky and his own congregation in Bedford, England.



Figure 3: Diaspora “Settlement Scene” (1758)

Source: Moravian Historical Society, used by permission.

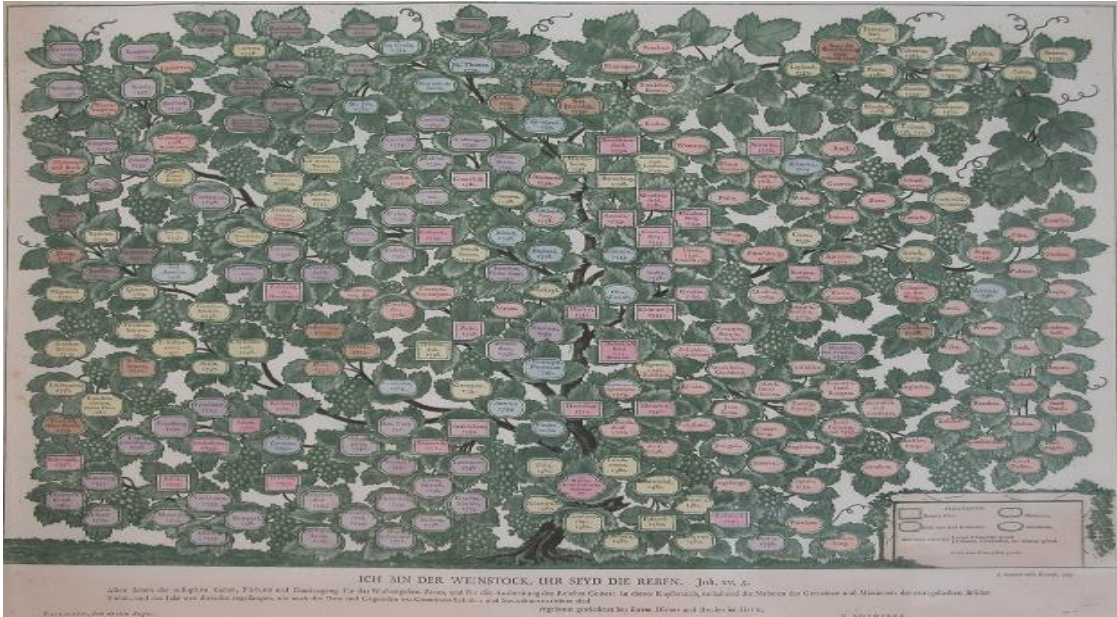


Figure 4: The Diaspora “Grapevine” (1797)

The caption reads, “Ich bin der weinstock, ihr seyd reben. Joh, XV, 5.” (I am the vine, you are the branches.) Source: Moravian Historical Society, used by permission.

The most tangible expression of the united and ecumenical ideal was the Congregation of God in the Spirit, a series of ecumenical gatherings initiated by Henry Antes with the support and leadership of Zinzendorf. It met at various locations once a month beginning in January of 1742 and initially included representatives from every German denomination in Pennsylvania. This series of "Pennsylvania Synods," as it was also called, was the earliest ecumenical experiment but lasted only nine months, however, when it became apparent that denominational differences were not so easily overcome. Zinzendorf realized that the Moravians alone were truly committed to working for a united *Gemeine*, and he consequently suspended the synods.¹³

While the Congregation of God in the Spirit represents the most concrete example of Zinzendorf's *Gemeine* ideal, the notion of a united and universal *Gemeine* also provided a foundation and motivation for Moravian *diasporawerk*. As "friends" were established, individuals were "awakened" and societies were formed, the invisible church was made visible and enlarged. As the work of itinerancy expanded, geographic concentrations of Moravian activity developed.

Moravian Itinerancy

The initial visits by Moravians in Pennsylvania immediately included itinerant travel. As mentioned previously, Spangenberg itinerated throughout the Philadelphia region as early as 1736; Andreas Eschenbach, along with others, made extensive journeys in 1740 – almost two years before the establishment of Bethlehem. Zinzendorf himself was an important itinerant. He established the *Pilgergemeine* in Europe, a kind of traveling administrative team, and continued this tradition during his visit to the colonies

¹³ Craig Atwood, "Introduction," in *A Collection of Sermons from Zinzendorf's Pennsylvania Synods*, Julie Tomberlin Weber, trans. (Bethlehem: Moravian Church in North America, 2001) xv. See also Zinzendorf, Nicolaus Ludwig Von. *Authentische Relation von dem Anlass, Fortgang und Schlusse der am 1sten und 2ten Januarii Anno 1741/2 ...* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin, 1742).

at the end of 1741.¹⁴ In 1742 he made journeys around Philadelphia, traveled through the enclave of German settlers just west of the city, and into the wilderness areas of the Northern Pennsylvania. (See figure 5)¹⁵

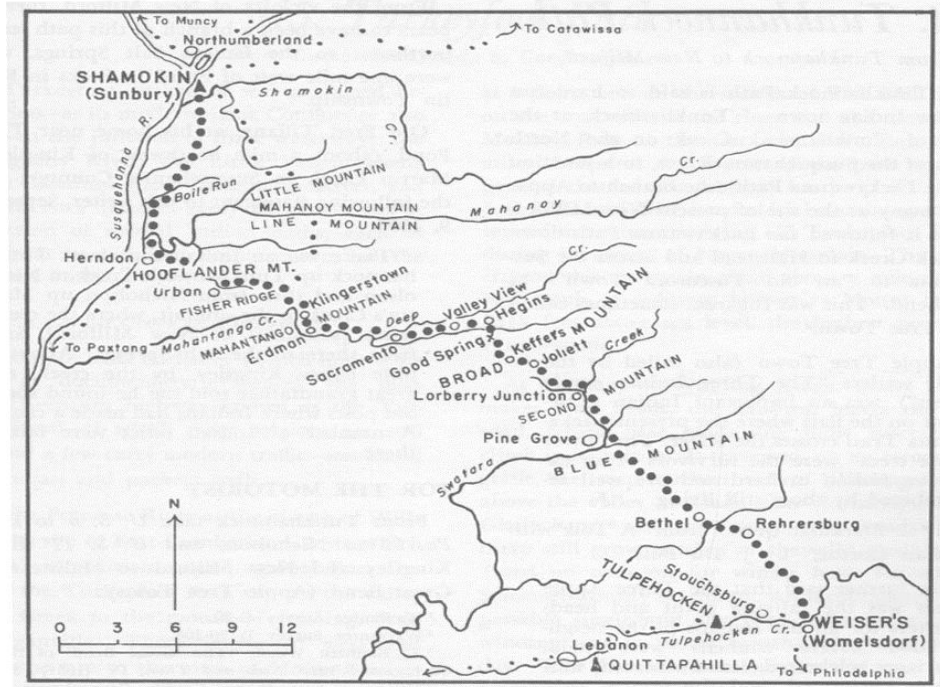


Figure 5: The Tulpehocken Path.

Zinzendorf probably used portions of this Indian path when he traveled from Tulpehocken to the Native American towns near present day Sunbury. Source: Paul A Wallace, *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania*, used by permission.

Itinerant travel also began immediately after the founding of Bethlehem. The new community was divided into a *Pilgergemeinde* (pilgrim congregation) and a *Hausgemeinde*

¹⁴ Hamilton and Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church*. Members of the Pilgergemeinde constituted a “little congregation” and were appointed by Zinzendorf probably through the use of “the lot”. They point out that, “Its personnel changed frequently as individuals or groups left on missions in Europe or in heathen lands.” 64-5.

¹⁵ For a collection of documents relating to Zinzendorf’s travels among the Delaware Indians, see William C. Reichel, *Memorials of the Moravian Church* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co, 1870).

(home congregation). Essentially, each resident was either a member of one or the other (although a few are listed as members of both).¹⁶ Members of the *Hausgemeinde* were the settled residents of Bethlehem and were not involved in travel. Itinerants and missionaries constituted the *Pilgergemeinde*.¹⁷ As in Europe, the roster of Bethlehem’s *Pilgergemeinde* was continually changing – it was not a permanent membership. One was a member of the *Pilgergemeinde* whenever he or she embarked on a mission and was a member of the *Hausgemeinde* upon return.¹⁸

Expanding Outward

By July 1742, the Bethlehem congregation had identified several preaching “stations” and assigned itinerants to service them.¹⁹ These included Allemängel, Emmaus, Conshohocken, Great Swamp, Trapp, Conestoga, Mühlbach and Neshaminy.²⁰ Bethlehem authorities appointed Andreas Eschenbach, who had traveled the regions even before Bethlehem was founded, with the responsibility to decide the details of these assignments.²¹ Itinerants might be assigned their circuits from their superiors, by divine guidance (the lot), their own wishes, or a combination. When considering a journey, itinerants would work out a “plan” with the authorities at Bethlehem which might outline the regions to be visited, the motivations of the itinerants, and perhaps special instructions. Such “plans” were often formulated in question-and-answer format and set to paper. (See Figure 6)

¹⁶ *Bethlehem Diary* vol I, 18-20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ See Levering, *A History of Bethlehem*, 129 and Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 118-19.

¹⁹ *Bethlehem Diary* vol. I, 36-46.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 36, 38, 41- 46

²¹ *Ibid.*, 39

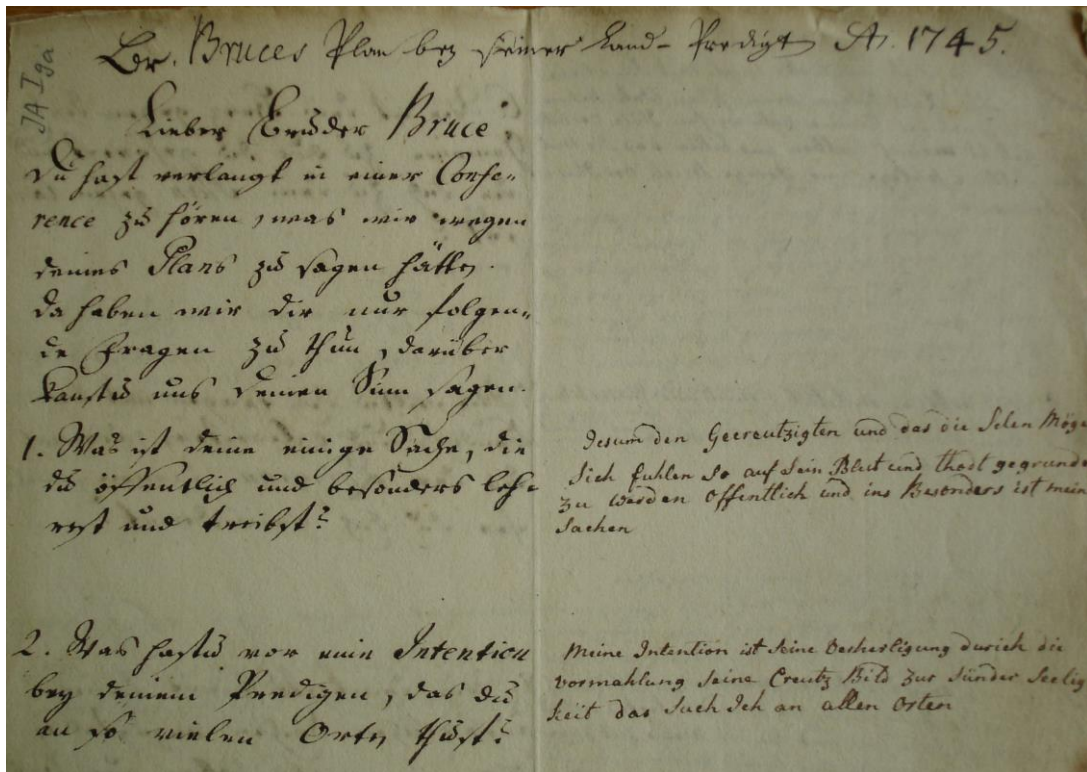


Figure 6: First page of David Bruce's plan for itinerant preaching

Source: Moravian Archives, used by permission.

Pilgrim routes were circuitous. Bethlehem served as the initial sending point and when a circuit was complete, itinerants would return. The sense of the itinerant travels as circular is illustrated in the Bethlehem diary when itinerants are referred to as the *Pilger Rad* or "wheel of pilgrims."²² On November 4, 1742, for example, the diarist recorded,

In a conference following the first evening meeting an over-all plan was adopted and laid down for carrying on the Lord's work in these regions by means of the *wheel of pilgrims*: the rural ministers, fishers, and the rest of the workers.²³

²² *Bethlehem Diary* vol. I, 112, 117, 191, 196.

²³ *Ibid.*, 112.

Elsewhere, the diary indicates that "The wheel set out" or "The wheel returned again."²⁴ This did not mean however, that all itinerants came and went as a group. There was in reality a continual flow of pilgrims arriving and departing. The constant circulation of itinerants that began in 1742 reflects the transient nature of the Moravian community. Some itinerant journeys were short – lasting only a week or two. Others might take up to three months. Itinerants would rarely spend more than one day at any given point.

Throughout 1742, several Moravian societies emerged around the various stations where itinerants were preaching. The earliest of which formed in the wake of Zinzendorf's own itinerant journeys. These concentrations included Germantown, Oley, Donegal, Heidelberg and Tulpehocken. After Zinzendorf's initial preaching in Philadelphia, Moravian activity continued in the city and expanded outward into New Jersey and New York. By November, the diarist in Bethlehem indicated as many as five full-fledged Moravian congregations: Oley, Germantown, Philadelphia, Friedrickstown and Tulpehocken. Itinerants had also started preaching across the Delaware in East Jersey among the Swedish Lutherans.²⁵ Emmaus was established by the end of the year.

While other denominations floundered as a result of a shortage of ministers, the Moravians flooded the middle colonies with preachers. By the start of 1743, within a year of the founding of Bethlehem, there were already more Moravian workers in the middle colonies than the Reformed and Lutheran (both German and Swedish) combined.²⁶

As a result of itinerancy, secondary centers of Moravian activity emerged, primarily at Warwick and Philadelphia. Like Bethlehem, these also became points of departure and return. All missionary activity remained, however, under the supervision of Moravian authorities at Bethlehem. For this reason, itinerants who might circulate around these secondary centers still traveled frequently to Bethlehem for instruction and

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁵ *Bethlehem Diary*, vol I, 113, 118, 162, 167 and 181.

²⁶ Fogleman, *Jesus is Female*, 111-21.

re-assignment. Itinerants at times required special meetings or conferences with Bethlehem authorities, such as Bishop Spangenberg, when they faced difficult circumstances or experienced conflict with those not sympathetic to their activity. Itinerants like Jacob Lischy and Paul Bryzelius met with the Bethlehem elders regarding the controversy that surrounded their work. In this way, itinerants were frequently circulating both between the administrative centers as well as between those centers and the outlying regions. Bethlehem, Philadelphia and Warwick (Lititz) were also used to provide rest and rejuvenation.²⁷

Moravian itinerants also included women. Zinzendorf taught that under the new covenant, women could legitimately serve in leadership roles. Thus, women itinerated and led meetings for other women in the rural regions. Occasionally, they even preached. Anna Nitschmann, for example, completed a preaching tour of Pennsylvania in 1742.²⁸ More frequently, however, women traveled with their husbands and were thus included as part of the "wheel."²⁹ While their husband led services for men, they led devotional services for other women or worked within the system of rural schools.³⁰ Wives were especially appreciated when itinerants would find women home alone, as they often did. Women also served as elderesses and teachers, overseers, and ordained deaconesses.³¹

While itinerants were removed from their "home" congregations often, they were rarely alone. Even if a single or married man traveled alone, congregations or households were rarely separated by more than a day's walk and in some cases were only a few hours apart. Itinerants often stayed with diaspora members or sympathetic households. They

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Fogleman, *Jesus is Female*, 164-5.

²⁹ Ibid., 168-70.

³⁰ Ibid., 169, For itinerants working in Moravian schools in rural areas, see Mabel Haller, *Early Moravian Education in Pennsylvania* (Nazareth: Moravian Historical Society, 1953).

³¹ Fogleman, *Jesus is Female*, 172-3.

might cross paths at Moravians societies or meeting houses in such places as Warwick, Oley, Lancaster or Philadelphia. This provided itinerants the opportunity to exchange information with each other as well as with scattered members of the *Gemeine*. Sometimes itinerants would travel together for a few days sharing the load of sermons, baptisms and visitation and then part company. Sometimes, English and German itinerants traveled together providing joint preaching services in both languages.³²

One of the most significant roles of Moravian itinerants was as preachers. Itinerants preached whenever they had opportunity. This usually required some form of permission or request by a local minister or community leader. Moravian preachers preferred that people in the area were notified prior to their sermon so they could make arrangements to attend. Like other awakeners, Moravian itinerants not only preached in church buildings, but in houses, barns, courthouses and in the open air. Following the lead of Zinzendorf, itinerants preached Christocentric sermons that called their listeners to experience awakening through the blood and wounds of Christ. Moravian preachers were popular and often received requests by various congregations to become "settled" ministers.³³

Beyond preaching, Moravian itinerants made extensive visitations among rural households. When visitations produced favorable results, itinerants incorporated friendly households into the regular circuit. They informed their fellow workers about the location of sympathetic families who would provide lodging, meals, or simply welcome conversation. These friendly households became important points within the itinerant networks and preachers recorded the location of these families in their diaries and maps along with the church buildings and preaching points they visited. A typical circuit

³² Fogleman, *Jesus is Female*, 122-3

³³ Jacob Lischy is a good example. See Fogleman, *Jesus is Female*, 123-4.

included several preaching points and friendly households. At times, Moravian leaders even took up residence at strategic points within a given region.³⁴

Despite facing great opposition, Moravian itinerants in the middle colonies were successful in founding and maintaining societies much like they did in England and elsewhere on the European continent through *diasporawerk*. In several places, Moravians were able to erect a meeting house, school or *Gemeinhaus* (communal living quarters), which marked a more permanent presence in these communities. Locations in which societies, schools and congregations emerged also became important points within the Moravian networks. In these places, itinerant work transitioned from evangelism to providing religious services in addition to spiritual counsel for society members and Moravians workers. Such journeys often were performed by more prominent itinerants who were important leaders, such as Matthai Hehl and Christian Henry Rauch.

Itinerants in a Pluralistic Field

Moravian ministers, although their opponents thought otherwise, worked with an ecumenical and irenic spirit. Unlike ministers from other church traditions, Moravian preachers were supported fully with funds from the Moravian Church. They thus avoided the squabbles over money that plagued Reformed and Lutheran pastors. Moravian itinerants also sought to avoid, as much as possible, theological disputes. Doctrinal pacifists, Moravian itinerants did not intentionally interfere with the local congregations they visited and rather than engage in theological arguments, they attempted to "confound" their listeners only "with the Crucified Christ." Although their opponents claimed otherwise, they avoided aggressive tactics and, although they welcomed large crowds, they did not actively seek large audiences.³⁵

Conflict certainly existed, but was by and large a result of the Moravian desire to provide pastoral care to existing congregations and seek out the awakened from within

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 116

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 111-130.

local congregations, not intentional subversion. Additionally, the diverse religious membership within the Moravian community allowed elders to commission preachers to work in religious denominations outside of their own tradition. While Zinzendorf defended these ordinations as legitimate, Moravian opponents considered them illicit and believed the Moravians were merely trying to clandestinely infiltrate their congregations in order to propagate their "heresies."³⁶

Moravians were not theologically aggressive, and neither were they the "enthusiasts" New Lights routinely claimed them to be. Moravians clearly taught that the awakening experience would be intense, and often accompanied by tears and overwhelming emotion. But they did not promote the bodily manifestations or the disorder that came to characterize radical New Lights. In fact, when they encountered such enthusiasm, they outright rejected it. An illustrative example is the itinerant journey of Owen Rice and James Burnside who traveled through New York and Connecticut in 1745.³⁷ The geographical focus of the trip was New London, a town along the Thames River which, as the location of James Davenport's famed book burnings and the headquarters of a well-known group of separatist called Rogerenes, had gained a reputation as a haven for radical New Lights. Moravians had made earlier contacts in the town and on this trip, Rice and Burnside stayed at the Saltonstall residence, a prominent New London family -- well connected to established and respectable Congregationalism. The Moravians traveled quietly, but soon, it was reported to them, the whole town knew

³⁶ The best examples are Johann Philip Böhm's two "Faithful Warnings." Useful sections can be found in Hinke, *Life and Letters*, 348-84. The England titles to Böhm's tracts are, *Faithful Letter of Warning addressed to the High German Evangelical Reformed Congregations and all their members in Pennsylvania for their faithful warning against the people who are known as the Herr Hutters ...* and *Second Faithful Warning and Admonition to my very dear and esteemed Reformed fellow-believers, and to all others who love the Lord Jesus and to whom His holy Gospel and His holy sacraments are most precious.*

³⁷ "Diary of Owen Rice and James Burnside to New London in 1745," Moravian Archives.

they were there. Members of the Rogerenes were especially interested in meeting the itinerants.³⁸

The Rogerenes were named after the founder of the group, John Rogers, who started a separatist congregation around 1674. After influential contacts with members of the Society of Friends, the Rogerenes adopted certain Quaker practices including plain dress and waiting quietly for the Spirit during their meetings. Seventh-day Sabbatarians, the Rogerenes were especially known for protesting, and in some cases, disrupting Congregationalist and Presbyterian meetings during Sunday worship. Not surprisingly, New London's separatists faced frequent arrest and opposition from civil authorities. By the time of the Great Awakening, however, the Rogerenes were experiencing a bit of a reprieve from civil action against them (even though local ministers still resented them) and the separatists, over one hundred strong, even started a fledgling seminary, called the Shepherd's Tent. Although the Great Awakening was waning by 1745, when Rice and Burnside visited New London, the Rogerenes were still thriving.³⁹

The Moravian itinerants were quickly befriended by Michael Hill, a separatist from nearby Saybrook and a one-time companion of James Davenport. Hill took them to meet with the Rogerenes. During the next few days, they attended a Rogerene meeting, met with John Rogers Jr. and John Bolles, New London's foremost separatist leaders as well as attended a sermon by John Curtis, a former teacher at the Shepherd's Tent. They also heard stories, from John Bolles' son, of Rogerene activities, including those of Timothy Waterous. Waterous, one of the Rogerene's "chief preachers," had recently disrupted a Presbyterian meeting by standing at the door of the meeting house and delivering loud

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ On the Rogerenes, see Ellen Starr Brinton, "The Rogerenes," in *The New England Quarterly* 16:1 (March 1943) 2-19, Harry Stout and Peter Onuf, "James Davenport and the Great Awakening in New London," in *The Journal of American History* 70:3 (December 1983) 556-78, and Peter Onuf, "New Lights in New London: A Group Portrait of the Separatists" in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 37:4 (October 1980) 627-43.

blasts with a conch shell. The itinerants also encountered a Rogerene woman who reminded Rice and Burnside of a "French Prophetess" after she boldly exhorted them. Hill also introduced them to a Baptist New Light who declared that bodily "fitts" were necessary evidence of genuine revival.⁴⁰

As late as 1759, Moravian itinerant, Richard Utely also encountered New Light radicalism among the Narragansett Indians outside Charlestown, Rhode Island. Although English ministers had worked among the Narragansett as early as 1713, it was during the Great Awakening that many converted to the "New Light." By the 1750s, when Utely visited the Christian Narragansetts, the largest congregation was led by Samuel Niles, a local separatist minister.⁴¹ Under Niles' leadership, Utely reported, the Narragansett "carried on in a very strange, confused and extravagant manner. "Indeed," he declared, "my eyes had never beheld so strange a spectacle" as their prayer which included crying and weeping that was "exceeding loud." During the meeting, Utely reported that Niles related his revelatory visions which included being "caught up in the 3rd heaven" where he saw "glorious things" and heard "unutterable words." Utely blamed the radicalism he found among the Narragansett on New Lights who, more than a decade after the Great Awakening, were still infecting the Indians with their "extravagancies."⁴²

So how did Owen Rice, James Burnside and Richard Utely respond to such radical New Lights? In New London, Rice and Burnside clearly were not impressed. They declared John Curtis's sermon "cold and formal" and were suspicious of the Rogerenes in general. The Moravians left meetings with John Bolles on unfriendly terms. Bolles declared that they would not be in "fellowship" with the Moravians and refused to wish them

⁴⁰ "Diary of Owen Rice and James Burnside to New London in 1745."

⁴¹ On the influences of the Great Awakening on the Narragansetts of Rhode Island, see William S. Simmons, "Red Yankees: Narragansett Conversion in the Great Awakening," in *American Ethnologist* 10:2 (May 1983) 253-71.

⁴² "An Account of his [Richard Utely] visit to New London and Among the Narragansett Indians," Moravian Archives.

"Godspeed." The Baptist New Light with whom they met declared them "opposers" to the work of God since they did not agree that enthusiasm was evidence of legitimate revival. Rather than the New Lights, who seemed self-righteous, Rice and Burnside were attracted to those who felt more keenly their spiritual needs. To these they distributed Moravian catechisms or taught Moravian hymns indicating that it was from these humble seekers that a "little flock" might be gathered, not from New London's radicals.⁴³

In Charlestown, Utely was likewise suspicious of the enthusiasm he found, likening the Narragansett to the "Prophets of Baal" for their loud wailing. When Samuel Niles gave him the opportunity to speak during the meeting, Utely spoke against their excess, declaring that seeking the wounds of the Savior would be sufficient to "preserve us from running into extravagancies."⁴⁴ It would seem that Moravian awakeners were just as inclined to reject radical New Lights as were the Tennentists.

Developing Itinerant Circuits

As Moravian missionaries and itinerants traveled, they often made use of Indian paths or the colonial roads that followed these routes. Paul Wallace, who has worked extensively with Moravian missionary journals, has documented numerous routes which American Indians and Moravian missionaries shared.⁴⁵ Research conducted for this study suggests he is correct.

Clusters of itinerant activity developed in three general regions: In the forks of the Delaware (Bethlehem and Nazareth), around Lancaster and Warwick, and in the greater-Philadelphia region. (See figure 8) These three networks were not administratively independent or completely in isolation from each other. They were, rather, overlapping

⁴³ "Diary of Owen Rice and James Burnside."

⁴⁴ Utely, "Account in New London and among the Narragansett."

⁴⁵ See Wallace, page 121, for an example of Zinzendorf traveling the Oley Path (original source: William C. Reichel, ed. *Memorials of the Moravian Church* (Philadelphia 1870) 75-6. Wallace also indicates that a section of the Wyoming Path was named "David's Path" by Moravian missionaries. See page 43.

clusters with permeable boundaries. The Bethlehem and Lancaster/Warwick circuits are described below. The Philadelphia circuit is treated in the next section.

The Bethlehem Circuit

Naturally, the region around the "Forks" became an important concentration. Bethlehem remained the spiritual and geographic center of the Moravian enterprise. It was also situated strategically at the intersection of several Indian paths and colonial roads.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ This is evident through a review of the many maps and routes provided in Paul A.W. Wallace, *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission 1965 and 1998).

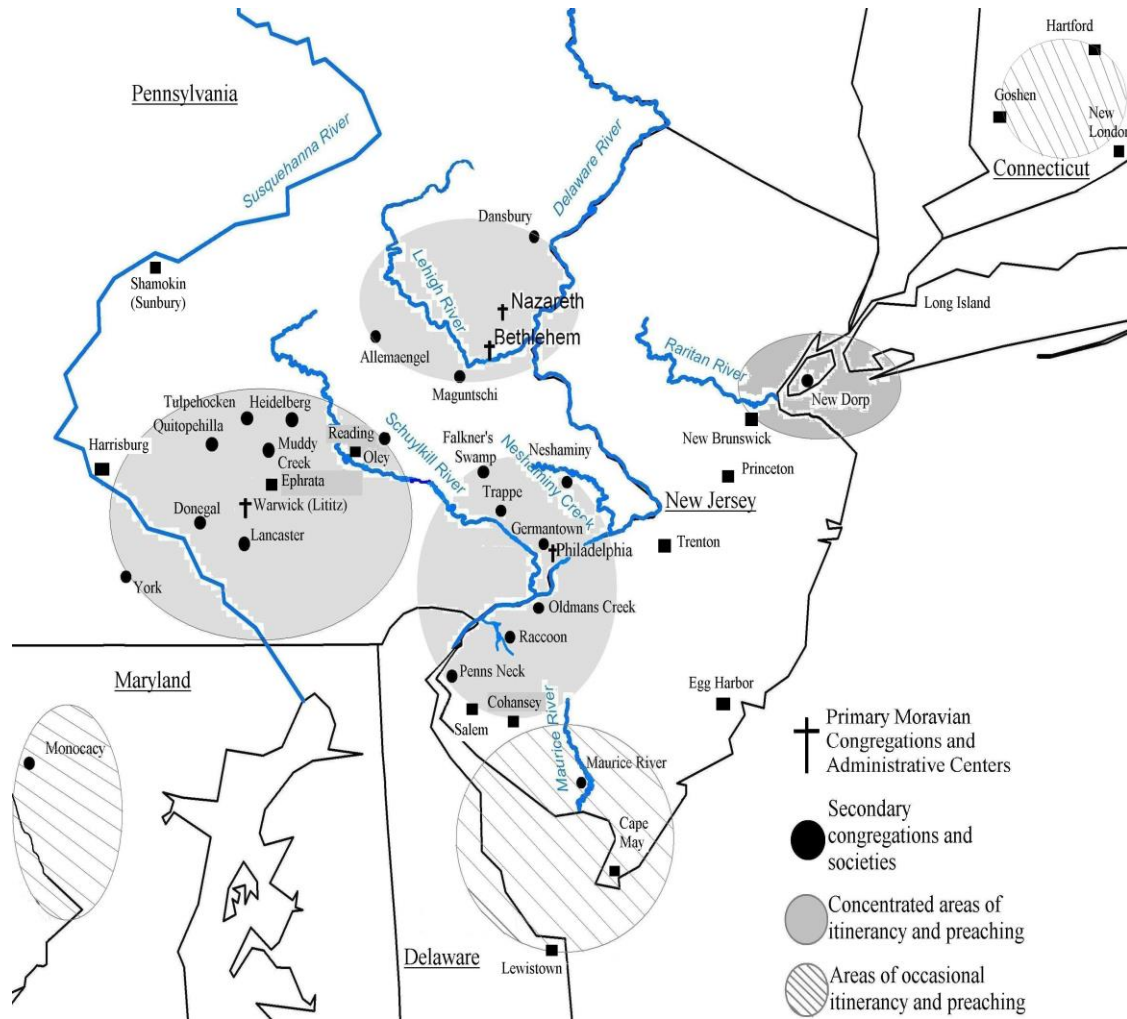


Figure 7: Areas of Moravian Itinerant Activity.

Several Moravian congregations and settlements were located close enough to Bethlehem that travelers could reach them within a day or two. They included Oley, Macungie, Nazareth, Friederickstown and Allemengel. The Indian mission villages, such as Nain and Gnadenhütten (Leighton), were also nearby.

Missionaries who made their way into Native American territory often traveled northwest, leaving Bethlehem and going through Nazareth on their way toward Wyoming

(Wilkes Barre). They no doubt traversed portions of various Indian trails including the Lehigh Path. (See figure 8)⁴⁷

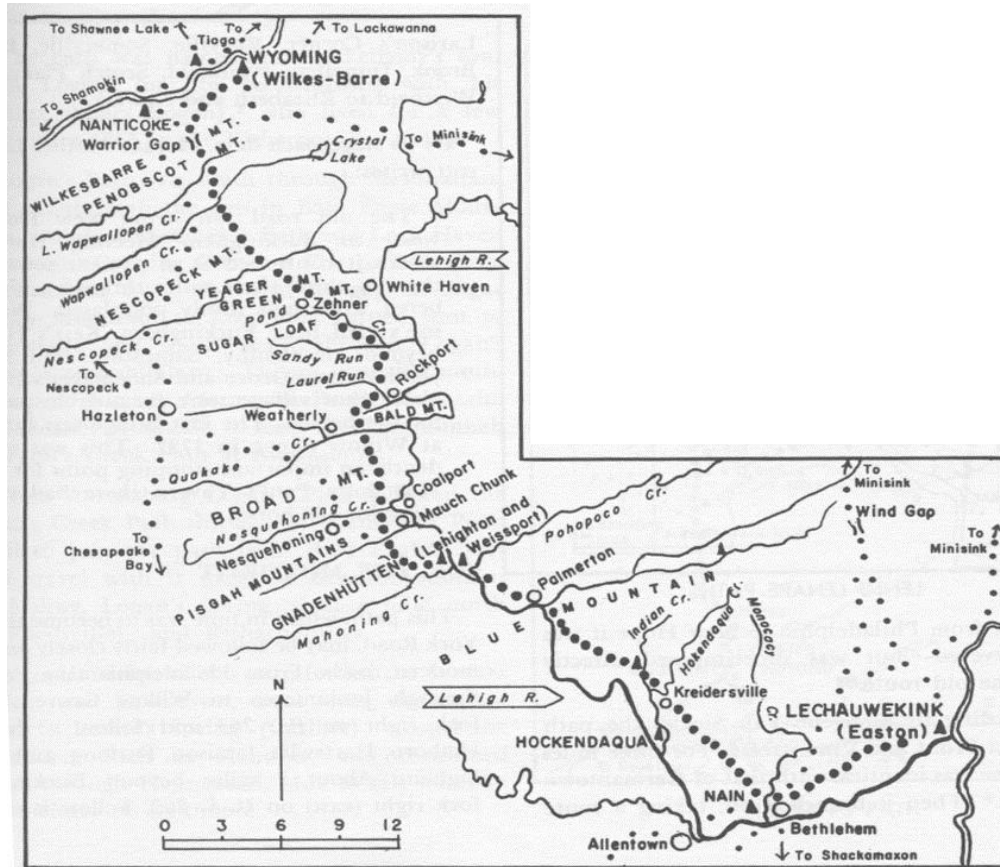


Figure 8: The Lehigh Path

Source: Paul A.W. Wallace, *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania*, used by permission.

The Lancaster/Warwick Circuit

Lancaster and Warwick became important early centers for Moravian itinerant work and the Moravians established congregations and schools in both locations. Warwick gained special prominence as Moravian authorities gathered the society members there into an Ortsgemeine in 1754. Named Lititz, the village ranked among the

⁴⁷ Wallace, *Indian Paths*, 43-4, 88,113-14,178,187, 191.

most important Moravian settlements. In later decades, Lititz functioned as a significant link between Bethlehem and mission stations further west around Pittsburgh and in the Ohio Territory. Lititz was also home to Matthai Hehl, an important Moravian bishop and administrator. Hehl was himself an itinerant who also mapped the rural regions, traveled and supervised some of the itinerant activity.⁴⁸

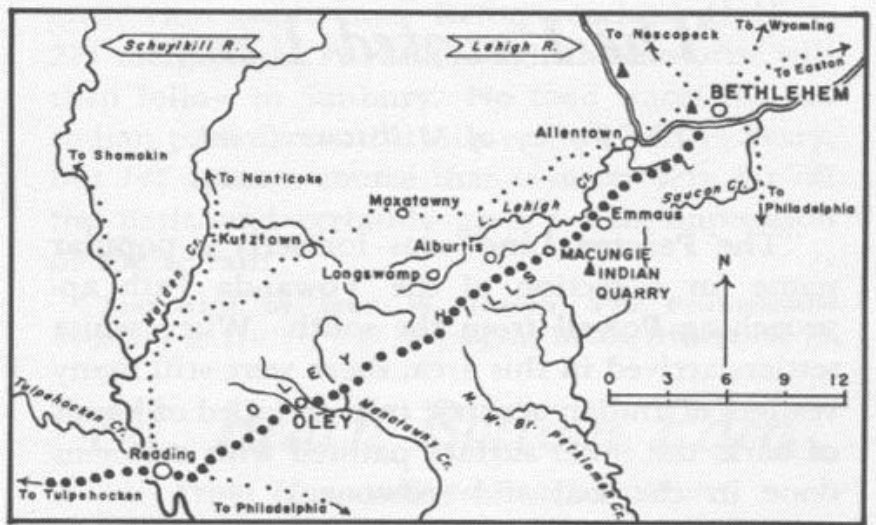


Figure 9: The Oley Path.

Moravian itinerants traveled this route frequently. Source: Paul A.W. Wallace, *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania*, used by permission.

Itinerants traveling from Bethlehem to the Lancaster/Warwick area had no shortage of roads on which to travel. The first leg of the journey was toward Reading and the northern section of the Schuylkill River. For this, itinerants usually took the Oley Path (as Zinzendorf did in 1742) through Macungie and the town of Oley, where the Moravians established a congregation and school. (See figure 10) From there they could proceed into Reading.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Lititz Congregational Diary, Moravian Archives.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 121.

From Reading, itinerants often traveled further south to Lancaster or west toward Warwick. The Lancaster/Warwick region became a significant secondary "circuit." The Moravian society at Warwick quickly grew into a base for itinerant travels for the Lancaster, Lebanon and York regions. The Lititz diary reports a constant flow through the Warwick community and out to surrounding congregations including Tulpehocken, Quintephillia, Conshohocken, Heidelberg, Bethel and others.⁵⁰

If headed to the Lancaster/Warwick region from Bethlehem, itinerants usually traveled first to Reading. From Reading, they traveled west on the Maxatawny Path toward Heidelberg and Tulpehocken. (They may have traveled portions of the Maxatowny or Perkiomen Path, although Moravians sources do not mention this route specifically.)⁵¹ Itinerants who used the Oley Path probably used this route to access Moravian societies in Tulpehocken and areas around Warwick including Quintapelliha (Lebanon), Mühlbach and Donegal.⁵²

Itinerant diaries also indicate that when traveling between Fredereickstown and York, they used a route that was similar to the French Creek Path. Along this route, they visited various congregations including Ephrata and Muddy Creek, Lancaster, Earlentown (New Holland) and Coventry.⁵³ When traveling to York and Codorus Creek, they no doubt crossed the Susquehanna near present day Washington Boro where the river was easily forded and where ferries would later be constructed. Many prominent itinerants such as Christian Henry Rauch, along with Jacob Lischy, made extensive visits between York and Coventry along these routes.(See figure 11)⁵⁴ From York, Moravian travelers could

⁵⁰ Lititz Congregational Diary, Moravian Archives.

⁵¹ Wallace, *Indian Paths*, 98, 127-8.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵³ Wallace, *Indian Paths*, 57.

⁵⁴ See the various travel diaries of Jacob Lischy and C.H. Rauch, which follow them both between Coventry and York, in the Moravian Archives.

continue along the Monocacy Path south into Maryland and Virginia as Matthai Hehl’s map indicates.⁵⁵ This route was no doubt used also by Spangenberg

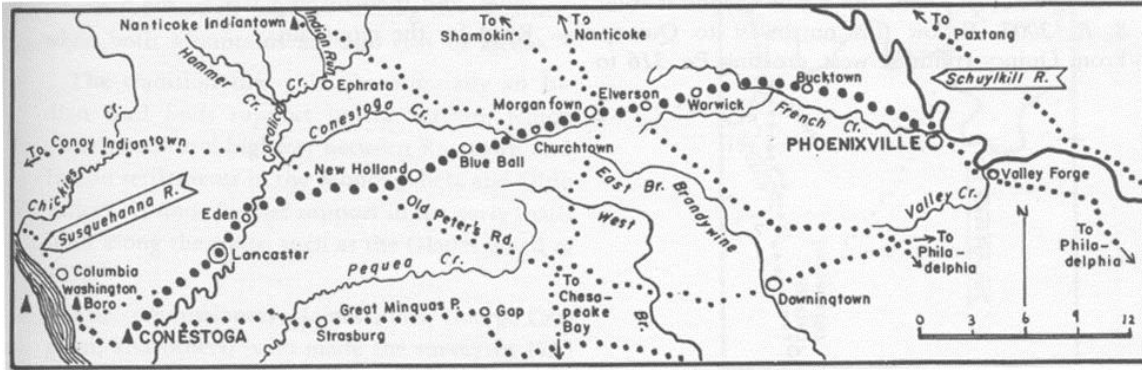


Figure 10: The French Creek Path

This path from Philadelphia to Conestoga allowed access to several Moravian societies and congregations between Coventry and Lancaster. Source: Paul A.W. Wallace, *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania*, used by permission.

who traveled to Virginia with Matthew Reutz in 1747 as well as Leonard Schnell and Robert Hussey while on their way to Savannah, Georgia in 1743.⁵⁶

Throughout the whole enterprise, Bethlehem remained the administrative center. Itinerants might reside and operate in one cluster, but travel to Bethlehem for conferences or to meet with the elders there. In addition to Bethlehem and Warwick, itinerant activity also clustered around Philadelphia, especially for Anglo-Moravians.

⁵⁵ Wallace, *Indian Paths*, 105.

⁵⁶ See William J. Hinke, “Diaries of Missionary Travels among the German Settlers in the American Colonies 1743-1748” *Pennsylvania German Society* Vol. XXXIV, 1929, 8-16.

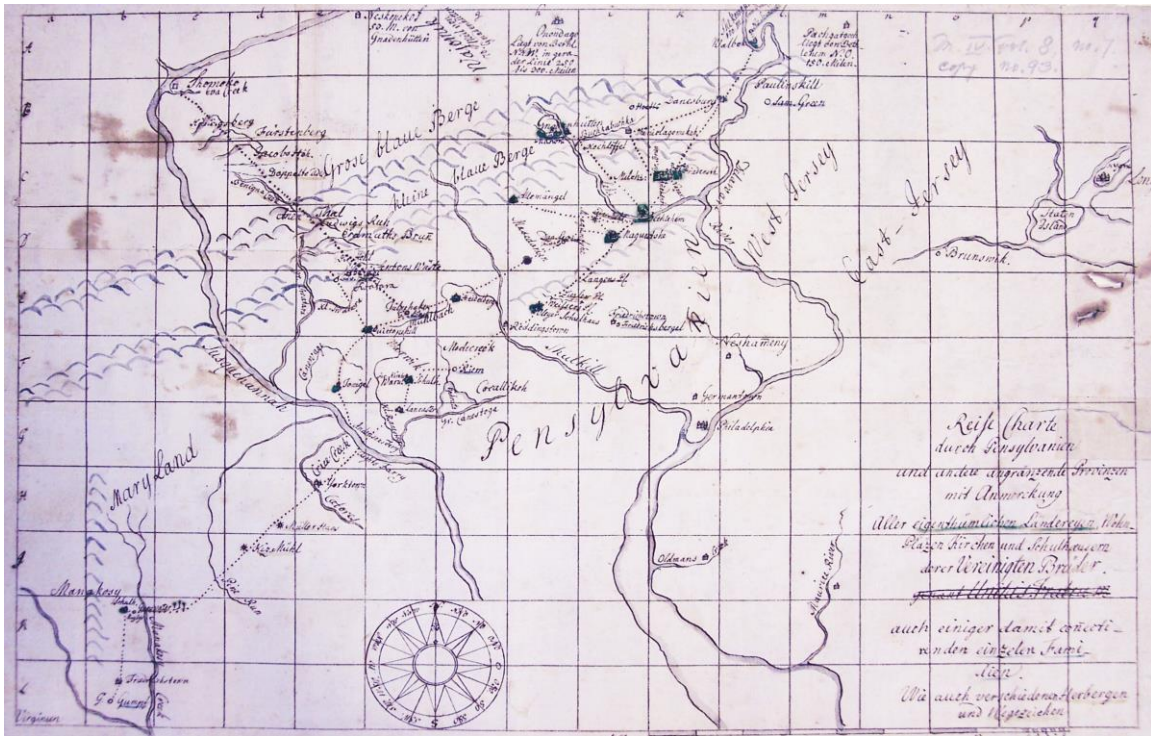


Figure 11: Matthai Hehl's itinerant map

The map shows the location of Moravian congregations and societies as well as sympathetic households among the itinerant network. It also indicates the general routes itinerants followed included the route into Maryland. Source: Moravian Archives, used by permission.

Anglo-Moravian Itinerancy in the Greater-Philadelphia

Region

Within the growing networks described above, most itinerant work was carried out among Germans. Secondly, the Moravians worked among the Swedes on the east side of the Delaware River. But more significant for the present study, Moravians also became active among English speakers. Indeed, immediately after the founding of Bethlehem and as the English Congregation was being settled in Nazareth, Anglo-Moravians began efforts to establish contacts and work for religious awakening among

Anglophones living near Bethlehem. As early as July, 1742 David Bruce visited Irish “neighbors” nearby Bethlehem – a number of whom had made visits to the new Moravian settlement.⁵⁷ English-speaking itinerants also were sent out from Bethlehem to points along the Neshaminy Creek and the Schuylkill River as well as to rural villages such as Maxatawny, Trapp and Oley.⁵⁸

As the Moravian presence in Philadelphia grew, English speaking itinerants increasingly used Philadelphia as their base. The Philadelphia circuit included the region just east of the Delaware River, where Swedish Lutherans had settled and established thriving communities in Raccoon, Morris, and Swedesborg. Moravians frequently traveled “among the Swedes” and by the end of 1742, Swedish speaking Moravians such as L. T. Nyberg and Daniel Paul Bryzelius encountered both controversy and success in this region.⁵⁹ Swedish Moravians were not the only itinerants who worked in West Jersey. English speaking itinerants also developed favorable contacts and could count on several loyal households for support and lodging. These included the Lutheran pastor Peter Tranberg as well as the Keen, von Eiman, and Hopman households.⁶⁰ Anglo-Moravian itinerants frequented villages such as Penn’s Neck, Morris, and Raccoon. The greater-Philadelphia region also included the German areas of Germantown and Fredericktown. By 1748, English itinerants based in Philadelphia traveled as far as Egg Harbor and Cape May along the New Jersey shore.

In the first two years of operating among English speakers, there were at least nine Moravian preachers and itinerants specifically servicing English-speakers in and

⁵⁷ *Bethlehem Diary*, Vol.1, 28, 37.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 38-9, 72, 180.

⁵⁹ On the Raccoon and Pennsneck Swedish Lutheran congregations, see Amandus Johnson, *Records of the Swedish Lutheran Churches at Raccoon and Penns Neck, 1713-1786*, translated by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, State of New Jersey (Elizabeth, NJ: Colby and McGowan, 1938).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

around Bethlehem and Philadelphia including Pyrlaeus and Böhler -- a relatively small but highly influential band.⁶¹ Even before Moravian authorities established a formal English presence in Philadelphia, Anglo-Moravians, such as John Okely had started working in the greater Philadelphia area.

John Okely and the Moravian Message along the Delaware

John Okely (1721-1792) was a prolific itinerant in the Philadelphia region. As noted in chapter one above, Okely had adopted Moravian spirituality in his hometown of Bedford, where the Moravians gathered a congregation through the work of his mother Ann and older brother, Francis. While Francis was more prominent among Bedford Moravians, John figured more centrally among English Moravians in the American colonies.

There is no record that John preached before arriving in North America. He was instead gainfully employed as a legal clerk. Okely was, however, counted among the members of the Bedford evangelicals and had early gravitated toward the Moravians.⁶² Like others attracted to the Moravians, he had visited Moravian settlements on the continent and it was he who influenced Francis's decision to join fully with the Moravians.⁶³ John remained part of the Moravian society at Bedford until 1741 when he journeyed to Bethlehem and was one of the initial founders of the village, coming to Pennsylvania as a member of the first Sea Congregation.⁶⁴ Here, he became one of the earliest members of the *Pilgergemeine* before receiving ordination in 1751. Before his death in 1792, Okely held several offices in Bethlehem including "scrivener," "conveyancer," and Justice of the Peace. He also served as an assistant commissary for

⁶¹ David Bruce, Shaw, Okely, Joseph Powell, Rice, Gambold and Burnside.

⁶² "Life of Ann Okely," in *The Bedford Moravian Church in the Eighteenth Century*, 219.

⁶³ John Walsh, "The Cambridge Methodists" in *Christian Spirituality* 273-4.

⁶⁴ *Bethlehem Diary*, see also *A History of the Beginnings of the Moravian Work in America* by George Neisser 185

the Continental Army before experiencing irreconcilable difference with the Bethlehem authorities and withdrawing from the Moravians shortly before his death in 1792.⁶⁵

While Okely spent a number of years itinerating throughout the Philadelphia region, only two of his diaries have survived. Both of them, however, illuminate the present study. First, they reveal that the theological differences between Moravians and New Lights described in chapter two above became significant tensions on the ground. Okely, like other itinerants, faithfully espoused Zinzendorf's teachings. At the same time, anti-Moravian efforts among New Lights had their desired effect. In addition to showing how theological tensions played out, Okely's diaries illustrate the methods Moravians used to promote their brand of religious awakening. Okely's 1742 diary is treated in this chapter while his 1743 diary is treated in the next.

Immediately upon leaving his base in Philadelphia at the beginning of August, Okely traveled east across the Delaware and made use of the previously established network of sympathetic households. As described above, the Moravian congregations in both Bethlehem and Philadelphia were popular visiting places for spiritual seekers, and after returning home, a number of these visitors welcomed itinerants, providing meals and lodging. Before turning south along the Delaware, Okely visited the Tusseys, Keens, and Herrenborns – all Moravian supporters among the Swedish Lutherans in West Jersey. Illustrating the networking effect of the English itinerants, Okely regularly encountered individuals who had heard other Moravian preachers such as in Wilmington where David Bruce and Rice were already known.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See Neisser and Levering 124. Also Haller, *Early Moravian Education*, 129

⁶⁶ Okely Diary 1742, 2.



Figure 12: John Okely's 1742 and 1743 itinerant journeys.

Some had also traveled to Philadelphia where they had heard Moravians preach. Several reported that if they lived closer to a Moravian congregation, they would visit more often.

Diaries such as Okely's provide descriptions of those who were spiritually "dead" and those who had been awakened. For example, although William Tussey supported the

Moravians, his wife was a "self-conceited Pharisee."⁶⁷ Likewise, a Quaker near Darby was "cold and indifferent" as well as "wise and Philosophical and very far from that Poverty of Spirit which shall inherit the Kingdom of heaven."⁶⁸ Okely found the Anglican minister in St. Georges, a "poor dead, worldly carnal man" that "minds the fleece more than the flock."⁶⁹ He reported that some areas were so cold and dead that both Moravians and the New Lights were "out of favour."

Others had been "somewhat awakened," but lapsed. In Wilmington, Delaware, one man confided in Okely that "he had once felt the Lord's grace on his Heart but ... was now in such darkness and confusion as to doubt if ever he had experienced anything at all" Okely advised him "I had also been in the same circumstances once and that my remedy was, to come to the Lord Jesus, as such a Sinner, and wash me in his Blood that he must know the atoning Blood as Sinner and that would make him Happy."⁷⁰

According to Okely, many of those who had fallen away had experienced conversion under George Whitefield's preaching but these experiences had been less than genuine. He met a Presbyterian man, for example, who had been "somewt. Awaken'd by Mr. W[hitefield]" but was in fact "the only remaining fruit I could find of his [Whitefield's] labours there." In Philadelphia, this man had previously met Edward Evans who asked him to welcome Okely when he arrived. The man reported to Okely that he was hesitant, however, given the Moravians' controversial reputation. He reminded Okely of the "many things he had heard preached against the brethren." Okely advised him to "count the Costs" and that "shame and reproach do surely attend the gospel of Christ" and then answered his objections. That afternoon, Okely preached in the courthouse.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 1.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 5.

⁷⁰ Okely diary 1742, 3.

⁷¹ Ibid. 12-13.

After the meeting had ended without incident and some had even been "pretty much affected" by the sermon, the man seemed to warm up to Okely's message.

Contrasting with the "dead" and lapsed were those who became fully awakened. Okely had particular success at Duck Creek (Smyrna), where he preached twice in as many weeks. Several townspeople reported to Okely that they had attended Whitefield's sermons in addition to those of the Moravians. One of these men had even built a meeting house in hopes that a congregation would be formed, but could not find a permanent minister. Illustrating the success that Moravian preachers often enjoyed, Okely reported that a "general awakening" had taken place under his preaching to nearly two hundred people at the Duck Creek meeting house. After preaching, Okely reported "our Saviour was pleased to attend it with his Spirit and Power, far beyond my Expectation."

On his way back north along the Delaware, Okely stopped again at Duck Creek and preached a sermon to a "great company" on Mark 1:15. Okely was excited to report that "the Grace of our Savior was visibly present, and moved and affected almost all hearts present." They were so impressed that they pressed Okely to stay on as their minister.⁷² The people were particularly endeared to Okely and it was hard for him to leave. One young man followed after him asking for directions to his residence in Philadelphia. He requested "as many books as I thought necessary and usefull." Although Okely gave him his address in Philadelphia, he "told him the Bible was Sufficient enough to show him the way of salvation."⁷³ Okely commented in his diary,

He was very unhappy, and did not know what to do with himself, he was not willing to damned, and he was too unholy for our Saviour and dared not go to him. I told him our Saviour saved Sinners only, and if he would become one, our Saviour would

⁷² Okely 1742 diary 16-18.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 19.

receive him, and love him and cover him with his Bloody Righteousness and then he would not be condemned.⁷⁴

Also in Duck Creek, Okely visited a widow who had recently "joined herself" with "the N. Lights" who were attempting to "build her up in her self Righteousness." Okely commented that she had been "truly awaken'd" by Whitefield's preaching but was "much confused" by the New Lights and Baptists. She was "shy" with Okely when she found out he was a Moravian because "she had heard much against them." When Okely assured her that the Moravians "did not preach or trouble ourselves" about anything but the "crucified Christ," she "came into a Hearty discourse with me, and I had opportunity ... [to speak] many things to her heart, so that she confess'd with tears [that] her heart did rest alone on the Blood of Christ."⁷⁵ When Okely left, she had been "so much affected in her heart with what I said to her, so that she could scarce let me go."⁷⁶

Although witnessing awakening at Duck Creek, in other places, Okely encountered resistance from New Light supporters. In New Castle, for example, he met a man who shared Okely's enthusiasm for the "grace of the Lord," but had been swayed against the Moravians by New Light preaching. Before he realized Okely was a Moravian, the man asked him what he thought of the Moravians and if they had gained a "footing" in Philadelphia. After Okely defended the Moravians, the man suspected that "he was talking with one" which Okely confirmed. The man proceeded to bring "all the objections" that Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Finley were then raising. Although Okely tried to persuade him these objections had no merit, the man became "like one that had burnt himself and sought to get away." Before parting, he said that he did not think Okely would have much success and that he "believed all those thoughts that were alleged against us" and that such "worthy men, Experienced Christians, and near-walkers with

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Okely 1742 diary 7.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 8.

God" could not be wrong.⁷⁷ Blaming the man's prejudice on the New Lights and even Whitefield, Okely commented that they "will one day repent what he has done." New Light opposition was also strong in Wilmington where Okely complained that

The place seemed to be shut and bar'd against us from all quarters. Mr. T.[ennent] is a bitter enemy to us in secret, and foments the enmity against us both in the Sweeds and Church [of England] people, so that they openly declare they will not suffer a Moravian to preach amongst them."⁷⁸

Others raised issues that reflected popular criticisms of the Moravians, including those treated in the literature described in the previous chapter. In Chester, for example, Okely fielded accusations that the Moravians were a "new upstart sect." In response, he defended the Moravian Brethren as "one of the oldest of the Protestant Religions."⁷⁹ Others in Chester brought up the issue of perfection. A woman asked if "there was not such a thing as becoming quite free from the feeling of sin." Okely assured her that perfection was impossible and that "on the contrary ... we as sinners had momentarily need of the Blood of Christ to wash in to our dying day"⁸⁰

Okely specifically encountered individuals in St. Georges, who had been influenced against the Moravians by reading Crellius' *Compendious Extract*.⁸¹ Beyond simply answering Crellius' pamphlet, Okely was prepared with his own literature. He had left Philadelphia with a stack of copies of the Bechtel Catechism and another Moravian tract called the "Friendly Traveler." Zinzendorf had written the "Traveler" specifically for

⁷⁷ Ibid. 4-5.

⁷⁸ Okely 1742 diary 23.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 21.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 22.

⁸¹ Ibid. 6.

itinerants to distribute as an evangelistic tool. Okely distributed this literature frequently during his journeys in 1742 and 1743.⁸²

Okely's journals are much like those of numerous other Moravian itinerants who canvassed the middle colonies. Yet they reflect the particular issues of the greater-Philadelphia region, especially the competition between Moravians and Tennentists. As this chapter has described, Moravian activity was not limited to the areas in and around Philadelphia, but was rather linked to an extensive network of itinerant activity. Recognizing the extent of the Moravian program, it is little wonder that those who opposed their teachings felt threatened by this expanding activity. The networking activity of the Moravians included English-speaking itinerants like John Okely whose preaching and visitation fueled the controversy in and around Philadelphia. While previous chapters have focused primarily on events leading up to and including the year 1742, the next chapter follows the Moravian-Tennentist controversy as it continued to play out in 1743.

⁸² Zinzendorf, "My Dear Fellow-Traveler, here hast thou a letter, which I have wrote to thee out of the fullness of my heart . . ." (Philadelphia, 1742). The "Fellow Traveler" was written anonymously, but Zinzendorf is taken to be the author. The broadside was essentially an educational device. Although not in question and answer format, it was clearly meant to instruct the reader in the basics of Christian faith -- not unlike a catechism. Zinzendorf even calls himself "teacher" and provides the reader with a basic narrative of Creation, the fall, the work of Satan, the ancient Israelites, the redemption, and finally, the necessity of attaining the "religion of Christ" where one "feels grace and forgiveness by that blood which so many thousands name in ignorance."