

MORAVIAN MOMENT #31...

Baptism of the Spirit

Persecution in Czechoslovakia drove the Moravian Church underground. Death stared them in the face daily. It was not a time for the faint hearted. It required strength, faith and courage of the highest order. Bishop John Amos Comenius saw the Moravians as a hidden seed and he believed that he was called by God to provide the place and condition where that seed would grow. It seems that the hand of providence was guiding them to renew the Unity of the Brethren of the Moravian Church at Herrnhut, Germany.

As the community developed at Herrnhut, different opinions, attitudes and life style caused serious divisions among them. It became very bitter at times and sought to tear the community at Herrnhut asunder. What was going to become of the band of once faithful men and women of God who had sacrificed so much for the Kingdom of God?

On August 13th, 1727, Pastor Rothe, a Lutheran, invited the Herrnhut people to Holy Communion in Berthelsdorf Church. At that service a sense of awe was overpowering. It was like Pentecost. It has being described as a "Baptism of the Spirit". This marked the real beginning of the renewal of the Brethren's Church. Following the service people gathered in several houses, continuing their fellowship together, and Count Zinzendorf, sensing the atmosphere, had food sent to each group in order for them to continue together in communion and prayer. The practice of sharing in a fellowship meal continued and developed into the Love feast. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit saw a divided Church united and on fire for Christ. Men and women now turned from hatred, bitterness, rage and anger, to love of God and one another. O how the Moravian Church longs for another out pouring of the Holy Spirit upon our Church, to snatch it back from the enemy and revive us again.

Having had its rebirth, the congregation was divided into bands for prayer and the study of the word of God, which led to the "choir" system when people were grouped according to age, sex and marital status. The single Brethren's Choir was formed in 1728, followed in 1730 by the Single Sisters. Community houses were built and devotional meetings were a vital feature in these establishments. But they also became centers of industry. Later there were buildings for Widows' and Widowers' Choirs. Education for the children was also important in Herrnhut and future Moravian communities.

The community was in a special sense a "Village of the Lord". A roster was made for Hourly Intercessions with persons being assigned to pray at every hour of the day and night. The Prayer Watch continued for one hundred years without a break, and is continued now by the Moravian Church throughout the world. This rebirth of the Moravian Church saw the most revolutionary event in the history of Missions where Missionaries were sent to every corner of the globe. Can this happen again? Are there other men and women who desire to be used by God? Are you willing to stand up and be counted?

12th August, 2007