

Faith of Our Fathers Germany 2023 Journey – Herrnhut

1. Introduction

This report provides feedback with regard to an Unlimited Prayer Frontiers (UPFSA) prayer outreach to Germany in September/October 2023, which included the centers of Hermannsburg, Wittenberg, Dresden, Herrnhut and Berlin. The outreach had a challenging mandate from God and was to serve as a forerunner to more outreaches from South Africa and Africa as a whole to Europe. The report is thus to serve as a source of information to follow-up initiatives, both by UPFSA and by other organisations. The report relates the experiences on the outreach in relation to specific words received from God during the nine weeks of preparation and during the outreach itself. A joint team understanding of the impact of the outreach, as reflected in this report, has been gained in various feedbacks that have already happened, i.e. a focused, externally-led team de-briefing, individual feedbacks to the communities/churches which were represented on the outreach, and the country-wide feedback meeting on Zoom on 11.11.23.

To speed up the feedback, a first report was produced on Hermannsburg, whereas this report will only address Herrnhut. A final report will cover all centers visited.

2. Purpose of outreach

Since a prayer journey to Germany in 2019, a vision from God has emerged and has grown over time, in various joint 'Europe / Africa Nations Redeemed' events, into a clear purpose: *"for spiritual children (Africa tribes / nations believers) to come back to Europe to show prophetic gratefulness to their spiritual parent nations for the gospel they brought to Africa already centuries ago (Eph. 6:1-3; Malachi 4:6); bringing gifts that will bless the parents (Matt. 2:10-11).* This was to be done to encourage our brothers and sisters, the body of Christ in Germany, with a sense of God's end-time purpose for the nation of Germany. We experienced God's preparation and leading towards his mandate throughout the journey and thus the report is to serve first and foremost as a testimony to an amazing God.

3. Preparation of the journey

In the beginning of May 2023 an invitation went out to join the journey: "We want to especially invite descendants of our 'first nation' – the Khoi / San people of South Africa as well as Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho believers. We want them to represent their communities to bring thanksgiving and prophetic expressions of gratefulness for the gospel that German believers brought to southern Africa." By beginning of July, God had provided a wonderfully representative team:

Sophia Hendricks, Angela Dunn: Khoi descendants impacted by the Moravian mission from Herrnhut;

Victor Vilakazi: from the Zulu nation impacted by the Hermannsburg Mission Society;

Rolf Gevers, Irma Lammerding: German-speaking descendants of missionaries from Hermannsburg;

Eberhard Braune: born in Germany, with links to the Rheinisch Mission Society to Namibia;

Karine Derieux: French speaker with a prophetic ministry for Germany;

Leon Coetzee: Afrikaner of Huguenot descent and leader of UPFSA.



Beginning of the journey in Hermannsburg

God had played a big role in the bringing together this team. Irma took an in-faith decision on very short notice, when Friedhild Böhmer of the Mkhondo German community had to withdraw because of an operation her husband had to undergo. Leon was able to join the Germany team when a parallel journey to France / Switzerland had to be called off, because no more bookings for visa were available, months ahead of time (because of the World Rugby Cup in France).

Team preparation is vital for UPF prayer journeys. This started immediately, with regular Zoom meetings and then daily joint prayer on the Whatsapp group during the last four weeks. The first in-person meeting happened at departure from OR Tambo airport on 24 September 2023. The strength of the team effort for this outreach can be gauged by the 97 intercessors that were brought together across the country to support the outreach.

4. Herrnhut visit

The Unitas Fratrum - "Unity of the Brethren"

On a journey of discovery to Moravian mission stations in the Cape in South Africa in 2021, we discovered that Moravians were commemorating their church from 1457, more than 550 years ago. Some background is provided here of this early part of the history of the Moravian Church, to help understand its significance in the overall Protestant and global mission movement.



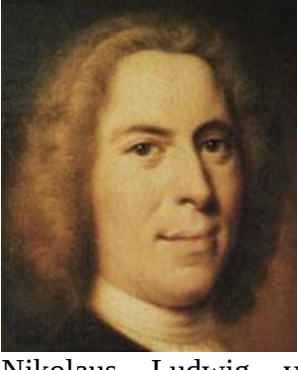
Moravian Church in Shiloh, South Africa – commemoration dates 1457 and 1737

The Moravian Church, or the Moravian Brethren, formally the Unitas Fratrum (Latin: "Unity of the Brethren"), is one of the oldest Protestant denominations in Christianity. The Hussite movement, that was to become the Moravian Church, was started by Jan Hus (John Huss) in early 15th-century Bohemia, in what is today the Czech Republic. The Church was established as a reaction to practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Hus wanted to return the Church in Bohemia and Moravia to the practices of early Christianity: performing the liturgy in the language of the people, allowing lay people to receive both the bread and the cup during communion, and eliminating Papal indulgences and the idea of purgatory.

The movement gained royal support and a certain independence for a while, even spreading across the border into Poland, but was eventually forced to be subject to the governance of Rome. When Hus was summoned to attend the Council of Constance, they decided that he was a heretic and released him to the secular authority, which sentenced him to be burned at the stake in 1415. Within 50 years of Hus' death, a contingent of his followers had become independently organised as the "Bohemian Brethren" or Unity of the Brethren, which was founded in Kunvald, Bohemia, in **1457**. This is the date that the Moravian Church has adopted as their origin.

Bohemia blossomed as a Protestant stronghold, but always lived under the fear of a Catholic takeover by the Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled by the Habsburg monarchy. In 1617 the Empire tried to put the fiercely Catholic Ferdinand of Styria on the Bohemian throne. When Ferdinand sent two councilors to Prague to organize the government in 1618, Protestants threw them out a window (famously known in history as the Defenestrations of Prague), triggering the Bohemian Revolt. This Protestant-Catholic clash spread to Moravia and signaled the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, one of the longest and most destructive conflicts in

European history, lasting from 1618 to 1648, throughout Europe. At the Battle of White Mountain on November 8, 1620, the Catholics defeated the Bohemian Protestants, who, from then on, lived under constant persecution and turmoil. By 1629, Protestants were offered an ultimatum. They were forced to choose to either leave or to convert to Catholicism. The Brethren were forced to operate underground and eventually dispersed across Northern Europe as far as the Low Countries, where Bishop Jan Amos Komenský attempted to direct a resurgence. The largest remaining communities of the Brethren were located in Lissa in Poland, which had historically strong ties with the Czechs, and in small, isolated groups in Bohemia and Moravia. Here, the Peace of Westphalia (1648) had put Catholics fully in control.

			
Jan Hus 1370 - 1415	Jan Amos Komenský 1592 - 1670	Christian David 1692-1751	Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf 1700 - 1760

Herrnhut - re-establishment of the Brethren

In 1722, a small group of the Bohemian Brethren (the "Hidden Seed"), who had been living in northern Moravia as an illegal underground remnant surviving in the Catholic setting of the Habsburg Empire for nearly 100 years, arrived at the Berthelsdorf estate of Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf in present-day Saxony in the eastern part of modern-day Germany. Out of a personal commitment to helping the poor and needy, von Zinzendorf, a nobleman who had been brought up in the traditions of Pietistic Lutheranism, agreed to a request from their leader (Christian David, an itinerant carpenter) that they be allowed to settle on his lands in Upper Lusatia in Saxony. Zinzendorf founded Herrnhut as a Christian community, also including Pietists from Germany and beyond. The community held services at an assembly hall in Herrnhut and took the sacraments and worshiped in the Lutheran parish church in the nearby village of Berthelsdorf.



The strategic position of Herrnhut, right at the corner of three countries - Germany, Czech Republic and Poland - a photo taken in one of the prayer rooms in Jesus House, Herrnhut

A devout Lutheran, Zinzendorf tried to keep the refugees within the state church. His aversion to apparent sectarianism was overcome when he realized that he faced the remnant of a church older than his own. Reluctantly, he helped them revive their own tradition. As a result, Herrnhut became the mother community of the Moravian church. It also became the center for a network of Pietist conventicles working to nurture the

spiritual life within the established Lutheran and Reformed churches. The town initially grew steadily, but major religious disagreements emerged and by 1727 the community was divided into factions.

In response, Zinzendorf visited all the adult members of the deeply divided community. He drew up a covenant, calling upon them 'to seek out and emphasize the points in which they agreed' rather than stressing their differences. On 12 May 1727, they all signed an agreement to dedicate their lives, as he dedicated his, to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, on 13 August 1727, at a specially called Communion service, the Holy Spirit came upon the community and brought a dramatic transformation: "Self-love and self-will, as well as all disobedience disappeared and an overwhelming flood of grace swept us all out into the great ocean of Divine Love. Every one desired above everything else that the Holy Spirit might have full control." Zinzendorf wrote twenty-seven years later: "This firm confidence changed them in a single moment into happy people which they are to this day, and into their happiness they have since led may thousands of others through the memory and help which the heavenly grace once given to themselves, so many thousand times confirmed to them since then."

The Moravian revival of 1727 was preceded and then sustained by extraordinary praying. A spirit of grace, unity and supplications grew among them. On 26 August, twenty-four men and twenty-four women covenanted together to continue praying in intervals of one hour each, day and night, each hour allocated by lots to different people. Others joined the intercessors and the number involved increased to seventy-seven. They all carefully observed the hour which had been appointed for them. The intercessors had a weekly meeting where prayer needs were given to them. This astonishing prayer meeting went on for more than a hundred years.

Prayer led to action, especially evangelism. More than one hundred missionaries left that village community in the next twenty-five years, all constantly supported in prayer. Within two decades there were missions to Greenland, Suriname, South Africa, Algiers, and among the North American Indians.

Komensky – the education focus

Besides Zinzendorf, the name of Comenius stands out among Moravians. John Amos Comenius (Czech: Jan Amos Komenský - 1592 - 1670) was a Moravian philosopher, pedagogue and theologian who is considered the father of modern education. He served as the last bishop of the Unity of the Brethren before becoming a religious refugee. When the Protestant nobles lost to the Catholics in the Estates Uprising of 1621, Comenius had to flee from Fulnek and go into hiding. All his writings, stored at the Fulnek town hall, were burned during a Catholic mass in May of 1623.

Comenius introduced a number of educational concepts and innovations including pictorial textbooks written in native languages instead of Latin, teaching based in gradual development from simple to more comprehensive concepts, lifelong learning with a focus on logical thinking over dull memorization, equal opportunity for impoverished children, education for women, and universal and practical instruction. He also believed heavily in the connection between nature, religion, and knowledge, in which he stated that knowledge is born from nature and nature from God. Besides his native Moravia, to which he always desired to return, he lived and worked in Sweden, Poland, Transylvania, England, the Netherlands and Hungary.

Already, by the middle of the 16th century as many as 90 percent of the subjects of the Bohemian Crown were Protestant. The majority of the nobility was Protestant, and the schools and printing-shops established by the Moravian Church were flourishing. Very often the Brethren were protected by local nobles who joined their ranks to assert their independence from Habsburg Vienna. By the middle of the 16th century there was not a single town without a Protestant school in the Czech lands, and many had more than one, mostly with two to six teachers each. With the University of Prague also firmly in hands of Protestants, the local Catholic church was unable to compete in the field of education.

Not surprising, that Herrnhut became a unique community in which civic and church life were integrated into a theocratic society, a prototype for more than 30 settlements in Europe, the British Isles, and America. These exclusive Moravian villages were characterized by Christian fellowship groups, daily worship featuring both vocal and instrumental music, boarding schools, and concentration on foreign and domestic evangelism. They supported themselves and their projects by thriving handicraft industries. The purpose of these communities was to assist the members resident there in the sanctification of their lives, to provide a meeting place for

Christians from different confessional backgrounds, to provide Christian training for their own children and the children of their friends and supporters and to provide support for the Moravian Mission work throughout the world.

Our contact with the Brüdergemeine – the Moravian Church, Herrnhut

Looking back, we realize, that God had planned this visit. Our main contacts, stemming from a short visit in 2019, were in Jesus House. During that visit, we were unable to make any personal contact with the Moravian Church, because of major meeting the German church had at the time with their Czech brothers. Surprisingly our friends from Jesus House suggested that we stay in Komensky, which we only later realised was the guest- and meeting house of the Brüdergemeine. Using our one contact name we had received from the Moravian Church in South Africa, Sister Christiane Vollprecht, responsible for visitors, we made a booking. The next day a big letter arrived from Komensky – we are booked in – all eight mentioned by name. God had wanted this contact with the Brüdergemeine, Herrnhut all along.

Initial correspondence had started with Raymond Friesen of Jesus House, whom we knew from 2019. Soon we were blessed with a further surprise contact – Nick Pease, leading the Hebron Europe e.V. prayer network, had recently moved from England to Herrnhut and was keen to help us. Then Sister Vollprecht connected us to Pastor Benigna Carstens, who in turn connected us with Pastor Erdmann Becker. Once we were in Herrnhut, Ulrike Novakova of Jesus House helped with several local meetings and wonderfully filled days.



Raymond Friesen



Erdmann Becker



Nick Pease



Ulrike Novakova

Sunday in Herrnhut – God's plan

The days that we would be in individual centers were determined by the overall programme, which emerged from our initial flight bookings. Our programme changed when we made the final flight booking and cut off a few days from the journey to save costs. Looking back, it was here that God had provided a miracle. Suddenly we were in Herrnhut on Sunday, for their Erntedankfest (Thanksgiving for the Harvest Service) and in the capital, Berlin, for the German Day of National Unity.



'Erntedankfest' Sunday Service in the church hall in Herrnhut

We had arrived late on Saturday afternoon from Dresden and settled down in Komensky, but still in time for Communion in the Brüdergemeine. This was particularly touching for the Germans in our group – a whole service in German, linked to the next day's thanksgiving under the theme of 'Thanks for the world-wide Christian community' – how fitting.

The next day found us in a full Brüdergemeine church hall and suddenly part of a thanksgiving that had not been part of our planning. We marveled at the beautifully displayed harvest items and became part of the annual thanksgiving. But more than that - we were allowed to introduce ourselves to some questions, which Pastor Becker had arranged with the youth organisers of the event:

- In your country do you also have Erntedankfest - give thanks for the harvest?
- What fruit, in particular, do you give thanks for?
- Can you please introduce your team to us?
- Can you please share your purpose for coming here with us?

It was a wonderful opening to the thanksgiving we had come to bring.

The 'Faith of Our Fathers' Thanksgiving event

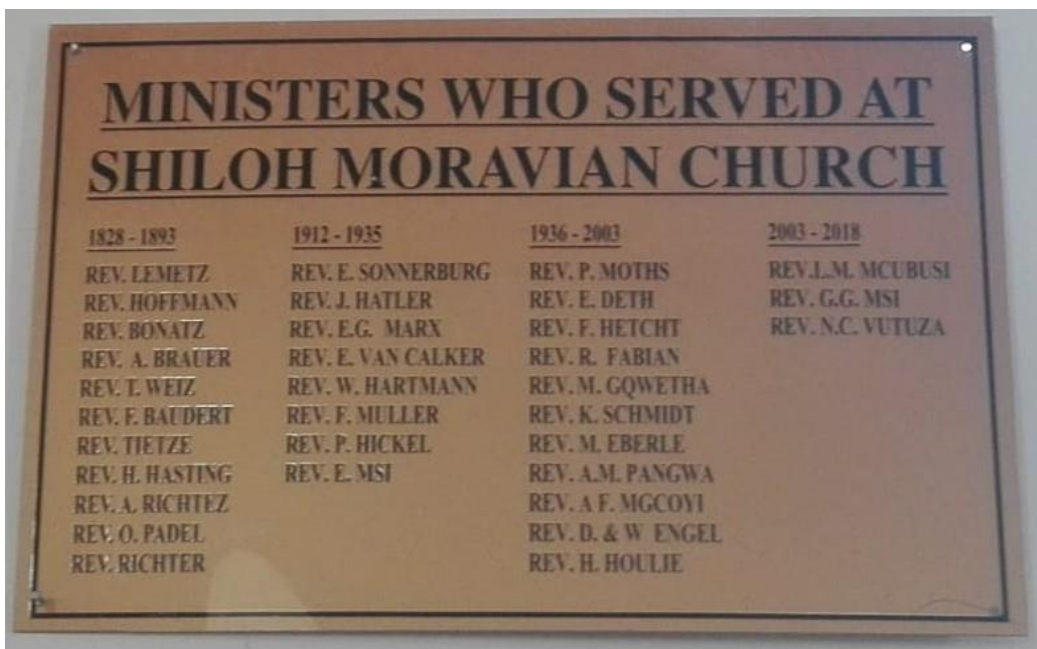
This, our main objective, had been arranged for Sunday afternoon. God had been part of the planning again. Raymond of Jesus House, had a brother-in-law, Martin Theile, who had been a pastor of the Moravian Church and who was part of the Weiz family, all missionary descendants. Through him a meeting was brought about, cutting across all denominations – something that had been so much in our prayers.



Bringing thanks for the gospel that missionary forefathers had brought to South Africa

The meeting was a real blessings. Our hosts had even found a Xhosa hymn that we could all sing together. Our Moravian team members could share how their communities had been blessed by the gospel from Germany and how the heritage was very much alive today. Together, we thanked our Father in whose divine purpose the early missionaries had acted. A participant, Erdmute, wrote a wonderful word from her grandmother into my diary: “Wir wollen des Heilands fröhliche Leute sein” – “We want to be the joyful people of our Saviour.” We saw this first love for God in all these missionaries and prayed Psalm 33 over them.

How God was connecting us, we could still continue to piece together afterwards. A number of old missionaries had shared from their Africa experience – South Africa, Port Elizabeth, East Africa. Martin Theile spoke of his grandmother Hanna, a Weiz, born in Shiloh, South Africa. Back at home, Eberhard found a photo of a memorial plaque in the church in Shiloh, taken during a visit to Moravian mission stations in the Cape two years before. On it was Rev. T. Weiz in the first column (1828-1893). At the time, Eberhard had been impressed, how everybody in Shiloh remembered their German missionary pastors, in particular the last one, Rev. M. Eberle.



Memorial plaque in the mission church in Shiloh, South Africa

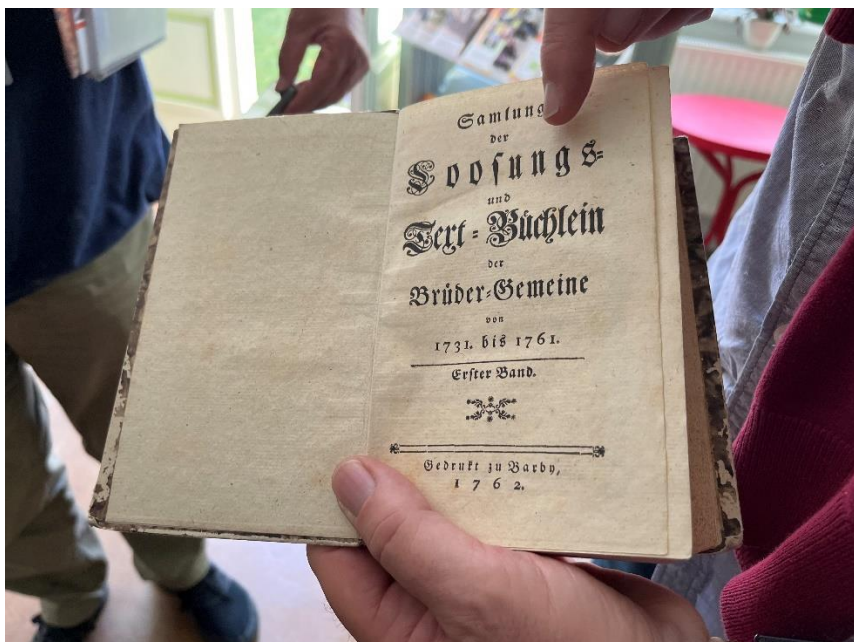
Learning from Pastor Erdmann Becker

There were solemn moments, sitting in the leadership house of the Brüdergemeine with Pastor Erdmann and hearing from him some of the early history, but also praying for our own nation, South Africa – for unity in the body of Christ and for a Godly government, that would address the nation's needs in new, effective ways.

We were blessed to have this quiet time in Herrnhut, guided by Pastor Erdmann Becker. His task in recent years in Berlin had been to prepare the Losungen (Daily Texts) from the drawing of the watchwords for a specific year to the translation into different languages world-wide, over a period of three years. The Daily Texts had already played a wonderful role in the nine weeks of preparing our team of different languages and denominations in weekly Zoom meetings and daily prayers together. In South Africa alone we already have the Texts in German, Afrikaans, English, Xhosa and in the Zulu and Sesotho languages.



In the Brüdergemeine leadership house with Pastor Erdmann Becker



The original Daily Texts (1731-1761) still available in Herrnhut



A deep sense has developed among us, that these Daily Texts, particularly the comprehensive ones we had discovered in the Moravian Church of South Africa (MCSA), could still play a much bigger role in guiding a wider body of Christ in unity in these challenging times of ours.

YWAM Herrnhut

How wonderful, that there is still a mission flame burning brightly in Herrnhut – through a YWAM (Youth With a Mission) center in Herrnhut. We were able to attend their Monday morning praise through Ulrike's arrangements. We met a group of young people from across the world with a deep love for God and for the lost in Germany and far beyond. We learned, that the major bottleneck in reaching the German youth was the mass bombardment they received with impulses through the media and the internet, which prevent the message of Jesus from breaking through. Some of our prayers are recorded in Irma's diary:

- LORD, by your Holy Spirit, bring the pure Message of hope, cutting through all worldly static and confusion;
- May the YWAM Harvest Disciple Training School (Harvest DTS) become a strong light tower for Herrnhut;
- Break the spirit of hardness through the Spirit of Love;
- May the humanistic intellect be challenged soon by visiting Black South Africans, bringing a natural, simplified LOVE = JESUS message in uniquely African ways.



With Ulrike and Nick at YWAM, Herrnhut



Jesus House – International House of Prayer

The people of Jesus House filled our every empty moment in Herrnhut with a wonderful joy. The main event with them was a Monday evening prayer and worship, but worship together already started late Monday morning, culminating in an amazing impromptu lunch that Ulrike had arranged.

When, in 2005, the Christliche Zentrum of Herrnhut (a charismatic branch that developed after WWII - “we are a church, a house of prayer, and a guest house”) purchased a former hospital as their community center, they called it Jesus Haus, to become:

- an Altar of Worship
- a Well of Encounter
- a Gathering Place for Nations
- a Training and Discipleship Center

What we also noticed, as we were guided through Jesus House, was a heart and conviction to pray for the nation of Israel (Psalm 122:6).

Prayer and worship was wonderfully joyful. A special blessing was, that Pastor Gabi Albert, from a charismatic Moravian Church in neighbouring Zittau could participate. She and her family had been on a journey to Namibia in 2022, seeking forgiveness from the Nama and Herero nations for German colonial misdeeds (identificational repentance). At the time, Raymond Friesen connected us with her and we were able to share in this amazing experience.



A wonderful time together at Jesus House

5. Closing thoughts for Herrnhut

Prayer

Much prayer was at the heart of our journey, in the preparatory weeks, during the journey and corporately with our German brothers and sisters. The prayer will continue, knowing that our God is a God who answers prayer.

Revival

Revival was on our heart as we travelled to Herrnhut. The whole world knows about the revival that once broke out here. God is working across generations and the old springs of revival can break out miraculously again under his will and our obedience (Job 14:7-9; 2 Kings 3:16-17). Wherever we went, the River Elbe reappeared and became symbolic to us of the water of life that flows unendingly from the temple, rising in the Bohemian mountains and blessing Herrnhut, Dresden, Wittenberg and Hermannsburg on its way, and finally,

via Hamburg and the ocean, becoming a blessing for the whole world and for us in South Africa (Revelation 22:1-2).

Divisions in the body of Christ

Who carries the revival and mission legacy in Herrnhut today? Worldly influences since the Reformation have brought divisions in the Church. The influence of Nazi Germany is still felt. Could we have hoped for greater expressions of unity during our short visit? We pray that at least some seeds have been sown. Both Jesus House and Komensky need a fresh understanding of the heart of the king of Kings. “Many wear white, but are not pure anymore” (Is.1:18-19). “Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often I’ve ached to embrace you under my wings, but you wouldn’t let me.” (Mat. 23:37). Repent therefore. “As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.” God’s seasons are our opportunities for new beginnings. Communion with Him and 24/7 prayer together once brought unity and harmony. Wisdom will be needed. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).”

God is at work. Already at home, we discovered in written material we had taken home from Herrnhut, that reconciliation is deeply on the heart of Herrnhuters. In preparation for the 300 year jubilee of that first communion (1727), a God idea has grown: *Reconciliation continues!*



'Versöhnung geht weiter' – Reconciliation continues

Holy Spirit

It was the Holy Spirit that brought the revival. Are we open to His move today? We reflected on Deuteronomy 4:15 in the light of the Moravian Church's strong emphasis on symbols like the Moravian Lamb and the Herrnhut Star – this despite the symbol of the white benches in every church. Have beautiful hymns become dutiful words only? Has our history made us proud? Are we celebrating Zinzendorf more than the God that inspired him? Our religion cannot help us. Change our hearts to You Lord – like in Zinzendorf's time. A fresh Holy Spirit wind is needed in the sails of the church. May we leave all pretense and preach the gospel with joy again (Phil. 1:15). As the Holy Spirit will restore the Living Word, dead patterns of religion will fall away on their own. That is our prayer.

Mission

The mission with which God had once sent Germans to bless South Africa and the whole world, is today virtually absent in church practice and has even received a bad name through its wrongful association with colonialism. Still, a return to God's commission for every new generation must become central for the Church in Germany again (John 8:31; Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 10:14-15). May revival in Herrnhut also light the mission flame again.

Losungen – the Daily Texts

These are words from God's heart, originally selected by Zinzendorf to awaken and inspire the flock. They can still play a major role in bringing a fresh unity of purpose in the global body of Christ and in our prayer for the nation of Germany.

Israel

Especially beautiful for us South Africans was the love for Israel we experienced from German Christians. Have they heard the call from God's heart? “A call to the church of Jesus to step into the priestly end time commission to become way makers and midwives for our Jewish siblings” (words from Benjamin Berger's,

„Eine Herde – Ein Hirte“, ‘One Herd - One Shepherd’, a farewell gift to us in Berlin). This is wonderfully complimenting the Faith of Our Fathers vision, in which it is not only about spiritual parent nations, but about our root nation, Israel.

Germany

More and more, the prayer for Herrnhut became a prayer for Germany. Like in the case of Joshua, the LORD will clothe Germany with clean clothes for the celebration (Zechariah 3). Germany must take on its calling – for its own people, for the large number of immigrants, for Europe and for the world as a whole. It is time to seek forgiveness, to repent and to return to God.

Joy was among the main words received for Herrnhut in our listening to God in the preparatory weeks at home (Luk. 1:46-55; 2 Cor. 12:9; Gal. 5: 22-23). When the people will rejoice in God their Saviour, the city will rejoice. God wants a relationship with the German nation again (Rev. 2:4). He wants His body to be whole and fresh – like fresh bread – to feed those in famine. May Germany see what is important in God’s eyes and invest in that (Mat. 23:23-24).



On the prayer tower (Altan) in Herrnhut



How can we move forward in these thoughts from God?

Let us take courage from the way God has blessed the ‘Faith of Our Fathers’ vision and initiative and grow it further under His guidance.

Let us maintain and strengthen the relationships that have been established with different partners in Herrnhut and beyond (Brüdergemeine, Jesus House; missionary community; YWAM; Hebron Europe prayer network).

Let us pray for the seeds of reconciliation and hope that have been sown in Herrnhut, to germinate and grow.

Let us share and promote what we have experienced on this kingdom journey among our own churches and communities and pray that it will birth new initiatives that can build on our experiences.

Let us draw in partners that may be able to strengthen the ‘Faith of Our Fathers’ initiative (eg. Jericho Walls; Institute for Christian Leadership Development, South African Christian Leadership Initiative; Order of the Mustard Seed).

Above all, let us keep the nation of Germany in faithful and abiding prayer. Let us acknowledge the prayer foundations that were already laid by others, in particular Gerda Leithgöb, and stand on the Word that inspired her to go and go again and again.

“yet at the scent of water it will bud and put out branches like a young plant.”

Job 14:9