After Gnadenhütten: The Moravian Indian Mission in the Old Northwest, 1782–1812

Kyle Fisher
Gordon-Conwell
Theological Seminary

ABSTRACT: This article examines the Moravian missions to Native Americans in the Old Northwest after the massacre of ninety-six Christian Indians at Gnadenhütten, Ohio, in 1782. It argues that the missions grew after the massacre despite the trauma of the event. Natives continued to find the Moravian culture centered on a theology of the suffering Savior a compelling reason to join the church, often in the context of famine, alcoholism, and displacement among Native communities. However, as seen in the White River mission in Indiana, nativist resistance movements presented an alternative to Moravian mission culture and prevented the missions from expanding westward. Missions in Ohio eventually declined because of pressures associated with rapid white settlement. While the Gnadenhütten massacre did not destroy the missions, it affected the way Indians interacted with Moravian Christianity.

KEYWORDS: Moravian missions, Gnadenhutten, Indian Christianity, Nativism, Ohio

The year 1782 remains the most tragic in the history of Moravian missions in North America. In March of that year a group of Moravian Indians, mostly from the Delaware peoples, set to work gathering their much-needed corn crop. The mission towns of Gnadenhütten, Salem, and New Schönbrunn on the Muskingum River in eastern Ohio country lay along the frontier of white settlement, between Pennsylvania backcountry locales hostile to

Journal of Moravian History, VOL. 17, NO. 1, 2017

Indians and numerous tribal villages to the west. Nearly 200 militiamen under the command of David Williamson marched west from Washington County, Pennsylvania, to retaliate for recent Wyandot and Shawnee attacks on frontier settlers. Rumors had circulated that the Moravian Indians were the perpetrators. When the militia reached Gnadenhütten, they recognized the community of "Christian Indians" and called for others to come from Salem. Although accounts differ, it is certain that a large number of these men capitulated in a gruesome plan to slaughter these peaceful Natives. Ninety-six Indians, ninety of them from the Moravian congregations, were killed. Most of those who fled joined fellow Delawares along the Sandusky River. Two boys who had survived managed to locate missionary David Zeisberger and inform him of the tragedy. Zeisberger sent word to any Moravian Indians remaining in Ohio to come to him on the Huron River outside Detroit, but found they were "much scattered in the bush, here and there."[1]

Few modern studies have examined the Moravian missions in the Old Northwest after the Gnadenhütten massacre of 1782.[2] This lack of attention may stem from an assumption that the Gnadenhütten massacre itself was such a disruptive event that future missions in Ohio Country were rather insignificant. For example, in 1871 Moravian historian Edmund de Schweinitz pinpointed the Gnadenhütten massacre as "the beginning of the decline of the mission."[3] After the massacre, the total population for the North American Moravian missions in fact grew fourfold

The author thanks Rev. Roy Ledbetter and Edward Quinter for transcribing and translating the sources from the German.

1. Eugene F. Bliss, ed. and trans., *Diary of David Zeisberger, A Moravian Missionary among the Indians of Ohio*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati: Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1885), 1:78–86; quotation, 138; Rob Harper, "Looking the Other Way: The Gnadenhutten Massacre and the Contextual Interpretation of Violence" *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2007): 621–44.

2. The most detailed account of this era of Moravian missions is Earl P. Olmstead, *Blackcoats Among the Delaware: David Zeisberger on the Ohio Frontier* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1991), which is informative but is mostly a political history highlighting David Zeisberger's life. More well-rounded studies of earlier periods of Moravian missions include Rachel M. Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700–1763* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Amy C. Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); and Amy C. Schutt, "Delawares in Eastern Ohio after the Treaty of Greenville: The Goshen Mission in Context," in *Contested Territories: Native Americans and Non-Natives in the Lower Great Lakes, 1700–1850*, ed. Charles Beatty-Medina and Melissa Rinehart (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 111–36.

to 212 Indians in 1790. It dropped to 158 following the outbreak of war between the United States and a western Indian confederacy. But a retreat into Upper Canada in 1792 helped the missions grow rather steadily into 1803. As this article argues, the real decline for the missions in the United States came from various threats caused by white settlement, especially after 1800.[4]

The Gnadenhütten massacre did affect the way Indians in the Ohio Valley and lower Great Lakes viewed their relationship to white settlers. Jeffrey Ostler has argued persuasively that there was in fact an indigenous awareness of genocide in this region through the second half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. It is not coincidental that the Moravians moved their mission to Fairfield in Upper Canada in 1792 when indigenous fear of annihilation was at its height, or that they moved back into Ohio later in the decade when such fear diminished. Leading up to the War of 1812, however, this fear of genocide increased and played an important role in the messages of nativist leaders as they pushed back against attempts to take more Indian land. Multiple historical records show that Indians referred directly to the Gnadenhütten massacre when talking about the duplicity of whites in their dealings with Indians. The violence of the Gnadenhütten massacre worsened a general fear that all Euro-Americans were a threat to Native lands and life. Missionary diaries show that the trauma of Gnadenhütten was something the Moravian Indians never forgot.[5]

POST-GNADENHÜTTEN MISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS

It is remarkable that despite fears of extermination throughout Indian country, the missions survived. The diaries show that while the populations of the Indians congregations never reached pre-Gnadenhütten numbers

3. Edmund De Schweinitz, *The Life and Times of David Zeisberger* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1871), 553.

4. Maia Turner Conrad, "'Struck in Their Hearts': David Zeisberger's Moravian Mission to the Delaware Indians in Ohio, 1767–1808" (PhD diss., The College of William and Mary, 1998), 218–26, ProQuest (9920297), 223.

5. Jeffrey Ostler, "'To Extirpate the Indians': An Indigenous Consciousness of Genocide in the Ohio Valley and Lower Great Lakes, 1750s–1810," *William and Mary Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (October 2015): 587–622; Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:303–5, 326–29; Goshen diary, July 11, 1799, Records of the Moravian Missions to the American Indians (hereafter cited as MissInd), 171.4, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem; Goshen diary, April 30, 1811, MissInd 173.7.

again, they did grow from their lowest point of 53 Indians at the end of 1782. In 1783 the population nearly doubled to 102. It dropped slightly to 96 three years later when they moved back into Ohio, but increased annually until 1790, when it rose to 212 inhabitants, the highest population of the missions in the Old Northwest after Gnadenhütten. The decision to move to Fairfield in Upper Canada made some leave, lowering the population to around 150 members. Skipping the years the mission was in Fairfield, we come to the next available year for mission data: Goshen's population was 50 congregants in 1799. This mission reached its height at 71 members a year later. Combined with the population of the White River, Indiana mission (1801–6) and the Pettquotting mission (1804–7), the average population during these years was 84 persons. It is difficult to trace the number of congregants at the short-lived Sandusky mission that dissolved before 1812. Reliable data from the Goshen mission shows it had an average of 29 Indians between 1807 and 1811. While these numbers are clearly lower than the 353 total inhabitants in 1780, they do demonstrate that the missions grew for a while after the massacre. They also show a decline after 1800 when the missions reentered Ohio.[6]

The best explanation for the growth of the missions after 1782 is that Indians continued to find the Moravian culture, centered on a theology of the suffering Savior, a compelling reason to join the church, often in the context of famine, alcoholism, and displacement among Native communities. Socially and economically, the Indians in the mission towns continued traditions of hunting, building, and growing that were in use before 1782. Conversely, the missions declined again because of the proximity to white settlement, which brought not only a fear of violence, but also the destructive forces of alcoholism and land clearing, which eliminated many natural resources the Moravian Indians needed. Although the missionaries attempted to restrict these forces, rapid settlement of the Ohio Valley eventually eroded much of the unique Moravian Indian culture that had revived after 1782. Additionally,

6. Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:253, 316, 386, 464; 2:74, 147, 240. The "memorabilia" at the end of each year's diary give an indication of the membership statistics: Goshen diary, December 31, 1799–1803, MissInd 171.6–13; December 31, 1804–1807, MissInd 173.1–4; December 31, 1809–1811, MissInd 173.6–8; Pettquotting diary, December 31, 1805–1806, MissInd 1571.2–3; Lawrence Henry Gipson, ed., *The Moravian Indian Mission on White River: Diaries and Letters, May 5, 1799 to November 12, 1806* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1938). Besides total population, the numbers of baptized, unbaptized, and communicant inhabitants roughly follow the same proportions after 1782 as before, showing consistent standards for acceptance into the congregations. See Conrad, "Struck in Their Hearts," 218–26.

Native resistance movements that were a response to Euro-American expansionism hampered the ability of the missions to move into new regions.

OVERVIEW OF MORAVIAN MISSIONS IN THE OLD NORTHWEST

Moravians planted missions in Ohio country in 1772, when the Pennsylvania missions of Friedenstadt, Friedenshutten, and Chechshequannink moved to the Muskingum River Valley (see fig. 1). Seeking to reunite the Moravian Delawares with the larger part of the Delaware peoples who had moved westward to settle in the Ohio Valley before mid-century,

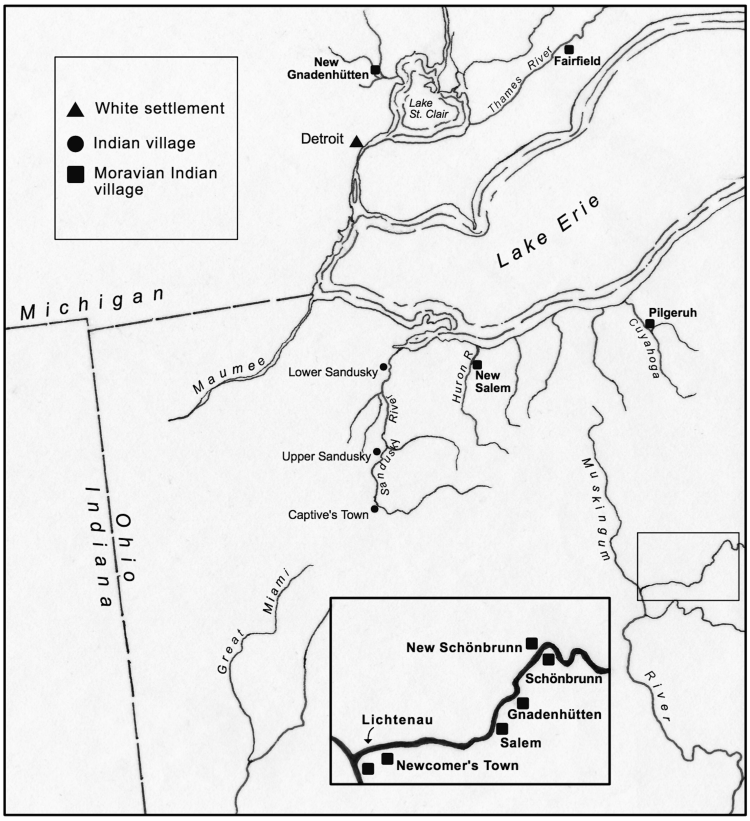

FIG 1. Map adapted from a map originally published in *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* by Helen Hornbeck Tanner, Copyright © 1987 by the University of Oklahoma Press, used with permission of the publisher.

Chief Netawatwees invited the Moravians to relocate their mission towns there. The missionaries and Moravian Indians—primarily Delawares and Mohicans—constructed the towns of Schönbrunn and Gnadenhütten along the Muskingum River. When Netawatwees told the missionaries that he wanted the Moravian Delawares to move closer to the Delaware capital, known to the English as "Newcomer's Town," they constructed a third settlement named Lichtenau.

The Revolutionary War divided the Delaware peoples among pro-British, pro-American, and neutral parties. The Moravian Delawares chose the third path, frequently rejecting the attempts of other Indian nations to involve them in the war. In 1777, however, some Delawares left the Moravian towns, joined with neighboring Mingos and Shawnees to fight the Americans, and threatened the missions. The head ("*Oeconomus*") of the Ohio missions, David Zeisberger, decided to abandon Schönbrunn, and several other missionaries were sent to Bethlehem to keep out of harm's way.

The missions underwent a tumultuous period for the next couple years as additional non-Moravian Delawares agreed to join with the British against the United States. In 1779 New Schönbrunn was founded on the opposite side of the river from the former town. After Lichtenau became a frequent waystation for parties of Indian warriors, the missionaries decided to abandon the site and settle the town of Salem near Gnadenhütten. These towns enjoyed relative peace and security until August 1781, when British captain Matthew Elliot appeared at Gnadenhütten with allied Indian forces led by the Delaware Captain Pipe and the Wyandot leader Pomoacan. The missionaries were suspected of collaborating with the Americans; David Zeisberger had indeed provided intelligence to American forces several times during the war. After the missionaries and Christian Indians declined several invitations by Pomoacan to lead them away to a safer place, the Indian delegation forced them to move. The Moravian Indians were taken northwest to "Captive's Town," while the British seized the missionaries and brought them to Detroit for questioning. Pomoacan later granted the captives permission to return to the Muskingum to gather their corn stores. The Moravian Indians met their cruel fate at Gnadenhütten on March 8, 1782.[7]

7. George Henry Loskiel, *The History of the Moravian Mission among the Indians in North America, from Its Commencement to the Present Time* (London: T. Allman, 1838), 189–250; Hermann Wellenreuther and Carola Wessel, eds., "Introduction," in *The Moravian Mission Diaries of David Zeisberger, 1772–1781*, trans. Julie Tomberlin Weber (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 13–16; Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian*

After the massacre, most of the Delawares who had been involved with the missions fled, some going to Pipe's Town on the Sandusky River, others moving farther west with the Shawnees along the Great Miami. A small number moved into the Detroit region to found the town of New Gnadenhütten, which lasted until 1786, when the missionaries decided to move back into the upper Ohio Valley because of violent threats from tribes to the northwest and the opposition of a new leader. Pilgerruh, on the southern shore of Lake Erie, proved a temporary solution until they could settle New Salem on the Huron River in 1787. The town grew to 212 Indians by 1790. In 1790 and 1791 United States forces were defeated by a militant western Indian confederacy intent on pushing back white encroachment. To keep the Moravian Indians safe and neutral, the missionaries and their Indian helpers decided to relocate the mission to Upper Canada under the protection of the British government.[8] Fairfield was settled on the Thames River in 1792. It grew into a rather thriving settlement, reaching 172 Indians by 1797, but faced problems from alcohol into the next century. The Treaty of Greenville, signed between the western confederacy and the United States in 1795, effectively removed Indians from the southeastern Great Lakes region. In the fall of 1798 David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder returned with 33 Indian brethren to the Muskingum River Valley. They built the settlement of Goshen north of the abandoned Gnadenhütten. Soon surrounded by white settlement, Goshen always remained small. A mission to the multiethnic tribal villages on the White River in Indiana Territory existed from 1801 to 1806 before nativist opposition forced the missionaries to abandon it. Another town, named Pettquotting, was established on the south shore of Lake Erie in 1804, but lasted only a few years due to opposition of non-Moravian Delawares and the sale of the land to settlers. The War of 1812 brought the final defeat of militant Native resistance and secured the Old Northwest as the domain

Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 37–39; Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 104–5. The Moravian Delawares were only one group of Delawares living farther east that Netawatwees and other leaders sought to attract to Ohio Country. Others included those living in New Jersey, some affiliated with the Presbyterian missions of David Brainerd (Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 134).

8. Indian helpers provided significant leadership to the mission congregations. The missionaries selected female and male helpers from the most able communicants. They assisted with interviewing candidates for baptism and communion, providing spiritual guidance to other Indian brethren, advising the missionaries in decisions about relocating the missions, greeting visitors, and—in the case of the men—teaching, preaching, and translating.

of the United States. While Goshen lasted until 1823, most Moravian Delawares, like other Indians of this time, lived essentially a refugee existence, moving south and west in search of land that was their own.[9]

INDIANS AND MORAVIAN CHRISTIANITY AFTER 1782

Prior to 1782, the Moravian Indian towns were places characterized by a culture shaped by the Moravian theology of the suffering Savior. For Moravian communities everywhere, familiar rituals of worship, centered on the atoning suffering and death of Jesus, brought about group cohesion and stability to the Moravians as they settled around the world.[10] Specifically, these rituals enabled believers to apply Jesus's atonement to themselves as they contemplated his physical sufferings and death.[11] Baptism, communion, foot washing, reading, and singing were mainstays of Moravian life. This was just as true in the mission towns. Despite the disruption that Gnadenhütten caused to the practice of this distinctive indigenous religion, the post-1782 mission towns remained places where Indians in the Ohio Valley and lower Great Lakes continued to appropriate Moravian ritual life to their own needs.[12] Jane T. Merritt has argued of the Pennsylvania missions around the middle of the eighteenth century, "Moravian theology influenced the development of a distinctive native Christian religion."[13] This distinctive native Christian religion continued after 1782.

9. Loskiel, *History of the Moravian Mission*, 258–302, 310–16; Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 173, 182–87; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 184–85.

10. Gillian Lindt Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds: A Study of Changing Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 20–21.

11. Paul Peucker, *A Time of Sifting: Mystical Marriage and the Crisis of Moravian Piety in the Eighteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 27.

12. This essay follows recent scholarship in examining Native Christianity not from an either-or paradigm of "conversion" versus "nonconversion," but from a perspective that seeks to uncover how Native Americans appropriated elements of Christian theology or practice as they continually negotiated their relationship to changes caused by colonization. This approach places Native stories at the center, rather than Euro-American conceptions of religious transformation. Recent studies from this approach include Linford D. Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas, eds., *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Keely McCarthy, "Conversion, Identity, and the Indian Missionary," *Early American Literature* 36, no. 3 (2001): 353–69.

13. Jane T. Merritt, "Dreaming of the Savior's Blood: Moravians and the Indian Great Awakening in Pennsylvania," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (1997): 736.

Baptism, one of the most important rituals for the Moravian Indians, granted an individual entry into fuller liturgical participation with the church. Missionaries were always cautious in whom they baptized, because baptism implied a deep personal commitment to the Savior.[14] In baptism the individual made a "covenant" with the Savior, which he or she renewed at the beginning of every calendar year.[15] A person seeking baptism typically approached a missionary or baptized Indian with a request, rather than receiving an offer for baptism. Missionaries and Indian helpers would observe the candidate and eventually interview him or her, asking personal questions about the candidate's commitment to the Savior and desire to live for him. Once the candidate had demonstrated a sufficient commitment, he or she was always baptized "into Jesus's death," as the baptized laid their hands on the believer.[16]

After publicly affirming their new religion, baptized Indians were given new names—normally biblical ones—as an additional marker of belonging to the Savior.[17] Indians often assumed new names at important points in their lives, and the practice of renaming at baptism meshed with Native tradition in this regard.[18] Children born to baptized parents were baptized as infants and given a Christian name.[19] The missionaries often did not see the need to rebaptize adults into the Moravian Church. For example, the elderly Amochol came to New Salem in 1788 expressing interest in joining the community. When he told the missionaries his mother had taken him to a French priest in Canada to be baptized as a boy, they agreed this was sufficient.[20] Especially since they were performed during services for the entire congregation, baptisms were events where all observers could be drawn more deeply into the faith. At the baptism of the single woman Gustit, renamed Rachel, the unbaptized showed "great excitement" and some visiting Indians stood up on their benches for a better look. The missionaries interpreted this interest as evidence of the continuing effectiveness of their labor.[21]

The highlight of Moravian religious life was the Lord's Supper.[22] The communion meal was nothing less than a time for the most spiritually

14. Wellenreuther and Wessel, "Introduction," 61.

15. Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:174, 178, 387.

16. Ibid., 181, 317.

17. Craig D. Atwood, *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 160.

18. Merritt, "Dreaming of the Savior's Blood," 740.

19. Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:294, 324, 345; Conrad, "Struck in Their Hearts," 94.

20. Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:390–91.

21. Ibid., 462.

22. Wellenreuther and Wessel, "Introduction," 62.

devoted to experience deep intimacy and unity with the Savior and with each other. Missionary David Zeisberger's post-1782 diaries often describe the delight of the communicants as they partook of the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ. Unlike baptisms, which were celebrated only when individual candidates underwent the ritual, communion was a more regular practice. Communion was always held on a Sunday, with the exception of Good Friday, and it was announced eight days before so the communicants could spend the week preparing their hearts to receive it. Communicants were not always able to participate in communion; the status of their hearts had to be examined first through interviews with missionaries or helpers. Reflecting Moravian fondness for language conveying the physicality of Jesus's atonement, missionaries described the communion ritual itself with language about Christ's blood and death, and the spiritual blessings that they represented. After hearing the communion text one Sunday in late 1783, the brethren felt a sense of unity as they were "washed with the blood of Christ." The diaries often describe the communion experience as enjoying the "sacrament of his body and blood with hungry and thirsty souls." A feeling of unity through sharing in the suffering death of Christ was a goal of the communion ritual. As a means of practicing love and unity, the Indian brethren typically visited the homes of the missionaries for spiritual fellowship after each Lord's Supper.[23]

Although an emphasis on the blood, wounds, and death of Jesus was less prominent among later missionaries, Natives continued to show interest in these elements of Moravian religious life.[24] As Jane Merritt observes, for Natives "the body was a central metaphor for religious expression," and blood in particular had symbolic meanings of power for both men and women. During times of illness, some Indians actually found the missionaries' practice of medicinal bloodletting attractive because it used the power of blood to heal their sick bodies. Communion, a Moravian "ritual of community renewal" in which people partook of the body and blood of Christ together, was a means of obtaining power.[25] Baptism "into the death

23. Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:225, 139, 158, 165, 168, 173, 376, 230.

24. Wellenreuther and Wessel, "Introduction," 56. A study of three diary excerpts of roughly equal length from the Checomeco mission (ca. 1740–46), Schönbrunn mission (1772–77), and Lichtenau mission (1776–80) reveals that the first contains significantly more references to "blood-and-wounds" theology than the later two. The Moravian Church after 1750 returned to an earlier emphasis on all the sufferings of Jesus, not primarily the side wound, a fact reflected in the diaries. See Peucker, *A Time of Sifting*, 143-45.

25. Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, quotation, 164.

[physical sufferings] of Christ" was likewise a way of renewing or purifying oneself.[26] For some Indians, Moravian missionaries, who always directed baptismal and communion ceremonies, "acted as powerful shamans who dispensed the body of Christ and created a link between Indians and the spirit of the Lamb."[27] Indians in the post-1782 mission congregations continued to derive a sense of power from the rituals of baptism and communion, especially during the hardships of famine, disease, and death they faced in the wake of the American Revolution. On the Good Friday service at New Salem in 1788, there was great emotional reaction among Christian and non-Christian Indians alike after reading throughout the day the traditional four-part history of Christ's passion.

> By consideration of all the sufferings [of Jesus], . . . his whole tortures from head to foot, hearts were mightily moved and many tears shed. . . . Of the new people came one after the other, for a long time, and till late in the night, complaining of their misery and wretched condition, with many tears, and gave us to understand their longing for the bath of holy baptism and cleansing away of their sins.[28]

For the "new people"—most likely visiting Chippewas—as well as for the other Indians of the congregation, the description of the suffering Savior evidently still produced an intense emotional effect. Baptism was a means of experiencing a powerful connection to the sufferings of Jesus.

The physical sufferings of Jesus also featured prominently in the preaching of the Indian helpers to fellow Indians. Samuel spoke to two Indians who visited New Salem. As they listened about the Savior, they "were so convinced of the truth, especially when he described to them the Savior upon the cross, how his hands and feet were pierced with nails and his side transfixed, that they broke into floods of tears." In 1788 the helpers Samuel, Abraham, and Boaz spoke with a Chippewa whose father had told him before he died that the "Indians were not upon the right way to eternal life, they would find it hard after this life, and had nothing good to hope, . . .

26. See Arthur J. Freeman, *An Ecumenical Theology of the Heart: The Theology of Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf* (Bethlehem: The Moravian Church in America, 1998), 282–84. Zinzendorf emphasized that baptism was purification in the blood and wounds of Christ.

27. Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 112–21, "the body," 112, "acted as," 116–17.

28. Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:401, 403.

[but] that there were Indians who knew something better." He learned from a dream four years earlier that the "believing Indians" would visit them, and his son should "hold" to them, since "from them he would hear that which he should receive and believe." Samuel then exhorted the Chippewa to reject heathen ways and instead to embrace the Savior, who "for our sins was nailed to the cross . . . through his hands and feet, and his side was pierced through with a spear, for he poured out all his blood." This made the Chippewa listen "devoutly, and [sit] a while deep in thought," until he asked if the Savior would come again. "Yes," Samuel replied, and believers would be "glad and live with him forever, but the others will weep and groan." For these Native Christian preachers and their listeners, a theology of the suffering Savior with whom the believer could have an intimate connection evidently had appeal.[29]

As a reflection of the harmony of the congregation, "lovefeast" celebrations took place among specific choirs or with the entire congregation. Lovefeasts were liturgical meals designed to strengthen the congregation through reaffirmation of its commitment to the suffering Savior.[30] The traditional lovefeast involved sitting at tables while servers brought beverages and bread. As the participants were eating they sang or listened to hymns, discussed spiritual matters, and sometimes listened as a missionary read news from the *Gemeinnachrichten* (Congregational Accounts).[31] In early 1787, before leaving New Gnadenhütten due to threats of violence from nearby tribes, the congregation celebrated Epiphany with a lovefeast, where they were reminded of the other Moravian missions in Greenland, Suriname, and the West Indies.[32] The Indian congregations held lovefeasts during celebrations for baptisms, communion, and birthdays, as well as during holy days like Epiphany or Easter.[33] They incorporated aspects of their traditional culture into the lovefeast, including foods, oratory, singing, and celebration. Sometimes a member of the congregation would host a lovefeast and typically provide food for everyone else. In June 1800 a small group of baptized Indians gathered in Gelelemind's home. Gelelemind's former role as a chief gave him influence as a public speaker, and he addressed these members of the congregation three times. After the first speech, the Indians sang and had a meal of meat, vegetables, tea,

29. Ibid., 1:388, 447–49.
30. Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 161.
31. Ibid., 161–62.
32. Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:318.
33. Ibid., 382, 182, 441, 318.

and wheat-flour cakes. Following the second speech, they sang verses in alternation. Following the third, they dismissed and resumed singing in their homes.

Apparently, lovefeasts were often times when the Indians gathered without the company of the missionaries to express "the experience of their hearts," give "short exhortations," or sing verses in harmony. Missionary Benjamin Mortimer noted that a Native helper frequently presided at lovefeasts, and that "[the] teachers are welcome to attend, . . . but are seldom invited," especially since the Indians believed the missionaries considered "the whole [experience] . . . a private matter." Given the fact that Moravian missionaries typically presided over lovefeasts in the *Gemeinhaus* (church building),[34] the restricted celebration described in Gelelemind's home perhaps shows a compromise on the part of the missionaries, as well as greater indigenous leadership over the congregation. The lovefeast was a ritual that the Indians used to strengthen their congregation.[35]

Song constituted the major element of Moravian theological praxis.[36] Moravian hymnals provided thousands of hymns that the brethren worked into the *Daily Texts*, liturgies, and litanies for all manner of occasions. One practice, continued in the Indian congregations, was the *Singstunde* (singing meeting)— a service exclusively of singing hymn texts selected to draw out a particular theological theme.[37] Zeisberger and other missionaries translated hymns, scripture, and prayers into Native languages and taught German to the Indians through these translations. The diaries show the Indian brethren had a particular fondness for singing.[38] As Walter Woodward notes, given the importance of song to both Moravians and Native peoples, it was perhaps the best bridge between the cultures.[39] Hymn selections often focused on the suffering and death of Christ and the personal connection the believer had with the Savior. The most favorite hymn of the Moravian Indians was "O World, See Thy Creator!" which

34. I am indebted to Paul Peucker for pointing this out to me.

35. Goshen diary, June 1, 1800, MissInd 171.7.

36. C. Daniel Crews, "Moravian Worship: The Why of Moravian Music," in *The Music of the Moravian Church in America*, ed. Nola Reed Knouse (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 30, 38; Albert H. Frank and Nola Reed Knouse, "Hymnody of the Moravian Church," in *Music of the Moravian Church*, ed. Knouse, 56–57.

37. Nola Reed Knouse, "The Moravians and Their Music," in *Music of the Moravian Church*, ed. Knouse, 17.

38. See, for example, Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:187, 223; Goshen diary, July 21, 1799, MissInd 171.4, and January 6, 1800, MissInd 171.6.

39. Walter W. Woodward, "'Incline Your Ear This Way': Song as Cultural Mediator in Moravian Mission Towns," in *Ethnographies and Exchanges: Native Americans, Moravians, and Catholics in Early North America*, ed. A. G.

Zeisberger had translated into Delaware. Mortimer wrote that the Indians sang this hymn "more than any other in their houses," and that "children five years of age can repeat the whole of it." In church it was sung "amidst a very solemn feeling, attended with many tears."[40] The hymn reflects classic Zinzendorfian theology that the Creator of the world was the Savior of the believer.[41]

> O World, see thy Creator,
> Extended, like a traitor,
> Upon the cross's tree! . . .
> Draw near: thou wilt discover,
> How blood and sweat all over
> His sacred body dies;
> Out of his heart most noble,
> For inexhausted trouble,
> Sighs are successive foll'wing sighs.[42]

The Moravian Indians often sang for long periods of time. After a solemn Epiphany lovefeast at Goshen, the baptized brethren commemorated their baptisms by staying up late at night to sing "the praises of him who had washed them from their sins in his blood."[43] Singing about the suffering Savior was typical at times of dying. The Indian brethren seem to have adapted the Moravian practice of *Einsingen*, pastoral singing over a dying person, to traditional healing. In Native cultures, singing was a powerful activity that connected people with the spirit world and brought direction, protection, and healing.[44] After one service at Goshen, Indians assembled in a house and sang "till late at night," an activity in which the Indians found "particular delight." They continued to sing "almost uninterruptedly for several weeks in succession," typically assembling in a house where a sick child lay. As Gelelemind's son Benjamin lay dying, the Indians remained after the customary laying on of hands to sing around his bed all night. Something about the death and suffering of the Savior, communicated

---

Roeber (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 126.

40. Goshen diary, December 20, 1799, MissInd 171.6.

41. On the essence of Zinzendorf's theology, see Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 223.

42. *A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the Protestant Church, of the United Brethren* (Manchester: R. & W. Dean, 1809), 27.

43. Goshen diary, January 6, 1800, MissInd 171.6.

44. Woodward, "Incline Your Ear This Way," 128.

through song, was appealing for these Indians as they handled challenges of death and disease at Goshen.[45]

NATIVIST RESISTANCE: THE EXAMPLE OF THE WHITE RIVER MISSION

When missionaries attempted to recreate this culture of the suffering Savior among Munsee Delawares, Wyandots, and Shawnees living to the west in Indiana Territory, they met with resistance. While living at the Fairfield mission in Upper Canada, David Zeisberger learned that the Delaware chief Tedpachxit wanted the missionaries to come preach the gospel to the Indians along the White River in Indiana Territory. Zeisberger understood that Delaware leaders had wanted to unify the tribe by bringing the Moravian Indians closer, and that not every overture made to the missionaries was sincere interest in Christian religion.[46] But whatever the motive of the leaders, he saw an opportunity to take the preaching of the gospel farther to the west and so extend Moravian influence to the rest of the Delaware nation.[47] Despite his astuteness, he was unaware of growing Delaware opposition to Euro-American ways, and how much the missions represented a threat to many of the Delawares most concerned about loss of Indian lands. Missionaries at Fairfield, more isolated from intertribal conflicts south of the Great Lakes, also did not realize the extent to which warriors had gained influence over their chiefs by opposing unpopular treaties.[48] Zeisberger secured Bethlehem's approval to send a portion of the Goshen population to the White River under the guidance of the missionaries Abraham Luckenbach and John Peter Kluge.[49]

45. Goshen diary, July 21 and August 12, 1799, MissInd 171, resp. 4. See Amy C. Schutt, "Delawares in Eastern Ohio after the Treaty of Greenville: The Goshen Mission in Context," in *Contested Territories: Native Americans and Non-Natives in the Lower Great Lakes, 1700–1850*, ed. Charles Beatty-Medina and Melissa Rinehart (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 111–36, who interprets the episode of singing over the sick child as the Indians secretly practicing traditional healing practices.

46. For examples of Zeisberger's wariness of the motives of Delaware leadership, see Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:27–28, 199, 335–44, 409–10, 451–53.

47. Goshen diary, July 22, 1799, MissInd 171.4; Zeisberger to General Helpers' Conference, April 30, 1800, MissInd 229.8.

48. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 435, 438–39.

49. Lawrence Henry Gipson, "Introduction," in *The Moravian Indian Mission on White River: Diaries and Letters, May 5, 1799 to November 12, 1806*, ed. Gipson (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1938), 3–19.

Nativist movements influenced the way Indians in the Great Lakes region thought about the Gnadenhütten massacre.[50] From about 1786 to 1794 and again from 1805 to 1815, nativist activities surged in response to the loss of land and sovereignty tribes had experienced by the end of the American Revolution.[51] While different in particulars, all nativist teaching had the assumption that exercising proper behavior could restore the power Indians had lost because of their own spiritual failures.[52] Influential prophets spoke about visions they had experienced and preached messages about the necessity of separating from Euro-American ways, eliminating corrupting practices among Indians, and reviving a Native way of life. The famous Shawnee prophet Tenskwatawa taught that Indians must free themselves from the "taming" ways of whites through eliminating alcohol from their towns, ceasing to hunt animals for their skins, reducing trade with whites, stopping marriage of Indian women to white men, and, at least for the Shawnees, practicing only monogamy. Similar to other nativist teachers and prophets, he showed the influence of Christian concepts on Native beliefs as he spoke about the need for Indians to turn from their sins so they did not experience the punishment of hell.[53]

Strongly influenced by the nativist teaching the Delawares had absorbed from extensive contact with the Shawnees, the war leader Buckongahelas often stood in opposition to Moravian missionary activities. Buckongahelas's statements to Kluge and Luckenbach in 1803 are insightful for thinking about the ways in which many western Delawares viewed the Moravian missions after 1782. After preaching the gospel, the missionaries told them plainly that "we believed that you and your people had a desire for the great Word, but now we see, to our sorrow, that no one bothers about it." Buckongahelas gave them an equally honest response:

> Yes, what you say is true. But we cannot drop our customs and teaching and sacrifices. . . . Your teaching is only for white people, and you yourselves see that we have another skin. [God] wants us to live as we are living now, and believe nothing else. Then too we have not forgotten the murder of the Christian Indians in Gnadenhütten. The white teachers, your brethren, taught the same

50. Ostler, "To Extirpate the Indians," 589, 592–94, 615–19.

51. Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 95.

52. Ibid., 36, 128.

53. R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 32–41; White, *Middle Ground*, 503–6.

> thing you are teaching here. They sought to attract the Indians to themselves, and after many had been so drawn to them, they called the white people to come and murder them. . . . I know full well that the teachers were at fault. For this reason the Indians do not want to be made tame again, so that they may not suffer likewise.

Buckongahelas's response to Kluge and Luckenbach clearly reflects nativist teachings. The Indians must renew Native ways of life that the Great Spirit or Master of Life had originally given them. Like many other Indians in the west, the White River Delawares repeatedly invoked the belief that the Great Spirit had created separate ways for the Indians and the whites. Religion was also connected to skin color: Indians and whites ought to pursue the distinct ways of life God had shown them. The violence of Gnadenhütten was connected to both religion and skin color. It was the "white teachers" who "taught the same thing you are teaching here" who were complicit in violence against the Indians. Most important is his comment that "the Indians do not want to be made tame again, so that they may not suffer likewise." The war leader expressed the nativist teaching that accepting white ways—of which Christianity was a part—made them "tame." That is, white ways made Indians weak. It was because the Indians at Gnadenhütten had been weakened through white teachings that they could not defend themselves. It was in this theological context that the Gnadenhütten massacre was interpreted.[54]

Nativism exerted pressure on the White River mission from both without and within, presenting a major alternative to life in the Moravian Indian towns. From within, some Indians in the White River mission revealed a loss of confidence in the shamanic power the Moravian missionaries seemed to have. The niece of Buckongahelas, Mary, came to the missionaries for healing from consumption. Her "heathen friends" from the surrounding community came to visit her often. Even though the missionaries frequently exhorted her to look to the Savior for healing, she suddenly rejected their help, saying the Word of God could not cure her, but the Indian doctors could. Through Mary's friends, Buckongahelas heard about

54. Buckongahelas's speech, in *Moravian Indian Mission on White River*, ed. Gipson, 256. For distinct teachings for Indians and Whites, see ibid., Kluge to Loskiel, October 26, 1803, 508–9; September 3, 1805, 376–77. For the accusation that missionaries wanted to tame Indians so they could be killed like at Gnadenhütten, see ibid., 131, 141, 155; Kluge to Loskiel, April 12, 1803, 496; White, *Middle Ground*, 506, 507.

her and sent a canoe to bring Mary and her husband back, threatening to "drive . . . away" the missionaries if they resisted.

Some Indians once associated with the missions turned against them with greater violence. Thomas White Eyes, who left the Goshen mission, rejoined non-Christian Indians on the White River and participated in a drunken assault on the Kluges' home in July 1806. Externally, the presence of powerful prophets kept Indians from joining the mission. In April 1805 Indians gathered "in great numbers" to hear story of "the old woman" and perform an eight-day, round-the-clock ceremony. "This teaching makes a great impression on the Indians," the missionaries observed. In May "the Indian woman" preached that Indians should abandon "all evil, drinking, fornication, stealing, murder, and the like," and took over supervision of the Delaware annual Big House ceremony. A former Moravian Delaware woman named Beate claimed to have seen God himself. God sent her a "good spirit" in the form of a "small white thing," which, after swallowing, allowed her to speak only the word of God. By the end of 1805, Tenskwatawa's visions and teachings had spread to a "large number" of Delawares and Shawnees, and, the missionaries lamented, "still [met] with great favor." After the Shawnees renewed their sacrifices, prophets among the Delawares had visions of God who appeared with white hands, "but otherwise . . . had the form of an Indian." Similarly, threats of divine judgment (destruction by a whirlwind) were impending unless the Delawares renewed their sacrifices. The influence of Christianity on these visions and teachings came from years of Indian and white contact. Such visions appealed to the very Indians the Moravians on White River sought to attract. Nativist teachings about reforming sinful behavior and rituals that promised the renewal of Indian power in the face of poverty, social decay, and land loss offered a serious challenge to Moravian offerings of highly structured mission life centered on the powerful blood of the Savior.[55]

That the Moravian mission to the Indians was operating in a context very different from its earlier days is evident in two different Native responses to paintings of the bleeding Christ on the cross. In 1753 Nanticoke and Shawnee warriors visited Bethlehem, where they saw pictures of the crucified Christ on display. They instantly made a connection between the bleeding Christ and the ideal of the warrior captive who dispensed spiritual power through enduring bloody enemy torture.[56]

55. Gipson, ed., *Moravian Indian Mission on White River*: Kluge to Loskiel, April 28, 1805, 530–31; July 21, 1806, 566; March 14, 1805, 339–40; May 14, 1805, 354–55; January 25, 1806, 402–3; December 3, 1805, 392. White, *Middle Ground*, 504, 506–7.

56. Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 116–21.

In August 1804 a group of Natives visited the mission and asked to see a picture of the Moravian Savior. After they examined the painting depicting Jesus nailed to the cross, with blood pouring from his hands, feet, and side wound, they asked Kluge and Luckenbach to paint Moravian teachings on a large skin—"how Heaven and Hell looked, then too all the sins of mankind, and what punishment would follow upon every sin, and how everyone would fare after this life." If they could see this, they would be "much more deeply impressed than if they merely heard these things." An Indian once painted his vision on a skin and many believed from seeing it.[57] Apparently, the image of the Savior made virtually no impression on them—perhaps because Jesus was portrayed with white skin. Their request for understanding sin and the judgments of the afterlife, however, fit with nativist teachings that Indians would be judged in an afterlife according to how they reformed their living. The Indians on White River had come to demand a demonstration of the power of Christianity in a way that fit into their nativist theology, rather than recognizing a European expression of Christianity as powerful because it was compatible with their traditional beliefs.

Kluge and Luckenbach found that for Indians along the White River, the image of the suffering Jesus had become connected to whiteness. The suffering of the Savior was no longer a source of power for these Indians, but only an example of the violence of whites; Jesus himself was a victim of white violence. After listening to the missionaries describe the suffering of the Savior, many would respond, "Those are great words, but we [Indians] have not put him to death. That was perpetrated by white people, therefore, this teaching is for them. We have another skin and consequently another teaching." As one Indian man said after attending a service, "[Jesus] did not die in Indian land but among the white people. . . . The white people are more wicked than the Indians." These Indians had reinterpreted Jesus's crucifixion as an example of white violence against a white Jesus. Intriguingly, nativist Indians still associated blood itself with power. One man came and "begged" Kluge to bleed him, which he did, since "the Indians here do not like it when one denies them this." The missionaries likely saw requests for bloodletting as purely medicinal. By contrast, nativist Indians likely requested bloodletting because the act of being cut to release blood gave them spiritual power. But for nativists, the blood of Jesus had come to symbolize only weakness.[58]

57. Gipson, ed., *Moravian Indian Mission on White River*, August 21, 1804, 308.

58. Ibid., July 4–8, 1806, 437–38. Disease swept through the tribes along the White River in the late 1790s and early 1800s, causing some Delawares to doubt the power of the missionaries to prevent it. Some Delawares, such as this man, likely still hoped the

The missionaries indicated that leaders like Buckongahelas wanted the rest of the Christian Indians to return to the Delaware communities, but wanted no whites to accompany them. "Ever since we have been here, the chiefs have constantly been speaking about it that you sent them so few believing Indians, after they had invited all of you to come," Kluge wrote to Zeisberger. It would please the chiefs if some brethren from the Fairfield mission came, Kluge said, as well as relieve "the suspicion that we merely desire to attract white people to this country." It would also give the Christian Indians a buffer from heathen practices, support the missionaries, and give another congregation to which Indian brethren could transfer if conflict arose. While Zeisberger wanted to plant the White River mission because Goshen was so isolated from non-Christian Indians, Kluge felt it was too isolated from Christian Indians. "The [other] Indian congregations are so far away from us," he lamented. Six months later, no other Christian Indians had been sent, and the situation had grown "very much worse."

Tenkswatawa taught that there were "witches" among the Indians, often those who had noticeably acculturated to Euro-American ways. During the spring of 1806, White River Delawares were in an upheaval as they joined in Tenskwatawa's witch hunts to rid themselves of harmful tribesmen. The prophet accused Chief Tedpachxit of having poison that he had used to kill many Indians. In an act of defiance against the missionaries, a group of warriors brought the old chief to the mission town, threw a tomahawk into his head, and burned him in front of Kluge and Luckenbach while he was still alive. The only remaining Indian from Goshen, a Mohican named Joshua, was taken prisoner and accused of serving a destructive evil spirit. He met the same fate as the chief. Both Indians were considered compromisers with the colonizers. Militant nativists made it clear that white people and Christianity, which for them were inextricably linked, were unwelcome in Indian country. "Wholly worn out," the missionaries abandoned the White River mission in September 1806, concluding that the preaching of the gospel among the "heathen Delawares" had little hope of success.[59] Although support for Tenskwatawa's reforms waned among

missionaries could help them, even if they were disinterested in Christianity. For doubts about the missionaries' healing powers, see Alfred A. Cave, *Prophets of the Great Spirit: Native American Revitalization Movements in Eastern North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 79–80.

59. Gipson, ed., *Moravian Indian Mission on White River*: Kluge to Zeisberger, September 24, 1805, 545–51; Kluge to Loskiel, April 1, 1806,

the western Delawares, renewed interest in Moravian Christianity did not accompany this change.[60]

For Indians on the White River, rejection of Moravian Christianity was complex. Responses of these Natives to the presence of the missions consistently incorporated racial differences to justify the rejection of not only Moravian teaching, but also and especially Moravian teachers themselves. The influence of Christian teachings in these responses seems to indicate that nativist leaders around the turn of the eighteenth century responded to Christianity in some of the same ways they had in the 1730s and 1740s. As Jane Merritt explains, earlier nativists led "not so much a coordinated reaction to the planting of seeds of Christianity . . . as . . . a response to white Christians who had changed the economic and material conditions of native peoples."[61] Wrapped up in this rejection was the Gnadenhütten massacre. The blame for the massacre was laid primarily on the white missionaries who had become grouped with other whites who threatened Native sovereignty over their land and flourishing.

THE DECLINE OF THE OHIO MISSIONS

Under the leadership of John Ettwein, the Moravian Church in America took advantage of the opening of the west for settlement. Ettwein believed that acquiring Ohio land would provide a legally protected space for the Indian congregations and enable them to return to their former locations while generating revenue for the missions. He appealed to Congress for a grant of land on the argument that the United States ought to recompense the church for the massacre at Gnadenhütten. In 1785 Congress granted 12,000 acres encompassing the former sites of Gnadenhütten, Schönbrunn, and Salem.[62] The new mission town of Goshen was planted on this land.

The missionaries had always hoped to return to the area of their former towns along the Muskingum after 1782.[63] After hearing word that Congress

556–65; September 17, 1806, 573–78. Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet*, 42–46.

60. Cave, *Prophets of the Great Spirit*, 84–85. Joshua had in fact boasted of a dream he had in his youth about a man-eating bird that appeared to him and promised to eat any person Joshua pointed out (84).

61. Merritt, "Dreaming of the Savior's Blood," 732.

62. Kenneth Gardiner Hamilton, "John Ettwein and the Moravian Church during the Revolutionary Period," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 12, nos. 3–4 (1940): 198–201, 203–5. Congress did not officially grant the land until 1796, and it was not settled until 1798.

63. Zeisberger and Heckewelder to William Wilson, November 10, 1784, MissInd 215.4.

had granted them land, the congregation initially planned to leave the Detroit region to return to a tributary of the Muskingum. Following the decision-making process of the lot, they believed the Savior had shown them a place across Lake Erie where they could escape the pressures of neighboring Chippewas. But government reports of a potential outbreak of violence in the Muskingum Valley made them decide—again through the lot—to settle between the Cuyahoga and Pettquotting rivers in the spring of 1787. Although New Salem reached the highest population of the post-Gnadenhütten Ohio missions at 212 members, the mission's leaders generally seem to have thought that the Muskingum was where the congregation should return.[64] This desire was shaped not only by the government land grant and the lot, but also by the belief that the Delawares had given the Moravian Indians and their teachers land on the Muskingum as their home. In 1772 Netawatwees told Zeisberger that a piece of land east of Newcomer's Town, about forty miles in length, "shall belong to the converted Indians and we will not permit any other Indians to live there." The Wyandots had recently given this land as a gift to the Delaware peoples.[65] Because of hostilities between tribes and the United States in the early 1790s, the mission was forced to delay its return to the Ohio Valley and relocate to Fairfield in Upper Canada. It was not until 1798 that the land grant was settled. David Zeisberger and Benjamin Mortimer began the mission of Goshen near the former Gnadenhütten.

After arriving at Goshen, several Moravian Delawares went to the Delaware village of Woapicamikunk on the White River to express their wish that the western Delawares should follow Netawatwees's last will and "receive God's Word." Although the missionaries and Indian helpers were aware of the strong desire of the chiefs and captains to draw their fellow Delawares to White River, they believed those who were meant to come to Goshen would.[66] "It is certain that through the [earlier] preaching of the gospel . . . the Delawares, as a nation, have been powerfully laid hold of," Zeisberger argued.[67]

64. Bliss, ed., *Diary*, 1:206–7, 319–30.

65. Amy C. Schutt, "Forging Identities: Native Americans and Moravian Missionaries in Pennsylvania and Ohio, 1765–1782" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1995), 174–75, ProQuest (9531532); Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 158–60; quote from Earl P. Olmstead, *David Zeisberger: A Life Among the Indians* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), 186–87.

66. Zeisberger to General Helpers' Conference, April 30, 1800, MissInd 229.8. On Netawatwees' "last will and testament," see Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 356.

67. Goshen diary, July 22, 1799, MissInd 171.4.

But a response from the chiefs to an 1805 inquiry from Goshen and Pettquotting revealed not only a disagreement with the Moravian Delawares about Netawatwees's intentions, but also the belief that the missions, which Delaware leaders once considered useful in strengthening their people, were now only a threat to their unity. The Moravian Delawares declared that "we hold fast to the Word of God till this day as our Chief wished and are again in the place where he had placed us." The Delaware chiefs stated that they were still true to Netawatwees's wish. They suggested that the late chief's main goal was to keep his people together, not necessarily to accept Christianity, as the inhabitants of the missions believed. "It is true he said [we should accept God's Word, but] it is also true [that] the white people worked against us. Their actions made the heavens sad; the sky was full of restless clouds," they said in an implicit reference to the tragedy of Gnadenhütten. Like other Indians living along the Wabash at this time, the chiefs saw white missionaries as a threat: "We determined the white teachers are not good friends of the Indians. No, they have their own reasons to send the Indians" to the mission towns—perhaps to kill them. The missionaries were just like any other white settlers—people intent on taking Indian lands and lives. Instead of agreeing to live with the missionaries, the chiefs again used the opportunity to invite the Moravian Indians—but not the missionaries—to move to the rest of the Delaware nation. Reflecting acceptance of a growing pan-Indian consciousness, the chiefs asked the Moravian Indians to meet at the White River for a Council, and to extend this invitation "to all the Indians in this region." At the end of their speech, they presented the Moravian Indians with a black-white string of wampum, signifying a clear path between the Delaware nation and all other Indians.[68] Although a handful of White River Delawares did join the Ohio missions after 1798, the overall rejection of the missions by the western Delaware leadership undermined the goals of the missionaries.[69]

The greatest challenges the Ohio missions faced, however, stemmed from rapid white settlement. In 1794 Major General "Mad Anthony" Wayne defeated a confederation of Delawares, Wyandots, Shawnees, Miamis, Ojibwas, Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Mingos at the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

68. Goshen diary, September 29, 1805, MissInd 173.2; "Message of the Believing Indians in Goshen to the Chiefs in Woapicamik," September 1805, MissInd 172.5; David Zeisberger, *A History of the Northern American Indians*, ed. A. B. Hulbert and W. M. Schwarze, *Ohio History Journal* 19, nos. 1–2 (January–April 1910): 95.

69. Pettquotting diary, December 31, 1806, MissInd 1571.3.

One year later, the Treaty of Greenville established the lower two-thirds of Ohio country as the territory of the United States, opening the Old Northwest to unprecedented settlement. Private land-speculation companies like the Ohio Company of Associates, as well as federal land offices, sold large tracts of inexpensive land to buyers who agreed to improve them. John Heckewelder estimated there were 3,200 people in Ohio in 1793; by the end of the decade there were approximately 12,000 people in the Scioto River Valley alone. Between 1800 and 1810, Ohio's population grew 413 percent. With American victory in the War of 1812 came a tremendous economic

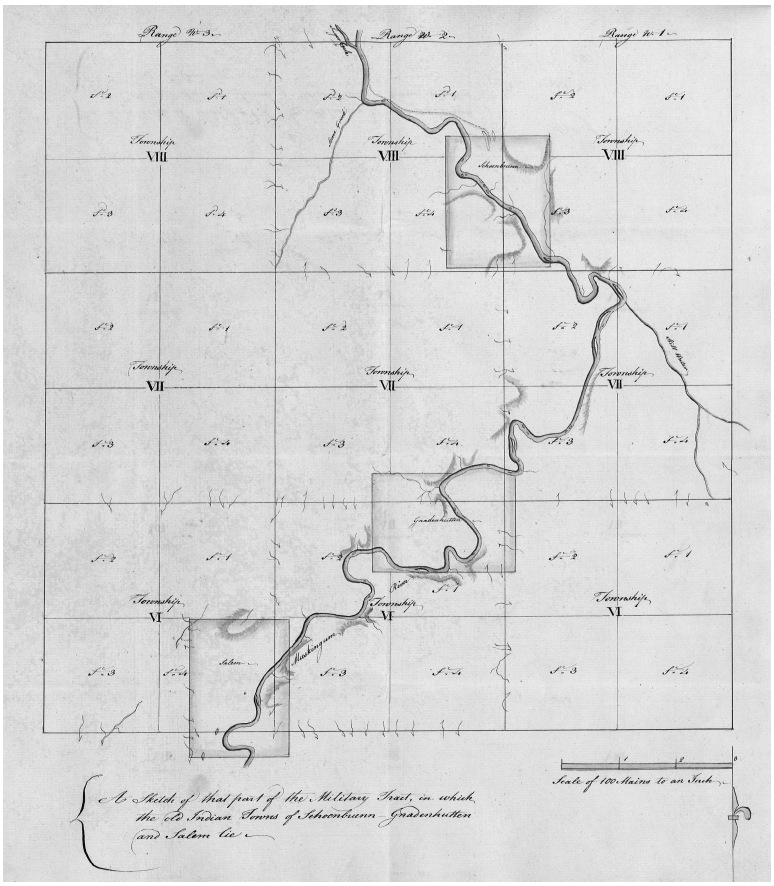

FIG 2. Watercolor sketch of a zoning map depicting the Moravian missions at Schönbrunn, Gnadenhütten and Salem in Ohio, adapted from the 1785 map of the Old Northwest Territory (DP f.226.2, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem).

boom, sending more people into Ohio to take advantage of fecund land and doubling Ohio's population by the end of the decade (see fig. 2).[70]

Moravian leaders soon realized that the recently formed Goshen mission needed a buffer against white settlement. Settlers "indifferent" to the goals of the missionaries were quickly occupying land to the south that Congress had granted to the Ohio Company. The missionaries worried that non-Moravian settlers spreading the alcohol trade might force them to relocate the mission. They requested that the Society for Propagating the Gospel acquire more land as a buffer, especially wooded territory that could provide much needed fuel and hunting grounds for the Indians. The Society later purchased more than a thousand acres near Goshen "as a rampart against the pushing in of strange [non-Moravian] white people."[71] Increasingly surrounded by white settlers, the Ohio missions were also isolated from the Indians they sought to attract. "It is not at all to be wondered at," wrote Mortimer at the end of 1799, "Considering all circumstances, that our congregation receives but little increase of numbers from among the heathen . . . especially in consideration of our geographical location."[72] Despite the large amount of land on which Goshen was situated, Zeisberger recognized that the town was "no place for a large Indian congregation."[73]

The missionaries sensed that the location of their mission made problems associated with race more salient. At an 1803 conference they expressed concern that the Indian brethren doubted their loyalty. The president of the Provincial Helpers' Conference, Georg Henrich Loskiel, charged the missionaries to renew their personal commitment to the welfare of the Indians. Missionaries must never show a preference for spending time with white people more than the Indians, which might cause the Indians to think the missionaries did not actually care about them. Above all, the missionaries must "guard against mixing the Indian congregation

70. Andrew R. L. Cayton, *The Frontier Republic: Ideology and Politics in the Ohio Country, 1780–1825* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1986), 36, 52–53, 112; Christopher Clark, "The Ohio Country in the Political Economy of Nation-Building," in *The Center of a Great Empire: The Ohio Country in the Early Republic*, ed. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Stuart D. Hobbs (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 150; Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789–1837* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

71. Goshen diary, October 19, 1800, MissInd 171.7; "Record of the Mission Conference Held in Goshen on the Muskingum from the Tenth to the Twenty-First of October [1803]," trans., Allen Zimmerman (Gnadenhutten, Ohio, 1954), 17, MissInd 174.4.

72. Goshen diary, December 26, 1799, MissInd 171.6.

73. Zeisberger to Loskiel, May 9, 1803, MissInd 1751.2.3: "Goshen aber ist kein Plaz für eine starke Ind[ianer] gemeine."

and its service in any manner with the white people." This was especially important since the Moravian Church had settled the former Gnadenhütten area with a European congregation and appointed Benjamin Mortimer its itinerant minister. The missionaries evidently had to work harder to prove their trustworthiness to the Indians.[74]

Despite attempting to limit the presence of whites and demonstrate their loyalty to the Indians, the missionaries could not prevent the congregation from being concerned about potentially hostile neighbors. Although the Gnadenhütten massacre did not cause the Indians at Goshen or Pettquotting to fear the missionaries as Indians on the White River feared them, the massacre did influence a concern for safety that many experienced as Indians living inside the Treaty of Greenville boundary. Shortly after Goshen was settled, Zeisberger left to visit the European congregation at Gnadenhütten. A report that a group of Indians had killed several settlers downriver made the congregation afraid Zeisberger had gone out to prevent an impending militia attack on Goshen. As Mortimer rightly noted, the Indians had not yet forgotten "the inhuman massacre of 1782."

In keeping with the growing concern about violence from whites throughout Indian country, such fears increased as tensions rose on the eve of the War of 1812. In 1810 militia in the nearby town of New Philadelphia began to drill. Mortimer noted that occasions such as these that brought many whites near Goshen always had "hurtful consequences among the Indians here." While Mortimer likely had the threat of vice in mind, other episodes show the congregation was perhaps more concerned about the threat of violence. Later in the year, the brother-in-law of Nicodemus told the Christian Indians he had heard reports that whites or other Indians may attack the settlement, causing them enough distress that the missionaries had some difficulty convincing them they were not in danger. In April 1811 reports of Indians living between Goshen and Sandusky fleeing on account of marching militia "whom so many Indians in these parts, from past experience, regard as so many lawless, blood-thirsty murderers," frightened the congregation. The missionaries repeatedly tried to assure the congregation that they did not need to be concerned.[75]

74. "Conference Held in Goshen [1803]," 12–13, 18–19, MissInd 174.4.

75. Goshen diary: July 11, 1799, MissInd 171.4; April 15, 1810, MissInd 173.7; September 20, 1811, MissInd 173.8; quote, April 30, 1811, MissInd 173.7. Ostler, "To Extirpate the Indians," 591.

Perhaps the most blatant threat of violence came as local militia mustered in late July 1812. A rumor had circulated that the Goshen Indians had aided other Natives who planned to attack nearby white settlements. Local residents made threats against the mission town, saying they would "shoot" any strange Indian they saw "and some said plainly, that every Indian here must be killed."[76] While Gnadenhütten did not play into nativist discourse as it had for White River Indians, it did affect the way Goshen Indians interpreted their relations with whites.

Alcohol contributed significantly to the deterioration of the Ohio missions. Although the missionaries had successfully petitioned authorities to ban the trade or offer of alcohol to Moravian Indian settlements, they overestimated the government's ability to control such activity.[77] In 1804 Moravians attempted to curtail the growing use of alcohol by establishing a new mission at Pettquotting, formerly the location of New Salem. Settlers had been taking advantage of Fairfield residents by trading alcohol for other goods, a fact Zeisberger attributed to whites merely trying to plague the mission to gain the land.[78] Many Indians left Fairfield for Pettquotting, and some from Goshen joined. At the end of its first year, the town had a population of fifty Indians. However, while Pettquotting was outside the Treaty of Greenville line and not as close to white settlements as Goshen, alcohol was a serious problem, and the diaries reveal that congregants, most often young men, had frequent difficulty abstaining from drunkenness. Indian brethren obtained alcohol on hunting or trading journeys to Munsee Delaware and Wyandot settlements along the Sandusky River or to various white settlements.[79]

Indians at Goshen encountered alcohol through non-Christian Indians and white settlers as well. Because the town was only eighteen miles from the treaty line, they rather easily traded with both Indians and whites on both sides of the boundary. As settlers cleared the land, locating game near Goshen became challenging. Furthermore, the store established at Gnadenhütten was too competitive for the Indian brethren

76. Goshen diary, July 26, 1812, MissInd 173.9.

77. Kluge and Luckenbach to William Henry Harrison, February 23, 1801, MissInd 317.4.7, MissInd 3500.6.10; Zeisberger and Mortimer to Arthur St. Clair, March 9, 1801, MissInd 317.4.8, MissInd 3500.6.11.

78. Zeisberger to Loskiel, May 9, 1803, MissInd 1751.2.3: "Es scheint die Nachbarn wollen die Brüder plagen, sie machen daß sie vom Lande weggehen sollen."

79. Pettquotting diary: December 31, 1805, MissInd 1571.2; May 8, May 18, and December 31, 1806.

to sell their own goods at the necessary prices. With these difficulties, the Moravian Indians often left for extended periods to participate in the regional economy.[80] While this provided them with important food sources, it also exposed them to the extensive alcohol trade in the lower Great Lakes region. The Indian brethren sometimes purchased liquor from whites when they left to go hunting or make sugar, and nearby settlers found ways around the ineffective government laws to trade in alcohol.[81] Mortimer and Zeisberger observed at the end of 1802 that "a considerable number" of the Goshen brethren "stand much in need of being anew laid hold of by the Spirit of God."[82] On Good Friday in 1805, half the adult population in Goshen was so drunk on whiskey from Gnadenhütten that they could have no lovefeast. One drunken congregant threatened to kill another on Easter.[83] The year 1811 was especially difficult. "Ever since the white people have been so much our neighbor, [we have not seen as much] encouraging fruit of our labor" as at the beginning of the Goshen mission. Temptations "encompass the poor Indians on every side."[84] Goshen continued to struggle on with less than thirty Indians at the end of 1811.

In addition to alcohol and the underlying uneasiness about white hostility, the Ohio missions faced a number of other problems. The size of the land and lack of technological assistance made it difficult for the congregants to cultivate the Schönbrunn tract. The Society for Propagating the Gospel did not provide the Indians with a plow until 1802, so they often had to rely on white neighbors with better technology to help them cultivate their crops. The Indians had fewer resources to make wood products like baskets and canoes or to practice their sugar-making tradition. Heavy snows killed many of the Indians' pigs in 1804 and 1807, wolves killed the cattle used to produce milk and butter, and drought and insects destroyed crops. The mortality rate was high: from 1798 to 1807, there were roughly equal numbers of births and deaths. Poor economic conditions and illness led many in the congregation to return to Fairfield. In just over four years,

80. Schutt, "Delawares in Eastern Ohio," 112–13, 121. See, for example, Goshen diary, June 30 and November 20, 1811, MissInd 173.8.

81. Goshen diary, March 30 and April 20, 1806, MissInd 173.2; December 9, 1806, MissInd 173.3.

82. Goshen diary, December 28, 1802, MissInd 171.11.

83. Goshen diary, April 12 and 15, 1805; see also May 19, 1805, March 12 and May 3, 1806, MissInd 173.2; September 2, 1807, MissInd 173.4.

84. Goshen diary, December 31, 1811, MissInd 173.8.

of twenty-six Indian brethren who had come from Fairfield since Goshen was planted, sixteen had returned.[85]

Many also left for Pettquotting. A major disruption occurred at Goshen in 1805 when a man named Ignatius left with his family and twelve other Christian Indians. Ignatius's son Henry committed suicide at Goshen. Following Moravian policy at the time, Zeisberger refused to bury Henry in the God's Acre. Outraged, Ignatius, his wife Christina, and those who sympathized with them left for Pettquotting.[86]

Pettquotting grew to seventy-six members by 1806, more than Goshen ever had. But its religious life was noticeably more troubled. The diaries indicate that some surrounding Wyandots and Munsees held to nativist theologies and sometimes encouraged younger Moravian Delawares to join in traditional ceremonies.[87] Missionaries Oppelt and Haven tried to correct any Indian brother or sister who dressed in traditional clothing or attended a ceremony in a neighboring town. By the autumn of 1807 the mission was officially dissolved due to alcohol, opposition from neighboring non-Moravian Delawares, and finally the government's sale of the land to settlers. Some Indians decided to remain at Pettquotting, while others went to Goshen. Most moved west to Sandusky on land granted by Munsee Delawares and their Wyandot neighbors. Abraham Luckenbach and John Hagen were invited there to preach. Some Delawares who had left the missions after 1782 frequently attended Sunday worship, and some sent their children to the mission school, but few affiliated solely with Moravian Christianity. The Munsees and Wyandots decided to leave Lower Sandusky when the Americans established a fort in the vicinity. Some of the Moravian Indians returned to Fairfield, but missions on the Sandusky were abandoned entirely by 1812, and the settlements were destroyed in the war.[88]

Although the Indians more frequently deviated from the moral order of the statutes in the last years of Zeisberger's life, nativism never had a significant direct effect on the Goshen mission. Many more Indians had left Goshen from economic difficulty and disagreement with Zeisberger's decision over Henry's burial than because of a rejection of teachings about

85. Conrad, "Struck in Their Hearts," 112-13; Goshen diary, June 7 and May 30, 1807, MissInd 173.4; June 3, 1800, MissInd 171.7; December 28, 1802, MissInd 171.11. I have estimated the birth-to-death rate from the number of infant baptisms and/or births and the number of deaths from the diaries of this period.

86. Goshen diary, March 30–31, April 8, and December 31, 1805, MissInd 173.2; Conrad, "Struck in Their Hearts," 220–21.

87. Pettquotting diary, September 14, 1806, MissInd 1571.3.

88. Loskiel, *History of the Moravian Mission*, 297–300.

the Savior or of the missionaries themselves. Their destinations were almost always the Fairfield or Pettquotting mission towns, and many visited or corresponded with Goshen.[89] Just three years before the Indians at White River asked to see Moravian teachings on a skin rather than a painting of the wounded Savior, Indians at Goshen reacted strongly to portrayals of Jesus. After seeing paintings displaying the Savior's sufferings, members in the congregation reacted with "much emotion." Describing how the Savior received such wounds on his body, the Indian interpreter "burst into a flood of tears." "One sister said that 'it was no wonder that the br[ethre]n and s[iste]rs in Bethlehem were better than they, as they not only heard of our Savior, but saw such pictures of his sufferings.'"[90] This woman perhaps had more in common with the Moravian Indians of the 1750s than the Indians on the White River; she certainly had no problem seeing a white Savior. Essentially, nativism had the greater effect of keeping the Indians who had rejoined non-Christian Indian communities after the Gnadenhütten massacre from rejoining the missions, rather than pulling away those who had rejoined. Indeed, although no nativists, the Christian Indians at Goshen had their anxieties about pressure from white communities confirmed.

Although the populations of the post-1782 towns never regained their earlier numbers, many Indians continued to find the highly structured communal life centered on a theology of the suffering Savior appealing. Moravian Indians continued to appropriate elements of Moravian religious ritual, such as communion, baptism, the lovefeast, and hymn singing in their culturally unique ways, continuing to develop—in Jane Merritt's phrase—"a distinctive native Christian religion." However, around 1800, the missions began to decline. This decline especially manifested itself in the disruption of the ritual life centered around devotion to the suffering Savior. The declining numbers of Indians associating themselves with this ritual life indicates that the Ohio mission towns—as places of refuge and of spiritual power—had significantly less appeal by the turn of the century. One major challenge to the missions in the Old Northwest came from nativism, which prevented the expansion of the mission towns to the White River and kept many Delawares from returning to the towns. Another

89. Goshen diary, December 31, 1806, MissInd 173.3; May 18 and July 6, 1807, MissInd 173.4; ibid., December 31, 1809, MissInd 173.6.

90. Goshen diary, January 6, 1801, MissInd 171.8.

challenge came from the problems of the alcohol trade, economic strain, and threats caused by rapid white settlement after the Treaty of Greenville. The thread of the Gnadenhütten massacre was spun differently, but it still ran through the Native experience of Moravian Christianity. And like other Indians, Moravian Indians after Gnadenhütten found an inhospitable land in the western region of the Early Republic.

KYLE FISHER is a graduate student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, where he studies religious history. He thanks the anonymous reviewers of the Journal of Moravian History for their helpful comments in the writing of this essay.