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German Culture and the Inuit: The Moravian Mission in Labrador

The work of the mission is a real labour of love. . . . There is not a little that is loveable in the Esquimaux, but were it otherwise that would only increase the devotion, the unselfishness, the long-continued self-abnegation and sacrifice of their faithful missionaries. . . . [The Esquimaux race] cannot be in better hands than those of the Moravian Mission, to which it undoubtedly owes its survival to the present day. The more completely the Esquimaux are left to these teachers and benefactors, so much better it will be for the race.
(Newfoundland Governor Sir William MacGregor, 1909)¹

In the United States, the Moravians, or *Unitas Fratrum*, are usually associated with their four exemplary religious settlement congregations started in 1741—Bethlehem, Nazareth, Lititz in Pennsylvania, and Wachovia (Salem-Winston) in North Carolina. These have been noted for their early communal pietism and Christian communism. They also acquired a reputation as adherents of a fervent christological theology and somewhat peculiar, rather rigid, religious practices, resulting in their seclusion from mainstream society. In the founding of these congregations, it has been observed, the missionary spirit was absent.²

In Labrador, Moravians have presented a quite different face. Arriving as missionaries among the hostile Inuit in 1752 they were not interested in founding immigrant settlement congregations. Within half a century of their presence in Labrador, these Moravians had pacified the seemingly unpacifiable region, created a written language for the Inuit to facilitate their literacy, and introduced educational and other strategies to enable the Inuit and their cultural identity to survive in a rapidly changing modern world. The Newfoundland government did more than just tolerate with benevolent indifference Moravian cultural dominance in northern Labrador. It also specifically invited Moravian responsibility for educational, judicial, economic, medical, social, and other services in that remote region.

The Labrador Moravians thus did not fit the Christian missionary stereotypes either. They did not come as fervent proselytizers eager to flush out all traces of ancient pagan culture. On the contrary, they arrived motivated and trained to concern themselves with all aspects of the native people's well-being, their culture, environment, and lifestyle. Nevertheless, Moravian linguistic, educational, musical, horticultural,

and scientific pursuits, in particular, reflected German ways and traditions and drew on some of the most progressive German models of the time. This article argues that, although operating within a framework of German culture and transplanting many aspects of German life into the rugged wilderness of northern Labrador, the Moravians left their mark as facilitators of Inuit survival in the broadest sense of the word.

Religious Origins

Who were the Moravians and what was their interest in Labrador? The Moravian brand of Christianity originated as an integral part of the popular Protestant revival movement of Pietism, which spread within the Lutheran Church beginning in the 1680s and peaking in eighteenth-century Germany. Rebelling against orthodox, authoritarian, institutionalized Protestantism, Pietism demanded a completely personalized religion gained by prayer and introspection and derived solely from Bible study. Their strong sense of the equality of all in the eyes of God coupled with a belief in good works as an expression of true faith earned them a reputation as social radicals eager to reform society through education. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Pietism was a potent force in German religious, cultural and political life.³

The present Moravian Church was founded in 1722 by Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-60) as a Pietist association of like-minded brethren within the Lutheran Church. He named it *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde* (Herrnhut community of brethren), as it is still known in Germany today. Himself the descendant of an Austrian Protestant family which had accepted religious-political refuge in Saxony, Zinzendorf wanted to gather under his protective wing the few remaining German-speaking members of a group of Protestants known as Moravians or *Unitas Fratrum* (unity of brethren) who were being persecuted in re-Catholicized Bohemia and Moravia (roughly the area of the present Czech state). These Protestants traced their denominational roots to the Czech reformer John Hus, who was burned at the stake in 1415, and even beyond him to the pre-Reformation sect of the Waldensians.

Under the patronage of Zinzendorf, who adopted the names "Moravian" and *Unitas Fratrum* for his association, the few surviving Moravian refugees experienced a spiritual renewal. Essentially indifferent to denominational particularities, Zinzendorf offered not only Moravians, but also Calvinists, Pietists, and other Christian dissenters a haven on his estate in Saxony where he built the community of Herrnhut (literally: the Lord's protection) for them—hence their German name *Herrnhuter*. Out of mystical foundations common to Moravians, Reformed, and Lutherans, he forged a bond of fraternity among dedicated followers. Calling themselves brothers and sisters, they pledged to overcome the divisions of Christianity under his spiritual leadership. With beliefs rooted in the tradition of European mysticism, they were convinced that such ethical principles of the Scriptures as love, rather than dogmatic formulation of creed, must govern Christian conduct as evidence of saving faith.

Zinzendorf inspired his *Unitas Fratrum* with a dual vision. He did not want to found a separate church. Rather, he wanted his followers to form an invisible church,

that is, a union of spiritually like-minded brethren who would function as a revivalist leaven within existing Protestant churches. (In reality this did not happen and they remained a cohesive group.) He also directed them to pioneer Protestant foreign missions. They should dedicate their lives to taking the gospel to the oppressed and hitherto neglected native peoples.⁴ The missionaries, in the words of one historian, “had to be willing to serve without pay, to work for their living, to be content with bare necessities, and to suffer, die and be forgotten, content that such was the will of God.”⁵

From the outset, the Moravians’ General Synod and its executive, the Unity’s Elders’ Conference, had their permanent seats in Germany and invariably consisted almost exclusively of Germans. Although the Moravians established Provincial Synods in England, Ireland, Holland, and America, Germany was the hub for the mission’s decision-making about objectives and operations. There the missionaries were trained and from there they were sent into the world. In 1732 the first Moravian missionaries set forth. These went to the black slaves of the West Indies. In 1733 Moravians went to the Inuit (Eskimos) of Greenland, and in 1735 to the Indians of America. Within a few decades, the Mission Board at Herrnhut administered a global community of Moravian synods, mission stations, and congregations with a presence in England, Sweden, Russia, the Americas, and Africa.

Mission Stations and Settlements

The idea of extending the Moravian ministry to the Labrador Inuit, who had a reputation (in the words of the Newfoundland Governor Palliser) as “the most treacherous, cruel and barbarous of all savages ever known,”⁶ was initiated by Moravian missionaries in Greenland, who were convinced that the same transformation of the lives of the Inuit could be wrought in Labrador as in Greenland. The Labrador Inuit’s bad reputation resulted from conflicts arising from their trade with European (before 1763 mostly French) fishing, trading and naval parties in the south. The great difficulties of establishing a mission in Labrador, however, became clear in 1752 when local Inuit murdered seven members of the first Moravian exploratory party, including its leader, the Mecklenburg seaman Johann Christian Erhardt.⁷ Labelled “the Dutchman” by Anglo-Saxon chroniclers because he used to be employed on a Dutch ship, Erhardt had planned a combined missionary and trade exploration funded by Moravian businessmen in England. In Ford’s Harbour, close to today’s Makkovik, he selected a spot for the first mission station he named Hopedale (not identical to present-day Hopedale). A house built at this site in 1752 was soon destroyed by Inuit. The ruins of this first attempt to start a Labrador mission were found by Moravian search parties in 1753 and 1775 but were subsequently abandoned and not rediscovered and excavated until 2001.⁸

A second—this time successful—attempt to establish a permanent foothold in Labrador was made by the Danish-born Moravian Jens Haven. He, like Erhardt, had ministered to the Inuit in Greenland. Unlike Erhardt, though, Haven was fluent in Greenland Inuktitut, a language very similar to the Labrador Inuit idiom. Haven’s

plans were brought to fruition with the help of the English branch of the *Unitas Fratrum* and Newfoundland Governor Hugh Palliser. After Newfoundland acquired Labrador from France in 1763, Palliser needed a truce with the Inuit so that an English trade and fishery might develop along the Labrador coast. After three voyages of inquiry by Haven in the 1760s and the British government's approval of a land grant of 100,000 acres in 1769, the first permanent mission station was built at Nain in 1771. The Moravians explained to Palliser that they needed the large tract of land to keep at bay "the vicious and debasing influence" of fishermen and traders frequenting the coast.⁹

From the outset, the behaviour of fishermen-traders loomed as the most formidable obstacle to Moravian endeavours and seemed to explain the Inuits' mistrust of white men. On his first trip to the Labrador coast in a Newfoundland fishing boat in summer 1764, an appalled Haven had to watch helplessly as the crew on his boat randomly shot at Inuit they spotted in kayaks. He was ridiculed by the fishermen, Haven reported, when he desponded about their apparent resolve "to murder all the Eskimos."¹⁰ In order to be safe from these and other "wandering pirates who then abounded," the Moravians chose a site for their mission premises in Labrador to which navigation would be extremely dangerous for those unfamiliar with the locality. In addition, Palliser decided to have the newly chosen Nain mission site fortified with cannon and muskets, not for defence against the Inuit, but against pirate-fishermen.¹¹ The Moravians' role in protecting the Inuit of northern Labrador from the extinction that was the fate of the southern Inuit bands has been widely recognized.¹²

Nain started out as a station in the wilderness consisting of a mission house, church, trading post, and outbuildings inhabited by fourteen missionary personnel—three married couples and eight single men. A school was added in 1791. Although the headquarters of the Labrador mission until 1957, Nain developed only slowly into a larger settlement. Initially, the nomadic Inuit visited Nain merely to trade and to participate in the religious festivals of Easter and Christmas. Meanwhile, they retained or relapsed into their indigenous religious beliefs.¹³ By 1850 the Mission counted some 300, mostly seasonally visiting Inuit communicants. Only thereafter did Nain acquire a more permanently resident Inuit and white settler population. The Moravians, however, had been able to stop almost immediately the ongoing warfare between Inuit and fishermen-traders as well as Inuit blood feuds.¹⁴ From the 1770s to 1800 murders were reported only in the regions to the north and south of the mission stations, indicating the missionaries' effective mediation in disputes.¹⁵

The excellent progress made by the missionaries in their relations with the Inuit caused the British government to approve a second mission settlement, Okak, to the north of Nain in 1775 and a third one to the south of Nain in 1782. The latter was named Hoffenthal (Hopedale) in memory of the first abandoned station. Like Nain, each was in an area occupied by a large gathering of Inuit during the winter, with an excellent harbour, good fishing, and an ample supply of wood and fresh water. Each of these settlements was started on a grant of 100,000 acres of surrounding land. Hopedale with its stately mission house, church, and store is, besides Hebron, the only Moravian mission complex that has survived from the mid-nineteenth century. Okak, which included an orphanage and a hospital, was closed in 1919 after the

Spanish influenza had wiped out three quarters of its Inuit community of 266. Its buildings were dismantled and their materials used to rebuild Nain where the original church, school, stores, and stately three-storey mission house with archive and library were consumed by a fire in 1921.

In order to be effective, the missionaries realized that they must go where the natives gathered. Five more settlements most of which no longer exist were therefore launched along the northern Labrador coast during the nineteenth century. These are Hebron (1830-1959), Zoar (1865-94), Rama (1871-1908), Makkovik (1896-present), and Killinek (1904-24). Hebron, sixty miles north of Okak, was a rugged mountainous spot surrounded by steep cliffs thirty miles north of the tree line. It was established near a large Inuit camp at Saglek Bay to take the place of Okak as the spiritual centre for reaching out to the Inuit in the north. The materials for the mission house had to be brought on 105 dog sled trips from Okak. The one-storey mission building with the attached church was constructed in the form of a German long-house with a central hallway and rooms leading off it. It served as a comprehensive community centre, housing the missionaries' residence, school, village smithy, and other communal activity. The Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918 decimated Hebron's Inuit population from 220 to 70, but it recovered. When in 1959 the Moravian Church decided to close the station citing isolation, lack of services, and supply problems as reasons, the government resettled the remaining 247 Hebron Inuit to Moravian communities further south. The Hebron mission building was preserved to become a National Historic Site in 1976.

Zoar, located between Hopedale and Nain, was the first Moravian settlement designed to gather not only Inuit but also settlers and Newfoundland fishermen of this area for trade and evangelization. The store, however, did not prove economically viable and became the cause of Inuit violence. When the Moravians closed it, the Inuit left Zoar. Consequently, the settlement had to be abandoned. The decisions to build stations at Rama and Killinek on Labrador's far northern coast signified the last, equally short-lived, Moravian efforts to establish contact with the remaining Inuit on Labrador's most northern coastal strip. Rama was situated a hundred miles above the tree line in an inhospitable environment of rock, ice, and sea. It serviced forty-five souls when the Moravians had to abandon it for financial reasons. Killinek station hugged the coastal cliffs of a barren rocky island at the northernmost tip of Labrador. Surrounded by frozen sea most of the year, it was almost completely cut off from the other stations, even in good weather. Two factors sealed its fate: its Inuit population declined despite an auspicious beginning and second, territorial disputes with Canada increased because of import duties imposed on supplies.

Makkovik was the first settlement started south of Hopedale. It was also the first one to serve primarily settlers and fishers, and the only one of the five started in the nineteenth century still surviving. Its large two-storey mission house and church, prefabricated by Moravians in Germany, burnt to the ground in 1948. They were replaced by much smaller bungalow-type buildings. The only additional Labrador congregations Moravians formed in the twentieth century were in Happy Valley (1943) and North West River (1960).¹⁶ In 1967 the five Labrador congregations constituted

themselves as the autonomous Moravian Church in Newfoundland and Labrador, which became an affiliated Province of the worldwide Moravian Church.¹⁷ The 250th anniversary of the Moravian Church in Labrador in 2002 attested to the fact that the Moravians had come to stay. Over 2,000 of northern Labrador's population of about 2,500 claim a Moravian heritage today.¹⁸

Moravian Life at the Mission Stations

The center of each Moravian settlement was the original mission station. It generally consisted of a large mission house with living quarters, offices, work shops, and communal rooms for the missionaries; a church (sometimes attached to the mission house); a trading store; outbuildings for curing such items as fish, meat, and skins; a garden; and a graveyard. The stately external appearance of the original two- and three-storey Labrador mission houses and the churches with belfries reflect German Baroque designs typical of most buildings in Herrnhut and Moravian mission stations everywhere from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. In Labrador the missionaries erected these structures themselves and made most of their own furniture from local materials according to German plans. Only the Makkovik mission house and church were shipped in pieces from Germany. On a trip home in 1891, missionary Hermann Jannasch had arranged, complete with four German tiled heating stoves, to get a newly developed German-type prefabricated church and mission house. They were to be manufactured for the new Makkovik station for later assembly in Makkovik. The buildings were temporarily assembled by the manufacturer in Niesky, Germany, where Jannasch marked their parts so he could reassemble them in Makkovik in 1896.¹⁹

Inuit gathered around this station complex, at first infrequently, then seasonally (usually from the onset of winter to shortly after Easter) in tents, sod huts, or small wooden houses. During the summer months the missionaries were thus alone in the settlement and could devote themselves to such activities as fishing and hunting, gardening, carpentry, scientific experiments, writing, and coastal travel. Six missionaries on average, including one or two married couples and a trading brother, occupied the mission stations, especially the larger ones. In 1900, at the peak of its operations, the Labrador mission counted a total missionary staff of thirty-seven (including wives) and a congregation of about 1,000 Inuit communicants (from an estimated population of about 1,500 Inuit along the entire Labrador coast), plus two to three hundred so-called settlers, that is, whites or half-Inuit.

Until the 1920s, most of the Moravian missionaries in Labrador were of German background and had been trained in Germany. The home office in Herrnhut arranged for the missionary's marriage by selecting a suitable Moravian bride. It also required that the missionaries' children be sent for education to Moravian boarding schools in Germany when they reached eight years of age. Some of these children returned from Germany to their places of birth in Labrador to become missionaries themselves. After serving in Labrador an average of fifteen to twenty years—a few stayed for as many as forty years—the German-born missionaries preferred to retire in Germany. There they looked forward to devoting their remaining years publicizing their

experiences as missionaries, promoting the mission's objectives in Labrador, and helping to solicit charitable donations for its operation. The missionaries born in Germany and their Labrador-born children, therefore, preferred to retain their German nationality, even when serving in Labrador for forty years. The absence of a German official of any kind for them in Labrador prompted the German Ambassador in London to request successfully the establishment of a consulate there. In 1880 a German consulate was opened in Nain so that the forty German missionary staff could "obtain legally valid papers."²⁰

Visitors frequently noted the "very German" living quarters and lifestyles of the missionaries. The big mission houses, indeed, were a microcosm of Moravian life in Germany. All the mission stations were heated with wood and coal by German-type tall ceramic tile stoves (*Kachelofen*). Even the remote Killinek station prided itself on a large blue-tiled stove of this type. Its efficiency and long retention of heat impressed RCMP constable Kenneth C. Butler, who visited the station in 1921 and had never seen this kind of stove before.²¹ Each station operated a bakery, a smithy, and a carpentry shop. In addition, Nain, Hopedale and Okak brewed beer, and Nain set up a printing press.

Jessie Luther, a New England visitor to the Hopedale mission house in 1910, took note of cross-stitch embroidery on the tablecloths, pots of red geraniums on the window sills, white window curtains, German texts on the walls, and beds with two layers of feather beds on them. Although content with Spartan diets for themselves, Moravians brought out their best food from storage for their guests. Missionary Berthold Lenz and his wife served Jessie Luther Sunday breakfast with whole wheat bread, oatmeal porridge, coffee and marmalade. Dinner consisted of "delicious soup, partridge (canned by Frau Lenz), potato, creamed cauliflower (from the garden) and stewed dried raspberries for dessert." Supper included smoked salmon, homemade German sausage, bread and butter, tea, and marmalade, "all placed on the table at once." Sunday noon dinner was followed by coffee at two o'clock:

We found the table spread as for a formal meal with lively white, green and gold china and a silver coffee service . . . In the center of the table were two large *kuchen* [cakes], one with apple and almonds, the other with rhubarb. It is remarkable how one could eat such a meal so soon after a twelve o'clock dinner with the prospect of supper at five-thirty and a nightcap at nine, but we seemed to manage five meals a day without difficulty.²²

The organization of social and cultural life at the mission stations, including the common housekeeping arrangement which was abandoned in 1907,²³ was as Moravian German as the physical layout and architectural style. In order to make the mission house a self-contained and self-sufficient family group, the missionaries maintained a strict division of labour. The upbringing of the missionaries' small children to the age of seven (thereafter they were sent to Germany), the kitchen, and the laundry were the preserve of the female missionaries, while bread baking, carpentry, repairs, and hunting and fishing, were male chores. Among the male missionaries those who knew the

native language engaged in preaching, teaching, and translating, whereas others were assigned practical work, such as construction or food gathering, and one was always responsible for the station's store. As a part of schooling, Inuit girls were assigned the washing and mending of all the children's clothes, while the Inuit boys had to split wood and haul water for the kitchen.²⁴ Inuit girls who spoke German used to help the missionaries' wives in their households.

Gardening

Moravians came to Labrador with great hopes for gardening as a way to remain as self-sufficient as possible. But even after they realized that at best they might be able to supplement no more than a fraction of their subsistence from nature, they did not give up. Inspired by the gardening skills and experience they had acquired in Germany, they experimented so long until they had discovered ways to adapt to the short growing season and harsh climate of Labrador. Visitors were invariably amazed at the ingeniously cultivated and prolifically yielding Moravian gardens in Hopedale and Nain. Even in Hebron and Rama, far north of the tree line, Moravians had gardens.

A Moravian drawing of Nain in the 1770s already showed two gardens, a large one on the left and a small one on the right side of the mission house. In Hopedale, too, the Moravians recognized the potential for gardening immediately. In less than a year after their arrival, they had marked off a piece of land 70 by 60 feet, surrounded it with palisades, and filled it with many wheelbarrows of mossy dirt, which was then mixed with seaweed to create a fertile mulch. Later visitors to Hopedale recorded their astonishment at the missionaries' success in growing vegetables and flowers.²⁵ In his Visitation Report of July 1876, Bishop Levin Theodor Reichel commented that the Hopedale gardens "took us by surprise, as vegetation in them was more advanced than we had anticipated: during our stay they improved very perceptibly with warm weather and very heavy rain. Salad [i.e., lettuce] and cucumbers in the forcing frames require great care and trouble, which are, however, well repaid."²⁶

Gardens were a standard feature at all mission stations where something could be grown. Some stations had attractively landscaped backyards equipped with walkways, benches, picnic tables, and even tea houses. Despite the harsh climate, the missionaries managed to grow successfully flowers, shrubs, and trees, and such vegetables as rhubarb, potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, lettuce, beets and radishes. The plants were usually started indoors behind stoves in cans and boxes, then nursed along sunny windows until the end of May when they could be moved into cold frames outdoors. In June and July they were then planted into outdoor beds fertilized with kelp that had washed ashore. To plant the Hopedale garden in May or June, the snow of the preceding eight months had to be dug out and carried away.²⁷

A Grenfell Mission crafts teacher, who visited Hopedale in 1910, was taken aback at the beauty of the Moravians' "dear little formal flower garden with three flower beds" holding pansies, poppies, and pink English daisies along paths of gravel, with pointed shingles bordering the small flower beds. There was also a greenhouse sheltering flowers and vegetables. Mrs. Lenz, the missionary's wife, led the visitor

along a walk bordered by trees, through a kitchen garden where lettuce, potatoes, rhubarb, turnips, and even cauliflower were flourishing, then through a gate in the picket fence to another lovely spot with trees, shrubs, and walks leading to seats beside them. There was even a little tea house, and in one place, a seat and table were raised by rock and sand to a height overlooking the sea and hills. Mrs. Lenz said she and Mr. Lenz had made this themselves, and it was their favorite retreat.²⁸

Nain had a more prolific vegetable garden than Hopedale because the soil had been lovingly collected all around the mission station wherever small pockets of it could be found.²⁹ In the outdoor garden beds, elaborate devices protected plants from the cold. Visitors marvelled how Inuit women trooped out on chilly evenings to cover up the potatoes. "Every row of potatoes is covered with arched sticks and long strips of canvas along them. A huge role of sacking is kept near each row and the whole is drawn over and the potatoes are tucked in bed for the night."³⁰ At Nain, missionary Jannasch built a hothouse sunken into the ground and warmed with heat sent through pipes from the tiled stove in the mission house.³¹

Professor Edward C. Moore of Harvard University, who toured the mission stations in 1905, echoed the Grenfell teachers's sentiments at the sight of the missionaries' gardens and their greenhouse at Nain. He was amazed that at Nain

pannies and petunias grow in the open air in August though icebergs are everywhere in sight. I have a picture of a doctor at this station sitting in his room with a gloxinia in a pot beside him in full bloom in mid-winter in a climate where the thermometer often reaches 25 degrees below zero . . . So small a thing as this love of flowers is typical of the refinement of these faithful men and women, and the simple godliness and quiet devotion which they manifest betrays the secret of all that these missions have achieved.³²

Language and Culture

For almost two centuries, the Moravian cultural record in Labrador had been largely a German experience. The predominant language at the mission stations was German and the bulk of the mission stations' diaries (until 1929) were written in German. When baptizing Inuit, the missionaries used only German first names.³³ For their interactions with local and British authorities, with settlers, fishermen, and the Society for the Futherance of the Gospel (S. F. G.), however, the German missionaries serving in Labrador also acquired some fluency in English.³⁴ But it is symptomatic for the pervasiveness of the Moravian stations' German environment that the few English-born missionaries serving in Labrador all learned German in order to function adequately. In virtually every aspect of Moravian-Inuit relations, German attitudes and customs were transparent. Moravian cultural endeavours, ranging from their

linguistic work, music, science, and educational methods to their work ethic, were mostly based on models and approaches originating in Germany.

Observing Inuit culture and preserving what they saw as essential to it reflected the Moravians' unique concept of culture and *Bildung* (education) rooted in their Moravian and German traditions. Zinzendorf had studied and admired John Amos Comenius (1592-1670) renowned as the "father of modern education." One of the last bishops of the original Moravian Brethren, Comenius's interest in natural science, his ideas of making learning interesting, and relevant for life³⁵ were further developed by Germany's foremost Pietist theologian August Hermann Francke (1663-1727).³⁶ As director of the Halle Pedagogium, he was Zinzendorf's chief teacher and mentor. Francke's pedagogical approaches were highly innovative. They were aimed at the physical and social improvement of orphaned, sick, impoverished, and lower class children, as well as at the needs of the upper classes. He advocated schooling children in accordance with their natural talents in academic and practical subjects, with natural history and the natural sciences occupying a prominent place in the curriculum.³⁷

Herrnhut's first Latin school, from its beginning in 1738, taught geography, anatomy, medicine, and a trade. This curriculum was further developed at the Moravian school and seminary of Wetterau (near Frankfurt am Main). One of the first directors of the Wetterau school, Bishop Polykarp Müller, was a devout advocate of "the study of science in the service of the mission to the heathen." He believed that an effective mission required the most versatile teachers with expertise in a number of disciplines of the arts and sciences, especially the study of languages, nature, cultures, and geography. Müller's ideas were implemented by Paul Eugen Layritz, Friedrich Adam Scholler, and David Cranz, three prominent Moravian educators who trained the first generation of Moravian missionaries. Two of these, Layritz and Cranz, were associated with the Labrador mission. Layritz visited Nain in 1773 as a representative of the Conference of Elders in order to help define internal procedures as well as missionary approaches and objectives in Labrador.³⁸

The Moravians' most vital cultural objectives, as well as their most significant and enduring ones, were their linguistic endeavours. The primary challenge, in keeping with their Moravian religious philosophy, was bringing literacy to the Inuit in their native language, to facilitate the spread of the gospel among them. Linguistically, the Moravians faced three formidable tasks: they needed to create a written language (Inuktitut), in order to produce reading materials in Inuktitut, which were essential for bringing about Inuit literacy. To accomplish this goal, the Moravians first created a written language for the Inuit based on the Inuit oral dialect. Then, to provide reading materials for the Inuit, the Moravians translated the Bible and other reading materials into the newly created Inuktitut. These tasks were accomplished during the difficult formative years of the mission. Although the missionaries had been prepared for practical trades and often lacked any specific phonetic and linguistic training, they were helped by two advantages—they were able to avail themselves of previous Moravian linguistic work done for the Greenland Inuit, and the first Labrador missionaries included several who had lived in Greenland and knew Inuktitut.

Five of the first missionaries were fluent in Greenlandic Inuktitut upon arrival in Nain. During his term in Nain from 1773 to 1797, Johann Ludwig Beck is known to have used a copy of his father's Greenland dictionary. As early as 1780, Hopedale missionary David Kriegelstein was reported preparing a book of readings for Labrador Inuit.³⁹ The first part of the Bible in Labrador Inuktitut—the Passion story—was available in 1800, to be followed by the Gospels in 1813. By 1826 the missionaries had translated into Labrador Inuktitut the entire New Testament, and by 1834 parts of the Old Testament. The translation of the complete Bible into Inuktitut by 1869 was the work of missionary Friedrich Erdmann, who served in Okak, Nain, and Hebron from 1834 to 1872.⁴⁰ In addition, comprehensive dictionaries, catechisms, prayer books, Bible stories, and hymnals—the 1950 edition of the Inuit hymnal still contains German subtitles—are the fruit of the German missionaries' linguistic labours.

Erdmann also prepared the first comprehensive printed Inuktitut-German dictionary (1864), based on numerous older, handwritten, and incomplete dictionaries copied and revised by missionaries in the course of their service in Labrador.⁴¹ The first detailed grammar (in German) of Labrador Inuktitut was the work of missionary Theodor Bourquin in 1891. Although modelled on Samuel Kleinschmidt's grammar of Greenlandic Inuktitut of 1851, it relied heavily on local native informants to do justice to the grammatical and orthographic peculiarities of the Labrador dialect. Missionary Hermann Jannasch, who assisted in this task, was overawed by the dedication with which Bourquin shouldered these labours over a fifteen-year period. Bourquin, recalled Jannasch in his memoirs of 1929, "carried a notepad with him on all his walks and travels in Labrador; he kept asking the Eskimo to explain every new expression and scribbled down everything most conscientiously." Bourquin's work revealed such an exceptional grasp of the peculiarities of Labrador Inuktitut and was so thorough, F. W. Peacock noted almost a century later, that revisions of this work "have failed to add any significant facts."⁴²

It has been observed that certain Inuktitut guttural sounds with a harsh and unpleasant ring to the English ear resemble German sounds. These sounds appear in such German words as "ach" and "doch" and facilitated the linguistic labours of the German missionaries. When compiling their dictionaries, the German missionaries wrote down the sounds they heard as they would have reproduced them in their own language. German phonetics thus is the basis for spelling Inuit words to this day, a system often causing confusion and irritation for English speakers. Lacking Inuit equivalents for many of the spiritual concepts and everyday items necessary to teach the Bible, the German missionaries had to create a large body of new Inuit vocabulary. Their pioneer creation of a written Inuit language and their translations into the new language consequently contain substitutions of German words for concepts missing in the native language. For example, such German words as *Gott* (God), *heilig* (holy), *Löwe* (lion), *Taube* (pigeon), *Harfe* (harp), *Kartoffel* (potato), the German names for the days and the months, and German numerals from one to ten have entered the native language. For plants like the fig tree or grape vine the Moravian linguists combined the Inuit word for pine (*nappartok*) with the German for fig (*Feige*) or wine (*Wein*) into *nappartok faigeliksak* and *nappartok vaineliksak* (i.e., the pine supposed to

bear wine).⁴³ From the 1940s on, a growing number of English words have broadened the Labrador Inuit dialect. The transcription of the Inuits' spoken language into the modern means of communication known as Inuktitut has, for good or ill, exposed their culture to incalculable new influences.

Education

One of the Moravian mandates in Labrador was to assume complete responsibility for the education of the Labrador Inuit. Until 1946, when the Newfoundland government finally assumed supervision of the Moravian schools, the missionaries discharged their responsibility with sensitivity and dedication. Newly arriving Moravian missionaries were not allowed to preach or speak to Inuit until they had learned Inuktitut. Guided by the twin principles of imparting a sound knowledge of the Christian religion while leaving the native way of life as undisturbed as possible, the Moravians' educational approach was geared to all-out literacy for the Inuit, females as well as males.

Reports indicate that by 1843 most of the Inuit in districts where Moravian schooling was available were literate in their own language. Inuit literacy remained high for more than a century. On the eve of the First World War, Wilfred Grenfell considered them the best educated people along the entire coast and Governor MacGregor believed that they would be able to exercise the franchise as intelligently as any whites. Their reputation for literacy was so widespread among illiterate fishermen visiting Labrador in schooners that Inuit are reported to have been asked to write letters for them home to Newfoundland.⁴⁴ Not until 1950 did Inuit literacy rates begin to drop drastically when instruction in Inuktitut was discontinued in favour of universal English schooling.⁴⁵

The first formal Moravian school in Labrador opened in 1791. The essential Moravian curriculum taught subjects that appeared to be of practical value—reading, writing, basic math and geography, elementary bookkeeping, and, of course, Bible study. Bible stories, however, formed the basic and most common instructional materials available to Inuit for more than a century and a half. The core academic objective was the acquisition by the Inuit of both basic literacy skills in Inuktitut and mathematical skills equivalent to grade four or five by today's standards. In 1815 the Moravian school curriculum in Labrador added history and political and social studies. Although the language of instruction was Inuktitut, the more advanced students were also taught English and German by 1900. In Nain and Hebron many Inuit spoke three languages. In 1909 eleven Inuit helpers from the different stations sent salutations written in fluent English to King Edward VII beseeching him to protect their hunting and fishing grounds from outsiders' encroachments.⁴⁶

Education for baptized Inuit was virtually compulsory since they had to sign a pledge following their confirmation that their offspring would go to school. Due to the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Inuit, the school year lasted only about 12-16 weeks although Okak had a Moravian orphanage from 1865. To meet the needs of the children of settlers living in dispersion, Moravians in 1900 opened in Makkovik the first

Labrador boarding school in English. In 1922 this school introduced a nine-month curriculum. The school had 37 students in 1930. At the same time, settlers' demands and changing Inuit migrating patterns led to the transformation of the Nain Inuit school into another nine-month Moravian boarding school. It opened in 1929 for some fifty children of Inuit and settlers, offering English-language instruction to settlers' children and Inuktitut schooling to Inuit. For settlers' children it operated as a boarding school while Inuit children attended whenever their parents returned from their winter fur-hunting expeditions induced by the sale of the Moravian trading franchise to the Hudson's Bay Company.⁴⁷

The missionaries diverse expertise enabled a multi-faceted education. The amateur scientists and skilled artisans among them taught the Inuit a variety of scientific subjects, arts, crafts, and skills, including the use of nets for catching seals. Missionary Hermann Jannasch introduced his Inuit students to the secrets of optics, photography, electromagnetism, and gases.⁴⁸ From the 1860s the missionaries' wives were reported to be offering sewing and knitting lessons.⁴⁹ In the nineteenth century the Nain mission taught carpentry to Inuit in a well-outfitted workshop. By 1900, Governor MacGregor reported, the course was dropped from the curriculum because the Inuit had become highly skilled at teaching one another without the help of the missionaries. Inuit had been serving as teachers' aides since the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁰

Music

Moravian music is deeply rooted in the rich hymnal and choral tradition of German Protestantism and has always been a vital expression of the Moravians' religion of the heart. As a contemporary of Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederick Handel, Count Zinzendorf was immersed in the profusion of Baroque music that was composed and performed all around Herrnhut. Himself the author of numerous hymns, Zinzendorf valued singing and instrumental music as manifestations of one's Christian joy and as a means to generate and revitalize communal bonds. From the beginning, therefore, singing and the teaching of hymns was an integral part of Moravian church services and school curricula in Labrador.⁵¹

The Inuit were fond to demonstrate great talent for music and singing. The first formal teaching of Moravian hymns in Labrador schools is documented in the winter of 1780-81 in Nain. As early as 1792 Inuit were reported singing German hymns in Inuktitut. In 1803 a Hopedale missionary reported back home that the Inuit children easily comprehended what was taught them and most knew the hymns in their hymn book by heart. Among the Moravians' publications were songs for Inuit "freely translated and copied from German folksongs" (1872) by missionaries such as Friedrich Erdmann. Anthropologists such as Maija M. Lutz have also pointed to the Inuit quest to fulfill old needs in new forms.⁵² German scientist K. R. Koch, who visited the Labrador mission stations in 1882, was amazed how many German folk songs had been translated for the Inuit. He was "peculiarly touched by the homely melodies, when he heard Inuit girls sing 'Freut Euch des Lebens' or 'Steh ich in finsterner Mitternacht,' although with a different text."⁵³

At their well-attended lessons, Inuit learned quickly to sight-read any tune. German carols (in Inuktitut) were a favourite when they enthusiastically celebrated Christmas and Easter. At the mission stations their choirs practised songs for several voices.⁵⁴ Initially, instruments served to accompany singing. Their earliest recorded use is at Nain in 1821 with missionaries playing the violincello and harpsichord and two Inuit playing the violin in support of congregational singing. Soon, however, brass instruments were added and every mission station acquired its separate Inuit brass band composed of different brass instruments. The typical Moravian church services remained largely choral singing, accompanied on the organ and stringed instruments by Inuit musicians. On special occasions, like Christmas, Inuit brass ensembles were added and the whole orchestration was known as the "German Band."⁵⁵

The Moravian churches at the larger mission stations had pipe organs imported from Germany. These were usually played by self-taught Inuit. The first organ arrived in Nain in 1828 as a gift from the church at Herrnhut where it had been in use since 1728. In 1845 this organ was moved to Hopedale when Nain received a new organ from the Kleinwelke congregation. Hopedale became quite famous for its musical culture. Inuit from Hopedale even played harmonium in a chapel they had erected on Uviluktok Island, their summer worship place. To the Inuits' delight, even the most northern stations of Rama and Killinek embellished their church services with a harmonium. The highest wish of an Inuk, visiting German scientist Koch noted, was to own a small harmonium.

The missionaries brought with them not only the German Baroque traditions of the brass band and choirs with instrumental accompaniments, but also the *Collegium Musicum*. In 1822 Inuit had been introduced to various European musical instruments and showed such skill and enthusiasm that, according to the Reverend Peacock, it was not uncommon to meet an Inuk able to play two or three brass instruments, as well as the organ and stringed instruments.⁵⁶ On Sunday mornings, visiting missionary Levin T. Reichel observed, Inuit awakened the mission station with clarinet and brass bands, and in the afternoon groups of natives used to visit the missionaries in their rooms for music and entertainment. It is therefore not surprising that the Moravians were able to impart to Inuit their love even for string quartets and classical music performances. Nain in the 1880s had a children's choir, a string quartet, and clarinet, flute and oboe players. According to missionary Hermann Jannasch, their skills were often extraordinary. On Christian holidays, Moravian church services in Labrador were no less musically embellished than the church services in Germany.⁵⁷

German Customs and Traditions

Besides their love for music, the Moravians passed on to the Inuit such German customs and traditions as the celebration of Advent with Advent wreath and hanging stars, Christmas with the decorated tree, the Christmas Eve gift exchange, and the inauguration of the New Year—with an Inuit brass ensemble playing the German hymn "Now Thank You All Our God." Missionary Hermann Jannasch's son, who grew up in Nain in the 1880s, remembered the eagerness with which Inuit liked to

show off their own Christmas trees decorated with pieces of paper, stars cut out of tin cans, pictures taken from catalogues and labels, and small dangling gifts.⁵⁸

The Moravians also endeavoured, though with greater difficulty, to impart to the Inuit a German sense of efficiency, order, and economy.⁵⁹ Moravian Inuit communities increasingly reflected the world the missionaries had left behind in Germany. Geographical isolation coupled with Moravian assumption of responsibility for every spiritual and material problem of the Inuit, missionary F.W. Peacock noted, resulted in what some perceived as benevolent paternalistic control over the lives of the native converts.

The atmosphere created was almost feudal and a fertile ground for the developing of autocrats. That some of the missionaries became autocrats cannot be denied but on the whole their humility and sense of mission prevented this . . . That they did not organize the life of the whole community with such [German] efficiency was simply due to the fact that the Inuit, as independent people, although willing to serve, did not intend to be servants, and, as time passed, began to look upon the work of the Mission as a partnership.⁶⁰

Looking back at the charges of paternalism and repression exercised by the missionaries, spokespersons of today's Moravian Church in Labrador admit that "some existed, perhaps a great deal." But the missionaries had practical ulterior motives. Their objective in all this was "to assist the Inuit in adapting to the changes which all saw as inevitable."⁶¹

Scientific Pursuits

The Moravians' training in Germany and the unique concept of education imbued in them prompted them from the outset to attach great significance not only to the study of native cultures, but also to the observation of natural phenomena and the pursuit of all kinds of scientific objectives. The missionaries often undertook these studies in close cooperation with scientists and scholars from German-speaking Europe. They also willingly accommodated scientists who intended to use the mission stations as observation posts for scientific field work.

The Moravians' amazingly wide range of cultural, educational and scientific activities is to a large degree a legacy of the strong devotion of German Pietistic culture to the native life of Germany, that is, a revolt against the blind acceptance of foreign models. It is also an outgrowth of the rejection of religious and philosophical dogmatism in education in favour of a pragmatic exploration of life and nature. Although hostile towards rationalism, this concept of education and culture embodied the spirit of several aspects of the eighteenth-century enlightenment, such as the romantic urge to return to nature, and admiration for the "noble savage."

Moravian preoccupation with nature has been traced to the pantheistic mysticism common to Hussite and Pietist traditions. It was a yearning for participation in the

harmony of the universe, for overcoming the divisions between man, nature, and God.⁶² Some of these approaches were further developed by Germany's foremost Pietist theologian August Hermann Francke (1663-1727). Francke's precepts inspired a whole generation of Herrnhut-Moravian pedagogues and educational theorists to promote state-of-the-art education in state-controlled and Moravian schools. Many prominent German writers, poets, administrators, and scientists received their early education at the boarding school in Herrnhut and at Moravian colleges in such places as Niesky and Barby. True to the spirit of the times, Moravian pedagogues demanded a thorough natural scientific education with emphasis on the acquisition of a keen sense of observation and understanding as a prerequisite essential for missionary and school service.

What was taught by Paul Eugen Layritz, a student of Francke and an instructor in various Lutheran and Moravian schools in Germany, was so devoted to experimental physics, geography, botany, and modelling with cardboard, wood, and glass, that it appeared to have little in common with the idea of a pietist education. His proposal for the reorganization of the Moravian theological academy at Barby (near Magdeburg) stressed the significance of a broad general education over narrow specialization in theology, law and medicine. As a result, more courses in natural science subjects than in theology were taught at Barby by the 1760s,⁶³ and the variety and thoroughness of Barby's natural history collection had few equals in Germany.⁶⁴ Barby professor Friedrich Adam Scholler is hailed as the *Unitas Fratrum's* foremost botanist and "true father of the natural sciences." For him the systematic study of botany, ornithology and entomology became virtually an end in itself. His comprehensive *Flora Barbiensis* (1775) widely praised among the leading botanists of its time, justified devotion to the natural sciences as admiration of and propaganda for the beautiful works of the Creator.

The value of an inductive knowledge of the physical environment, natural history, geography, and cultures of the areas destined for missionary activity was demonstrated by David Cranz in his pioneering history of the Moravian mission of Greenland, published in 1765. Intended as a model for a history of the Moravian mission in other lands, the book opens with a comprehensive geography of Greenland, including data on the weather and ice movements, as well as on the geology, flora, and biology. His examination of the culture and lifestyle of the Greenland Inuit compared these with whatever data were available about Labrador. Cranz's *History of Greenland* became thus far more than a record of the mission's work in Greenland. Its valuable collection of data became a guide and a reference for the subsequent launching of the Labrador mission.⁶⁵

The Labrador missionaries were thus conditioned from the outset to observe nature and to send data and samples for scientific analysis to Germany. Due to their training, wide range of interests, and educational approach, these missionaries contributed much to our knowledge of the Inuit, their pagan culture, and their physical environment. Moravians pioneered the study of the geography, climate, flora, fauna, and other natural phenomena of Labrador. The Labrador missionaries systematically observed and collected all manner of plants, birds' eggs, butterflies, moths, and insects,

and communicated the findings for evaluation and publication to scholars in Germany. Based on these, the renowned Moravian entomologist Heinrich Benno Möscher published between 1848 and 1870 probably the first and today still one of the most comprehensive classifications of Labrador butterflies.⁶⁶ Geological curiosity led missionaries to discover the semi-precious blue stone called Labradorite. As early as 1773 they sent a quantity of it to England in the "hope that this might contribute to [a reduction of] the mission expenses."⁶⁷

Moravian meteorological and cartographic observations proved to be of unique scientific and practical value. The Moravians collected instrumental weather readings at Nain, Hopedale, and Okak from the beginning. The Nain station kept continuous weather records from as early as 1772. These were sent on to London and, from 1882-1939, to the German Marine Observatory in Hamburg.⁶⁸ In 1809, 1836, and 1857, Moravians were the first to measure and record earthquakes in Newfoundland and Labrador that were related to earthquakes offshore.⁶⁹ In February 1903 they took note of even such seemingly minor phenomena as a precipitation of ashes or similar deposits on the white snow far and wide around Makkovik. In July 1903 they reported huge clouds of smoke or dust high up in the atmosphere darkening the daylight for two days.⁷⁰ At each of their mission stations the Moravians meticulously recorded the formation of shore ice each year.

A byproduct of the mission's expansion in Labrador was the mapping of the largely unmapped coastline by the missionaries. Their collective drawings and cartographic skills yielded the first accurate maps of the coastline of northern Labrador, published in 1860, by Bishop Levin Theodor Reichel. The Reichel map, which charted the sea route from Hopedale to Hebron, was in use until 1957.⁷¹ It was kept in Nain, where year after year, ships' captains would borrow it on their northward journey and return it to Nain on the way back.⁷² The first map of Eskimo Bay, based on data collected by missionary Ferdinand Elsner who had explored the Hamilton Inlet area in 1857, was published in 1861 in *Harper's Magazine*.⁷³ After his exploration of the area in 1870, missionary James O'Hara produced in 1872 a more comprehensive map of the entire coast from Davis Inlet to the Straits of Belle Isle. This O'Hara map showed with much more detail and accuracy the same area inland from Hopedale to North West River.⁷⁴ The mapping of the northern tip of Labrador was first undertaken in 1868 by missionary Samuel Weiz⁷⁵ and completed as a collaborative effort in 1896 by Captain Linklater and missionaries Linder, Weiz, and Jannasch.⁷⁶

The geographic and linguistic expertise of missionary Johann August Miertsching, stationed in Okak from 1844 to 1850, led to his inclusion as the only German in the British search for the Sir John Franklin expedition of 1850-52. As an Inuit interpreter he endured four gruelling winters with this search expedition in the Arctic, warding off threats from hostile Inuit and befriending them in their own language. During this ordeal Miertsching found the time and patience to record in a diary geographic, ethnographic, and meteorological data that provided unique and invaluable information to researchers about the topography, weather, and life in this region. The life-threatening tribulations in the unchartered Arctic challenged Miertsching, the missionary, linguist,

scientist, and jack-of-all-trades to rise to the occasion and leave his mark on the entire odyssey.⁷⁷

Miertsching had joined the Moravians as a shoemaker in 1836 at the age of 19. The Moravian education in Germany, his grandson Hans-Windekilde Jannasch later related, exposed him to the thoroughly inventoried local flora and fauna, to the study of ethnographic items and natural scientific data collected in all parts of the world, and to scholarly books of every kind. "Moravians were no otherworldly dreamers," Jannasch insisted. The real world and nature as the manifestation of divinity was their field of action. Music and gardening were favourite preoccupations besides training in every trade needed in the wilderness. In Labrador, apart from perfecting his skills as an interpreter in Inuktitut, Miertsching kept a diary in which he entered daily meteorological, geographical, and other natural scientific observations. His Herbarium contained 3,785 plants. In every respect he had the makings of a scholar and scientist. Scientists still speak highly of the data he collected.⁷⁸

The well-documented record of contributions to science of Hans-Windekilde's father Hermann Jannasch (1849-1931), who served in Labrador from 1879 to 1903, gives another indication of the range of scientific endeavours Labrador missionaries pursued. Besides pioneering Labrador photography, he prepared a herbarium, mounted butterflies and insects, collected rock samples, and stuffed birds as his German teacher Moeschler had taught him. In order to observe northern lights and related phenomena, he acquired a telescope and sent regular reports of his observations to the director of the Deutsche Seewarte (the German marine observatory) in Hamburg. After his retirement in Germany in 1904, Jannasch assisted Count Karl von Linden of Stuttgart, Germany, as an expert advisor with the acquisition of Labrador Inuit cultural objects for his Arctic collection. Linden was the founder of Stuttgart's famous Linden Museum, one of the largest ethnological collections in Germany.⁷⁹

Moravian Trade

The *Unitas Fratrum* was a poor church relying on voluntary contributions for the maintenance of its foreign missions. Nonetheless, the launching and survival of its Labrador mission required an additional source of revenue to pay for a supply ship, an annual voyage, and the provisioning of the isolated mission stations. The task of procuring the economic lifeblood of the Labrador mission was assumed by the English branch of the *Unitas Fratrum*, known as the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel (S.F.G., since 1741). In 1769 the S.F.G. decided to purchase a ship through the sale of shares to proprietors who formed a so-called Ship's Company. Trade with the Inuit was to keep the Company viable and enable the S.F.G. to pay for the operation of the mission. From the outset, this trade was not designed as, and never became, an end in itself.

The establishment of permanent mission stations with stores and the extension of credit to the Inuit enabled the S.F.G. to acquire a monopoly on trade with the Inuit. The goods received from the Inuit—seal oil, cod liver oil, cod, seal skin, fox skin, and carved ivory—achieved high prices at the London market. In return, the

Inuit acquired English-made knives, forks, guns, and various hunting and fishing articles. For their own personal use, the missionaries imported coal, canned meat, canned fruit, tea, coffee, sugar, bacon, potatoes, and medicines. No cash changed hands. Barter was on a debit-credit basis, also known in other parts of the Canadian North as the truck system. Until 1906 even the missionaries received an annual credit of 90 dollars at the mission store for their daily food and personal necessities, instead of a cash salary.

The missionaries' lifeline to Europe was an S.F.G.-owned ship. Once every summer it sailed from London to each of the mission stations where it delivered trading goods, provisions, mail, and sometimes a few passengers. Until 1926, when the last Moravian ship was sold to the Hudson's Bay Company, the mission had successively owned thirteen ships, six of them named the *Harmony*. For the missionaries, the ship's arrival provided the only regular contact with the outside world and the whole life of their community was organized around the so-called "ship's year." Each mission station had a two-year supply of provisions in case the ship did not arrive after one year. Yet not once in its 156-year history did the ship fail to deliver its cargo to at least one station, despite stormy seas, icebergs, ill-charted coastlines, and wars. The Moravian ship was fortunate to be granted safe conduct by the Thirteen Colonies and France during the American Revolution, and by Germany during the First World War.⁸⁰

The maintenance of a trading post at each mission station had two immediate consequences. It drew the Inuit to the mission stations and away from the orbit of private traders in the South. And secondly, it developed increasing Inuit dependence on European goods. The desire to satisfy new needs generated by this dependence induced Inuit to procure barter goods marketable in England. Prominent among these were cod and furs, both of which had hitherto been neglected by the Inuit. Moravians helped Inuit to procure these goods in marketable quantities by introducing sealing and fish nets to them as early as 1806. Eager to discourage Inuit idleness and dependence on the mission's charity, the missionaries taught them cod fishing and fur trapping, as well as budgeting, saving, and rationing. Despite the mission's frequently declared intention "to keep the Eskimo an Eskimo,"⁸¹ the desire to keep the Inuit self-sufficient thus unwittingly altered their lifestyle. Nevertheless, Moravians always maintained that they had never intended to disturb the Inuit way of living any more than necessary, in contrast to the traders in the South who, they alleged, were ruining the Inuit with the sale of alcohol, rifles, unnecessary luxuries, and harmful foodstuffs.

For over a century, the Moravian trade offset most of the expenses of the Labrador mission. In the late nineteenth century, however, market prices for primary products except furs began to fall steadily. Simultaneously, commercial competition associated with the influx of fishermen, settlers, and Hudson's Bay Company traders eroded the Moravian trade monopoly. Private traders moved closer to the mission stations while the Inuit moved closer to these trading posts. On top of that, the cost of the mission skyrocketed with the expansion of educational, health, and religious services for settlers and the building of new mission stations. Although the mission adopted a policy of retrenchment in 1909, the S.F.G. became unable to recover its expenses in Labrador and the Mission Board had to make up the escalating deficit.

The Moravians' real problem, Governor MacGregor noted in 1907, was their "kindness" which made them depart from strict business principles." The missionaries had a reputation not only for offering very fair prices for native products and liberal credit. They also, as one observer summarized

supported the aged and the needy out of their limited funds, frequently paid the Eskimos higher prices for their products than was strictly prudent, allowed undue credit to improvident hunters, and in 1901 even cancelled all unpaid debts so that their clients might start afresh with clean slates.⁸²

Moravian food relief to the poor was an entrenched feature of the mission from the beginning until Confederation in 1949. In short, the challenge of promoting the spiritual and material welfare of the Inuit always took precedence over the practices of sound business.

Initially, trade with the Inuit was to be kept strictly separate from the operations of the missionaries, and the missionaries were to earn their livelihood solely through the work of their hands. Trade was a necessary evil. In connection with the 1752 Erhardt expedition, Count Zinzendorf had ruled that the gospel should not be mixed with trade. Two special agents were therefore put in charge of the Company's barter trade in Labrador. However, disputes between the missionaries and the agents, and the failure to break even ended this arrangement in 1785. Thereafter, one trade brother at each settlement was to take responsibility for all Moravian trading under the inspection of the House Conference. Three fifth of the profits from the trade were to cover expenses for the mission's provisions, freight, and fares, and one tenth for the missionaries' personal needs.⁸³

Moravians used to justify their involvement in trade with the additional arguments that supervision would help raise the Inuit to a more orderly level of existence, teach them thrift and budgeting, and protect them from exploitation by unscrupulous traders.⁸⁴ In reality, however, the extension of credit seemed to make the Inuit less self-sufficient and more demanding. On several occasions, Inuit expressed confusion over the contradictions between the missionaries' attempts to balance the books and the Moravian message of love and charity. At the newly opened Zoar station (1864), and thereafter at Hebron, Inuit even staged open rebellions. They refused to pay their debts and argued that the goods brought by the *Harmony* should belong to them. When the Moravian trade was suspended at Zoar, the Inuit left the area and the Zoar station had to be closed in 1894.⁸⁵

The problem was, as the mission's historian J.E. Hutton observed in 1912, that "if a layman took charge, the trade was mismanaged; and if a missionary took charge, the Eskimos ceased to love him."⁸⁶ Since each system was fraught with defects, the mission alternated back and forth between the two. In 1861 trade was again removed from the missionaries and placed under a general manager with a layman running each store. In 1876 the missionaries resumed full control, and retained partial control under a general manager from 1898 to 1906. As the settler population increased and intermarried with Inuit, the Moravians between 1860 and 1900 opened trading

outposts for them in Voisey's Bay, Saglek Bay, Ford's Harbour, Makkovik, and Mugford Tickle.⁸⁷ After 1906 trade was once again completely separated from the mission until 1925 when the British Moravian Church leased all Moravian trading rights and stores to the Hudson's Bay Company.

Inuit and Moravians

The Moravians were satisfied to confine contacts with the Inuit to the winter months when the natives were willing to camp around the mission stations. These contacts, nevertheless, became pervasive after the Moravians assumed a twofold role as religious teachers and the purveyors of the Inuits' external comfort. To be effective, the missionaries had to act as employers, judges, mediators, doctors and suppliers of basic necessities, as well as traders. Natives were always reimbursed for services rendered. Trade, organized strictly on a contractual basis, was to teach natives how to manage their resources as well as to finance missionary operations in Labrador. No Inuk in their care, however, was allowed to starve. For more than a century the missionaries provided the only qualified medical care against the infections and diseases contracted from contacts with Europeans and Newfoundlanders in southern Labrador.

In order to devote their lives entirely to the Inuit, the Moravians developed a colony-like microcosm of German life in northern Labrador that survived unchallenged for more than a century and a half. This enclave of German culture was designed as a kind of *cordon sanitaire* for the Labrador Inuit, facilitating their physical survival and adaptation to a rapidly changing modern world within a Christian framework. But it also entailed Inuit acculturation to German cultural aspects ranging from German words in Inuktitut to the brass band which Labrador Inuit have come to consider part of their own indigenous tradition.

Evidence abounds that the Moravians had an excellent rapport with the Inuit. Visitors noted that "the bond that bound these humble folk to their pastor was genuine and sincere."⁸⁸ Inuit were reported rejecting temptations by crews of visiting Newfoundland fishing schooners to bad-mouth the Moravians.⁸⁹ The Moravians were shrewd analysts of human psychology—both European and native—and open-minded, tolerant students of native cultures. Realizing that the resilience of the indigenous Inuit culture and the corrupting impact of external factors were jeopardizing full and long-term conversion, the Moravians resigned themselves to maintaining a ministry in Labrador that would serve spiritual as well as material needs for a long time to come. Their unselfish devotion to the spiritual, cultural and material welfare of the Inuit had enabled these native people to survive and earned the Moravians local and international recognition as a significant cultural force in northern Labrador. In the absence of any other civilizing force until the mid-twentieth century, one might sum up the Moravian experience in the words of one of its last missionaries, "the history of the northern Labrador has been the history of the Moravian missions on the Coast."⁹⁰

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Notes

¹ Sir William MacGregor, "Report of an official visit to the coast of Labrador, by the Governor of Newfoundland, 1908," *Journal of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland*, 1st Session, 21st General Assembly, 1909, 338-39.

² Jacob John Sessler, *Communal Pietism among early American Moravians* (New York, 1933, repr. 1971). Hellmuth Erbe, *Eine kommunistische Herrnhuter-Kolonie des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1929). John R. Weinlick, "Moravians in the American Colonies," in F. Ernest Stoeffler, ed., *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, 1976), 123-63. Daniel B. Thorp, *The Moravian Community in Colonial North Carolina: Pluralism on the Southern Frontier* (Knoxville, 1977), 24f.

³ Eda Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany 1648-1914* (London, 1977), 110-14. Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: 1648-1840* (New York, 1964), 137-44. Koppel S. Pinson, *Pietism as a Factor in the Rise of German Nationalism* (New York, 1934).

⁴ The Moravian missionary impulse has been traced to Zinzendorf's encounter with missionaries of the Danish Halle-mission, started in 1706. See Karl Müller, *200 Jahre Brüdermission. I. Band: Das erste Missionsjahrhundert* (Herrnhut, 1931), 5-9. Hahn, Hans Christoph and Hellmuth Reichel, eds., *Zinzendorf und die Herrnhuter Brüder: Quellen zur Geschichte der Brüder-Unität* (Hamburg, 1977), 350-58. Hartmut Beck, *Brüder in vielen Völkern: 250 Jahre Mission der Brüdergemeinde* (Erlangen, 1981), 30ff. Sessler, *Communal Pietism*, 15f, however, argues that "persecution. . . led to the need for settlements in foreign parts, and this need in turn gave impetus to the theory of missionary work, which then grew to such proportions that it is easy to confuse it with the purpose behind the settlements."

⁵ J. K. Hiller, "The Foundation and Early Years of the Moravian Mission in Labrador, 1752-1805," M.A. thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1967, 12.

⁶ Public Record Office, London, Colonial Office (CO.) 194/27, p. 103-4, Palliser to the Earl of Halifax, 11 September 1765.

⁷ F. L. Kölbing, *Die Missionen der evangelischen Brüder in Grönland und Labrador* (Gnadenau, 1831), part II, 19f.

⁸ Hans Rollmann, "Labrador history unearthed," *The Telegram* (St. John's), 16 September 2001.

⁹ Quoted by R. Hunt, *The Life of Sir H. Palliser* (London, 1884).

¹⁰ Even after he had made cordial contact with the Inuit, Haven recalled, he kept meeting people in Newfoundland who "had made up their mind to murder the Eskimos" despite a proclamation by Palliser forbidding the continuation of such "treacherous or cruel conduct." N.a., "Lebenslauf des Bruders Jens Haven, ersten Missionars der Brüder-Gemeine in Labrador, heimgegangen in Herrnhut den 16. April 1796," *Nachrichten aus der Brüder-Gemeine*, 1844, 906-10. Haven, who spoke Danish and German, admits that he did not speak English when he first came to Newfoundland in 1764.

¹¹ Kölbing, 55. F. W. Peacock, "The Moravian Mission in Labrador 1752-1799: 'The Goodly Heritage,'" unpublished book manuscript, St. John's, 1980, 46f, 54. Harold Horwood, "Moravians Will Mark 2nd Century," *Evening Telegram*, August 1969.

¹² V. Tanner, *Outlines of the Geography, Life and Custom of Newfoundland-Labrador* (Cambridge, 1947), 1. Shmuel Ben-Dor, *Makkovik: Eskimos and Settlers in a Labrador Community: A Contrastive Study in Adaptation* (St. John's, 1966), 9f. William H. Whiteley, "The Moravian Missionaries and the Labrador Eskimos in the Eighteenth Century," *Church History* 35,1 (March 1966): 18.

¹³ The first Moravian census of 1773 counted 250 of an estimated total Labrador Inuit population of 1,460 wintering near Nain. Erhard Treude, *Nordlabrador* (Münster, 1974), 20.

¹⁴ J. K. Hegner, *Fortsetzung von David Cranzens Brüder-Historie* (Barby, 1791), 129.

¹⁵ J. Garth Taylor, *Labrador Eskimo Settlements of the Early Contact Period* (Ottawa, 1974), 92.

¹⁶ These consisted largely of personnel for Goose Bay airport and in-migrants attracted by the economic development and urban amenities of the area. Superintendent William Peacock signified the growing shift in the operation of his ministry when he moved his head office from Nain to Happy Valley in 1954.

¹⁷ By 1990 the five remaining Moravian congregations in Labrador were no longer a mission. Responsibility for this mission field had been transferred since World War I to the British Moravian Church, although a German missionary was in charge of Nain until as late as 1980.

¹⁸ N.a., "The Moravian Church in Labrador," www.moravian.mission.org/labrador.htm. 15/02/2001.

¹⁹ Hans Windekilde Jannasch, *Unter Hottentoten und Eskimos: Das Leben meines Vaters* (Lüneburg, 1950), 87ff, 95-99.

²⁰ *Journal of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland*, 2nd Session, 13th General Assembly, 1880, 355-58.

²¹ Kenneth C. Butler, *Igloo Killinek* (Toronto, 1963), 27.

²² R. Rompkey, ed., *Jessie Luther at the Grenfell Mission* (Montreal and Kingston, 2001), 267, 271.

²³ *Missionsblatt der Brüdergemeine* 72,3 (1908): 79.

²⁴ H. und M. Jannasch, "Bericht von Makkovik, Labrador 1903," *Mitteilungen aus der Brüder-Gemeine zur Förderung christlicher Gemeinschaft*, Volume 1904, Nr. 2,51f.

²⁵ See Hans Rollmann, "Moravian Gardening at Hopedale," www.mun.ca/rels/garden/gardening.html, 06/05/2002

²⁶ Translated by Hans Rollmann and posted on his web page.

²⁷ K. R. Koch, "Die Küste Labradors und ihre Bewohner," *Deutsche Geographische Blätter* VII (1884): 157. Pilot, 13.

²⁸ R. Rompkey, ed., *Jessie Luther*, 265f.

²⁹ F. W. Peacock, *Reflections from a Snowhouse* (St. John's, 1986), 39.

³⁰ Wilfred Thomason Grenfell, *A Labrador Doctor: The Autobiography of Wilfred Thomason Grenfell* (Boston and New York, 1919), 130.

³¹ Jannasch, *Unter Hottentotten*, 74.

³² *The Evening Herald* (St. John's), 14 April 1906.

³³ Hedwig E. Brückner, "Religiöse Einstellung der frühen Herrnhuter und Wirken ihrer ersten Missionare in Labrador, dargestellt und kommentiert auf Grund ihrer Aufzeichnungen aus dem späten achtzehnten Jahrhundert," M.A. thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1975, part I, 82f.

³⁴ Rompkey, ed., *Jessie Luther*, 270, reported conversation at the mission station to be a mixture of English, German, and Inuit.

³⁵ J. M. Lochman, *Comenius* (Freiburg/Switzerland, 1982), 16f.

³⁶ He was a Lutheran pastor, university professor and founder of several educational institutions in Halle,

³⁷ See Carl Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus* (Göttingen, 1971) and Klaus Deppermann, *Der Hallische Pietismus und der preussische Staat unter Friedrich III*, vol. 1 (Göttingen, 1961).

³⁸ Kölbging, part II, 66-74.

³⁹ Brückner, 109.

⁴⁰ Karl Thom, *Friedrich Erdmann, Missionar in Labrador: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Brüdermission und der Gemeinde Ihmert* (Hemer, ca.1968), 101-6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 101-6.

⁴² F. W. Peacock, "The Language of the Inuit in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador," in H. J. Paddock, ed., *Languages in Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977), 28.

⁴³ A. Martin, *Die Bibel und unsere Eskimo* (Herrnhut, 1928), 1-24. W. Senft, *Wie wir den Heiden das Wort Gottes gebracht haben* (Herrnhut, 1938), 28-40. F. W. Peacock, "Languages in Contact in Labrador," W. Kirwin, ed., *Regional Language Studies—Newfoundland*, 5 (1974), 1-3. Albert Heinrich und Erhard Treude, "Einige Entlehnungen aus dem Deutschen im Labrador-Eskimo," *Anthropological Linguistics* 13,3 (1971): 67-70.

⁴⁴ F. W. Peacock, personal interview, 29 October 1984.

⁴⁵ In 1990 the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in Ottawa found 53 percent of Labrador Inuit to be functionally illiterate. Recent linguistic research has emphasized the significance of Moravian literacy training as a life-skill that was both taught and supported by family members and elders. Thomas Perry and Jerold Edmondson, "Complex language ecologies and effective language education," Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Language and Development, Hanoi, 13-15 October 1999.

⁴⁶ Public Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's, Government of Newfoundland (GN) 1/1/7, 1909, (25/2/6).

⁴⁷ Schulze, *200 Jahre*, 65-67.

⁴⁸ Jannasch, *Unter Hottentotten*, 72.

⁴⁹ "Überblick über das Missionswerk der Brüdergemeine in dem Zeitraum zwischen den Synoden von 1857 und 1869," *Missions-Blatt*, Nr. 6 (1869 or 1870), 20.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

- ⁵¹ See Hans Rollmann, "Moravian Music." www.mun.ca/rels/music/music.htm, 22/05/2001.
- ⁵² Majja M. Lutz, *Musical Traditions of the Labrador Coast Inuit* (Ottawa, 1982).
- ⁵³ K. R. Koch, "Geschichte der supplementären Expedition unter Dr. K. R. Koch nach Labrador," in G. Neumayer, ed., *Die internationale Polarforschung 1882-1883: Die deutschen Expeditionen und ihre Ergebnisse*, Band 1 (Berlin 1891): 174.
- ⁵⁴ Thom, *Friedrich Erdmann*, 101-6.
- ⁵⁵ Canon William Pilot, *A Visit to Labrador* (London, 1899), 9.
- ⁵⁶ Peacock, "The Moravian Mission Labrador, 1752-1979," 211.
- ⁵⁷ Jannasch, *Unter Hottentoten*, 71. "Bericht von Bruder Levin Theodor Reichels Visitationsreise," 34.
- ⁵⁸ Hans-Wildeckinde Jannasch, *Erziehung zur Freiheit: Ein Lebensbericht* (Göttingen, 1970), 55.
- ⁵⁹ A. Martin, *Die Bibel und unsere Eskimo* (Herrnhut, 1928), 21.
- ⁶⁰ Peacock, "The Moravian Mission in Labrador 1752-1979," 228.
- ⁶¹ N.a., "The Moravian Church," <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/gvituk/moravian.htm>.
- ⁶² Brückner, xxxif, 4, 32.
- ⁶³ O. Uttendörfer, "Die Entwicklung der Pflege der Naturwissenschaften in der Brüdergemeine," *Zeitschrift für Brüdergeschichte* 10 (1916): 89-98.
- ⁶⁴ J. W. Stolz, "Bibliographie der naturwissenschaftlichen Arbeiten aus dem Kreise der Brüdergemeine," *Zeitschrift für Brüdergeschichte* 10 (1916): 108.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 98-106. David Cranz, *Historie von Grönland* (Barby, 1765).
- ⁶⁶ Heinrich Benno Möschler, "Beitrag zur Schmetterlingsfauna von Labrador," *Stettiner Entomologische Zeitung* 9 (1848): 172-74. For a listing of Möschler's publications until 1883 on Labrador butterflies see J.W. Stolz, "Bibliographie der naturwissenschaftlichen Arbeiten aus dem Kreise der Brüdergemeine," *Zeitschrift für Brüdergeschichte* 10 (1916): 114-21.
- ⁶⁷ As quoted in F. W. Peacock, "The Moravian Mission in Labrador, 1752-1979," 85.
- ⁶⁸ J. Hand, "Resultant der meteorologischen Beobachtungen an der Küste von Labrador bis zum Jahre 1874," *Meteorologische Zeitschrift* 13 (1896): 117, 358-61, 420-23. Ludwig Döll, *Wetter und Klima an der Küste von Labrador* (Hamburg, 1937). Alan G. Macpherson, "Early Moravian Interest in Northern Labrador Weather and Climate: The Beginning of Instrumental Recording in Newfoundland," in D. H. Steel, ed., *Early Science in Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's, 1987), 30-41.
- ⁶⁹ Hugh Miller, "Quakes in Newfoundland," *Evening Telegram*, 7 February 1887.
- ⁷⁰ H. and M. Jannasch, "Bericht von Makkovik. Labrador 1903," *Mitteilungen aus der Geschichte der Brüder-Gemeine zur Förderung christlicher Gemeinschaft*, Volume 1904, Nr. 2, 49f.
- ⁷¹ See Levin Theodor Reichel, *Missions-Atlas der Brüder-Unität* (Herrnhut, 1860), 21, and Levin Th. Reichel, "Bemerkungen über Land und Leute," *Petermann's Geographische Mitteilungen* 9 (1863): 121-27.
- ⁷² According to Rev. F. W. Peacock, this happened dozens of times between as late as 1940 to 1957. Personal interview, 6 Nov. 1984.
- ⁷³ "Map of Esquimaux Bay, by the Moravians," in Charles Hallock, "Three Months in Labrador," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 22,81 (1861): 748.
- ⁷⁴ F. W. Peacock, personal interview, 6 Nov. 1984.
- ⁷⁵ Copy in the Unitäts-Archiv, Herrnhut, Germany.
- ⁷⁶ See copy in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, St. John's.
- ⁷⁷ William H. Whiteley, "Johann August Miertsching," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto, 1972), 10:513.
- ⁷⁸ Hans-Wildeckilde Jannasch, *Herrnhuter Miniaturen* (Hamburg, 1976), 111-28.
- ⁷⁹ Jannasch, *Unter Hottentoten*, 120.
- ⁸⁰ N.a., "Brief Account of the Vessels employed in the Service of the Mission on the Coast of Labrador, and of the more remarkable Deliverances from imminent Peril, which they have experienced from the year 1770 to the present time," *Periodical Accounts relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren, established among the Heathen*, 21:75-83. E. Wilson, ed., *With the Harmony to Labrador* (St. John's, n.d.).
- ⁸¹ For example in the report by Br. L. T. Reichel visitation in Labrador, published in *Missions-Blatt aus der Brüdergemeine* 26,2 (1862): 51.
- ⁸² Diamond Jenness, *Eskimo Administration: III Labrador* (Montreal, 1965), 30f.
- ⁸³ Müller, *200 Jahre Brüdermission*, 157ff. Hiller, "The Foundation," 82, 112-17.
- ⁸⁴ Schulze, *Abriss*, 107.

⁸⁵ Schulze, *Abriss*, 215.

⁸⁶ J. E. Hutton, *A History of the Moravian Missions* (London, 1912), 30f.

⁸⁷ Tim Borlase, *Labrador Studies: The Labrador Inuit* (Happy Valley, 1993), 212.

⁸⁸ Pilot, *A Visit*, 10.

⁸⁹ G. Warneck, "Missionsrundschau," *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* 21,6 (1894): 275.

⁹⁰ F. W. Peacock, "The Moravian Missions in Labrador," in J. R. Smallwood, ed., *The Book of Newfoundland*, vol. 4 (St. John's, 1967), 51.

