

Edmund de Schweinitz

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The Financial History of the  
American Province of the Unitas Fratrum  
and of its  
Sustentation Fund

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THE FINANCIAL HISTORY

OF THE

AMERICAN PROVINCE OF THE UNITAS FRATRUM

AND OF ITS

SUSTENTATION FUND.

BY

EDMUND DE SCHWEINTZ, S.T.D.

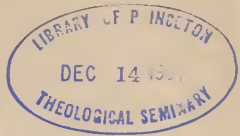
BISHOP OF THE UNITAS FRATRUM.



*S. H. Gapp.*

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### PREFATORY NOTE.

The following paper was prepared for the Conferences of the First and Second Districts of the American Province of the Moravian Church. It was communicated to the latter body at York, Pa., on the 24th of May, and to the former, at New Dorp, Staten Island, on the 30th of the same month. By a vote of the York Conference it was requested for publication and private distribution, two friends assuming the cost; and by a vote of the Staten Island Conference, a committee was appointed to secure an additional number of copies, the Trustees of the Bethlehem Church assuming the cost. At the suggestion of a friend, biographical foot-notes have been added.

BETHLEHEM, PA., JUNE 5, 1877.



THE  
FINANCIAL HISTORY OF THE PROVINCE  
AND ITS SUSTENTATION FUND.

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INTRODUCTION.

The financial history of our ecclesiastical Province and of its Sustentation Fund is so complicated and therefore difficult a subject that I would not have ventured to take it up, if I were not convinced of its importance, and if I did not believe that it will prove to be of special interest at this present time. It is important, because we must understand the past, if we would realize the necessities of the present, and our duty in view of them. It is interesting, because nothing shows more clearly, on the one hand, the faith which our fathers had in God's answers to prayer, and in the aid which He grants those who commit into His keeping, with the same implicit trust, both their spiritual concerns and their temporal affairs, and, on the other, the singular and mutual confidence which prevailed, that no private ends, but only the good of the Church and the glory of the Lord, would be furthered by the men who administered its funds.

The sources upon which this paper is based are the following: *John Plitt's MS. History of the Renewed Church*; *MS. Notes of a course of lectures on Brethren's History, by the late Bishop Stengård of the German Province*; *Bishop Croeger's Geschichte der Erneuerten B. K.*, 3 vols., Gnadau, 1852-1854; a number of original *Financial Papers* in the *Bethlehem Archives*; and, in particular, a voluminous *MS. Treatise on the American Property of the U. F., and its various Proprietors, by the late Lewis David de Schweinitz*.

In order to a proper insight into our provincial finances, it will be necessary, in the first place, to give an account of those of the Unity at large.

## THE FINANCES OF THE UNITAS FRATRUM.

They must be traced back to the private property of Count Zinzendorf and his wife.<sup>1</sup> The Brethren who fled from Moravia and renewed the Church at Herrnhut, in Saxony, were, without exception, poor, although many of them had been rich in their own country. But they left all for Christ's sake. Hence it was impossible for them to originate church-funds.

Now when the first immigrants arrived, Zinzendorf, as is well known, took little interest in their affairs, which he left to his steward. He did not think of renewing the Brethren's Church. His plans were of an entirely different character. As soon, however, as he began to realize, to use his own words, that Herrnhut was the parish to which he had been fore-ordained from all eternity—"Seine von Ewigkeit her bestimmte Parochie"—and as soon as he met with the *Ratio Disciplinae* of Amos Comenius and was led both by the lamentations and the hopes of this work to believe that God had, perhaps, called him to be an instrument in bringing about the resuscitation of the ancient Unitas Fratrum, he determined to make every sacrifice for the Moravian refugees which their cause might demand. He says himself (*Büdingische Sammlung I. p. 640 and 641*): "I could not peruse the lamentations of old Comenius, addressed to the Anglican Church—lamentations called forth by the idea that the Church of the Brethren was come to an end, and that he was locking its door—I could not read his mournful prayer a second time, 'Turn thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned, renew our days as of old' (Lament. 5, 21),—without adopting the resolution: I will, as far as I can, help to bring about this end. And though I have to sacrifice my earthly possessions, my honors, and my life, as long as I live, and, as far as I will be able to provide, even after my death, for such a consummation, this little company of the Lord's disciples shall be preserved for Him until He comes!"

Accordingly he made no difference between the claims of his own

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Lewis Count of Zinzendorf and Pottendorf, born at Dresden, May 26, 1700, died at Herrnhut, May 9, 1760, was the son of George Lewis Count of Zinzendorf, a cabinet-minister at the Saxon court. He was educated for the service of the state, and filled a government office for some years. In 1727 he resigned, and devoted himself to the cause of the Moravian Brethren; in 1737 he was consecrated a Bishop of their Church, at the head of which he stood until his death. He bore the title of *Advocatus et Ordinarius Fratrum*. His wife, whom he married on the 7th of September, 1722, was Erdmuth Dorothea Countess of Reuss-Ebersdorf, born at Ebersdorf, November 7, 1700, daughter of Count Henry X Reuss, and sister of Count Henry XXIX Reuss, both reigning Counts.

family and the wants of the Church; but provided for both from his private property, often giving preference to the latter. It was a noble thing to do, eminently characteristic of the man. At the same time, however, it originated a tendency which we cannot but regard as unfortunate. The Church was taught to rely too much upon funds, and to think too little of the duty of an immediate support of its causes by its members. Zinzendorf was opposed, upon principle, to collections. He was very willing to receive such gifts as were altogether voluntary; but he disliked appeals for aid and the gathering in of stated contributions. The chief reason which he assigned for this position was, that he did not think it right to interfere with those Christian causes which had existed prior to the renewal of the Brethren's Church, and which needed all the support they could get. As an instance of the mind that was in him in this respect, I may refer to the astonishing question which he put to the Lutherans in Philadelphia, in 1742, when at their earnest request, he was about taking temporary charge of their church, whose pulpit was vacant. Assembled in solemn conclave to arrange with him the particulars of his pastorate, he solemnly asked them: "*Könnst ihr das Geben lassen?*" (Can you stop giving?)

Now while some of the ordinary expenses of the individual churches, or, rather settlements, as they arose from time to time, were borne by themselves and by the various industries which were established in them, the demands of the *Unitas Fratrum* as such had to be met by Zinzendorf. These demands were: the support of the growing Foreign Missions, and of the Domestic Missions on the Continent of Europe, as well as of the extensive itinerancies connected with the latter; the support of the schools and of the Theological Seminary; the rent of domains which had been leased for the Church; the cost of erecting Brethren's and Sisters' Houses in the various settlements, as also other public buildings, if they may so be called; the support of what is denominated in our history "the Pilgrim Congregation," which consisted of Zinzendorf and his family together with the other heads of the *Unitas Fratrum*, and which had its seat sometimes in Germany, sometimes in Holland, and sometimes in England, directing the Church and its various enterprises, devising plans for the spread of the Gospel, and sending out Ministers and Missionaries into all parts of the world; the support of the Ministers who labored in churches other than those in the midst of which the "Pilgrim Congregation" happened to be, who, however, received no salary, but merely the necessaries of life; and, finally, the heavy expenses caused by the sending out of colonies to America and elsewhere, and the purchase of land for their use.

It was quite impossible for Zinzendorf to meet all these demands with his mere income, which, at first, was moderate, but, after he had inherited his grandmother's splendid estate, grew to be large. Hence, in addition to his income and to what was voluntarily given by members and friends of the Church, he raised extraordinary amounts by mortgaging his domains. The title to them was vested in his wife, to whom he had transferred them in the early part of his career, and thus anticipated an order, which subsequently reached him, from the Saxon Government to alienate his estates. This transfer delivered Herrnhut from the hands of its enemies.

The Countess Zinzendorf, who was an extraordinary woman, a princess of God—"eine Fürstim Gottes"—managed the finances of the family, and hence of the Church, with wonderful judgment and devoted faithfulness. If she had not displayed such unusual ability, many of the early enterprises of the *Unitas Fratrum* would never have been carried out. Jonas Paulus Weiss was her principal book-keeper and assistant, and did much to further its interests.<sup>1</sup> About the year 1730, money was raised, for the first time, on the estates, the rate of interest being six per cent. Six years later, Zinzendorf was banished from Saxony. His creditors became alarmed and demanded the payment of their loans. This was the first financial crisis in the history of the Church. But it quickly passed away. For the Lord raised up friends in Holland who offered new loans at three per cent. The offer was thankfully accepted and the clamorous creditors were paid.

In 1741, when Zinzendorf set out for America, a committee was appointed, under the name of the "General Diacony," to advise with the Countess in the management of the finances. About the same time, contributions began on the part of the members. But there was no system. Some gave much; others nothing at all. Missionary Societies, too, were organized, which helped to support the foreign work. In spite of all this, however, the expenses of the Church increased in an alarming manner.

During Zinzendorf's absence a number of new settlements were founded in Germany, calling for heavy loans; while the Missions in other lands continued to grow. In 1745, that lamentable period began which is known as "the time of sifting," when, in various German

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<sup>1</sup> Jonas Paulus Weiss, born January 9, 1696, at Nuremberg, died September 7th, 1779, at Herrnhut, was a rich merchant who settled at Herrnhut, in 1740, and joined the Church. He devoted himself to its service with self-denying zeal, and was elected a member of the Unity's Warden's Board by the General Synod of 1764. He was original in all his words and ways, and one of the few leaders of the Church who maintained their independence over against Zinzendorf.

churches, not only gross fanaticism showed itself, but the simplicity and economy also of former years were forgotten, and money was borrowed and spent in a reckless way. Scarcely had this evil been overcome, when the settlement of Herrnhag, in Middle Germany, was broken up (1750), in consequence of the enmity of the petty ruler to whose domains it belonged. This catastrophe entailed heavy losses upon the Church. Finally, while these were still uncovered, in the beginning of 1753, Gomez Serra, a Jewish banker, with whom large deposits had been made, failed.

At that time, there existed three distinct systems of credit, if I may so call them. The first in Saxony, whither Zinzendorf had been invited to return by the Government, in 1747, and where he had leased, at its request, the Principality of Barby; the second in Holland; and the third in England. As soon as the connection of the Brethren with the bankrupt Jew became known, many of their creditors demanded payment. A second crisis was thus brought on, which carried the Church to the very brink of ruin. Its liabilities amounted to the enormous of \$1,328,250. Zinzendorf was in England at the time, and the creditors in that country were particularly urgent. In what way could they be satisfied? Relying upon the aid of the Lord, and making this distressing subject one of earnest prayer, he came forward and offered personally to assume this whole frightful debt, pledging himself, that, if time were given him, the interest should be punctually paid, and the principal extinguished in installments. His lawyer tried to dissuade him from such a step, and proposed a compromise, according to which the creditors were to receive only a percentage. But Zinzendorf would not listen to anything of the kind, and insisted that every dollar, both of the interest and of the principal, should be paid. The majority of the creditors were impressed with such probity, accepted his offer, and bought the claims of those who refused to do so.

In this way the financial ruin and disgrace of the Church were prevented. But Zinzendorf had assumed a fearful load, and the meeting of his obligations caused him unceasing trouble and called forth unceasing prayer. On the 2d of March, 1753, a payment was due which he could not make. He had expected a remittance from Holland, but it did not arrive. Imprisonment in the Fleet, the Debtors' Jail of London, seemed inevitable. He was in momentary expectation of the constable who was to arrest him and Hoekel, a merchant that had endorsed the note, when his son-in-law, Bishop John de Watteville, brought him a letter from Cornelius van Laer, of Holland, containing the necessary amount. Such interpositions of Providence frequently occurred, and helped to strengthen his faith and that of his brethren. At the same

time, he fully recognized the mistakes which had been made, taking the chief blame upon himself. In a public discourse, which he caused to be reported and copies of which he sent to all the churches, he confessed his faults, and expressed, in particular, his regret that a better system had not been introduced in the management of the finances.

It must be remembered, however, that while such confessions were undoubtedly necessary, neither Zinzendorf, nor any of his coadjutors, had been guilty of personal extravagance. No one could accuse them of that. Money was spent recklessly for the Church, not for individuals.

In order to devise ways and means for meeting the obligations which he had assumed, the Count, in October of 1753, convened a financial conference, in Lindsey House, London. And after his return to Germany, an *Administrations Collegium*, or Committee of Administrators, was appointed, in the year 1755. This Committee, whose chairman was John Herman von Damnitz,<sup>1</sup> took charge of the finances, and, in addition to meeting the interest on the debt, provided for the schools and Missions, as also for the support of the Zinzendorf housekeeping, as it was called, which, however, included all the Ministers in the German churches, who received a support through it, but even now no salaries.

New sources of revenue were providentially opened about this time. Barons von Zezschwitz<sup>2</sup> and von Gersdorf,<sup>3</sup> both members of the Church, made over to it each an estate, while, at Herrnhut, the linen-weaving and mercantile establishment of Abraham Dürninger began to prosper very much, paying thousands of dollars toward the expenses of the Church.<sup>4</sup> At the Sixteenth General Synod, held at Berthelsdorf in 1756, still further provision was made for managing the finances, and the *Administrations Collegium* was changed into a *Direktorial Colle-*

<sup>1</sup> John Herman von Damnitz, born at Wurzen, Saxony, in 1706, died at Herrnhut in 1761, was a descendant of the Bohemian Brethren, and entered the service of the Saxon Government. In 1745 he joined the Church at Herrnhut, to whose interests he faithfully devoted himself. He was constituted a *Senior Civilis* in 1748.

<sup>2</sup> John Henry von Zezschwitz, born near Camenz, Saxony, in 1696, died, at Herrnhut, December 9, 1778, had been a fellow-student of Zinzendorf at Wittenberg. In 1746, he joined the Church, and in 1753 was constituted a *Senior Civilis*.

<sup>3</sup> Sigismund Augustus von Gersdorf, born at Hermsdorf, in Silesia, in 1702, died at Herrnhut, December 5, 1777, joined the Church in 1742, was constituted a *Senior Civilis* in 1750, and elected to the Unity's Wardens' Board in 1764.

<sup>4</sup> Abraham Dürninger was born at Strassburg in 1706 and died at Herrnhut in 1773, where he had established himself in 1747. In his last will and testament he bequeathed his entire establishment, which still exists, to Trustees who were to manage it for the good of the church at Herrnhut and of the Unity in general. In 1758, he was ordained a Deacon.

*gium*. In other words, a Board of Directors, responsible not to Zinzendorf, but to the Church, was put at the head of its financial department.

The financial distress, which I have now described, was not without its good results. In the first place, it swept away the remnants of fanaticism; in the second, it stimulated private beneficence; in the third, it developed the various industries which were carried on, so that they prospered greatly; in the fourth, it brought out a feeling of unity in the whole Church, even in so distant a Province as our own, and originated the principle that all must stand for one, and one for all; and, finally and chiefly, it led to the gradual emancipation of the *Unitas Fratrum* from the autocratic sway of Zinzendorf. The financial committees were the forerunners of the Executive Boards which governed the Church after the Counts' death. Had these committees not existed during the latter part of his life, and necessarily deprived him of some of his authority, the idea of a successor, monarchical in power as he had been, would have found many advocates. Zinzendorf himself recognized and approved of the change, and, on his death-bed, plainly intimated that the Church could carry on its work without him, and that Executive Boards would take his place.

He died, May 9, 1760. Four years later, in the summer 1764, the Seventeenth General Synod met at Marienborn to determine the future constitution of the *Unitas Fratrum*, and, especially, to consider its finances. It appeared that there still remained a debt of \$773,162. But it appeared also that, since the financial conference of 1753, hence in ten years, no less than \$555,088 of liabilities had been paid off. This astonishing result was due, in particular, to the ability of John Frederic Köber, who now stood at the head of the financial department. He was a lawyer by profession, a financier by nature, and a devoted servant of God by grace.<sup>1</sup> But there still remained a heavy burden of debt. How was it to be paid, and how were the current expenses to be covered, now that Zinzendorf and his wife, who had deceased in 1756, were both gone? Their estates had furnished the chief source of revenue.

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<sup>1</sup> John Frederic Köber was born December 10, 1717, at Altenburg, the capital of Saxe-Altenburg, and died at Herrnhut, August 8, 1786. He was a graduate of the University of Leipzig and entered the service of Baron von Gersdorf. In 1747 he joined the Church, and became one of its leading men, not only in the management of its finances, but also in securing concessions from various Governments. In 1769, he was elected to the Unity's Elders' Conference, and, in 1775, ordained a *Senior Civilis*. He was chiefly instrumental in giving to the *Unitas Fratrum* its present constitution.

Zinzendorf left four heirs: three daughters, Benigna,<sup>1</sup> Agnes,<sup>2</sup> and Elizabeth,<sup>3</sup> and Count Henry XXVIII Reuss, a nephew of his wife.<sup>4</sup> In law, the estates of Berthelsdorf and Hennersdorf undoubtedly belonged to them; at the same time, these domains had, as undoubtedly, been pledged, by their father and uncle, for the payment of the liabilities of the *Unitas Fratrum*. Its financial future, therefore, rested in their hands. If they chose, they could cause the Church untold trouble and practically ruin it, by taking the estates, and disavowing the mortgages which rested upon them, as debts for which they were not responsible, but which had been contracted for the Unity; if they chose, they could act in the spirit, and according to the mind, of Zinzendorf, and continue the sacrifices which he had begun. Taught as they had always been to consider the cause of the Lord and of the Brethren of paramount importance, it was not hard to foretell what the issue would be. The heirs came forward, and, of their own free will, declared, that they desired no change, that they acknowledged the liabilities of the estates, and that their revenues should be used, as theretofore, for the good of the Church.

Its leading men, however, also deserve their share of praise. They might, on their part, have said: The enormous liabilities, resting upon the Zinzendorf property, do not, according to the letter of the law, concern us. They were assumed by the Count personally. It is true, it was done for the Church, but the Church, as such, did not contract the debts, and has not, by the minutest scrap of paper, made itself responsible for them. Such thoughts, however, were not entertained, for a single moment, by any one. On the contrary, the new heads of the

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<sup>1</sup> Zinzendorf had twelve children all of whom died in infancy except the above mentioned three daughters and one son, Count Christian, who died unmarried in 1752. The Countess Benigna, born December 28, 1725, at Berthelsdorf, died May 11, 1789, at Herrnhut, was married, in 1746, to Baron John de Watteville, by whom she had several children, two of whom married and had issue, namely, the oldest daughter, Anna Dorothy Elizabeth, who became the wife of John Christian Alexander de Schweinitz, and another daughter, Maria Justina, who became the wife of Count Henry LV Reuss Köstritz. John de Watteville, Zinzendorf's son-in-law, born October 18, 1718, at Walschleben, in Thuringia, died, October 7, 1788, at Gnadenfrei, was the Count's principal assistant, and, after his death, a member of various Executive Boards, and finally of the Unity's Elders' Conference.

<sup>2</sup> The Countess Agnes married Count Dohna, by whom she had one son, who married the Countess Stolberg, but died without issue.

<sup>3</sup> The Countess Elizabeth, married Baron Frederic Rudolph de Watteville, a member of the Unity's Elders' Conference, but died, in 1807, without issue.

<sup>4</sup> Count Henry XXVIII Reuss, son of the reigning Count Henry XXIX, was born in 1726 and died in 1797. He was an assistant of Zinzendorf, a *Senior Civilis*, and a member of the Unity's Elders' Conference.



Unitas Fratrum were anxious to settle this intricate question in an honorable way, in a fraternal spirit, and according to the will of the Lord. Consequently they made an offer which was to stand by the side of that of Zinzendorf's heirs. It was this: The interests of the Church and of the Zinzendorf family shall be separated; to the latter shall be paid out a capital mutually agreed upon, and the family shall not be held responsible for the debts; the Church assumes these, but, at the same time, receives from the heirs, as absolutely its own property, the entire family estates, with all their revenues.

In accordance with the views which our fathers, at that time, entertained of the use of the lot, this proposition and the offer of the heirs were submitted to its decision. The lot decided in favor of the former. Accordingly a capital of \$90,000 was paid out, one half of it, or \$45,000, to Count Reuss, and the other half, to Zinzendorf's three daughters, who, therefore, received only \$15,000 each. The heirs declared themselves fully satisfied, although the daughters made a great sacrifice. For if the plan which they proposed had been adopted, they would, after the debt of the Church would have been extinguished, eventually have had two of the finest estates in Saxony, free of all incumbrances, for themselves and their heirs. I say this, because I have often been astonished that neither Plitt, nor any other of our German historians, acknowledges, in any way, the patriotism which Zinzendorf's daughters, on this occasion, manifested; and, especially, because a financial statement laid before our Provincial Synod of 1849 contains the amazing assertion, that Zinzendorf's "family transferred all his family estates, *subject to all his debts*, to the Unity." Of personal debts, contracted for his own convenience, Zinzendorf left not a dollar.

And now the Synod began, with renewed zeal, to devise means for paying off the liabilities of the Church. The income of the estates, the profits of the trades and mercantile establishments in the various settlements, and contributions, which seem, however, to have rather been taxes laid on the individual congregations, were to be used for this purpose.

But this last source of income failed in a year or two, and it soon became evident that the enactments of the Synod were insufficient, especially as regarded the governing Boards.

There were no less than three of them: namely, the Directory, the Board of Syndics, and the Unity's Warden's Board. The Unity's Wardens' Board took special charge of the debt and of the whole credit system of the Unitas Fratrum. The current expenses were to be made up, as far as possible, by voluntary contributions. But this plan did not work well, nor was the relation between the three Boards properly defined, so that frequent collisions occurred, and the

cause suffered in consequence. Hence the Eighteenth Synod, in 1769, united all the Boards into one body, which was styled the Unity's Elders' Conference. The Unity's Wardens' Board constituted its financial department. This union was an excellent measure and proved a complete success. Otherwise, however, the enactments of this Synod as touching the liabilities were still more unfortunate than those of the Synod of 1764. For it laid down the principle that the members of the Church must personally and singly stand for the debt. This caused great opposition. The Synod, it was said, claimed an unwarrantable right over the private property of the individual.

Accordingly the Elders' Conference of Zeist, in Holland, proposed that the liabilities should be divided among the several settlements and churches as such, each one promising to assume a certain part. This proposal met with favor in the Unity's Elders' Conference, but otherwise proved very unpopular, especially at Herrnhut, where some of the wealthiest families became so indignant that they severed their connection with the Church. A third and most perilous crisis seemed to be approaching. Before it actually broke out, however, the semi-centennial anniversary of the founding of the Renewed *Unitas Fratrum* was celebrated, on the 17th of June, 1722. This occasion God overruled for good. A new spirit of love and patriotism was awakened. At Herrnhut, twenty-six single sisters sent a letter to the Church Council proposing a Sinking Fund, to be created through free-will offerings, and pledging their silver plate as a beginning. This proposal met with an enthusiastic response, not only at Herrnhut, but in all the other churches also, including those of America. A Sinking Fund was at once established, under the superintendence of Köber, assisted by Quandt.<sup>1</sup> These two men were the leading financiers, and the autobiography of the latter is full of instances of the wonderful way in which the Lord assisted him, often at times when everything seemed dark, and he had obligations to meet without a dollar in hand.

I cannot forbear adducing two instances. On one occasion he found, while at Leipzig, that a note of 1500 *Thaler* would be due the next day. He had nothing with which to pay it, and retired to rest heavy of heart. On awakening the next morning the following stanza of a hymn suggested itself:

Thu auf den Mund zum Lobe dein,  
Bereit das Herz zur Andacht fein,  
Den Glauben mehr, stärk den Verstand,  
Dass uns Dein Nam' werd wohl bekant.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Quandt was elected to the Unity's Elders' Conference in 1769, and died in 1822.

<sup>2</sup> Open our mouths to praise Thee; prepare our hearts to worship Thee; let our faith be increased, our understanding strengthened, that we may know Thy name.

He felt vexed with himself that his heart should sing anything except a *Miserere*. On going out for an early walk, in great anxiety, revolving in his mind what he should do, he happened to pass the post-office. He went in and inquired whether there were any letters for him. A letter was handed him. He opened it, and it contained a draft exactly covering the amount he was in need of.

Again, toward the end of 1772, he was sitting, one evening in his room at Barby, where the Unity's Elders' Conference had its seat. His heart was utterly oppressed. At Easter, of the coming year, a capital of more than 100,000 *Thaler* was to be paid. He studied the case, east up his accounts, planned and devised many things, until late at night, and yet saw no light ahead. How was it possible to meet so large an obligation? In deep distress, he sat and brooded over this question. Suddenly the watchman in the street below began to sing as he passed the house:

Was kränkst Du dich in deinem Sinn  
Und grämst Dich Tag und Nacht;  
Nimm Deine Noth und wirf sie hin  
Auf Den, der Dich gemacht.<sup>1</sup>

"Heartily ashamed of my unbelief," he says, "I instantly put away my accounts, and retired to bed full of hope. And lo! very soon, I found that the Lord *had* taken my great trouble upon himself. For I received intelligence that a suit, that had been pending for ten years, had just been decided in favor of the Church, which was to receive 145,000 florins for the improvements which it had made on the domain of Marienborn."

At the Nineteenth General Synod, held at Barby, in 1775, Quandt and Köber reported that, since the Synod of 1769, therefore in six years, \$220,000 of the capital debt had been extinguished. On the occasion of the Twentieth Synod, in 1782, a still further reduction was reported; and at the Twenty First, held in 1789, of the enormous amount of \$1,328,250, standing against the *Unitas Fratrum* in 1753, to which must be added the \$90,000 paid out to Zinzendorf's heirs, making the total \$1,418,250, there remained only \$444,977 unpaid. Consequently in thirty-six years, \$974,253, or nearly one million, had been paid off. This result could not have been reached, if some of the wealthy heads of the Church had not manifested great liberality. The same Count Reuss, for example, who had received one half of the capital paid out to the Zinzendorf family, on one occasion, assumed \$6,750, of the debt, and, on another, gave \$11,250 to one of the causes of the Unity. Gersdorf and others acted in the same spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Why art thou sick in spirit? Why dost thou grieve day and night? Take thy troubles and cast them upon Him who created thee.

The next Synod, the Twenty Second, held in 1801, proved to be a time of unbounded rejoicing, and raised a *Te Deum Laudamus*, which was re-echoed by the whole Church. Only \$54,000 of the debt remained unpaid, and this balance was assumed by the house of Abraham Dürninger & Co., at Herrnhut. The *Unitas Fratrum* was free at last. In fifty-four years it had extinguished liabilities amounting to nearly one and a half million of dollars.

But new financial troubles soon began, caused by the wars of Napoleon and losses sustained by single Diaconies. This was the title given to that system of finances which the individual settlements carried on. A new debt was created, which, however, was entirely paid off by the middle of the present century, prior to the General Synod of 1857. The details of this second debt are of minor importance, and would lead me too far. I proceed, therefore, to the finances of our own Province.

#### THE FINANCES OF THE AMERICAN PROVINCE.

Leaving out of account the temporary settlement of the Brethren in Georgia, and the purchase of land in that Colony, I begin with the first investment made in Pennsylvania, on the 2d of April, 1741, when Henry Antes, acting for Bishop David Nitschman,<sup>1</sup> bought of William Allen, of Philadelphia, five hundred acres of land on the Lehigh, now the site of Bethlehem. This purchase was soon followed by others. In the same year, the entire tract of five thousand acres at Nazareth, which had belonged to George Whitefield, was sold to the Brethren. In 1743, they bought two hundred and seventy-five acres, on the south side of the Lehigh, opposite Bethlehem, of John Simpson, of London, through his attorney, William Allen, of Philadelphia; and, in 1749, two hundred and fifty-three acres, also on the south side of the Lehigh, of the Widow Ysselstein. In 1755, George Klein, of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, sold his farm of five hundred and eleven acres, at a low rate, to the Church, for the purpose of a Moravian settlement, which, in memory of that Barony in Bohemia on which the *Unitas Fratrum* was founded in 1457, received the name of Lititz.

Hence a body of land of upward of six thousand five hundred

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<sup>1</sup> David Nitschman was born December 27, 1696, at Zauchtenthal, in Moravia. In 1724 he fled to Herrnhut, and became the first Bishop of the Renewed Church, receiving consecration, in 1735, from Bishop Jablonsky. He was the founder of Bethlehem, in 1740 and 1741, where he died, October 8, 1772. In the course of his long and faithful service in the Church, he undertook more than fifty sea voyages.

aeres, to which, however, more was added from time to time, constituted the basis of our provincial finances; and, as a matter of course, the settlements at Bethlehem, Nazareth and Lititz, their three chief centres. I leave out of the question the settlement at Hope, in New Jersey, begun in 1774, because it was again relinquished in 1808; and the large domain in North Carolina, bought of the Earl of Granville, because it belongs to the financial history of the Southern Province.

The money necessary for the purchase of this land was, for the most part, furnished by the Unity at large, and therefore, in point of fact, by Count Zinzendorf. In some instances, however, other brethren appear to have used their private funds for this purpose. Not all the land was paid for in cash. In many cases, merely bonds and securities were given. Thus the American Province came into financial connection with the Church in Europe, and helped to create the debt of the Unity.

Now there are two points, of a peculiar character and of special interest, belonging to our provincial finances.

From 1742 to 1762, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and the smaller settlements which arose in its vicinity, such as Gnadenthal, Christianspring, and Friedensthal, were united in a so-called "Economy." Of this Economy, Bethlehem was the centre. Lititz, as far as I know, never belonged to it; nor was such an arrangement introduced anywhere else by the Brethren, except, for a short time, at Bethabara in North Carolina. It was semi-communistic in its character. The inhabitants of the Bethlehem and Nazareth tracts formed an exclusive association, in which prevailed a communism, not of goods, but of labor. Those who had private property retained the control of it. But no one worked for himself, or carried on business of his own. All gave their time and the labor of their hands to the Church, whether as farmers, or mechanics, or storekeepers, or in any other capacity. In return they received the necessaries of life from the Church.

This association prospered greatly, by the blessing of the Lord. Not only did it yield the inhabitants themselves a comfortable support, but it also maintained an extensive itinerancy among the settlers in various of the Colonies, supported the entire Mission among the Indians, and helped to found and keep up, in the first years of their existence, a number of other Moravian churches which were organized in America, and which were known as "the city and country congregations." Such churches arose in Philadelphia and New York, at Heidelberg, Hebron, Bethel, and York, Lancaster, Mt. Joy, Emmaus, and Oley. In some cases, however, for example, at Emmaus, Hebron, Heidelberg, individual members gave land for the church-edifices and

parsonages, and for the support of the minister; and, in all cases, these congregations did what they could to maintain themselves. They never became, however, organically factors in the finances of the Province. Whether, through the profits of the Economy, any part of the original purchase-money for the land was paid off, I cannot tell, but deem it very probable.

It must, therefore, never be forgotten that, when the Economy was abrogated, the American property of the Unity had been immensely improved by the hard and gratuitous labor of the inhabitants of the Bethlehem and Nazareth Tracts, who had made a wilderness to blossom as the rose and introduced all manner of industries, some of which yielded considerable profits.

The other peculiar feature of our finances was the appointing of nominal Proprietors, who held the real estate of the Church, in fee simple, and the investments in their own name. This arrangement was introduced in order to avoid incorporations. In some instances the Proprietors, were, at the same time, the Administrators, that is, the men who administered both the estates and the investments; in others, this was the case. Whenever the Proprietor and the Administrator were two different brethren, the former gave the latter a general power of attorney, which enabled him to act in all cases according to his own judgment. As soon as a Proprietor came into possession of the estates, he executed his last will and testament, leaving them to his successor, who was appointed by the Unity's Elders' Conference. At the same time, he gave to this body a solemn pledge in writing that he would, to the best of his ability, administer the property for the good of the Church, and not in any way use it for personal ends.

I consider this feature in our finances one of the most remarkable known in all financial history, and a wonderful instance of brotherly faith and confidence. Never was there the most distant attempt made to abuse this trust, which, at one time, involved hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Proprietor held not only the property of the Unity as such, but also that of the Moravian settlements in America, as also the titles of most of the church-edifices and parsonages of the city and country congregations. In some cases, however, these stood in the name of Trustees; or in the name of the "Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen," organized in 1787, and incorporated in the following year—the first body corporate which our Church in this country ever had.

Now it appears that the original purchases of the land were made by various agents who, from time to time, transferred it to what are called in law "Joint Tenants." These Joint Tenants were Bishop

Spangenberg,<sup>1</sup> Henry Antes,<sup>2</sup> and David Nitschmann.\* On the 21st of November, 1751, Spangenberg and Antes issued a release by which they nominally sold the two-third part of the property to the remaining tenant, David Nitschmann, who thus became the sole proprietor, in fee simple, of all the estates of the Church. Thereupon, on the 26th of May, 1757, the said David Nitschmann executed his last will and testament, in which he appointed Bishops Spangenberg and Boehler his executors, with directions to sell his real estate, as they might see fit, for the payment of the debts of the American Province of the Church, contracted in his name. Nitschmann died in the following year, and his executors sold the estates to Bishop Nathaniel Seidel,<sup>4</sup> who had been designated as the next proprietor, and who, in lieu of purchase money, assumed all the said debts. On the 20th of June, 1770, Seidel executed his last will and testament, in which he left the entire estates to

<sup>1</sup> Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, A. M., was born July 15, 1704, at Klettenberg, in Germany. He studied at the University of Jena, and became a Professor at that of Halle. In 1737, he joined the Brethren. After having visited Georgia and Pennsylvania in 1735 to 1739, he was consecrated a Bishop in 1744, and returned to America, where he presided over the Church until 1748, and again from 1751 to 1762. From 1762 to 1769, he was a member of the Executive Board in Germany, and, from 1769 to 1792, President of the Unity's Elders' Conference. He died September 18, 1792. He was one of the most distinguished heads of the *Unitas Fratrum*.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Antes was a wheelwright, farmer, and magistrate, of Falkner's Swamp, now Frederic Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. He leased his farm to the Brethren for the purposes of a school, while he spent five years at Bethlehem, superintending the erection of mills and houses. In 1748, he was constituted a *Consenior Civilis*. He died July 20, 1755, and was buried on his farm.

<sup>3</sup> David Nitschmann was the uncle of Bishop Nitschmann, and was born on the 29th of September, 1676, at Zauchtenthal, Moravia. He suffered a severe imprisonment on account of his faith, but escaped to Herrnhut in 1725. After having labored in the W. I., he came to America with his uncle, in 1740, and cut down the first tree, with the assistance of Martin Mack, for the building of Bethlehem. He died April 14, 1758. He was the father of the well known Deaconess, Anna Nitschmann.

<sup>4</sup> Nathaniel Seidel was born, October 2, 1718, at Lauban, in Saxony, and was of Bohemian descent. In 1739, he joined the Brethren, and served the Church in Germany in various capacities. He came to America in 1742, and spent the next sixteen years of his life mostly on missionary tours in North and South America, Germany, England and the West Indies. In 1758, he was consecrated a Bishop, and, in 1761, succeeded Spangenberg as the head of the American Church, which position he occupied until his death, May 17, 1782.

Frederic William de Marschall.<sup>1</sup> Both in Nitschmann's and Seidel's last wills and testaments there had been a want of explicitness in setting forth the difference between their private property and what they held for the Church. But their personal heirs cheerfully gave the necessary releases and other papers, so that, a few years after Seidel's death, Marschall was in full and legal possession of everything that belonged to the Church. He also had the satisfaction of rescuing the North Carolina estates, which were held by James Hutton, of London, and which were in great danger of being confiscated in the Revolutionary War. Marschall was in England at the time, and hastened home, where he gave to the Legislature of North Carolina a full and true account of the character of the Church's property in that Colony, and was acknowledged by this body as the legal proprietor.

Meanwhile, Bishop Spangenberg, who had managed the Economy like a Spartan lawgiver, was recalled to Europe, in 1762, in order to take his seat in the Interim Executive Board, as it was called, organized immediately after Zinzendorf's death. Thereupon the Economy was given up, by mutual consent, and the inhabitants of the Bethlehem and Nazareth Tracts bought of the Church either land, or the stock and fixtures of the trades which they had been carrying on, and began business on their own account and in their own names. Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Lititz, however, remained exclusive Moravian settlements, and a number of *Branchen*, as they were denominated, that is, business enterprises of various kinds, were still conducted for the Church. But none of these settlements had any property of their own. It belonged to the *Unitas Fratrum* as such, and was managed by what was known as the "General Diacony." This state of affairs continued from 1762 to 1771.

According to the principles laid down by the General Synods of 1764 and 1769, a change became necessary. Hence, on the 16th of November, 1770, there arrived at Bethlehem a deputation sent to America by the Unity's Elders' Conference, and instructed to arrange the financial affairs of the American Province on the new basis estab-

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<sup>1</sup> Frederic William de Marschall was born at Stolpen, a Saxon garrison-town, of which his father was the commandant. He received a strict military education, but subsequently joined the Church, filling various important offices in the German Province. In 1761 he came to America as General Warden and Bishop Seidel's Assistant. In 1768, he was put at the head of the Southern Province, with the title of *Oeconomus*. In this position he remained until his death, February, 11, 1802. In 1775, he was ordained *Senior Civilis*. He was one of the most distinguished fathers of the American Moravian Church.



lished by the Synod. This deputation consisted of Christian Gregor,<sup>1</sup> John Loretz,<sup>2</sup> and John Christian Alexander de Schweinitz.<sup>3</sup> Gregor and Loretz were members of the Unity's Elders' Conference; Schweinitz was to remain in America as the first Administrator of the Unity's Elders' Conference.

The work which this deputation had to do was an exceedingly complicated and difficult one, but, after protracted deliberations with the Provincial authorities, the authorities of the Bethlehem Congregation, and its members as represented in church-council, an agreement, satisfactory to all parties, was reached, by the beginning of summer, in the year 1771.

Its principal points were these: First, the Church at Bethlehem is to be made financially independent, and to be put on the same footing as the Moravian settlements in Europe.

Second, said Church accordingly buys of the General Diacony, hence of the Unity at large, three thousand nine hundred and sixty-four acres and eighty-nine perches of its land, at £2 Penn. per acre, as also all those buildings, trades, and business concerns of the town which still belong to said General Diacony, the whole property, land, houses, and business concerns, being valued together at £29,000 Penn.

Third, said Church pays for this property by assuming £29,000 Penn of the debt of the Unitas Fratrum, equivalent to about \$87,000.

Fourth, said Church pledges itself to pay a certain amount annually, out of its profits, to Provincial expenses, to the American Sustentation Diacony now first to be established, and to the Sustentation Diacony of the Unity in Europe, and begins a Diacony of its own.

This agreement—I omit minor details—was signed on the 1st of June, 1771, on the part of the Unity by Nathaniel Seidel, Christian

<sup>1</sup> Christian Gregor was born at Diersdorf, in Silesia, January 1, 1723. He was a distinguished musician and editor of the German Hymn Book of 1778. From 1764 to 1801, he served in the Executive Boards and the Unity's Elders' Conference. In 1789 he was consecrated a Bishop. He paid official visits to Holland, England, Russia and America, and died, November 6, 1801.

<sup>2</sup> John Loretz was a Swiss by birth, and entered the Unity's Elders' Conference in 1769. He died in 1798. He wrote the *Ratio Disciplina*.

<sup>3</sup> John Christian Alexander de Schweinitz was born on his father's estate of Nieder Leuba, in Upper Lasatia, on the 17th of October, 1740. From 1764 to 1769 he was Secretary of the Mission Board. After serving as Administrator for twenty-seven years, he was elected to the Unity's Elders' Conference, and died February 26, 1802. In 1801, he was ordained a *Senior Civilis*. His second wife, whom he married at Bethlehem, in 1779, was a grand-daughter of Zinzendorf.

Gregor, John Lorez, and John Christian Alexander de Schweinitz; on the part of Bethlehem, by Jeremiah Denecke, the Warden, John Ettwein, the Senior Minister, and John Arbo, Jacob Weissinger, and George Huber, representing the financial concerns of the Brethren's, Widow's, and Sister's Houses.

The price which Bethlehem paid for the land is said, by old documents, to have been very high, especially as one-third of it was Lehigh Mountain land, which was, it is further said, not worth the taxes. But there was no dissatisfaction expressed. All parties were actuated by true patriotism to the Church. The Unity's Elders' Conference, when they heard of this settlement, wrote a letter to the Conference at Bethlehem, saying, "that they had been moved to tears of joy." Subsequently a further promise was given, that the *incrementum latens* of the property, that is, profits growing out of its increased value, in case its value did increase, should be so applied that the kingdom of God and the Brethren's Church would reap the benefit.

Similar arrangements were made, in 1772 and 1775 at Nazareth, and, at a later time, at Lititz.

From this brief account of the agreement entered into between the Unity and the three Moravian towns in America, it will appear, that the following paragraph, found in a Statement of Historical Facts presented to our Provincial Synod of (1855) (Journal p. 99): namely, "These congregations agreed in a brotherly way not to entertain any further claims on the property of the Unity, but, on the other hand, the agreement was understood to be a fair contract, *releasing likewise these congregations from all distinct claims on the part of the Unity in general*"—is unhistorical and incorrect.

I have now reached the beginning of the independent history of our Provincial finances. In 1771, the Sustentation Diacony, or as we call it, the Sustentation Fund, was established, and, along with it, another, known as the School Diacony, for the education of the children of ministers. In modern times, during the incumbency of the late Philip H. Goepp, the two were consolidated. These Diaconies stood under the control of the Provincial Helpers' Conference. In the same year, 1771, that part of the Unity's property in America, which had not been sold to Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Lititz, and which was very considerable, began to be managed, for the good of the *Unitas Fratrum* at large, as a part of the assets held by the Unity's Warden's Board in Germany, by Schweinitz, its first American Administrator. He had an official seat in the Provincial Helpers' Conference.

But neither the Sustentation nor the School Diacony owned any funds. Their receipts were exceedingly limited. In the course of

years, they received, occasionally, small bequests, and began an extensive system of credit. But down to nearly the middle of the present century, they had hardly one thousand dollars invested in stocks, and their entire assets were not much more than \$25,000, a large part of which was unproductive. Their chief sources of income were the stated amounts paid, every year, by the Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Lititz Diaconies, and, especially, the profits of the Boarding Schools. The city and country congregations were, indeed, pledged to take up annual, or semi-annual, collections in aid of the Sustentation, and of the School Diacony, in particular. This was stipulated as early as 1771. But such collections were exceedingly irregular, often very small, and often failed altogether.

And yet, in spite of its insufficient income, the obligations of the Sustentation Diacony gradually grew to be, and remain to the present day, the following :

The general expenses of the Provincial Conference, together with the salaries of such of its members as hold no other office ; aid to ministers serving congregations which do not give them an adequate support ; the deficit, if any, on the publications of the Church ; the education of the children of ministers ; the expenses of the Theological Seminary, in so far as they are not made up by its own resources ; and, especially, the pensions paid to superannuated ministers and widows of ministers.

What wonder that the Sustentation Diacony fell into debt, borrowing large amounts from the Administration at Bethlehem, and, hence, from the Unity's Warden's Board in Germany ! What wonder that this Board was obliged, repeatedly, to relieve our American Sustentation Diacony, sometimes making annual appropriations for its benefit, and sometimes remitting to it capital debts ! It did this on the broad principle underlying, as I have said in another connection, the finances of the entire Unitas Fratrum, namely, that all stand for one, and one for all. And it did this as late as the year 1847, when it canceled an obligation of nearly \$14,000, which it held against our Sustentation, on account of Nazareth Hall. After this most generous act, our Provincial Synod pledged itself to ask for no more aid.

Meanwhile the Diaconies, or the finances, of the three Moravian settlements in America were developed, and like all other Diaconies, began an extensive system of credit. In course of time, they took large amounts of money from individual members of the Church, for which they gave bonds, and on which they paid four and a half per cent. interest. Hence they became, in point of fact, church-savings-banks. But they did not prosper. Their property, being mostly in

land, yielded them but a small revenue; they met with heavy losses; some of them assumed the deficiencies of their Brethren's and Sisters' Houses; Bethlehem was nearly ruined by the enormous cost of its large church-edifice, the erection of which, in 1803, constituted, at that early day, financially, one of the most insane projects ever undertaken by Moravians; in particular, however, all these Diaconies were obliged, in order to maintain the exclusive system, to buy up many properties which they did not want, and for which they had no use, so as to prevent strangers from getting possession of them. Hence, on the strength of the financial union prevailing throughout the Church, the Unity's Warden's Board came to the assistance of these Diaconies also, not only in the form of heavy loans, but also through direct appropriations and free gifts. In this way our provincial finances grew continually more involved, and were more and more closely interwoven with those of the Unity at large. About the year 1837, Bethlehem owed the Administration, and therefore the Unity, \$80,000, Nazareth \$50,000, and Lititz \$12,000, on which loans, at first, five per cent., and then four and a half, were paid. At the same time, the Sustentation, as I have said, was likewise, more or less, in debt to the Unity. It became evident that this state of affairs ought not to continue, and that some change of system was necessary.

During all this period, the city and country congregations of the Province still stood in no organic union with its finances, and, indeed, had little connection of any kind with them. Whenever a connection did exist, it was to their advantage, in as much as they borrowed money from the Sustentation or the Administration.

And now, in order that the change of system which gradually took place, may be understood, I must again take up the history of the Unity's property, with its Administrators and Proprietors.

From what I have said it must be clear, that, although its revenues, for the most part, were sent to Europe, to the Unity's Warden's Board, for the good of the whole *Unitas Fratrum*, the location of this property in America conferred very great benefits upon our Province. The Administrator's office was a branch office of that of the Unity's Warden's Board at Herrnhut, and, whenever an American Diacony, or church, was in difficulties, and needed help, it applied to him, and was generally relieved.

John Christian Alexander de Schweinitz managed the Unity's property for twenty-seven years, from 1771 to 1798, Marschall being the Proprietor. In the year last named, Schweinitz was elected to the Unity's Elders' Conference, and returned to Germany. His suc-

cessor, in the office of Administrator, was John Gebhard Cunow,<sup>1</sup> Marschall remaining Proprietor. Now, in accordance with the directions of the Unity's Elders' Conference, Marschall, in his last will and testament, had left all the estates and the entire other property of the Church, North and South, to Schweinitz, as the next Proprietor, who remained the legatee, even after his removal to Europe. But when the Twenty-Second General Synod, in 1801, re-elected him to the Unity's Elders' Conference, and it became evident that he would remain in Germany, he grew exceedingly uneasy with regard to this provision of Marschall's will, and the innumerable difficulties which would arise, in case he, now an alien, although formerly a citizen of the United States, should actually become the heir. He was, moreover, impressed with the idea that he might die before Marschall, or soon after him, which would complicate matters still more. Accordingly he urged the Unity's Elders' Conference to direct Marschall forthwith to execute a new will and constitute some one else the legatee. The Conference yielded to his solicitations, and appointed Christian Lewis Benzien,<sup>2</sup> of Salem, as Proprietor in his stead. Hence, on the 16th of December, 1801, Marschall executed a new will, and made Benzien his heir. It would almost seem as if Schweinitz had been moved by the Lord himself to urge such prompt measures; for, not eight weeks after the execution of this new will, Marschall died, at Salem, and, fifteen days later, Schweinitz died at Herrnhut. If the will had not been changed, the result would have been most disastrous. There would have been no Proprietor at all for a period of fifteen years, in as much as a settlement would have been out of the question until Schweinitz's youngest child would have become of age, which would not have been the case until 1816.

John Gebhard Cunow was now the Administrator, and Benzien the Proprietor of all the estates, North and South. In 1811, Benzien died, and left the property in the North to Jacob Van Vleck,<sup>3</sup> and that in

<sup>1</sup> John Gebhard Cunow was born in Germany on the 6th of January, 1760. After having served as Secretary to the Unity's Elders' Conference, and as a Professor in the Theological Seminary, he came to America as Schweinitz's successor. In 1822 he retired, returned to Germany, and was subsequently employed as a Diaspora Missionary at Königsberg, where he died in 1829.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Lewis Benzien was born in London, July 19th, 1753. In 1786, he became Marschall's assistant at Salem, and, in 1802, his successor as Administrator and Proprietor. He died November 13th, 1811.

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Van Vleck, born in New York City, March 24th, 1751, died at Bethlehem, July 3d, 1831, was a son of Henry Van Vleck, a prosperous merchant of New York, at whose house the Brethren held religious services, prior to the building of the Moravian Church. He was educated in the German Province. In 1790

the South to Cunow. Cunow remained Administrator for twenty-four years, from 1798 to 1822. During his incumbency, an unfortunate controversy broke out between the Administration and the Bethlehem Church, the only thing of the kind that ever occurred in our financial history. In order to pay off a part of its heavy debt, that Church wanted to sell a tract of land. The Unity's Elders' Conference itself had suggested this measure. Cunow was opposed to such a sale, and, as attorney of Jacob Van Vleck, the Proprietor, peremptorily refused to give the necessary titles, inducing, at the same time, the Unity's Elders' Conference to withdraw its suggestion. No doubt he had, what he believed to be, the good of the Church in view. But his acts were arbitrary, and very bitter feelings were engendered, which the Financial Committee of the General Synod of 1818 helped to intensify, by interpreting the agreement of 1771 in such a way as to make it appear that the Moravian settlements in America could not dispose of the land bought of the Unity, but merely held it on a perpetual lease. These agitations continued until the spring of 1822, and resulted in the retirement of Cunow from the office of Administrator. He was succeeded by Lewis David de Schweinitz,<sup>1</sup> to whom Cunow made over the Southern estates. Those in the North were still held by Jacob Van Vleck.

Schweinitz was fortunate enough to bring the existing controversy to an end. On the 2d of March, 1824, a new agreement between the Unity and Bethlehem was signed, according to which Bethlehem, and

he took charge of the Boarding School at Bethlehem, and subsequently became Senior Minister at that place; in 1802, he was appointed Principal of Nazareth Hall, and subsequently Senior Minister at Nazareth; and, from 1812 to 1822, he was President of the Southern Provincial Board. In 1814, he was consecrated a Bishop of the *Unitas Fratrum*. The last nine years of his life he spent in retirement at Bethlehem.

<sup>1</sup> Lewis David de Schweinitz Ph.D., born at Bethlehem, February 13th, 1780, died at the same place, February 8th, 1834, was the son of John Christian Alexander de Schweinitz, the first Administrator, the grandson of John and Benigna de Watteville, and the great grandson of Zinzendorf. He was educated in the Paedagogium and Theological Seminary of the German Province. In 1812, he was appointed Benzien's successor as Administrator in the South; in 1821, Senior Minister and Principal of the Boarding School at Bethlehem; and, in 1822, Administrator in the North. Thereupon he resigned his office as Principal, but remained Senior Minister at Bethlehem. The General Synod of 1825 elected him a *Senior Civilis* of the *Unitas Fratrum*. His ordination to this grade was the last which occurred. He was one of the most distinguished American botanists of his day, published numerous botanical works, was a member of various learned societies in Europe and America, and received the honorary degree of Doctor in Philosophy from the University at Kiel, in Denmark.

hence, of course, Nazareth and Lititz also, were declared to be the real owners of the land, which they could sell, as they pleased, provided it was done according to the synodically established rules of the Unity's Warden's Board; and, further, the Proprietor was pledged to give the necessary titles in case of such sales; while Bethlehem engaged, on its part, to make over to the Sustentation, in addition to what it had previously paid, two thirds of its clear profits, after all expenses had been covered, and all other promises redeemed. At the same time, Jacob Van Vleck, the Proprietor, issued and signed a declaration, to the end, that he held the property of the Moravian settlements merely in trust, and for their use. Five years later, on the 4th of December, 1829, he transferred, by a general deed, the entire estates in the North to Lewis David de Schweinitz, who thus became sole Proprietor of the whole church-property in America. In his will he constituted, by direction of the Unity's Elders' Conference, William Henry Van Vleck<sup>1</sup> the sole heir of this property. In 1834, Schweinitz died, foreseeing and foretelling radical changes in the finances of the Province. He was succeeded, in the office of Administrator, by Philip Henry Goepp,<sup>2</sup> William Henry Van Vleck being the Proprietor of all the estates, both North and South. On the 9th of October, 1843, however, the said Van Vleck transferred, by deed, the entire property North to the said Goepp, and, on the 7th of August, 1844, the entire property South to Charles F. Kluge, who had succeeded, in that same year, Theodore

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<sup>1</sup> William Henry Van Vleck, born at Bethlehem, November 14th, 1790, died at the same place, January 19th, 1853, was a son of Bishop Jacob Van Vleck, a former Proprietor, and a grandson of Henry Van Vleck, one of the founders of the Church in New York City. He was educated in the American Theological Seminary, and was one of its first three students. After having served as Minister in Philadelphia, as Principal of Nazareth Hall, and as Minister in New York City, he was, in 1836, consecrated a Bishop, and appointed President of the Southern Provincial Board, which office he filled until 1849, when he resigned and settled at Bethlechem, where he became Pastor of the Church. He was one of the most eloquent and distinguished fathers of the American Church in this century.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Henry Goepp was born at Gnadenfrei, in Prussia, April 29th, 1798. After serving in the German Province as Professor in the Theological Seminary, as Secretary to the Unity's Elders' Conference, and in other capacities, he came to America in 1834, as Schweinitz's successor. He remained Administrator until 1856, a period of twenty-two years, and a member of the Provincial Conference until 1861, a period of twenty-seven years, when he resigned, and went to Germany, where he spent nine years in retirement. In 1870 he returned to America, and, two years later, died at the house of his son, on Staten Island, March 19th, 1872.

Shultz<sup>1</sup> in the office of Southern Administrator, Shultz having, in 1821, succeeded Lewis David de Schweinitz in the same office.

Thus Philip H. Goepp became both Proprietor and Administrator of the property of the Church in our Province.

In the time of his incumbency, the provincial finances were greatly simplified, very much improved, and, as to their system, entirely changed. In order to these ends, however, the exclusive polity of the fathers, and the financial union with the rest of the Church of the Brethren, which they had established, were both sacrificed.

This brings me back to the history of our own Sustentation Diacony and of the Diaconies of the Moravian settlements in the Province.

In view of their involved condition and of the seeming impossibility of improving it according to the old system, Goepp advocated an entirely new departure, which was gradually carried out in its various details, from the year 1844 to the year 1855.

In the first place, on the 11th of January, 1844, the exclusive polity of Bethlehem, as a Moravian settlement, was given up, by enactment of the church-council, and the town thrown open to any and every one who might choose to acquire property there.

In the second place, on the 27th of May, 1847, the council of the same church, whose liabilities had increased to \$117,000, resolved to make its assets, which still consisted mainly in land, available, by selling one thousand three hundred and eighty acres of it to the Administration, its chief creditor, at \$75 an acre, thus realizing \$103,500, and leaving only \$13,500 of uncovered liabilities. At the same time the Council increased its annual contribution to the Sustentation Diacony to \$1,500, reiterating, furthermore, the pledges of 1771 and of 1824, that Bethlehem was bound to help along, to the best of its ability, the cause of the Church in the whole Province.

In the third place, on the first of November, 1850, the Church Council of Nazareth abrogated the exclusive polity of that town and threw it open to the public.

In the fourth place, the Church Council at Bethlehem, on the 13th of February, 1851, determined to give up entirely the old financial system, to abolish its Diacony, to secure incorporation and hence to

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Shultz was born at Gerdaun, in East Prussia, December 17th, 1770. In 1799, he was sent as a Missionary to Surinam, whence he came to Bethlehem in 1806. Thereupon he served as Minister in the churches of Emmaus, Hebron and Schoneck. In 1821, he succeeded Schweinitz as Administrator at Salem, which office he filled for twenty-three years, retiring in 1844. He died at Salem, August 4th, 1850.



sever its financial connection with the Unity at large, and to make a final settlement with the Sustentation Diacony of the Province.

In the fifth place, on the 20th of March, 1855, the Church Council at Nazareth adopted precisely the same resolution.

And, in the last place, on the 23d of July, 1855, Lititz, which had held out longest, abolished its exclusive polity, and, in the following years, changed its financial system in the same way in which Bethlehem and Nazareth had changed theirs.

The result of all these important and far-reaching measures was, that the Churches at Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Lititz were incorporated, and that their financial affairs were put into the hands of committees—at Bethlehem the Committee was called the “Liquidation Committee”—which sold the greater part of those landed estates that remained, making over nearly the one half of the proceeds to the Sustentation Diacony. In order to hold these funds the Provincial Elders’ Conference, which managed this Diacony, was likewise constituted a body corporate in law, on the 29th of March, 1851, under the afflicting style and heavy title of “The Board of Elders of the Northern Diocese of the Church of the United Brethren in the United States of America.”

In as much as these changes had been mostly proposed by the Unity’s Administrator and Proprietor, they received his sanction, and through him the sanction of the Unity’s Elders’ Conference. In the sale of land, he gave the necessary titles, and all things were amicably settled.

Thus, then, the Sustentation of the Province, for the first time, held what may properly be called a fund; and the old settlement-churches, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Lititz, by giving nearly the one half of their property to it, redeemed the pledges originally made, in the time of John Christian Alexander de Schweinitz, in 1771, 1772, 1775, and subsequently renewed at Bethlehem, in the time of Lewis David de Schweinitz, in 1824, and of Philip H. Goepf, in 1847. It was, however, expressly stipulated, that the shares made over to the Sustentation Fund should be held, for all time to come, as Trust Funds, which were not to be alienated. The Sustentation Fund has, therefore, in point of fact, been created by the churches at Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Lititz.

It is an interesting circumstance that their final settlement with the Sustentation Diacony practically carried out, no doubt unknowingly to the parties concerned, an idea expressed in 1818 by the Financial Committee of the General Synod, in view of the controversy then going on, namely, that Bethlehem should settle with the Sustentation by giving to it the one half of its land.

In saying that Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Lititz, have redeemed their pledges, I do not mean to imply that they are now rid of further responsibility to the Sustentation Fund, and the causes of the Province generally. On the contrary, all the written agreements which they have made with the Unity, and all the charters according to which they are constituted, clearly set forth, that, while their property undoubtedly is their own, they are bound to use it, after first meeting their own real wants, in such a way that the interests of the whole Church in this country will be furthered. The same position, precisely, holds good of such other churches of the Province as are gradually accumulating funds, for example, that at Emmaus and that in New York city.

The Twenty Seventh General Synod, held at Herrnhut in 1857, the first after the introduction of the new financial system in the American Province, not only practically approved of what had been done, but also followed its example. For, upon motion of the chairman of the Unity's Warden's Board itself, it was resolved to abrogate, *in toto*, the financial union existing among the Provinces of the *Unitas Fratrum*. Accordingly, a careful estimate of its assets was made, upon the basis of which a capital was paid out to the British Province, another capital, very large in proportion to its dwarfish dimensions, was given to the Southern American Province, and, although our Northern Province had really, by its own act, already severed its connection with the financial union of the *Unitas Fratrum*, a third capital, of \$25,000, was passed into its hands. The German Province retained all the estates in Germany, including those which had belonged to the Zinzendorf family, and all the property held by the Northern and Southern Administrations in America.

Since that time each Province carries on its own finances independently of the other. Leaving out of the question the Foreign Mission funds, there now exist only two, each of \$30,000, which the *Unitas Fratrum* holds in common. The first to pay the salaries of one half the members of the Unity's Elders' Conference, the other half receiving their salaries from the German Province; the second to defray the expenses of the General Synods.

In the year preceding the meeting of the Twenty Seventh Synod, Philip H. Goepf retired from the offices of Proprietor and Administrator (1856,) and was succeeded by Eugene A. Frueauff, to whom he made over the property. This property, as I have said, belonged, according to the financial settlement agreed upon at the Synod, to the German Province. It was turned into cash as rapidly as possible, with the view of winding up the Administration, by William Theodore Roepper, the

responsible cashier. In the year 1869, when the Twenty Eighth General Synod met, the Administrator's office was closed, and this important part of the history of our American church-finance came to an end.

In the Southern Province, Charles F. Kluge was succeeded, in 1853, in the offices of Proprietor and Administrator, by Emil A. de Schweinitz, who still holds both. But he, too, is winding up the concern in his hands, which also belongs to the German Province, as rapidly as possible. Negotiations are now going on having in view the sale of all the land which remains to the Southern Province. When this sale will have been consummated, the Southern Administration likewise will cease, and the last vestige of American proprietorship, in the peculiar sense in which this paper has explained it, will disappear.

And now, brethren, having attempted to give you this imperfect and, I fear, unwarrantably lengthy, history of the finances of our Province and of its Sustentation Fund, I will not claim the privilege of a preacher, and detain you with practical applications, although many most important ones could be made.

Let me, in conclusion, draw your attention to merely one point, which, in fact, comprises everything else that I want to say. It must be clear, from this paper, that the Sustentation Fund is organically and indissolubly connected with the progress of our Church. The more the Church increases, the greater the demands upon the Fund. Now, even at the present time, its income, that is, the interest of its securities and the rent of its houses, is far from sufficient to meet its disbursements. It has to depend for aid upon the profits of the Boarding Schools, which are subject to great fluctuations. If, then, the present revenues of the Fund are not enough, what will they be in the future, in case the Church continues to grow as it has been growing for the last twenty years? Is it not self-evident, that either the Sustentation Fund, by the creation of new funds, or in other ways, must be relieved of a large part of the demands which it now has to satisfy, or the Church must stop extending? No one, I hope, will think of advocating the latter; therefore the former will be the only alternative.

When this momentous question comes to be considered, and it cannot be considered too soon, may the Church be animated by the same spirit of childlike faith and of unceasing prayer which our fathers manifested in all their financial difficulties!





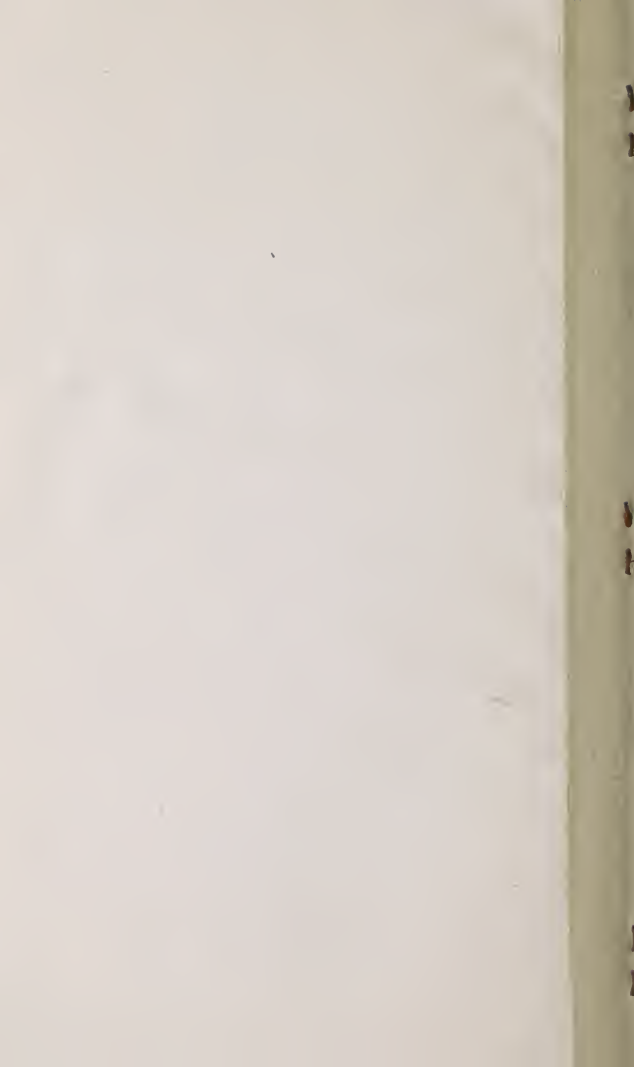










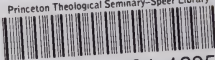




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