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ATWOOD, CRAIG D. *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004. 240 pp. \$37.50 (cloth).

Colonial Moravians are far more popular today than they ever were in the eighteenth century. Then, Moravians were suspected of being “papists” on account of their liturgical practices, mistrusted because of their close relations with Indians and slaves, and thought more than a little odd in their communal living arrangements. These qualities, combined with their prodigious record keeping, have proven enticing to sociologists, historians, and ethnohistorians alike, studying everything from the life course of religious movements (Gillian Lindt Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds* [New York, 1968], and Beverly Smaby, *The Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem* [Philadelphia, 1988]) to interracial religious communities (Jon Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan* [Chapel Hill, NC, 1998]) to the dynamics of ethnic identity in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania (Jane Merritt, *At the Crossroads* [Chapel Hill, NC, 2003]). All of the studies cited above treat Moravian belief and practice to a greater or lesser extent, but none goes so far as Craig Atwood’s new work in taking seriously the distinctive religiosity of the Moravian *Brüdergemeine*. *Community of the Cross* is a dual biography of the colorful Saxon Count, Ludwig von Zinzendorf (the main force behind the growth of the Moravian movement in the eighteenth century) and of the community in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, which Atwood treats as the incarnation of Zinzendorf’s theology.

The Moravians who settled Bethlehem in the 1740s traced their roots to the fifteenth-century movement that arose around the memory of the martyred Jan Hus. However, the more immediate context for the eighteenth-century flowering of the Moravian movement (also known as the *Unitas Fratrum*, or Unity of the Brethren) was German Pietism. Atwood offers a succinct account of these dual contexts before delving more deeply into the life and theology of Zinzendorf. In two chapters, one devoted to Zinzendorf’s “theology of the heart” and the other to his christology, Atwood ably explicates how Zinzendorf’s theology grew out of the distinctive circumstances of his youth and the idiosyncrasies of his personality, while ably avoiding deterministic theories.

Zinzendorf drove many of his contemporary clergymen to distraction with his refusal to engage in doctrinal debates, and most historians have tended not to take the count seriously as a theologian. The Zinzendorf presented by Atwood, however, is more than an eccentric member of the aristocracy with an unseemly interest in the blood and wounds of Christ. Atwood makes a convincing case for Zinzendorf’s theological creativity, focusing on his gendering of the Trinity and the consequences that followed from this central idea. God is Father, the Holy Spirit is Mother. Jesus is Son, but also Creator; he is Bridegroom, but also Mother of the Church, born of his side wound. In inhabiting these roles, Jesus both sacralizes human experience and provides the model for all relationships.

The remaining four chapters examine the Bethlehem settlement as an embodiment of Zinzendorf’s blood and wounds theology. This theology, Atwood argues, not only informed the liturgical practice of the community but, indeed, shaped all of life in Bethlehem, erasing the boundaries of sacred and profane, and sanctifying all of life—including all forms of labor and all life stages, even sacralizing sex as one means whereby humans came to understand the sacred bond between Jesus and his Church. These litanies and hymns of blood and

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wounds might be expected to produce a dreary and angst-ridden community, but, in fact, argues Atwood, Zinzendorf's theology succeeded remarkably well in meeting the psychological needs of community members, providing a sanctioned outlet for many potentially disruptive emotions and sublimating the needs of the individual to the benefit of the community (216–21). Further, Atwood suggests, Zinzendorf's theology "served as a bulwark against the forces of anomie in a changing world and unleashed the power of the human spirit to create community" (223).

Some readers may charge that Atwood's Moravian commitments have led him to depict an idealized "golden age" of American Moravianism during Zinzendorf's life. In fact, however, Atwood's history is a necessary corrective to earlier denominational histories that viewed the theology of the "Sifting Time" of the mid-eighteenth century as an embarrassing indulgence from which the church had thankfully recovered. However, having made a convincing case for the centrality of Zinzendorf the theologian in creating, shaping, and maintaining the *Brüdergemeine*, Atwood places too great a burden on the death of Zinzendorf the man in explaining the post-1760 changes in Bethlehem, neglecting other factors like the increasingly problematic missions. Support of mission work, rather than utopian communitarian ideals, were behind Bethlehem's unique communal economy and figured centrally in the religious life of the community. Atwood's central focus on the function of religious ritual in community formation will make *Community of the Cross* a welcome addition to history of religions scholarship, and his careful explication of Moravian piety will be invaluable to historians interested in Moravians for their unique role in colonial intercultural relations.

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