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### Review Of "The Zinzendorf-Muhlenberg Encounter: A Controversy In Search Of Understanding" By W. H. Wagner

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cannot disturb much of its broad and already turbulent surface, much less its depths. Consider the global ambition of a book that treats, for example, Russian expansion into Alaska, British adventures in the South Pacific, the Spanish conquest of Mexico, the ethnogenesis of the Crow Indians, the African slave trade, and the Glorious Revolution in England. Consider the organizational brilliance that it takes to pull these topics together in a manner that leaves one convinced that the new imperial approach makes sense. Taylor's new imperial focus helps not only to convene such events, so disparate in time and space, but also to combine the recent history of colonial frontiers, of which Taylor has been such a leader, with the history of the Atlantic world, a movement of no small importance among today's colonial historians.

*University of Michigan*

GREGORY EVANS DOWD

*The Zinzendorf-Muhlenberg Encounter: A Controversy in Search of Understanding.* By WALTER H. WAGNER. (Nazareth, Pa.: Moravian Historical Society, 2002. 173p. \$22.95.)

Recently the Moravian Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America entered into a full communion agreement. Wagner, a Lutheran pastor and professor at the Moravian Seminary, examines the origins of the split between the two denominations symbolized by a meeting in 1742 between the founder of the Moravians, Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf, and Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg, the pastor most influential in shaping American Lutheranism. The book's underlying theme (which is correct) is that even in the 1740s the differences were marginal and that unification requires neither denomination to repudiate its heritage. Even though primary interest in the book will be to members of these churches, historians interested in religion will find it a convenient way to understand the context for the controversies that helped shape Pennsylvanian Germans' denominational history.

Our only account of the meeting of the two men is a transcript written by Muhlenberg for purposes of publication. Muhlenberg went by himself to the meeting that to his surprise turned into a kind of judicial examination/debate and there is no record of the Moravians present taking down the words. I wonder whether Muhlenberg's account is accurate enough to merit the sophisticated analysis provided by Wagner. More helpful is his careful reconstruction of the background of the two protagonists and Muhlenberg's successful strategy.

The book makes clear that the issues debated in Philadelphia began in Europe and any chances of unity were slim; indeed, the University of Halle

authorities neglected Pennsylvania until the Moravians appeared and then sent Muhlenberg to counter the count. Wagner provides an informative account of the debates in Germany between Lutheran scholastics and pietists over interpreting Luther's heritage. Although Muhlenberg and Zinzendorf can be described today as Lutheran pietists, they differed significantly in their attitudes towards authority. Muhlenberg can be described as an organization man while the count ignored authority—whether family, church, or government. Although Zinzendorf's doctrinal soundness was certified by German university authorities, others opposed his mission and he never had gained formal written certification for his claim to be a minister. In addition, Zinzendorf added to Lutheran doctrine controversial emphases upon the wounds and blood of Christ and upon images of Jesus as "Brother-Husband-Father-Creator; the Spirit as the Mother" (p. 89). He had also been influenced by English spiritualist Jane Leade and her Philadelphia society. While professing to be an orthodox Lutheran minister, Zinzendorf was also a bishop of the *Unitas Fratrum*—a sect that under the treaty of Westphalia had no right to exist.

Neither Muhlenberg nor Zinzendorf knew much about Pennsylvania, the variety of religions there, or the Lutheran congregations. Zinzendorf thought that the divisions of Christendom were a scandal and he staged a series of ecumenical conferences in Pennsylvania to bring some a unity of the "Church of God in the Spirit" even while denominational structures remained distinct. The count was used to deferential listeners, and his manner and message alienated independent-minded colonists. Because a shortage of clergy plagued German Reformed and Lutheran churches, Zinzendorf sought to place his adherents in these churches as ministers. Muhlenberg saw these Moravians as attempting to subvert Lutherans. The result was a series of bitter disputes that required the courts to decide the legal basis for ownership of church property.

Wagner is a good guide to the theological issues involved, but his grasp of Pennsylvania history is problematic. He underestimates the impact of the Great Awakening on Pennsylvania, ignoring the bitter schism among the Presbyterians and the rise of the Baptists, and seems unaware of recent scholarship on the migration and culture of the Pennsylvania Dutch. The first chapter on dynastic succession in Europe will bore those who already know this history and confuse those who don't. More significant, his focus on the two clergymen slights the influence of the Lutheran and Reformed laymen who determined as much as the leaders whether Moravian, Reformed, and Lutheran would become one denomination or three.