

# Tell Me About Synod

## Part III



### MORAVIAN SYNODS: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

American Moravians have held synods from the very beginning. In fact, Moravian leader Zinzendorf held seven synods in Pennsylvania, even before the Moravian Church was officially organized in this country.

“The main reason to come together,” Zinzendorf explained in 1747, “is to recover and rest, to be together, and to share the spirit.” Synods were occasions, not only to discuss matters and make decisions, but also for the worldwide church to become visible.

That was Zinzendorf’s intention with the seven Pennsylvania synods he held in 1742: representatives from different denominations were present to discuss how Christians in the New World could overcome their differences and become one.

After Zinzendorf’s death, synods became the place to determine the future direction of the church and to elect leaders. There are General Synods (now called Unity Synods) for the world-wide Moravian Church and Provincial Synods for individual provinces. Some provinces also have District Synods for smaller regions within the province.

The proceedings or minutes of the synods are recorded and preserved at the Moravian Archives. The minutes of Zinzendorf’s Pennsylvania synods from 1742 were printed by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia. Just for that reason, these minutes are valuable items. For us Moravians, they are valuable because they document the actions of our spiritual ancestors when they gathered to make the church visible.

By Paul Peucker, Archivist and Director, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem

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2024 Eastern District Synod

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