

Herrnhut, house of prayer

A house of prayer is not primarily a location or a building with that name or purpose. It is primarily the Church carrying out the unceasing task of intercessory prayer -- for the city, the nation, and the world. Though a literal center of prayer may be needed for this ministry, the task of that center is to encourage and assist the Church to become the Lord's house of prayer for all nations.

I have found a great inspiration for the kind of prayer life needed in our day by learning about the spirit of the Moravian movement of the 1700's. The Moravians became the first modern missionary movement to the nations. This movement was born in prayer. Fleeing religious persecution in their homeland, a band of Moravian families were given sanctuary by Count Zinzendorf on his large estate. Though weary and divided among themselves, revival fell on them. Soon they were a united, fervent body of believers, with high expectancy of what God could do through them. A prayer meeting began among them, soon organized into a twenty four hour a day unceasing prayer watch. The name of the place became Herrnhut, literally meaning "Watch of the Lord". This prayer meeting went on for more than one hundred years nonstop, twenty four hours a day! Out of it came a spirit of sacrifice and missions that sent groups of Moravian young people and families to the ends of the earth, with their belongings packed in their coffins as a mark of their commitment. In this spirit, two young men sold themselves as slaves to gain entrance to an island of slaves, so that they might have the privilege of giving them the gospel. As they left the shore of home with their belongings in their coffins, they shouted back to their weeping loved ones the words that became the cry of this Moravian movement: "MAY THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN RECEIVE THE REWARD OF HIS SUFFERINGS!"

It was decades later that the rest of the Church of Jesus Christ began to awaken to the call to the peoples of the world. Many believe that Herrnhut, the one hundred year Watch of the Lord, was the spiritual birthplace of modern missions. Many now are praying that a "Herrnhut anointing" return to the Church in this day. May it be so.

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