LEARNING FROM HISTORY

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Some thoughts for contemporary mission from a historical perspective.
Category: Quotes

Not everyone will want to read a paper on the history of Moravian missions, but anyone who is interested in the modern mission movement should take a look at its conclusion:

> *The Moravian vision for renewal and mission is certainly something missionaries can learn from today. Throughout the history of the church, often times corporate mission impetus emerges out of extraordinary concerted prayer. The Moravian missions movement demonstrated this historical phenomenon, and the Moravians also showed how ongoing prayer is life-giving for missionaries on the field. To be sure, they employed some extra-biblical practices in their praying, but their devotion to God in prayer was commendable. Furthermore, their relentless devotion to unite mission and prayer is worthy of imitation.* ***Too often prayer ministries err on the side of inaction, and similarly, mission agencies can err on the side of emphasizing strategy and methods over against prayerfulness.*** *Mission agencies and churches should be aware of the modern tendency to elevate pragmatism over piety.*
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> *Another implication of the Moravian missionary movement that deserves consideration but not wholesale imitation is their emphasis on Christian unity. The Moravians were renowned for working across denominational lines in order to demonstrate Christian love to a watching world. This emphasis on ecumenism over the years slipped into doctrinal tolerance and liberalism because they did not hold fast to a confessional center, but their initial intentions were noteworthy. OnÂ the mission field and in non-Christianized areas of the world, kindhearted charity and practical support among various evangelical groups is not only a witness to unbelievers, it is also a source of encouragement and strength for weary and persecuted believers.*
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> *The role of suffering in Moravian piety is an implication that should be considered for missionaries and global leaders today. The Moravians viewed suffering in missions as a way to identify with Christ and demonstrate the power of the resurrection in a cruciform lifestyle.* ***In an era of vaccinations, modern medicine, jet travel, and a love for ease, any call to self-denial and suffering is often met with derision****. Though their Crucicentrism was misapplied at times, it is no coincidence that Moravian missionaries often chose paths of hardship because of their vision of the slain Lamb who has conquered death.* ***A renewed consecration to follow Christ as the conquering Lamb is needed in contemporary Christianity.***

Emphases mine.

I'm indebted to Antony Billington for drawing my attention to the Journal of World Christianity, from which this paper is taken. The latest edition has a reflection on the current refugee crisis based on the book of James which might be of help to preachers and teachers.