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“*Gar nicht biblisch!*” [Not biblical at all!]: Ephesians, Marriage, and Radical Pietism in Eighteenth-Century Germany

Abstract: This article explores the use of Ephesians 5 and the church as the bride of Christ within a set of 18th-century speeches to the married couples in a radical pietist community known as the Moravian Brethren. I will show how the text is used to undergird a novel ideology of marriage and community structure, both of which are connected with socio-economic change.

Keywords: Ephesians; Pietism; Marriage.

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1 Introduction

In 1721 a group of Moravians escaping religious persecution in what is today the Czech Republic came to the Oberlausitz region on the German border to today's Poland and the Czech Republic. They made their way to the doorstep of the local count in Berthelsdorf, Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf's estate manager gave them permission to settle on the land, on the main road between Löbau and Zittau, and thus began the history of the town of Herrnhut and the Brüdergemeine.¹ In 1750, this small group had grown to a population of about 1000 people with Zinzendorf as the spiritual leader, and the Moravian Brethren

¹ There are several names for this community. The English name is Moravian Brethren. The German name is (*Herrnhuter*) *Brüdergemeine*. The name *Unitas Fratrum* is an “appropriation” of the name for the pre-Reformation church of *Unitas Fratrum* or *Unity of Brethren*, which trace their lineage back to Johan Hus. Paul Peucker, “Wives of the Lamb: Moravian Brothers and Gender around 1750,” in *Masculinity, Senses, Spirit*, ed. Katherine M. Faull (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2011), 43. For an introduction to the early years of the community, see Otto Uttendorfer, *Alt-Herrnhut. Wirtschaftsgeschichte und Religionssoziologie Herrnhuts während seiner ersten Zwanzig Jahre (1722-1742)*. Herrnhut: Verlag Missionsbuchhandlung, 1925.

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had established communities all over Europe and Pennsylvania, as well as missionary stations in Greenland and the West Indies – with many more to come.

While this radical pietist congregation was flourishing in the 1750s, another man's world was falling to pieces. Johann Gottlob Seidel, pastor in the nearby village of Rennersdorf saw Zinzendorf and his community of brethren in Herrnhut as the reason for this imminent catastrophe. According to Seidel, this community not only professed a perverse theology, expressed in bizarre notions of marriage, but also conducted business in a manner which contributed to the deterioration of local industry, devaluation of labor and the encroachment of trade from other nations.

Seidel wished to put an end to this, and attempted to do so by publishing a text called "*Haupt-Schlüssel zum herrnhutischen Ehe-Sacrament*" ('The main key to the Moravian marriage-sacrament').² The bulk of the text is more than 50 speeches given by Count Zinzendorf to the married couples within the congregation.³ These speeches are framed by an introduction and running caustic commentary by Seidel. The main purpose of his publication was to show how depraved the count was, to alert the authorities, who must stop him, to make everything return to 'normal'.

Given that Zinzendorf's 'pack' today is a church (Unitas Fratrum) with almost one million members, it is safe to say that Seidel failed in his attempts to put an end to this venture. As the comments regarding the business practices indicate, Seidel's valiant efforts were also severely impeded by the emergence of capitalism, a development which Zinzendorf and the Brüdergemeine were able to deploy to their utmost advantage.

The *Hauptschlüssel*-text is interesting from a number of angles; not least the privileged place of marriage, in which gender as well as interpretation of scripture plays a significant part. Even more interesting is how Seidel (perhaps unconsciously) connects gender and sexual relations with socio-economic shifts thus

² Johann Gottlob Seidel "Haupt-Schlüssel zum herrnhutischen Ehe-Sacrament," in *Herrnhut im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, Vol. 2 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2000 [1755]).

³ Most of these speeches are so-called choir-speeches. The various groups in the congregation, ordered according to gender and marital status and sexual maturity were called choirs. Thus these speeches are given to the *Ehe-Chor*, the Married Choir. The Choir-speeches were intended for internal use in the congregations, and it is not known how they came into Seidel's possession. However, Zinzendorf's successor, August Gottlieb Spangenberg wrote in his 8-volume biography of Zinzendorf that "an unnamed priest in Upper Lusatia had at this time handed over a collection of the Count's speeches to the Married couples in the Brüdergemeine. He does not say how they came to be in his possession, but I have heard that a brother had gathered them for his own use, and had lost them near Herrnhut, where they then were found and brought to the priest." A.G. Spangenberg, *Leben des Herrn Nicolaus Ludwig Grafen von Zinzendorf und Pottendorf*. (Barby 1772–1775), 2003–2004 [All translations from the German are my own, unless otherwise stated].

reminding us of Karl Kautsky's statement, that, "every system of production has had a special form of household to which corresponds a special system of family relationship."⁴ This feature signals the importance of registering the recalibration of gender and sexual relations at both macro and micro level, not only in the text at hand, but also the text used to bolster these recalibrations, in our case Ephesians 5. The aim of this article is to explore the use of Ephesians 5 within the choir speeches and show how the text is used to undergird a novel ideology of marriage and community structure, both of which are connected with socio-economic change.

To ease us into the material from eighteenth-century Germany, I begin with some remarks from Annette Merz's article on the transformation of a metaphor from 2 Corinthians 11 to Ephesians 5.⁵ Merz argues that Ephesians 5 is a corrective to i) an ideology of ascetics from the Corinthian correspondence and ii) the Pauline metaphors' "egalitarian character" which could destabilize the relationship between the sexes.⁶ Merz outlines the social consequences of the Pauline metaphors thus:

[...] while the women are putting into practise a metaphor in conformity to their gender role, they withdraw from the role as wife that society expects of them. Men would find the metaphorical deconstruction of the gender roles objectionable, for they would be obliged either to imagine themselves or Christ in the role of the wife, or else to guard against a latent homosexual fantasy. How much "pleasanter" is the analogous relationship between Christ-*Ekklesia* and husband-wife portrayed in Eph 5.22–33, where the man is allowed to compare himself with Christ, while the woman is directed to take on the role of the *Ekklesia*?⁷

According to Merz, then, the Corinthian text is the problematic one, with the men having to imagine themselves as women or "to guard against a latent homosexual fantasy" – whatever that is supposed to mean is not further explained. Merz's assumptions in regard to what men would find "objectionable" or "more pleasant" are seriously challenged when we take a look at the marriage ideology of the Brüdergemeine and the role of Ephesians in the articulation of the relation between male and female, Christ and congregation. Here the Ephesian text is understood in the manner of 2 Corinthians, with the congregation firmly in place as bride of Christ, and, as a result, a very fluid understanding of gender.

⁴ Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle*, trans. William E. Bohn (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1910), 26.

⁵ Annette Merz, "Why Did the Pure Bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11.2) Become a Wedded Wife (Eph. 5.22–33)? Theses About the Intertextual Transformation of an Ecclesiological Metaphor," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 79 (2000).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁷ *Ibid.*

2 Ephesians and Zinzendorf

In the speeches published by Seidel, there are three levels of interaction with Ephesians: assumed, gestured, and explicit. This is consistent with choir-speeches outside the published collection, where the majority of biblical material is assumed, rather than being stated explicitly. In his examination of two earlier documents of Zinzendorf's expositions on marriage, Peter Vogt casts light on this phenomenon. He compares two texts on marriage, one for internal use within the community ("Seventeen Points of Matrimony") and one for external use ("1742 Manual of Doctrine"). He notes that while both texts address similar concerns, they differ considerably in terms of style and rhetorical approach "especially with regard to their use of biblical quotations."⁸ The 1742 Manual of Doctrine is shaped in what was a traditional exposition of faith: a catechism, a form which presents the doctrine through a series of questions and answers – a style common in the Lutheran tradition.⁹ Furthermore, this exposition of Moravian faith is consistently based on biblical references and corresponds, writes Vogt, "to Zinzendorf's concern to present Moravian doctrine and piety as being fully consistent with Holy Scripture."¹⁰ Thus, it should not surprise us that choir-speeches which were intended for internal usage assume biblical material rather than constantly referring to it.

To give examples from these three levels, then, we first have the assumed level, where Ephesians *seems* to be the underpinning, without a specific reference, for example, "[s]o there must be an undeniable indicator, a criterion of the marital status that can be imitated by no other means and status, within which the people cannot be wrong and that is the representation of Jesus and the congregation,"¹¹ or, "[b]ecause that is the secret that lies within the marriage, that

8 Peter Vogt, "Zinzendorf's 'Seventeen Points of Matrimony': A Fundamental Document on the Moravian Understanding of Marriage and Sexuality," *Journal of Moravian History* 10 (Spring 2011): 43.

9 Luther himself wrote two catechisms, a small one meant for the house-father in his instruction of his household, and a large catechism, intended for clergy. For a study of several catechisms see Gordon A. Jensen, "Shaping Piety Through Catechetical Structures: The Importance of Order," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 10/2 (2008): 223–46.

10 Vogt, "Zinzendorf's 'Seventeen Points of Matrimony': A Fundamental Document on the Moravian Understanding of Marriage and Sexuality," 52.

11 Seidel, "Haupt-Schlüssel," 41. "Es muß also ein unläugbares Kennzeichen, ein Criterion des Ehestandes seyn, das durch keinen andern Stand kan bedeutet und nachgemacht werden, darinne die Leute sich nicht irren können: und das ist die Repräsentation Jesu und der Gemeine."

every man signifies an image of Christ, and each woman signifies an image of the congregation.”¹²

The second level, what I called gestured interaction, are the instances where he refers to the Apostle, or Paul and then quotes Ephesians, but without specific reference to the text: “the Apostle Paul has said [...]: ‘This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church,’”¹³ which of course is a quote from Ephesians 5:32.

Finally, there is the level where Zinzendorf several times refers to Ephesians and Paul as point of reference to the conceptualisation of marriage:

This will help us through, when passages of Scripture speak of a thing disparagingly, and then somewhere else speaks of the same thing reverently, and even sometimes it is the same author, as for example Paul on marriage in 1 Cor 7 and Eph 5, and then again in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Because if one wanted to say the same, he had helped set certain people on a different track in the Epistle to the Ephesians than 1 Corinthians 7 and there were exceptional children of God, to which was sent what He said in Ephesians 5, then he said in the epistle to the Hebrews chapter 13: it must be thus for all, it must be thus consistently.¹⁴ This is thus the great art which the Savior must give to all combatants and witnesses, so that they know to place the words of his witness in the right place, and as expressed by the Apostle somewhere else, to divide the word of truth.¹⁵

Zinzendorf is obviously not tormented by scriptural contradiction or matters of authenticity, but uses the different advices on wedlock to bolster up the ideology of marriage and non-marriage in his community. First and foremost, we will look

12 *Ibid.*, 120. “Denn das ists Geheimniß, das in der Ehe steckt, es soll ein jeder Mann ein Bild Christi, und eine jede Frau ein Bild der Gemeine vorstellen [...]”

13 *Ibid.*, 151. See also a similar occurrence, 267.

14 What this verse is meant to refer to, I am not sure. Perhaps 13:4? Fritz Tanner claims that Hebrews 13:4 constitutes one of the most fundamental passages for the understanding of marriage and gender in Pietism in general, as well as in Herrnhut Fritz Tanner, *Die Ehe Im Pietismus* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1952), 132. If so, then this is the only reference to Hebrews in the case of marriage I have seen.

15 Seidel, “Haupt-Schlüssel,” 230–231. “Das muß uns durch helfen, wenn mancherley Schrift-Orte von einer Sache geringschätzig reden, und wieder ein andermal sehr ehrerbietig davon reden, und wenns manchmal eben derselbe Autor thut, wie z.E. Paulus gethan hat in der Ehe-Sache 1 Cor. 7. und Eph. 5. und dann wieder in der Epistel an die Hebräer. Denn wenn man gleich wolte sagen, er hätte in der Epistel an die Epheser gewissen Leuten auf eine andere Spur geholfen als 1 Cor. 7. und es gäbe ausnehmende Kinder Gottes, auf die sich das geschickt was Er Epheser 5 sagt, so hat er in der Epistel an die Hebräer Cap 13 gesagt: Es muß bey allen so sein, es muß durchgängig so sein. Das is also die grosse Kunst die der Heyland allen Streitem und Zeugen geben muß, daß sie die Worte seiner Zeugen an den rechten Ort zu legen wissen, und wie es der Apostel an einem andern Ort ausdrückt, das Wort der Wahrheit recht theilen.” See also a similar point, 179.

at how Ephesians and its depiction of the relation between Christ and the church provides the scriptural foundation for what Peter Vogt calls the “*Ehereligion*,” the religion of marriage.¹⁶

3 Procurator-Marriage and the Gendered Soul

The Procurator marriage is a central feature of Zinzendorf’s theology – and probably the most infamous, due to Seidel’s publication.¹⁷ Briefly put, it means that the married couple stand in for Christ and his congregation, or church.¹⁸ Thus the married man represents Christ and the married sister the Church and every time they engage in sexual intercourse, they enact the close relationship between Christ and his congregation. Intercourse was accordingly regarded as a liturgical or sacramental act. However, this representation of Christ and the Church only takes place in the temporal state. In eternity, the men of the congregation will return to their *original female state*, and relate to Christ as women towards the one true man.¹⁹ This is expressed in the following quote from the first speech of Zinzendorf in Seidel’s collection:

16 Vogt, “Zinzendorf’s ‘Seventeen Points of Matrimony’: A Fundamental Document on the Moravian Understanding of Marriage and Sexuality.” Vogt’s article describes the earlier understandings of marriage in the community as indicated in the document “Seventeen Points of Matrimony” and gestures towards the more radical understanding of marriage present in the *Ehereligion/Procurator-Ehe*.

17 Studies have been plentiful, although mostly in the context of the settlements in North America, particularly Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Craig D. Atwood, “The Union of Masculine and Feminine in Zinzendorfan Piety,” in *Masculinity, Senses, Spirit*, ed. Katherine M. Faull (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2011); Katherine M. Faull, “Temporal Men and the Eternal Bridegroom: Moravian Masculinity in the Eighteenth Century,” *ibid*; Paul Peucker, “In the Blue Cabinet: Moravians, Marriage, and Sex,” *Journal of Moravian History* 10 (Spring 2011); Paul Peucker, “Wives of the Lamb.” Classics include: Gottfried Beyreuther, “Sexualtheorie im Pietismus,” in *Zweiter Sammelband Über Zinzendorf*, eds. Erich Beyreuther and Gerhard Meyer (Hildesheim/New York: Georg Olms, 1975 [1963]); Tanner, *Die Ehe im Pietismus*. Vogt, “Zinzendorf’s ‘Seventeen Points of Matrimony’: A Fundamental Document on the Moravian Understanding of Marriage and Sexuality.”

18 The term ‘procurator’ should in this sense be understood in its usage in early modern Europe, as that of a ‘stand-in.’ See under ‘procurieren’ in Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, “Deutsches Wörterbuch,” (Leipzig, 1854–1971).

19 The common reference is from Zinzendorf’s “Zeister Reden 26,” *Zinzendorf Hauptschriften*, vol 3, 208: “All human souls are generis foeminini, and the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only one generis masculini,” quoted in Faull, “Temporal Men and the Eternal Bridegroom,” 61 (Faull’s translation). Seidel also quotes this in a footnote (p. 43) and wonders icily who has made this revelation to the Count.

However, it is an unquestionable matter that a Maid of Jesus Christ, in her sister-estate [*Schwester-Stande*] enjoys much more, has much more foretaste of the Lamb, than the man. Such is the case of nature. We [i.e., men] are now exchanged [*ausgewechselt*], we are from our sex placed in another sex, a Metamorphosis has taken place with us, we are in a hidden condition; and therefore, since we with certainty know that our estate [*Stand*] thus will not remain constant, so we must always be mixed a bit with the Savior, we must keep our eyes to ourselves, lest we get too lustful in order to prove ourselves as Sisters, not to gain too much of an appetite for the sisterly bliss, and through this, forget our official duty.²⁰

This speech is recorded as being given to the Married Choir in the congregations of Herrnhag and Marienborn on the February 5, 1747 in Herrnhag.²¹ According to this quote, and many others just like it, the corporeal reality of men is an anomaly. The physical reality of being a man has no corresponding spiritual component, but will morph into the blessed sisterhood in eternity. For the sisters, there is a correspondence between women's spiritual and corporeal reality. Thus physical men are the product of a "becoming," into a radically different *Stand*, which is marked by the penis.²² The final sentence, where Zinzendorf exhorts the brothers not to gain too much of an appetite for sisterly bliss and get too lustful, presages what was to take place in the congregation in the coming years, namely what became known as the Sifting Time, from Luke 22:31.²³ This time is associ-

20 "Aber das ist eine unstreitige Sache, daß eine Magd Jesu Christi in ihrem Schwester-Stande viel mehr genießt, viel mehr Vorschmack vom Lamme hat als der Mann. Das bringt die Natur der Sache mit sich. Wir sind jetzt ausgewechselt, wir sind aus unserm Geschlecht heraus gesetzt in ein ander Geschlecht, es ist eine Metamorphosis mit uns vorgegangen, wir sind in einem geborgten Zustande; und daher, weil wir gewiß wissen, daß unser Stand so nicht fortwähret, so müssen wir immer vom lieben Heyland ein bisgen geblendet, die Augen müssen uns gehalten werden, daß wir nicht zu viel Lust kriegen uns als Schwestern zu beweisen, nicht zu viel Appetit kriegen nach der Schwestern Seeligkeit, und darüber unsere Amtspflicht vergessen" (35).

21 The Brüdergemeine had congregations all over Europe and its colonies. The most infamous settlement is that of Herrnhag, and its sister congregation nearby: Marienborn. Both were situated in Wetterau, in the Western part of Germany and were the site of what became known as "the Sifting Time."

22 Paul Peucker, "'Inspired by Flames of Love': Homosexuality, Mysticism, and Moravian Brothers around 1750," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 1 (2006): 53–55.

23 The studies into this period of the Brüdergemeine are quite extensive. Especially the work of the head archivist at the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Paul Peucker is very instructive: "Blut Auf Unsre Grünen Bändchen.' Die Sichtungszeit in der Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine," *Unitas Fratrum. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Gegenwartsfragen der Brüdergemeine* 49–50 (2002); "Inspired by Flames of Love"; "The Songs of the Sifting. Understanding the Role of Bridal Mysticism in Moravian Piety During the Late 1740s," *Journal of Moravian History* 3 (2007). See also Craig D. Atwood, "Interpreting and Reinterpreting the Sichtungszeit," in *Neue Aspekte Der Zinzendorf-Forschung*, ed. Martin Brecht and Paul Peucker, *Arbeiten Zur Geschichte Des Pietismus* 47 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

ated primarily with Zinzendorf's son, Christian Rénatus, known as Christel and an eroticization of the side-hole imagery derived from John 19:34. As Paul Peucker has shown, Christel, along with other single brothers took the true nature of man further, leading to Christel's declaration at a ceremony in Herrnhag on December 4, 1748 that all single brothers were sisters and thereupon consecrated them into this new state. This was repeated in Marienborn and later in Zeist. This meant that the brothers could enter into marital union with Christ, here and now, and not have to wait until the afterlife. We have already moved from the ideology of marriage to that of non-marriage, and the practice of homo-eroticism in the communities. In his work on homosexuality in the Herrnhag congregation, Paul Peucker draws attention to a meeting between Zinzendorf and two of his co-workers (Johann Nitschmann and Carl Heinrich von Peistel), where the opportunity not to marry was discussed:

One should by all means examine the brothers if they are capable of [*im Stande wären*] wedlock before one unites them in marriage, because when a dear sister would get a brother who is unsuitable [*untüchtig*] for the sacramental act of matrimony and who is not capable of having carnal knowledge of his wife, then this would make an unpleasant marriage, although our sisters are beyond the flesh and do not marry for such reasons. A sister would think, "I might just as well have remained single as living a celibate life within marriage." For intercourse is an essential part of marriage, and no brothers and sisters should be given in marriage who are not capable of that.²⁴

Peucker argues that Zinzendorf is not referring to sterility here, but to couples who do not have sex, because the husband [or wife – given the last sentence] is incapable of, or disinterested in sexual intercourse.²⁵

This particular point is quite significant. As mentioned earlier, the congregation was structured in choirs. While conceived of as pastoral counseling groups, they also constituted economic units, in that each choir house was intended to function as an independent economic unit. Nevertheless, the whole congregation was conceptualized as a household, with Jesus as its head. The

²⁴ "Mann sollte die Brüder allemal erst untersuchen, ob sie zur Ehe im Stande wären, ehe man sie verheyerathete, denn wenn eine liebe Schwester hernach einen Bruder kriegte, der zur sacramentischen Handlung der Ehe untüchtig und nicht im Stande seine Frau ehelich zu erkennen, so mache daß, obgleich unsere Schwestern über das Fleisch weg und aus keinen solchen Ursachen heyerathen, eine unangenehme Ehe. Eine Schwester dencke: ich hätte eben so wohl ledig bleiben können, als ehlose in der Ehe leben. Denn die Vereinigung sey ein wesentliches Stuck der Ehe und es solten keine Geschwister verheyerathet werden, die darzu nicht im Stande wären." Quoted in Peucker, "Inspired by Flames of Love," 43, translation by Peucker.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

choir system enabled the possibility to develop specific gender roles, which differed from those in the feudal household. Because people's livelihood was not dependent on marriage,²⁶ the independent choirs offered the possibility not to get married. Unmarried brothers or sisters could easily find a role in the congregation, which is testified by the numerous autobiographies left behind by unmarried brothers and sisters. At the same time, it seems that the Ephesian text was extremely influential in articulating the marriage theology of the community, casting not only the congregation as the female bride of Christ, but also the men as women, which is not an unfeasible interpretation of the Ephesian text, nor of the Corinthian one.²⁷ This brings us to the socio-economic upheavals to which not only Seidel's text, but also Zinzendorf's movement was a response.

4 Corroding Feudalism

As mentioned in the introduction, Seidel adorns the published speeches with a host of caustic, dismissive and rude comments, questioning Zinzendorf's biblical prowess and dismissing the entire Procurator marriage as fabric woven out of cherry-picking; a homemade, affected, and confused nature which together make up a maze, which spellbinds the good souls.²⁸ In his comments, Seidel betrays orthodox Lutheranism's concerns with marriage, its rigid three-estate structure (aristocracy, peasantry, and townspeople), and its manifest patriarchy.²⁹ Lutheranism had for a time been highly compatible with the socio-economic structures of semi-feudal Eastern Germany. While the Oberlausitz always had been a center for religious deviance, it seemed that the social-economic changes in these years strengthened not only the possibilities for alternative socio-religious formations,

²⁶ In his analysis of the transitions between the household of the agricultural communities and the bourgeois family and the shifts in understandings of gender, historian Marion Gray shows the significance of marriage and household practice in pre-capitalist social formations. Marion W. Gray, *Productive Men, Reproductive Women. The Agrarian Household and the Emergence of Separate Spheres During the German Enlightenment* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000).

²⁷ See Gillian Townsley, "Gender Trouble in Corinth: Que(e)rying Constructs of Gender in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *Bible and Critical Theory* 2, no. 2 (2006) for an excellent analysis of gender in Corinth, that perhaps is not so far from what was taking place in Herrnhaut.

²⁸ Seidel "Haupt-Schlüssel," 217n.

²⁹ See Gray, *Productive Men, Reproductive Women*, 25–48, for a clear presentation of these social structures.

but also the rigidity of an orthodoxy in rapid decline.³⁰ On the one hand, then, Seidel's comments relate to issues of gender and sexual behavior in the speeches. For example, as a response to the first quote above, where Zinzendorf admonishes the brothers not to gain too much of an appetite for sisterly bliss, Seidel notes: "Why not in German: Sodomy [*Sodomiterrey*]. A knower of nobility, sitting in Hennersdorf, would have known about it, perhaps the lord Count remembers his own procedure."³¹ As response to Zinzendorf's statement that the male sex has "a perpetual veneration" for the female sex, and that the brothers can hardly wait to become similar to the body that has carried him [i.e. Mary], Seidel replies with reference to Philippians 3:21, "In my Bible it says: that we will be similar to his glorified body etc. and not that we will become akin to the holy virgin Mary, and to hand in the sign of manhood,"³² thus not convinced by Zinzendorf's eschatological sex-change. Interestingly, he never challenges Zinzendorf's references to Ephesians.

On the other hand, the introduction is preoccupied with what we might call the social consequences of Zinzendorf's behavior and dealings within the Moravian community, while the comments to the speeches are focused on ridiculing the theology of marriage in the community. What is the relationship – if any – between the two parts?

The introduction is a 24-page litany of misdeeds by Zinzendorf and the passiveness of the authorities. Much of Seidel's anger is focused on money matters: How Zinzendorf is redirecting funds for orphans into his own community chest, how he is undermining local trade by dealing with the English and Dutch cloth traders, as well as trading in silk, calico and other precious linens, spices, cotton and leather goods, which he has monopolized. All in all, because of Zinzendorf, money is flowing out of the country, when Zinzendorf and the Brethren initiate other ventures under other 'Sovereigns'.³³ Yet another problem is that the Brethren are undermining the guilds by not recognizing specialized labor, and employing

30 For a description of the religious conditions in the Oberlausitz in these years, see Alexander Schunka, "Die Oberlausitz zwischen Prager Frieden und Wiener Kongreß (1615 Bis 1815)," in *Geschichte der Oberlausitz: Herrschaft, Gesellschaft und Kultur vom Mittelalter bis zum Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Joachim Bahlcke (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2001), 153–59.

31 Seidel, "Haupt-Schlüssel," 35n. "*warum nicht teutsch, Sodomiterrey. Ein gewisser von Adel so in Hennersdorf gesessen, möchte was davon gewust haben, vielleicht besinnt sich der Herr Graf auf sein Procedere.*"

32 *Ibid.*, 65n. "*In meiner Bibel steht: daß wir ähnlich werden seinem verklärten Leibe und nicht, daß wir der H. Jungfrau Maria ähnlich werden, und das männliche Zeichen abgeben sollen.*"

33 Seidel "Haupt-Schlüssel," 13–4.

people from the congregation on the basis of a couple of weeks of training. Seidel regards Zinzendorf as a dangerous man, because of the funds at his fingertips, and his vast network of communities to which he can send the best manufacturers within 24 hours, thus crushing any local industry.

All of these issues are indicative of a socio-economic system in disruption and the institutions that Seidel sees as being under attack: community, the guilds and the family (or household and marriage) are precisely the traditional intermediate authorities that the emerging states were trying to break down.³⁴ However, even with all of this going on, Seidel identifies the marriage ideology of the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine as the problem, which perhaps is not so disproportionate as it initially would seem:

Finally, there is the whole Zinzendorfsche faith and the Moravian Brethren religion, into which the Count's brand newly invented Marriage Sacrament has tumbled, and the so-called Procurator-Ehen now constitute the entire economy of salvation. From these marriages, children without original sin may be born. When he now will have several thousand of such community children together, one can easily assume what kind of fits he then will venture. Out of sorrow/regret I cannot contemplate this filth any further, and in order that one should not think that too much is put upon him, one may here read the speeches given and drafted by the lord count himself, which he gave in the so-called Marriage-quarterlies.³⁵

What Seidel here draws attention to, is the matter of physical and ideological reproduction, which of course is a crucial part of the household within any economic system. While he spends over 300 pages attempting to denigrate the theological foundation of the Herrnhuter marriage ideology, he fails to realize that the marriage ideology really only is a part of the household and community structure of the Brüdergemeine. If anything in the congregation is to be named the entire economy of salvation it is the choir structure, but Seidel is proceeding from what he perceives to be fundamental and attacking what he thinks is the *fons et origo* of the community – all of this without realizing that the world is rapidly changing.

³⁴ Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 29–52.

³⁵ “*Endlich ist nun der gantze Zinzendorfsche Glaube und die Mährische Brüderreligion, in das von den Grafen Spann Nagel-neu erfundene Ehestands-Sakrament rein gespurtzelt, und die sogenannten Procurator-Ehen sind nun tota æconomia salutis. Aus diesen Ehen können nun Kinder ohne Erb-Sünde gebohren werden, wenn er nun etliche tausend dergleichen Gemein-Kinder wird bey-sammen haben, so kan man leichte vermuthen, was er hernach vor Anfälle wagen wird. Ich kan for Jammer an diesen Unflath nicht weiter denken, und damit man nicht meine, man thue ihn zu viel, so lese man hier, die von den Herrn Grafen selbst gehaltenene und aufgesetzten Reden, so er in den sogenannten Ehestands-viertel-Stunden abgelegt.*”

I now want to return to Ephesians, and use the above notes to comment upon some of the issues in Ephesian scholarship and the wider Herrnhut project of which this is a part. The comments in this last section should be seen more as gestures towards a larger argument and further work, rather than any conclusive analyses.

5 Ephesians generally and Zinzendorf especially

In his 1971 study of Ephesians 5:21–33, Paul Sampley notes that Ephesians scholarship in recent years was entering a new phase, in which authenticity, which had so dominated earlier investigations, was beginning to be replaced by critical studies, which examined the letter in its own right.³⁶ While it still seems that authorship and dating constitute major themes in the exegesis of this letter,³⁷ Sampley's study is nevertheless first in line of what will come to occupy feminist exegesis, namely the critical focus on the household code, the imagery of the body and the *hieros gamos*.³⁸

Most of the feminist studies engaging these topics note that there is a problem in the use of the metaphors in chapter 5. Jennifer Bird and Carolyn Osiek both point to how the congregation is presented as being both the bride of Christ and the body of Christ.³⁹ Christine Gerber notes the shift in corporeal metaphors between 5:20–23, where initially Christ is in a position of royal power,

36 J. Paul Sampley, *“And the Two Shall Become One Flesh”: A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21–33*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 1.

37 The authorship issues naturally concern the question of whether this letter is an authentic Pauline letter, or whether it is Pseudo-Pauline, or the more insipid Post- or Deutero-Pauline. In his commentary on Ephesians, John Muddiman's 54-page introduction is mostly devoted to discussing the authorship issue and its consequences, see John Muddiman, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries. (London/New York: Continuum, 2001).

38 See, e.g. Jennifer G. Bird, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, eds. Fernando F. Segovia and R.S. Sugirtharajah (London: T&T Clark, 2007); Carolyn Osiek, “The Bride of Christ (5:22–23): A Problematic Wedding,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 32, no. 1 (2002); Christine Gerber, “Die Alte Braut und Christi Leib. Zum Ekklesiologischen Entwurf des Epheserbriefs,” *New Testament Studies* 59, no. 02 (2013); Sarah J. Tanzer, “Ephesians,” in *Searching the Scriptures, Volume Two: A Feminist Commentary*, eds. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Ann Brock, and Shelly Matthews (New York: Crossroad, 1994); Merz, “Inter-textual Transformation.”

39 See Bird, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” 275; Osiek, “The Bride of Christ,” 34.

with everything at his feet (20) and then in 22b–23, Christ becomes the head of the body that is the *ekklesia*.⁴⁰ However, the body is also a central feature of some of the older and old-school research on Ephesians. Here the problem is more what the sources to this particular image were, and the suggestions range from Gnostic redeemer myths (Käsemann) to Stoicism.⁴¹ Or, research questions focus on the differences between Paul's understanding of the body-metaphor as articulated in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians.⁴² These varying clusters around the body of Christ would seem to indicate that here is a central problem, which not only concerns its function within the argument of the letter, but also presents a fundamental challenge to the interpreters of the letters deploying the body of Christ to articulate community.⁴³

In her response to attempts to salvage the meaning of the imagery, Gerber points out that “here, the verbal imageries are not pretty dressings of a thought, but rather fundamental and indispensable, because they make something, for which there exists no negotiated conceptual language, imaginable and communicable.”⁴⁴ This point interested me immensely because what I am arguing in relation to my larger project on Zinzendorf's choir-speeches is that his ample use of ‘body of Christ’ is an attempt to articulate new relations in a changing world. More precisely, I have identified two recurring features in the choir-speeches I am analyzing, namely a constant reference to the body of Christ and great attention to the members' own bodies.⁴⁵ To briefly capitulate the argument, the bodies of the members are drawn into relation with the body of Christ either directly (e.g., analogy between women's vaginas and the side-wound of Christ) or via the choir

40 Gerber, “Die Alte Braut und Christi Leib,” 205–06. She also points to the “mismatch” in 2:14–16, where the body is on the one hand an *organon* of members and as a unity of two peoples under one head, a mixing of images that cannot avoid breakdown of meaning.

41 See discussion of sources in Sampley, ‘*And the Two Shall Become One Flesh*’, 61–66.

42 Ernest Best, *Ephesians* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2004), 189–96; see also Merz, “Intertextual Transformation.”

43 I address some of these challenges in Christina Petterson, “Imagining the Body of Christ,” in *Sexuality, Ideology, and the Bible: Queer Readings from the Antipodes*, eds. Robert J. Myles and Caroline Blyth (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, [2014]).

44 Gerber, “Die Alte Braut und Christi Leib,” 216 [my translation.]

45 This is the focus of the analysis in Petterson, “Imagining the Body of Christ.” For an analysis of the production of masculinity in relation to Christ in the community see Petterson, “Männlichkeit im Radikal-Pietismus des 18. Jahrhunderts,” in *Männlichkeit und Reproduktion. Zum gesellschaftlichen Ort historischer und aktueller Männlichkeitsproduktionen*, eds. Andreas Heilmann, et al., *Kulturelle Figurationen: Artefakte, Praktiken, Fiktionen* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, [2014]).

structure (which follows the humanity of Christ and the stages he went through). What I argue is that these relations introduce a level of mediation, which at the same time individualizes and creates a community, generating, as it were, an individual who at the same time is an individual as well as a member of a community.⁴⁶ This community-building replaces the traditional forms of society, namely community, guilds, and family. In the case of the *Brüdergemeine*, this shows up in the arrangement of the household as a household of choirs, which are the groups into which the congregation is divided and according to which they led their daily lives: Widows; widowers; married sisters; married brothers; single sisters; single brothers; big girls; big boys; small girls; small boys.

What about in Ephesians? Gerber's primary argument in her article is that the *ekklēsia* in Ephesians does not denote a universal church, but rather a local congregation, which is consistent with her refusal to see the metaphors as denoting an already existing structure. Her analysis is thus primarily on the potential of the metaphor of Christ's body and its ability to articulate what the term *ekklēsia* cannot; namely the organic unity of the whole.⁴⁷ However, if the language in Ephesians is attempting to conceptualize something for which there is no referent, then this gives us a quite different image of the stability of the Roman Empire and its patriarchal gender structure, with which many biblical scholars are currently enamored. Struggles in terms of gender, worship, power and so on are almost always regarded as either an internal Christian conflict, or an early Christianity trying to come to terms with a static Roman Empire. However, if we take a cue from Zinzendorf, we see that these new gender configurations do not simply appear, but relate to broader socio-economic change, within which gender, sexual relations and household are categories in transition, not just within nascent Christianity, but in the growing pains of the Roman Empire, as it shifted gear, and took on a new level of control.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Hanns-Joachim Wollstadt, *Geordnetes Dienen in der christlichen Gemeinde*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 25–26.

⁴⁷ Gerber, "Die Alte Braut und Christi Leib," 217.

⁴⁸ See Roland Boer, "Paul's Uncertain Transitions," *Bible and Critical Theory* 7, no. 2 (2011). Although Boer does not take either gender or household into account in his analysis, it is nevertheless important because of its inclusion of the dynamics of the empire, and its own developments. For an analysis that amply addresses gender and household, see Alan Cadwallader, "The Markan/Marxist Struggle for the Household: Juliet Mitchell and the Challenge to Patriarchal/Familial Ideology," in *Marxist Feminist Criticism of the Bible*, eds. Roland Boer and Jorunn Økland (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008).

6 Summary

In reading the reception of Ephesians within the socio-economic transitions in eighteenth-century Europe, I have drawn attention to the letter's metaphors of community and gender as particularly positive elements within Zinzendorf's interpretation of marriage and afterlife. I have then gestured towards the opposite direction; that is, encouraging reading Ephesians, and other New Testament texts in light of social upheavals and new understandings of household and gender, not only within early Christianity, but within the larger Roman world.

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