

Winelle Kirton-Roberts

*New Herrnhut To Norre Gade: Moravian Mission From The Estate To The Street, 1732-1882*

This paper offers a geo-spiritual study of Moravian mission in St Thomas, tracing the movement from the estate settlement of New Herrnhut to the urban ministry centred at Norre Gade between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Drawing on original documents, maps, architectural plans, and mission records, it examines how Moravian theology, communal discipline, and missionary practice were embedded in landscapes and buildings. New Herrnhut is analysed as an attempt to reproduce the spatial and spiritual order of European Moravian settlements within an enslaved society. At the same time, Moravian missions at New Herrnhut reproduced racial hierarchy, economic exploitation, and expectations of obedience among enslaved Africans. The paper then considers the nineteenth-century shift to Charlotte Amalie, where emancipation, urbanisation, education, and the growth of a free Black population made the estate model increasingly untenable. The construction of the Moravian Memorial Church at Norre Gade in 1882 represented a new form of Moravian community: urban, socially diverse, architecturally ambitious, and shaped by the agency and aspirations of free Virgin Islanders. By comparing these two sites, the study argues that Moravian space in St Thomas changed from an instrument of disciplined mission within slavery to a public expression of religious belonging, mobility, and integration after emancipation, while retaining continuities in worship, education, music, and communal identity