

*Zinzendorf's 34 Homilies on the Litany of the Wounds – A Moravian Emotional Style?*

Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf delivered his thirty-four homilies on the Litany of the Wounds in 1747 in Herrnhag during a period of intensified religious tension within the Moravians, at the height of the so-called Sifting Time. Convinced that, in the wider Christian world, faith in the cross and the wounds of Christ had deteriorated into little more than empty phrases, Zinzendorf employed these homilies to put images of the cross, and of the blood and wounds of Christ, vividly before the eyes and into the hearts of the Brethren. As has been noted before (Peucker 2015; Keller 2013), Zinzendorf at times likened preachers to painters, insofar as their task was to paint the bleeding Christ into the hearts of their listeners. In keeping with this understanding, he adopted an exceptionally graphic and sensorially charged language in these homilies, one that renders the blood and wounds of Christ with striking immediacy and appears deliberately designed to elicit emotional and even bodily responses from his audience. His aim was, quite literally, to create an "air" permeated by the scent of the cross and the dead body of Christ meant to penetrate each individual Moravian and to anchor a genuine, childlike faith deep within their hearts.

However, as the homilies emphasize, such faith is not confined to the heart, but is to be reflected in the behavior and emotional life of believers. Zinzendorf promotes and calls for the adoption of specific emotional practices involving the embodiment and performance of that faith in daily life. According to him, the brethren's entire 'signature' and 'physiognomy' get transformed as a result and marker of authentic faith. They are urged to become ever more 'Jesus-like' in their natural simplicity, 'copies' of an 'original'. Consequently, they grow more similar to one another through the embodiment and emotional performance of their faith.

This paper examines whether an approach to the history of emotions such as that proposed by Monique Scheer, grounded in practice theory (Scheer 2012), can illuminate the ways in which Zinzendorf employed these homilies to try to establish a distinctly Moravian 'emotional style' rooted in the theology of the blood and wounds of Christ – one not only designed to reassure the Brethren of their shared faith, but also, through its very distinctiveness and inimitability, to serve as a means of distinguishing true believers from hypocrites.