

Our Lamb Has Conquered, Let Us Follow Him!:
A Rhetorical Analysis of the Seal of the Moravian Church using
Sonja Foss' Visual Rhetoric Schema and Cara Finnegan's Image Vernacular

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Dedication

For Robert and Lois Conrad, my beloved grandparents,
who inspired this project with their lifelong commitment
to the Moravian Church and its principles.

I am forever grateful for the Christian
foundation that you built our family upon.

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To my dad – Thank you for the way you have built our household and raised our family in the teachings of the Lord. The wisdom you have shared with me has forever shaped my understanding of life, love, and Truth.

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Finally, and most importantly, my utmost gratitude belongs to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. My work, my life, and all my love belong to You.

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Abstract

This study rhetorically and visually analyzed the seal of the Moravian Church using Sonja Foss' theory of visual rhetoric and Cara Finnegan's image vernacular. Two versions of the seal were analyzed to provide a more thorough assessment of the function of the seal. Foss' theory and Finnegan's framework provide a method for analysis that explores the history, obvious elements and themes, implied concepts and themes, and the functions of the artifact. Using these frameworks, this study found that four themes emerged. The seal acts as a representation of the Moravian church, a calling, a promise, and a reminder for those that encounter it. This study concludes that the multi-faceted functions posit it as a form of constitutive rhetoric that is worthy of study and analysis.

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*“In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty;
and in all things, love.”*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Ours is a visual age. The image seems to have taken over the written word as we are confronted more than ever before with visuals in our everyday lives.”¹
-Sonja Foss

Since the fourth century BC, communication has been studied using the approaches and vocabulary of rhetorical theory. Rhetorical analysts over the years have centered their focus on the spoken and written word. These media were seen as perhaps the only and most significant way of communicating. Words formed the foundation of communication.² It was not until 1970 that it was formally decided that visual images should be included in the study of rhetoric. Until that point, rhetoric had been seen as strictly a verbal field of study.³

In addition to accessing a broader range of human experiences, including visual images in rhetorical studies provides a more holistic picture of symbol use. By limiting rhetorical studies to discourse alone, scholars might easily overlook important information about communicative processes that narrow and distort the understanding of symbols. On the other hand, including visual imagery in rhetoric enables potentially greater understanding of a larger array of symbols used in the communicative process.

Sonja Foss is among the well-established scholars in the area of visual rhetoric. Her theory of visual rhetoric examines physical objects as communicative artifacts. In this theory, Foss explains how to examine the nature and function of images to understand both what they

¹ Sonja Foss, “Rhetoric and the Visual Image: A Resource Unit,” *Communication Education*, 31(1), 55-66 (1982): 55.

² Sonja Foss, *Theory of Visual Rhetoric. Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2005): 141-152.

³ Thomas Sloan, Richard Gregg, Thomas Nilsen, Irving Rein, Herbert Simons, Hemann Stelzner, and Donald Zacharias. “Report of the Committee of the Advancement and Refinement of Rhetorical Criticism,” *Report of the National Development Project* (1971): 220.

are communicating and how well they accomplish their function. Many studies have used Foss' framework for analyzing visual artifacts as forms of visual rhetoric, showing the credibility and usefulness of her approach. These studies illustrate how Foss' theory can be applied in an analysis of visual images.

The present study seeks to build on the framework of previous studies and apply Foss' schema for the rhetorical study of visual phenomenon to a new case. Accordingly, this qualitative study will explore the rhetorical value of the seal of the Moravian church. The main methodology of this thesis derives from Foss' theory of visual rhetoric. Using Foss' theoretical schema, this project will rhetorically analyze the seal of the Moravian church. The following chapter provides a review of existing literature concerning Foss' framework, a review of existing studies that have used Foss' theory of visual rhetoric, and existing research on the history and purpose of the Moravian church.

HISTORY OF THE MORAVIAN CHURCH

According to Evelyn Hasse, the Moravian church began in 1457, forty years after John Hus was burned at the stake for heresy against the Catholic Church. Hus was a Bohemian priest, philosopher, and reformer who studied at Prague University. He began as an orthodox Catholic, and went on to become a priest at Prague University and later Bethlehem Chapel. His ministry preaching centered on discussions about moral character and attacked the sins and vices of all classes. Hus' preaching escalated to attacking the vices of the clergy, and while this greatly angered the clergy, the people loved Hus.⁴

Soon thereafter, Hus began studying the works of John Wycliffe and realized that this English Reformist was right. He began preaching Wycliffe's teachings in the boldest way possible from the pulpit. In Prague, at this same time, Pope John began selling indulgences to raise money for an army to go to war with the King of Naples, claiming that if the people would buy these indulgences they would be forgiven of all their sins. Hus spoke out against the Pope saying, "Let who will proclaim the contrary; let the Pope, or a Bishop, or a Priest say 'I forgive thee thy sins; I free thee from the pains of Hell.' It is all vain, and helps thee nothing. God alone, I repeat, can forgive sins through Christ."⁵ It was ultimately this type of inflammatory language that got Hus burned at the stake for heresy against the Catholic Church.

Feelings of bitterness and dissatisfaction with the Papal Church continued to grow after Hus' death, and in 1457, his devout followers withdrew entirely from the Roman Communion. Under the name "Frates Legis Christi," which means Brethren of the Law of Christ, this group set the Bible as the sole standard of authority in both faith and practice. According to Hasse,

⁴ Evelyn Hasse, *Leaders of Revival: The Moravians* (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1911): 11.

⁵ Joseph Hutton, *A History of the Moravian Church* (Charleston: Bibliobazaar, 2006): 22.

“...all alike were one in the determination to shape their lives according to the Word of God, to submit to no unscriptural, priestly rule, and enjoy the full liberty wherewith Christ has set His people free.”⁶ This original group was not only evangelical but also evangelistic, making missionary work the forefront of their purpose.

Beginning in Bohemia, the group quickly spread throughout Poland and Moravia. They suffered greatly during the Thirty Years’ War, when persecution raged against the group sometimes called the Bohemian Brethren. They were reduced from three million to eight hundred thousand. The Brethren disappeared almost entirely from the Bohemian land, but resurfaced in Saxony, Germany in 1722 on the estate of Count Zinzendorf, a German man who believed and supported the beliefs of the group. He provided them a safe haven to rebuild their community. The new settlement was called Herrnhut, meaning “the Lord’s watch.” A large group of the brethren had flocked to Saxony from Moravia. The group grew rapidly, and it did not take long for their reaches to stretch far beyond Herrnhut.

Count Zinzendorf acted as the leader of this group and is most noted for his passion for missionary work. The fundamental principles advocated in the Moravian church developed from the teachings of Zinzendorf at Herrnhut in its early beginnings. He advocated themes such as obedience in civil and ecclesiastical laws of the country where the Moravian missionaries were working, and he forbid any meddling in political affairs or controversial issues that might arise in the countries where the Moravian missionaries preached. Perhaps most fundamental to the ideas that are today strongly advocated in the Moravian church is the concept of self-effacement. Zinzendorf strongly advocated promoting the cause of Christ above one’s own. In John Weinlick’s biography of Count Zinzendorf, he says that the subject matter of Zinzendorf’s

⁶ Hasse, *Leaders of Revival: The Moravians*, 11.

preaching can be summed up in four main points, of which the Moravian church has built their system of beliefs:

1. The essential, sole, and eternal divinity of him who became man.
2. The essential, real, and complete humanity of God who is in heaven.
3. Grace, the only means of salvation for men, and the pardon of every sin by the merits of the sacrificed Lamb.
4. The precious privilege that Jesus obtained for us by his blood, namely, deliverance from sin, and the power to lead a spiritual life.⁷

According to Paul Blewitt and Simon Reynolds, “The Moravians were missionary pioneers. As early as 1732, only ten years after the founding of Herrnhut, their first missionaries were sent out to the island of St. Thomas in the West Indies. Missionary work in North America, Greenland and parts of Africa quickly followed.”⁸ Archives of the church’s history can still be found in Herrnhut in Germany as well as Winston-Salem, North Carolina and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

The Moravian church has been known by a number of different names since its beginnings in the early 1400’s. The original Bohemian name was Jednota Bratrská, but it was changed shortly after its beginnings to the Latin name *Unitas Fratrum*, which means Unity of the Brethren. This Latin name was inherited from one of the earliest Protestant churches, the Bohemian Brethren. It has also operated under names such as Brethren’s Church, the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren, and the Church of the United Brethren. The name was formally changed

⁷ John R Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956): 140.

⁸ Paul Blewitt and Simon Reynolds, “The Moravian Church Archives and Library,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 22(2), 193-203 (2001): 194.

to the Moravians to distinguish from the Church of the Brethren, which was a group commonly known as the Dunkards and the United Brethren.⁹

The church operates under the motto, “In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, love.”¹⁰ It is this fundamental idea of unity that inspired the creation of the seal of the Moravian church and forms the foundation of all visual representations of the group. The following chapters will explore the seal of the Moravian church in more detail in an effort to understand its rhetorical function.

⁹ Fredric Klees, *The Pennsylvania Dutch* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1975): 91-121.

¹⁰ *The Moravian Church*, Moravian Church in North America, <http://www.moravian.org/> (2010).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

“If we wish fully to understand the role of rhetorical communication...we should open ourselves up to the multiple and marvelous ways that rhetoric can be visual.”¹¹
-Lester Olson

Communication today encompasses a vast array of areas worthy of study. It has become more commonly accepted to study many different objects as potential communicators. A painting, a song, a building, or a dance could all be considered forms of communication if examined from such a viewpoint.¹² Today it is understood that humans can communicate more than just verbally, but to what extent should other elements be regarded as forms of communication?

FOSS’ FRAMEWORK

Sonja Foss’ theory of visual rhetoric investigates physical objects as communicative artifacts. In this theory, Foss explains how to examine the nature and function of images in an effort to understand what they are communicating. This study will present a rhetorical analysis of an artifact using Foss’ theoretical framework found in the theory of visual rhetoric. As such, it is imperative that there be an understanding of this framework. The following section analyzes existing research on Foss’ theory, examines studies that have applied this theoretical framework to an image, and shows how these elements relate to the present study.

As mentioned above, in 1970, The Speech Communication Association held the National Conference on Rhetoric where a proposal from conference participants recommended an

¹¹ Lester Olson, Cara Finnegan, and Dianne Hope, *Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2008): 1.

¹² Foss, *Theory of Visual Rhetoric. Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media*, 141-152.

expansion of the study of rhetoric to include more than only verbal elements. The participants suggested that rhetorical criticism “may be applied to any human act, process, product, or artifact that may formulate, sustain, or modify attention, perceptions, attitudes, or behavior.”¹³ The proposal was accepted, broadening the field of rhetoric to include the study of essentially any element that could affect human perception or behavior.

Despite the formal decision to broaden the field of rhetoric, not all rhetoricians were so willing to accept all elements as worthy of study. Visual images became more commonly accepted as a part of rhetorical studies when Douglas Ehninger, a well-known rhetorician, developed a definition of rhetoric that did not favor verbal symbols, but included visual images as well. Ehninger defined rhetoric as the ways that humans “may influence each other’s thinking and behavior through the strategic use of symbols.”¹⁴ He also suggested that art, architecture, dance, and dress be included as appropriate subject matter for rhetorical study.

Sonja Foss states that she created the theory of visual rhetoric for a variety of reasons. The theory of visual rhetoric is designed to allow an approach to the visual environment from a rhetorical perspective. That is, it should increase awareness of the visual phenomena in surrounding environments and decrease the tolerance of the elements that may cause negative responses.¹⁵ The purpose of studying artifacts rhetorically is to gain an understanding of the meaning of images in an effort to use them appropriately. This is especially important as today’s society is becoming increasingly driven by visual elements.

¹³ Sloan, et al, “Report of the Committee of the Advancement and Refinement of Rhetorical Criticism,” 220.

¹⁴ Douglas Ehninger, *Contemporary Rhetoric: A Reader’s Coursebook*, (Glenview: Scott Foresman, 1972): 3.

¹⁵ Foss, “Rhetoric and the Visual Image: A Resource Unit,” 55-63.

In an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, author Michael Schrage explains the developing culture of society with reference to visual images. Schrage writes as follows:

There is little question that our media shape our culture--and no question that we're shifting from a culture built on words to one based on images. Figuring for media-hype inflation, a picture's worth 10,000 words these days and a film clip is worth even more. Words are now those things that simply link up the images; a complement to communication, not a focus. Movies and videos--not speeches and texts--determine cultural literacy.¹⁶

As Schrage notes, today's culture is largely shaped by visual images. Foss values the image as a communicative element that she says is often more effective than words in the process of communicating meaning. Sonja Foss and Maria Kanengieter write, "We no longer live in a logocracy – a culture based on verbal texts – but in a culture characterized by omnipresent visual images in forms such as television, film, billboards, architecture, and dress."¹⁷ These authors give several reasons for the growing merit in the field of visual rhetoric that led to the creation of Foss' theory.

First, Foss states that the reason for the flourishing study of visual images in rhetoric is "the pervasiveness of the visual image and its impact on contemporary culture"¹⁸ She goes on to state that images in the form of advertisements, television, film, interior design, dress, and architecture now make up a large part of the rhetorical field. Foss even states, "as much as

¹⁶ Michael Schrage, "Picture This: A Society at a Loss For Words," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 January 1990: D1, D6.

¹⁷ Sonja Foss and Maria Kanengieter, "Visual Communication in the Basic Course," *Communication Education*, 41(3), 312-323 (1992): 312.

¹⁸ Foss, *Theory of Visual Rhetoric. Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media*, 142.

rhetorical scholars may feel nostalgia for a culture in which public speeches were the symbols that had primary impact, that culture is gone.”

Another reason that Foss lists as a cause for the growth of visual imagery from a rhetorical perspective is that the visual image provides access to human experiences that are not always easily communicated with speech or discourse. Feelings and emotions are limited to discursive language if symbols and visual images are not included in rhetorical studies. Words, even in their most descriptive and elaborate form, are lacking in the ability to communicate all human experiences. Visual imagery allows the communication of human experiences that are multidimensional, spatially oriented, nonlinear, and dynamic.

As the theory of visual rhetoric is becoming better known in the field of rhetorical studies, more objects are being examined from a rhetorical viewpoint. In one article, Dorothy Walsh describes the function of pictures as communicators. The author seeks to show that there is a deeper meaning in pictures. The author also notes that information is at risk when communicated through pictures as it is more exploitative than explanatory. This article is important for a rhetorical study of an image, as it must be noted that studies of images are more subjective than more verbal elements, however, this article also shows that there is still relevance for studying images rhetorically despite their subjective nature.¹⁹

Adding visual images to the study of rhetoric has not been a seamless process. When it was first proposed that visual rhetoric be added to the field of rhetorical studies, there was considerable debate as to whether visual artifacts could actually be studied rhetorically. There were many who believed that rhetoricians simply are not trained to deal with images or other forms of nonverbal rhetoric. In one article, five different rhetoricians share their divergent views

¹⁹ Dorothy Walsh, “Some Functions of Pictorial Representation,” *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 2132-2138 (1981): 32-37.

regarding appropriate objects for rhetorical criticism. Waldo Braden was one of the participating rhetoricians who believed that only verbal elements should be studied in rhetoric. Braden stated, “I argue that by inclination and training most of us are best qualified to study the speech or rhetorical act.”²⁰ Other scholars in the field of rhetoric suggested that studying discourse is superior to images in rhetoric because of its direct impact on public communication.

Foss admits that studying visual images rhetorically poses a few problems as communication scholars are not all as well-equipped and trained to study visual images as they are speech, but advertising, public relations, film, television, theater, and journalism are examples of areas where the image is the central focus. Studying the visual images in these areas is a necessity to understanding how they function.²¹

Debate continues as to the precise ways in which visual images differ from discourse, but it is clear that there are some fundamental differences that require attention. For example, propositions and theses are not expressed by visual images. Images only appear to propose things because viewers attribute propositions to them. Images also lack denotative vocabulary. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to characterize every aspect of a visual image or replace it with a similar counterpart. Basically, there is no thesaurus in the visual world.

Foss’ theory of visual rhetoric provides a framework for analyzing visual images separately from discursive elements. This is important as today’s society is becoming increasingly visual. The field of communication has grown through the years to include visual studies such as art and graphic design and now also appropriates visual rhetoric. This addition to

²⁰ Foss, *Theory of Visual Rhetoric. Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media*, 142.

²¹ Sonja Foss, “Visual Imagery As Communication,” *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 12(1), 85-90 (1992): 85.

the field of communication broadens the possibilities and capabilities of communicators to include elements that were formerly thought of as a separate genre. As such, it is imperative that there be some form of evaluating what images are communicating in an effort to increase awareness of the visible world and decrease the tolerance of elements that invoke negative responses. Sonja Foss' theory of visual rhetoric provides this form of evaluation, making it possible to study what images are communicating.

In the handbook on her theory of visual rhetoric, Foss describes the term "visual rhetoric" as having two different meanings. First, this term is used to represent the visual object, or artifact. It also means the perspective on the study of visual data. In the first sense, visual rhetoric refers to the products that are created for the purpose of communicating. That is, the artifact will be viewed as a form of visual rhetoric in an effort to understand what is being communicated. In the second sense, visual rhetoric is the perspective used by scholars to focus on symbolic processes that use images to communicate. In the present study, for example, the seal of the Moravian Church is the visual artifact ("visual rhetoric I") while Foss' theoretical framework for visual rhetoric is the "perspective" on visual rhetoric ("visual rhetoric II").

Foss first addresses the term "visual rhetoric" as it refers to the image as an artifact. Not all objects are considered visual rhetoric. There are three markers that must be present for a visual image to be considered visual rhetoric. The image must be symbolic, involve human intervention, and be presented for the purpose of communicating with an audience. The following is an explanation of these three requirements that classify an element as visual rhetoric.

To qualify as visual rhetoric, an image must go beyond simply communicating meaning; it must be indirectly connected to its reference point. If an object is connected to its reference point for no apparent reason, it is considered visual rhetoric, thus, if meaning has been applied to

an object, it is considered visual rhetoric. For example, the shape of a stop sign has no inherent meaning that communicates that a car should stop. Someone that was simply developing a way to regulate traffic created these dimensions. Because there is no inherent meaning associated with an octagon and stopping, this is considered visual rhetoric. This arbitrary connection between visual images and a deeper meaning allows scholars to investigate the symbolic action of images.

The second element that classifies visual rhetoric is human intervention. There must be some kind of human action involved in creating an image that becomes visual rhetoric. This process involves conscious decisions to communicate meaning through the use of images. Objects are not inherently rhetorical. They only become so when humans decide to use them as rhetoric. For example, an eagle is simply a bird in nature. Americans have decided to use this bird as a symbol of freedom, and so it has become visual rhetoric.

The final marker that is required to make an object an element of visual rhetoric is the presence of an audience. Visual rhetoric is concerned with an appeal to a real or ideal audience. While self-expression may be a driving force in the reasoning that an image is created, it is not the only purpose. Visual rhetoric requires the function of communication with an audience. It is possible that the creator is the audience, but this is still more than self-expression so long as the purpose is to cultivate ideas or images as desired by the creator. These three markers will be applied in this study to the Moravian seal to discover what meaning is communicated.

As already stated, the term “visual rhetoric” also refers to the perspective scholars may take on a visual image or data. In this meaning, the term “visual rhetoric” presents a theoretical framework that allows for the analysis of the communicative aspects of visual rhetoric. This perspective focuses on these communicative aspects of visual images. It is from this perspective that scholars can use the theory of visual rhetoric. This theory is not comprised of axioms or

concepts, but rather it is comprised of the perspectives of the viewer as to how visual artifacts function communicatively.²²

It is important to note that this theory focuses on the rhetorical response to visual images, not the aesthetic response. Foss states that aesthetic responses are the viewer's direct perceptions of the sensory elements of an image, which might include enjoying the color, texture, or form of an object. There is no purpose beyond simply having the experience. However, in a rhetorical response, meaning is ascribed to the visual image. Emotions, ideas, and feelings are inferred by the image and interpreted by the viewer.²³

Scholars who apply the theory of visual rhetoric to images are typically interested in an audience that has no knowledge of imagery such as design, art, aesthetics, or the like. The intended audience is comprised of individuals whose responses to images are not based on an understanding of art traditions but are based on how visual symbols communicate to the untrained eye.

In order to apply this theory, scholars typically follow three guidelines for assessing visual elements rhetorically. First, scholars assess the nature of the image. The presented elements and the suggested elements are identified. At this stage, elements such as space, medium, materials, and shapes are identified. These are the basic "obvious" elements of the visual image. The implied images are also identified. Themes, ideas, concepts, and allusions that are likely to be recognized by viewers from the image are noted. Analyzing the presented and suggested elements of an image allows the scholar to gain an understanding of the

²² Foss, *Theory of Visual Rhetoric. Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media*, 141-152.

²³ Sonja Foss, "A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery," *Communication Studies*, 45(3-4), 213-224 (1994): 213-223.

communicative elements that are present in a visual image. This understanding helps to develop a general meaning that is likely to be identified by audiences.²⁴

Secondly, scholars focus on the function of the image, which does not mean the purpose as intended by the creator of the image. Instead, the function of the image refers to the action the image communicates. From Foss' rhetorical viewpoint, once an image is created, it stands independent of a creator's intention.²⁵

Finally, scholars who apply this theory of visual rhetoric focus on an evaluation of the image, which ties the first two stages together. The scholar assesses whether the image accomplishes the function suggested by the image itself. Using this theoretical framework, the Moravian seal will be analyzed to understand the nature, function, and evaluation of the artifact, providing a rhetorical criticism of this element. Having discussed Foss' framework, this research will now move to a discussion of studies that have applied Foss' approach.

APPLICATION OF FOSS' FRAMEWORK

In an article written by Lawrence Mullen and Julie Fisher, a visual artifact is examined rhetorically. The authors elaborate Foss' method of rhetorical visual analysis to examine a prescription drug advertisement. The goal of the study was to investigate whether elaborating Foss' technique for analyzing visual images would be beneficial to rhetorical analyses of images. Foss provides two techniques for a rhetorical analysis of a visual image including "message formulation from images" and "evaluation of images."²⁶ Foss' schema for analyzing visual images includes identifying presented elements, processing presented elements, formulating the

²⁴ Foss, *Theory of Visual Rhetoric. Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media*, 141-152.

²⁵ Foss, "A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery," 215.

²⁶ Foss and Kanengieter, "Visual Communication in the Basic Course," 314.

message, identifying the function of the image, assessing the function, and analyzing the connection between the features and the function of the image.

In Mullen and Fisher's study, the authors seek to elaborate Foss' theory by consolidating the two techniques presented by Foss into one and clarifying Foss' idea of "presented elements." Mullen and Fisher divide Foss' term of presented elements into three categories including aesthetic, production, and nonverbal communicative elements believing that these divisions make it easier and more objective to classify the basic visual elements of an image. The authors state that Foss unnecessarily separates the message and the function, and they argue that the message is the function.

Using their elaborated method, the authors analyze an advertisement for Zyrtec and find several messages communicated by the image. The advertisement is composed of a picture of a woman in a seemingly wide-open space, possibly a field of flowers. She is either shoulder-deep in flowers or holding a bouquet. The authors state that the advertisement communicates a union between women and nature. They go on to explain the hidden theme of Mother Nature that overarches the ad. According to these authors, the function of the ad is to associate the drug with the universal Mother Nature symbolism. After explaining these aesthetic elements of the ad, the article goes on to describe both production and nonverbal elements of the ad, addressing aspects such as the woman smiling, her tilted head, the color, the typography, and the camera angle. The findings suggest that the aesthetic, production, and nonverbal visual elements contribute to the function of associating the drug, Zyrtec, with natural and motherly connotations. Overall, the findings suggest that the ad is successful in its persuasive efforts and that the underlying themes are appropriate for the given product.

Three criteria are used to judge whether elaborating Foss' schema was beneficial to assessing the visual image: explanatory power, internal consistency, and simplicity. The authors

conclude that the elaborated method is somewhat successful as it has an advantage in terms of explaining visual phenomena and the two methods logically fit together, suggesting that they are internally consistent. The three sections that the authors of this study create allow for a more organized and systematic way of viewing the presented elements, however, this elaborated method is less simple than Foss' original schema, failing to adhere to the theoretical concept of parsimony. This study was created to explore potential enhancements to Foss' theory, as these authors believed that it was lacking in systematic organization; however, Foss' theory proved to be most effective and theoretically correct for analyzing visual images.²⁷ Mullen and Fisher's article is important for the present study as it shows the value of Foss' theory and the concepts that make it one of the most prevalent schemas for studying visual rhetoric. The ambiguities and complications of the elaborated method used by Mullen and Fisher illustrate the simplicity and necessity of a theory such as Foss' for analyzing images rhetorically.

There are two different applications that Foss discusses for analyzing visual images: deductive and inductive. The deductive approach entails using visual imagery to explain, or illustrate, theories that are formed by the study of discourse. For this study, the second approach to the application of the theory of visual rhetoric on images, that is the inductive method, will be used. In this approach, scholars investigate images in order to generate rhetorical theory. This approach takes into account the characteristics of visual symbols. The approach begins with an exploration of visual images and proceeds inductively in order to generate rhetorical theories specific to the visual image itself. In this approach, scholars typically assume that visual images are significantly different from discursive symbols and should be studied as such. Scholars who

²⁷ Lawrence Mullen and Julie Fisher, "A Visual Analysis of Prescription Drug Advertising Imagery: Elaborating Foss's Rhetorical Techniques," *Communication Studies*, 55(1), 185-196 (2004): 185-196.

use this method are cautious about using rhetorical theory as it applies to discourse for visual images because of the differences between the two.²⁸

Because of these differences, scholars who take an inductive approach focus on the presented elements and functions of the image in order to develop an explanation of how visual symbols operate. Using the inductive approach, scholars typically assume that in order for visual symbols to be relevant to rhetorical studies, new theories or concepts should develop from the images; however, this is not always the case. Rhetorical studies may not necessarily create theories, but this does not negate the importance or value of analyzing visual images rhetorically.

One example of an inductive, image-based approach to the rhetorical analysis of images can be seen in a study done by G. J. Chryslie, S.K. Foss, and A.L. Ranney. In this study, the authors' objective was to examine the process of visual argumentation and discover key elements that could be applicable for understanding argumentation. The authors began with the basic premise that although there is a great deal of knowledge about argumentation as a process of discourse, this knowledge is not applicable to visual argumentation because of the differences in visual images and discursive symbols. They analyzed three different images including a chair, more specifically an Eames shell chair, the Central Police Headquarters in Columbus, Ohio, and a photograph of a World War I German soldier's dead body.

The authors used reason to arrive at claims. From their analysis, the authors were able to develop four elements involved in the process of argumentation through visual images. First, they concluded that form, style, and medium make up the presented facts of visual argumentation. Secondly, feelings are affective states evoked within the viewer as a result of the image. Third, function is the use of the element outside of how it is used as an image. Finally,

²⁸ Foss, *Theory of Visual Rhetoric. Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media*, 148.

knowledge is information that is accumulated by the viewer through previous experience or learning. This example shows how the authors used the inductive method of studying visual images to analyze the given elements, and they were able to deduce conclusions from the images rather than developing an understanding of the images from existing theories.²⁹ The use of the inductive method in Chrystle, Foss, and Ranney's article illustrates how researchers can effectively develop conclusions from visual images apart from theories, thus illustrating the effectiveness of the inductive approach to analyzing visual images.

These studies show specific examples of both deductive and inductive ways of applying Foss' theory of visual rhetoric to visual images. There are numerous examples of studies that have also used Foss' theory to analyze a visual image or element.

In an article written by Michael Graves, the Quaker Tapestry, a multi-panel embroidered depiction of Quaker history and belief, is explored in an effort to understand how this artifact invites audience responses. Graves is aided in his analysis by approaches to visual rhetoric developed by Sonja Foss and Perry Nodleman. In addition, Graves uses dialogic ethics to evaluate the function of the tapestry. He examines the importance of the Tapestry as a visual artifact. Graves states, "First, I should like to focus on the Tapestry's importance as an unusual and interesting visual artifact that has an acknowledged rhetorical purpose, that of developing a sense of unity or community out of perceived disunity and even alienation."³⁰

Graves goes on to explain how the Tapestry has influenced the Quaker community by symbolically creating a sense of unity. He explores the specific elements of the art form itself

²⁹ As cited in Foss, *Theory of Visual Rhetoric. Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media*, 150.

³⁰ Michael Graves, "The Quaker Tapestry: An Artistic Attempt To Stitch Together a Diverse Religious Community," *Journal of Communication & Religion*, 24(1), 1-42 (2001): 4.

that function to invite understanding of the Quaker culture including the choice of medium, materials, and design. Graves addresses specific elements such as the choice of crewel embroidery over weaving or other types of needlework to show how these visual artifacts have rhetorical meaning. According to Graves, the choice to use crewel work facilitates group unity because it allows for multiple artists to participate in the creation of the Tapestry as opposed to a woven work of art which would require one worker at a time. This choice requires and allows for community building in the process of the artistic endeavor.

In addition to using Foss' schema, Graves explores a set of concepts found in Nodleman's study on children's picture books. Because the Tapestry includes both the visual image and text, Foss' schema would have been insufficient for understanding the interplay between the two. According to Graves, Nodleman found two "paradoxical truths." First, words without pictures can be incomplete and vague, lacking the communication of important visual information. Second, pictures without words are also vague and incomplete, lacking focus, temporal relationships, and internal significance that can often be easily communicated with words. Thus, Nodleman asserts that words and pictures have a combative yet complementary relationship. Nodleman's concepts are particularly useful in analyzing the textual elements of the Tapestry.

Graves also chose the ethical system of "dialogic ethics" to assess the legitimacy of the Tapestry's function. According to Graves, dialogic ethics includes six criteria of judgment including authenticity, inclusion, confirmation, presentness, spirit of mutual equality, and supportive climate. Using these criteria, Graves finds that the Tapestry's attempt to move the Quaker community closer toward unity is about moving them towards authenticity, inclusion, confirmation, presentness, mutual equality, and a supportive climate. Graves asserts that the group that was developed to undertake the task of completing the Tapestry had a sort of "dialogic

communication.” The nature of the project allowed for and required a higher level of communication among the Friends.

Graves’ study of the Tapestry is important for the present study as it illustrates how Foss’ schema can be applied to a visual artifact. In addition, Graves’ use of Nodleman’s concepts for the textual elements of the artifact provides an excellent framework for analyzing the visual image as well as the textual. This will be important, as the present study will look at both the visual and the textual elements of the Moravian seal.

In another study, Lester Olson analyzes Benjamin Franklin’s commemorative medal called *Libertas Americana*. In 1782, the war for America’s independence was coming to an end. At this time, Benjamin Franklin proposed that a medal be designed to commemorate the American military victories over the British, specifically at Yorktown and Saratoga. The *Libertas Americana* medal was created and became internationally recognized as an expression of gratitude of the United States to France for their assistance in the American Revolution. According to Olsen, Franklin’s expression of gratitude was a diplomatic move that was designed to help strengthen the relationship between the U.S. and France. Franklin distributed the medal to some of the most powerful and influential individuals in France. He also sent several medals to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the United States, requesting that he distribute them to every member of the U.S. Congress. Later, Franklin went on to send enough medals to be distributed to every governor in the United States.

Olson views the medal from epideictic, deliberative, and apologetic rhetorical viewpoints. Olsen finds through his investigation of the rhetorical functions that the commemorative medal was designed to praise the qualities in the United States and France that would be esteemed in each country. For the United States, Olsen finds that the medal represented courage, military skill, and potential for greatness. For France, the medal portrayed loyalty,

generosity, and concern for another nation. Olsen researched the production, distribution, image, and function of the medal. Olsen states, “Franklin’s commemorative medal, *Libertas Americana*, illustrates some of the underlying rhetorical functions of an expression of gratitude during the diplomacy of the American Revolution.”³¹ As Olsen has illustrated, a rhetorical analysis of a visual image brings rhetorical meaning to light and illustrates the value of rhetorical iconology. This is important, as my study will focus on a historical icon, much like the *Libertas Americana*.

In another study, John Katsion rhetorically analyzes the images found on American currency. Katsion finds that in the area of visual rhetoric, existing research does not offer an extensive way to analyze how context impacts rhetorical power of images. To compensate for this lack of attention to context, in his dissertation, Katsion uses Kenneth Burke’s concept of representative anecdote, Valerie Peterson’s ocularcentric schema, Barry Brummett’s application of Burke’s representative anecdote, and Walter Fisher’s narrative paradigm in his analysis. This elaborated method of study is used to analyze how context and visual texts interact, and to get a sense of the rhetorical value that is developed from this interplay. The method is then applied to images on United States dollar coins from 1794 to 2000.

Katsion finds that his elaborated method is essential to his analysis of the American coins because it reveals a powerful connection between the story, context, and the still image. He argues that Foss’ schema provides a good foundation for visual rhetorical criticism, but that it is lacking in that it does not account for production or context. Adding these elements to his analysis, Katsion finds that the images on the coins represent the discourses surrounding their creation and distribution. The concept of liberty and other issues of American society were debated as a result of the creation of these coins. Relevant to the present project, Katsion’s study

³¹ Lester Olson, “Benjamin Franklin’s Commemorative Medal *Libertas Americana*: A Study In Rhetorical Iconology,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 76(1), 23-45 (1990): 41.

gives evidence that Foss' schema may not be extensive enough to account for the rhetorical meaning behind visual symbols.³²

Graves' study of the Quaker Tapestry, Olson's study of the commemorative medal, and Katsion's study of the American coins provide frameworks for studying artifacts rhetorically that show the need for an elaborated method, beyond Foss' schema that extends to include the visual and the textual. Where Foss' schema is lacking, this study will go beyond the scope of her method for analyzing visual images using Cara Finnegan's framework to provide a more thorough analysis of the seal of the Moravian church.

FINNEGAN'S FRAMEWORK

Cara Finnegan provides a framework for analyzing visual images that includes an investigation into the history and development of an image. Contrary to Foss' framework, Finnegan's schema is concerned with where an image originates and the author's purpose. Finnegan analyzes aesthetics, origins, cropping, placement, and purpose. Finnegan asserts that the history of an image is significant and can uncover meaning otherwise hidden within the image.³³

Finnegan states, "We need to recognize that archives – even seemingly transparent image archives – function as terministic screens, simultaneously revealing and concealing 'facts,' at once enabling and constraining interpretation."³⁴ Finnegan explains that this deeper study is not meant to be completely contrary to other visual studies, but it is meant to uncover the finer details of the creation of images. She acknowledges that visual rhetoric is certainly not new to

³² John Katsion, "Images as Representative Anecdotes: The Visual Rhetoric of the Imagery on United States Dollar Coins from 1794 to 2000." (Ph.D. diss., Regent University, 2005): 1-220.

³³ Cara Finnegan, "What Is This a Picture Of?: Some Thoughts On Images and Archives," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 9(1), 116-123. (2006): 117-118.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 117-118.

the field of rhetorical studies, and this framework is not meant to replace other visual rhetorical studies, but it must at the very least be added as there are vital elements that cannot be uncovered by simply viewing the external elements. She writes, “The suggestion that the archive is a rhetorical construction is hardly new, of course. But I worry that in our desire to trumpet the general uses and benefits of archives, we too quickly gloss over the specific, complex rhetorical negotiations such research often requires.”³⁵

Finnegan uses the term “image vernaculars” in her rhetorical framework. She defines image vernaculars as, “The enthymematic modes of reasoning employed by audiences in the context of specific practices of reading and viewing in visual cultures.”³⁶ She goes on to define enthymemes as “arguments in which one or more premises are suppressed or assumed.”³⁷ Finnegan holds that in the analysis of images, there is a need for understanding why the image was created in order to understand the meaning that is being communicated. Apart from this historical evidence, studies of visual images can be misconstrued, misunderstood, and misinterpreted.

Perhaps the biggest difference between Foss’ framework and Finnegan’s schema is that Foss views the audience as an observer of the image. In these cases, data can be discovered simply by viewing the image. In Finnegan’s approach, the viewer is more than just an observer. She states that the audience is, “Not merely a witness to the argument, but a participant in its creation.”³⁸ In this line of thought, the historical elements that are represented in the image must be uncovered in order to understand the true meaning of the image. An analysis of an image goes

³⁵ Ibid., 118.

³⁶ Cara Finnegan, “Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 8(1), 31-57. (2005): 34.

³⁷ Ibid., 34.

³⁸ Ibid., 34.

much further than the viewing and requires extensive background research on historical content in order to understand the author's intended message. Foss is much less concerned with the author's intended message and seeks to uncover the given message by viewing the image and assessing its rhetorical value by sight alone.

APPLICATION OF FINNEGAN'S SCHEMA

Few studies have used Finnegan's approach to assess visual images, as it is fairly new to the field of visual rhetoric, however, Finnegan illustrates the use of her schema in a study entitled, "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture." In this study, Finnegan analyzes an image of Abraham Lincoln that was run in *McClure's Magazine* in November of 1895. Finnegan assesses the obvious and implied themes of the picture as well as the history and discovery of the photograph. The following is an explanation of Finnegan's study and the application of her schema.

Ida Tarbell was well known for her skills as a muckraking journalist in the 1880's. She was fascinated with Abraham Lincoln, having grown up witnessing her parent's admiration for this American icon. She produced a series of new documents and images about Lincoln's life, called the Tarbell Series, in an era when America believed there was nothing new to discover about the deceased president. She traveled all over the nation interviewing people who had personally known Lincoln and investigating court records, newspapers, and archives. Tarbell partnered with McClure's to produce the series of portraits and documents of Lincoln, promising to produce twice as many portraits of Lincoln than had ever been published and illustrate Lincoln's life and career as never before. The most vivid discovery of Tarbell's search was a previously unpublished photograph of Lincoln when he was a young man, given to Tarbell by Lincoln's son. This photograph is said to be the oldest existing picture of Lincoln.

McClure's cropped the picture and framed it in a type of frame that was popular when the picture was run. Despite the fact that the picture was originally taken in the 1840's, it was framed in the popular style of the 1890's. The differences between the original image and the edited one are of interest because not only were 1890's viewers encountering an 1840's photograph, but they were encountering it framed in a decidedly 1890's fashion. Previously published pictures of Lincoln featured him well into his political career. These pictures depicted him as strong, but disheveled, often with tousled hair. This new image showed a Lincoln that had never been seen before, younger and much more dignified looking.

Readers of *McClure's* wrote letters to the magazine, most of them describing Lincoln's portrait as a true depiction of the president they always knew him to be. His well-groomed appearance allowed viewers to see Lincoln as they had always wanted to see him. One letter writer said, "Here is a man who can be relied upon to make the right decisions."³⁹

Finnegan analyzes not only the history of the Lincoln photograph but the image vernacular and cultural significance of the production of the image, finding that the way the image was produced was just as important as the picture itself. *McClure's* made the image of Lincoln relatable to a generation fifty years after the beloved leader's presidency.

As Finnegan's article illustrates, there must be an understanding of the history and production of an image in order to understand it in its entirety. Finnegan writes, "If we seek to understand the artifacts of particular visual cultures, it makes sense to pay attention to how rhetorical expression taps into, shapes, and contests the norms of those visual cultures."⁴⁰ As

³⁹ Finnegan, "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture," 46.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

such, this study will explore the historical and cultural origins of the seal of the Moravian church in order to produce a more thorough understanding of the meaning of the seal.

Both Foss' and Finnegan's theoretical frameworks present compelling arguments as to how and why they should be used in rhetorical studies of visual images, and both are necessary for a more complete analysis of the seal of the Moravian church.

A search for studies on visual aspects of the Moravian church in the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database provided no results. There is little existing research on the visual representations of this historical group of people. Thus, this study will initiate the visual study of the Moravian church.

This review of existing literature has laid out the framework for studying images rhetorically as established by Sonja Foss and Cara Finnegan in an effort to give a better understanding of how the Moravian seal will be analyzed in this study.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore how the Moravian seal operates rhetorically. The main methodology of this thesis is Sonja Foss' visual rhetoric schema and Cara Finnegan's image vernacular. Using this theoretical schema, this study will analyze the seal of the Moravian church. The central research question that this study will aim to answer is, how does the seal of the Moravian church function rhetorically?

DESCRIPTION OF ARTIFACT

The seal of the Moravian Church contains a picture of the Agnus Dei, the Lamb of God, which is a metaphorical representation of Jesus Christ. The Lamb carries a staff with a banner of victory, represented by a red cross. The words, "Our Lamb Has Conquered, Let Us Follow Him" encircle the image. The theme of this ancient image symbolizes that victory was achieved through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ, not by force or deception. According to the Moravian Church of Canada, this symbol goes back to the early Moravian believers of the 16th century. It is still used in Moravian churches around the world and is seen in the form of stained glass windows, ornaments, and logos for the group. Its purpose remains to promote the idea of peace and liberty through the blood of Jesus Christ in accordance with the Bible and its teachings.⁴¹

As has already been stated and explained in the literature review, this thesis will seek to examine the Moravian seal using Foss' visual rhetoric schema. In addition, the meaning behind the Moravian seal will be explored in an attempt to understand the rhetorical value of this artifact. Applying this theoretical framework will produce varied results that will bring greater understanding to the rhetorical value of the artifact represented here. Using Foss' theory of visual

⁴¹ *The Moravian Church*. Moravian Church of Canada, <http://www.moravian.ca/index.html> (2010).

rhetoric, this study will provide 1) an analysis of the nature of the image, 2) a description of the function of the image, and 3) an evaluation of the image. This framework provides a solid foundation to guide this study.

A visual rhetorical study is a complex task even to the point of defining visual rhetoric. As such, Foss' schema will be used as a tool of analysis, but where it is faulty or lacking for the purpose of this study, I will move outside of its parameters to provide a complete analysis of the artifact at hand. The following chapters will apply Foss' framework and provide a rhetorical analysis of the seal of the Moravian church by giving an analysis of the nature of the image, a description of the function of the image, and an evaluation of the image, which ties the first two stages together. Chapter two will examine the history of the seal. Chapter three will address the nature of the image, using Foss' framework. Chapter four will extend the study by assessing the function of the image as outlined in the second phase of Foss' framework. Chapter five will culminate the analytical portion of the thesis by presenting an evaluation of the image and finally, chapter six will present conclusions on this rhetorical study.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE SEAL OF THE MORAVIAN CHURCH

“We consider it to be our responsibility to demonstrate within the congregational life the unity and togetherness created by God who made us one. How well we accomplish this will be a witness to our community as to the validity of our faith.”⁴²
-The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living⁴³

Before analyzing the visual representation of the seal of the Moravian church according to Foss’ framework, we must review the history and development of this symbol from the church’s beginnings to the present day. As the previous chapter explained, Foss’ framework for analyzing visual images rhetorically does not account for historical content or meaning, which this researcher finds to be of the utmost of importance in the case of the Moravian seal. As such, in keeping with Cara Finnegan’s approach to studying images rhetorically, the following section provides the history of the Moravian seal.

The visual symbol of the paschal lamb came into prominence in the tenth century, and by the twelfth century, this symbol could be seen with essentially all the elements that would later become the Moravian seal. The paschal lamb alone does not constitute the seal of the Moravian

⁴² *The Moravian Covenant: Principles by Which We Live and Bear Our Witness*, Formerly known as *the Brotherly Agreement of the Moravian Church* (Bethlehem: Interprovincial Board of Communication, 2001): 1-20.

⁴³ *The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* attempts to arrange and clearly state in a contemporary form a document that has long served the Moravian Church. The *Moravian Covenant* was first written in 1727 and adopted by the Moravian Church at Herrnhut, Saxony on May 12 of that same year. Originally called the *Brotherly Agreement*, the acceptance of this document composed by the church elders marked the beginning of the church’s spiritual renewal. According to the *Covenant*, revising the original *Agreement*, is in keeping with the spirit of the early Moravian Church which believed that all documents and covenants should be updated and made relevant to the present life of the Church. According to the *Covenant*, the guidelines were not intended to be “disciplines” that are forced upon Moravian congregations, but rather they are “agreements” into which members enter voluntarily. The *Covenant* is a recommendation for Moravian churches of today and is to be assessed and accepted by each local congregation before it becomes effective for their congregational life. The majority of the *Covenant* focuses on Christian life and is subtitled, “Principles by Which We Live and Bear Our Witness.” It was revised by the Northern and Southern Provincial Synods of 1998 and approved for acceptance in Moravian churches of today in 2001.

church, but only when it is accompanied by the Latin text, “Vicit agnus noster. Eum sequamur,” or in English, “Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him.”

In 1737, Bishop Daniel Ernst Jablonsky impressed this symbol into wax in a document that certified the Episcopal consecration of David Nitschmann. This is the earliest existing record of the seal, more than two hundred years after the time of John Hus, which most historians mark as the beginning of the Moravian church.

Thomas Hauptert, archivist and researcher for the Moravian Archives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina notes that Jablonsky’s document can be found in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. It is dated June 14, 1737, and signed by Daniel Ernst Jablonsky. According to Hauptert, the last full sentence of the document reads, “Obiges habe ich selbst geschrieben, unterschrieben, und mit unserm Kirchen-Siegel bedrucket” (I, myself, have written the foregoing, have signed it and have sealed it with our church seal.)⁴⁴

Hauptert also states that it can be concluded, then, that the Agnus Dei symbol of the paschal lamb with the halo and banner of victory with a cross upon it, is not a Moravian symbol except by adoption. It is a symbol of Christian art, which is rooted in Scripture and developed over a period of almost a thousand years. It emerged most prominently in the form that would be adopted into the Moravian seal in Germany and France in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries.⁴⁵

Although Jablonsky’s document is the earliest existing record of the Moravian seal, the seal did not come into regular use until 1882 when it was imprinted on the American edition of

⁴⁴ Thomas J. Hauptert, “Report on the Moravian Seal: Prepared for the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission of the Moravian Church in America,” June 1989, Moravian Archives,(Winston-Salem, NC): 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1-10.

the *Moravian Daily Texts* (see Appendix C). This version of the seal, however, is no longer in use. In 1917, the seal appeared in a slightly altered form on the front page of a magazine printed in British Provinces entitled, *Moravian Messenger*. Sometime before 1921, Ernest Detterer, who was the son of a Moravian minister and head of the Department of Art at Normal College in Chicago, Illinois, sketched a new version of the Moravian seal that would be used in many different contexts. It was printed on the front page of a periodical called the *Moravian Missionary* as well as the title page of the American Moravian hymnal printed in 1923 (see Appendix D). Detterer's version of the seal has been used extensively throughout the Moravian church since that time.⁴⁶

Today the seal is used in the Moravian Unity worldwide, appears in publications as well as all Moravian letterheads, and is seen in the form of stained glass windows in most of the Moravian churches. It is always accompanied by either the Latin or English translation of the text, "Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him."

This overview of the origins of the seal provides a greater understanding of why the chosen seal is being analyzed. For the purpose of this project, the most recent version of the seal will be analyzed as it includes elements such as color that are missing in earlier versions and will allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the seal of the Moravian church. After visiting the Moravian archives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, this researcher was given a picture of the most updated seal of the Moravian church that is used in all formal documents and letterheads (see Appendix A). In addition, this project will examine a picture of a stained glass window bearing the Moravian seal for purposes of comparing and contrasting similarities and differences between the printed version of the seal and the stained glass version (see Appendix B). The

⁴⁶ Ibid., 8-9.

following chapter will describe the seal in its entirety and provide an analysis of the nature of the image as outlined by Sonja Foss' theory of visual rhetoric.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF THE IMAGE

“Symbolism is a language, the extent and understanding of which is not limited by time, country, nor speech differences. It expresses abstract ideas by likeness to concrete objects and experiences.”⁴⁷

-Fern Sears

As noted in Chapter one, using Foss’ schema, rhetorical scholars first assess the nature of the image. The presented elements and the suggested elements such as space, medium, materials, and shapes are identified. These are the basic “obvious” elements of the visual image. The implied images are also identified. Themes, ideas, concepts, and allusions that are likely to be recognized by viewers from the image are also noted. Identifying the nature of the image helps to develop a general meaning that is likely to be identified by audiences.⁴⁸

In order to be classified as the seal of the Moravian church, certain elements must be present and are always used in tandem with each other. First, central to the seal is the Easter lamb, or Agnus Pachalis. This symbol features the lamb with a nimbus, or halo, standing with one foreleg extended to support the staff it carries bearing a white flag with a red cross on it. The lamb is said to be “passant” which Webster’s dictionary defines as “walking with the farther forepaw raised —used of a heraldic animal.”⁴⁹ The body and head of the lamb are normally facing to the left.

The nimbus, or halo, around the lamb’s head is often comprised of three rays. The staff that the lamb carries is often depicted as crucifors, which means that it has a small cross-piece at

⁴⁷ Fern Sears, *Let Me Speak! Christian Symbols* (Kansas City: Brown-Whie-Lowell Press, 1953): 1.

⁴⁸ Foss, *Theory of Visual Rhetoric. Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media*, 146.

⁴⁹ "passant," *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, <http://www.merriam-webster.com> (2010).

the top above the banner. Attached to the staff is a banner that is typically long and triangular or two-tailed. The symbol is enclosed in a circle. Text encircles the image and is typically written in either Latin, “Vicit agnus noster. Eum sequamur,” or English, “Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him.”⁵⁰

Each of the parts of the seal hold much deeper meaning that comes from historical symbolism, but there are also visual qualities that appear without the aid of historical research. As has already been stated, the lamb is always depicted in the passant position. This position makes the lamb appear as though it is marching. The lamb does not look timid in any way, but rather, stands tall. The lamb is clearly bold and the flag that it carries suggests triumph and power.

The halo that encircles the lamb’s head suggests that this lamb symbolically represents a deity or holy being of some sort. Based on common understanding of the beliefs of the Moravian people, this lamb represents Jesus Christ. Additional detail about the history and Biblical reference for this symbolic representation will be discussed in the following chapter.

The lamb is always positioned on top of a small green patch. Sometimes the patch appears to be grass (as in Appendix A), but in other depictions, the green is simply a decorative design (as in Appendix B). In both of these depictions, the green symbolizes Earth, showing that the Lamb of God is triumphant on Earth.

The banner that the Lamb carries bears a cross of red. In some depictions, the banner appears to be more of a flag (as in Appendix A) while in other depictions, it appears to be a banner (as in Appendix B). Both of these are regal in nature and the banner particularly seems to be waving in a celebratory manner. In many depictions, the lamb’s foot is wrapped around of the

⁵⁰ Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal*, 11.

pole of the banner (Appendix B), but in other illustrations, the pole appears to rest more on the lamb's shoulder. This slight difference is still significant, as the wrapping of the foot seems to depict a more triumphant and bolder representation of the marching lamb. With the foot wrapped around the pole, the animal almost seems to take on more humanistic characteristics. In both interpretations, however, it is clear that the lamb is purposefully carrying the flag or banner with dignity and is marching, perhaps as to war.

It is significant that the lamb is still in a marching position despite the fact that the text surrounding the image as well as the banner of victory that the lamb carries suggest that the Lamb has already conquered. This shows that the battle is not over, although the victory has already been won. This concept ties directly to the Christian belief in spiritual warfare and the battle between good and evil. This concept, however, goes deeper than the presented, or obvious, elements of the image and therefore should and will be discussed in the assessment of the function of the image in the next chapter.

SHAPE

The seal is always depicted in the shape of a circle (see Appendix A and B). The circle has significant meaning in many different contexts, but is most notable as a depiction of eternity. The unending ring has no beginning and no end. Perhaps one of the most prominent uses of the ring as a symbolic representation of eternity is seen in the wedding ring. This symbol not only indicates that an individual is married, but it stands for one's unending love for a spouse. In this same manner, the circle of the seal most likely represents eternity in one or several different ways.

The circle that encapsulates the seal could have a number of different functions based on historical Christian art, which will be discussed in the next chapter, but basic understanding of the common symbolic meaning of the ring positions this symbol as a representation of eternity.

In context with the other elements of the seal, the ring most likely represents eternity in relation to Christ and His gift of eternal life as well as His eternal power. Another fundamental element of the seal that has significant rhetorical meaning is the color. The following is an analysis of the meaning of the colors used in the seal of the Moravian church.

COLOR

Because the seal is used in so many different contexts, the colors often vary. There are some colors, however, that are always the same and have significant meaning. The lamb is always shown in white. Minor detailing might add shades of grey, but the base color is always white. Symbolically, in almost all known contexts, white represents purity. The halo that surrounds the lamb is colored in yellow. This is significant as the yellow coloring helps the viewer know that the object is in fact a halo, representing a Deity.

As has already been stated, the green of the patch underneath the lamb represents Earth. Had another color been chosen, such as blue, to represent Earth, it would be ambiguous as to whether the lamb was walking on water or perhaps just floating within the circle. The green clearly illustrates grass, a tangible, metonymic representation of Earth.

The background of the seal, behind the lamb, is always blue. This could have multiple meanings, but most obviously it looks as though the background is the sky, perhaps another representation of Earth, or the link between Heaven and Earth.

The flag that is carried is mostly white, bearing a cross that is red. The white, again, represents purity and the red is arguably symbolic of the blood that was shed by the sacrificial lamb in order to win the victory.

The text is depicted in many different colors, but most often it is either black text on a white background or white text on a black background. These two contrasting colors are probably used in tandem as they make the text very readable in most contexts.

TEXT

The text surrounding the image reads, “Vicit agnus noster. Eum sequamur,” or in English, “Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him.” It is significant that the lamb is referred to as “our” lamb and the second statement refers to the viewers as “us.” The Moravian’s motto, “In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, love”⁵¹ suggests that unity is an essential part of their belief system. They encourage, and even call for a uniting behind the common and central figure of their beliefs, which is Jesus Christ.

It is also interesting to note that the first phrase is written in past tense (Our Lamb *has* conquered), but the second phrase is written in present tense (Let us follow Him). It shows a retrospective point of view, acknowledging what Christ did when He came to Earth and sacrificed Himself. The two phrases seem to be independent, yet work so perfectly together that they could be viewed as a whole. It is almost as if to say, “Our Lamb has conquered, *therefore*, let us follow Him.” It suggests that because the Lamb conquered, we should follow Him.

It also presents a challenge to the viewer. It suggests the question, “Follow Him where?” The symbolism of the Lamb in preparation for battle suggests that we are to follow Him into war, and the text supports this idea with the strong and powerful word, “conquered.” When put together, this text presents an idea and a calling to the viewer to assess what has been accomplished and make a decision to follow based on the Lamb’s Victory.

This chapter has assessed the basic, “obvious” elements of the seal of the Moravian church. Having assessed the presented elements as well as implied concepts or themes, the following chapter will analyze the action that is communicated by the image based on more historical or intrinsic characteristics of the parts of the seal. Following Foss’ schema, the second

⁵¹ *The Moravian Church*, Moravian Church in North America, <http://www.moravian.org/> (2010).

phase in a rhetorical analysis of a visual image is an assessment of the function of the image, or the action that the image communicates.

CHAPTER V

THE FUNCTION OF THE IMAGE

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”⁵²
-John 1:29

Having assessed and discussed the basic or obvious elements of the seal, scholars using Foss’ theory of visual rhetoric secondly focus on the function of the image. This does not necessarily mean the purpose as intended by the creator of the image. The function of the image refers to the action the image communicates. From Foss’ rhetorical viewpoint, once an image is created, it stands independent of a creator’s intention.⁵³ The following is an analysis of the function of the lamb, the banner, and the halo seen in the Moravian seal as well as how they function together.

THE LAMB

The lamb has been used as a Christian symbol for many years and is rooted in Scripture, which often refers to Jesus Christ metaphorically as the Lamb of God. According to John Bradner in his book, *Symbols of Church Seasons and Days*, John the Baptist gave Jesus the title “Lamb of God” in John 1:29 and 36, but the symbolism of Jesus as the “lamb that is led to the slaughter” goes back to the Old Testament in Isaiah 53:7.⁵⁴ There are three basic types of the Lamb of God symbol that have been developed in Christian art, one of which was developed and used by the Moravian church.

⁵² King James Version, Jn. 1:29.

⁵³ Foss, “A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery,” 215.

⁵⁴ John Bradner, *Symbols of Church Seasons and Days*, (Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow Company, 1977): 44.

The first is the “sacrificial Lamb.” This symbol portrays the lamb in the midst of suffering, referring to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ laying down His life for mankind. This is symbolic of Christ crucified and often features the lamb with blood flowing from its chest into a chalice, which is an imitation of the wound Jesus Christ received when he was being crucified, as described in John 19:34-36.⁵⁵

The second is the “apocalyptic lamb,” in Latin this is referred to as the *Agnus victor*. This symbol portrays the lamb in an apocalyptic setting in reference to the book of Revelation in the Bible. For example, in this use the lamb is often sitting on the seven seals or standing on a hill from which four rivers flow, each river representing one of the four Gospels. This symbolic representation features the lamb without either banner or staff and is often used to symbolize Christ as the judge at the end of the world.⁵⁶

The third and final most often used representation of the lamb is the *Agnus paschalis*, or the “Easter Lamb.” The *Agnus paschalis* portrays the lamb after the resurrection, usually standing, and carrying a banner of victory. This “Easter Lamb” is the symbolic use of the lamb that is seen in the Moravian seal.⁵⁷

In this depiction, the *Agnus paschalis*, the Lamb always faces to the left of the viewer, the Lamb’s right. According to Hauptert, in heraldry, the left side implies something sinister from the Latin word “*sinistra*,” which means, “on the left side.” There is no direct link in existing research to suggest that this definition applies in Christian art as well, but if the direction that the lamb faces does have any significance, it could suggest that all of the viewers are on the lamb’s left,

⁵⁵ Ibid., 44, 52-53, 60.

⁵⁶ Robert Wetzler and Helen Huntington, *Seasons and Symbols: A Handbook on the Church Year* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962): 50.

⁵⁷ Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal*, 2.

indicating that they are unrighteous. It could also be indicative of the holiness of the Lamb, since he is facing the right, although this researcher has found nothing written on this subject.⁵⁸

Each of these three aforementioned symbolic uses of the picture of the lamb are representations of Christ's life and are metaphorically used to represent His sacrificial death from different points in time. The first, "sacrificial Lamb" portrays Christ during the passion. The second, "apocalyptic Lamb" portrays Christ in eternity, and the third, "Easter Lamb," portrays Christ after His resurrection, marching in victory.⁵⁹

The symbol of the Lamb has been used apart from Christian associations to represent certain ideas and qualities. According to Gertrude Sill in her *Handbook of Symbols in Christian Art*, "In general the lamb by its nature represents purity, innocence, and docility, as well as a sacrificial victim, and can be used to symbolize the virtues of temperance, prudence, and charity."⁶⁰ In Frank Wilson's text, *An Outline of Christian Symbolism*, he states, "The lamb always means sacrifice."⁶¹ Wilson goes on to explain that the lamb is often depicted with a banner of victory, as is seen in the Moravian seal.

The New Testament, Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God most notably in the book of John as well as more than twenty times in the book of Revelation. John 1:29 says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the

⁵⁸ Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal*, 10.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal* from Gertrude Grace Sill, *A Handbook of Symbols in Christian Art* (New York: Macmillan, 1975) 73.

⁶¹ Quoted in Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal* from Frank Wilson, *An Outline of Christian Symbolism* (New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1961) 31.

sin of the world.”⁶² Again in chapter 1:36, John writes, “And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’”⁶³

As was noted in John 1:29, this sacrificial lamb was said to “take away the sin of the world.” As such, it should be noted that there is a significant correlation between this symbol and the sacrificial system of Judaism. Among the Jewish people of this time, the lamb was the chief animal of sacrifice. This is noted in some of the earliest passages of the Bible, dating back to Abel in the book of Genesis.

The symbolic reference to the sacrificial lamb is not restricted to the New Testament. Isaiah 53:7 refers to the suffering servant when it states, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”⁶⁴ These Old Testament references to the sacrificial system of Judaism paved the way for a better understanding of the metaphor of Jesus as the Lamb of God and His redemptive sacrifice that would come in the New Testament writings.⁶⁵

According to Frank Cross and Elizabeth Livingstone in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, by the end of the third century the visual image of the lamb was recognized as a symbol of Christ’s sacrificial death. Sometime before the year 300 AD, a cross and a lamb was inscribed on the catacomb of San Callisto near Rome, and the Great Chalice of Antioch, which has been dated by scholars as early as the end of the first century to as late as the end of the third century, depicts a lamb at Christ’s right hand. These are the earliest known uses of the symbol of

⁶² King James Version, Jn. 1:29

⁶³ Ibid., Jn. 1:36

⁶⁴ Ibid., Isa. 53:7

⁶⁵ Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal*, 3-4.

the lamb in Christian art.⁶⁶ Between the years 450-550 AD, the lamb began to be featured wearing a halo, or a nimbus. This halo often had three rays indicating that the Lamb was a member of the Trinity.⁶⁷

According to Gertrud Shiller in her book, *Iconography of Christian Art*, by the beginning of the 7th century, many eastern churches had brought a prayer to the Lamb of God into their liturgies.⁶⁸ Pope Sergius I formalized the use of this liturgy when he ordered that it be sung during the Lord's Supper in the Eucharist somewhere between 687-701 AD. According to an article in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, the song text went as follows:⁶⁹

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

[Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
 Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
 Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.]

This prayer was also used in the Lutheran and Anglican liturgies and soon thereafter began being used in the Moravian prayers as well in a somewhat altered form. These liturgies introduced the first use of the lamb as a symbol for Christ, but according to John Bradner, the origins of the symbol of the paschal lamb can be seen in an Easter hymn, originally written in

⁶⁶ Frank Leslie Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, second edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

⁶⁷ Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal*, 3.

⁶⁸ As cited in Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal* from Gertrud Shiller, *Ikongraphie der chrislichen Kunst*. Bd. 1-4/2 (4 vols.) (Gutersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn: Gutersloh, 1966-1980), trans Janet Seligman (Lund Humphries, London, 1971, 1972).

⁶⁹ Quoted in Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal* from "Agnus Dei," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967): 209, f.

Latin, which proclaims: “Now thy banner thou dost wave; Vanquished Satan and the grave.”⁷⁰

No known date is given for this use of the symbolic paschal lamb, however, as these lyrics indicate, this symbol has developed in Christian art and is now largely recognized as a representation of Christ.

The image of Christ as the sacrificial lamb presents meekness and suffering, as in the passage in Isaiah 53, which refers to the lamb going quietly to the slaughter. Purity is also a part of the image, as seen in the whiteness of the lamb’s fleece. Most importantly, this image represents Christ as a sacrifice. In Jewish culture, a lamb was sacrificed at the ceremony of Passover. This tradition goes back to the book of Exodus when God called Pharaoh to release the people of Israel from Egyptian slavery. Plagues were sent on the Egyptians, the last and most severe of which was the killing of the firstborn of each Egyptian household. The people of Israel were told to sacrifice lambs and mark their doorposts with the blood of the lamb as a sign for God to pass over their homes, not killing their firstborn.⁷¹

According to Richard Taylor, the death of Jesus, as described in the Gospel of John, mirrors the commands as to how the Passover sacrifice was to be carried out. Jesus died at twilight on the Passover. This was the same time that God told the Israelites that the lambs should be sacrificed as noted in John 19:4 and Exodus 12:6. As Jesus was dying on the cross, He was offered wine from the hyssop plant, which holds the liquid it is dipped in. In the same manner, God told the Israelites to dip hyssop in the blood of the sacrificed lambs as illustrated in John 19:29 and Exodus 12:22. Jesus’ bones were not broken, fulfilling the prophecy in Psalm 34:20, just as God told the Israelites not to break the bones of the lambs sacrificed for the

⁷⁰ Bradner, *Symbols of Church Seasons and Days*, 52-53.

⁷¹ Richard Taylor, *How to Read a Church: A Guide to Symbols and Images in Churches and Cathedrals* (Mahwah: HiddenSpring, 2003): 52-53.

Passover. This is evidenced in John 19:36 and Exodus 12:46. These similarities suggest that Christ was the sacrificial Lamb that would spare mankind from death.⁷²

As this report on Christian art has illustrated, the symbol of the lamb, specifically the paschal lamb, represents Christ sacrificed, yet victorious. The lamb is always depicted in white, representing purity and docility, but also in the passant position, marching as into a battle. This depiction is an oxymoron as it depicts perhaps the most peaceful of animals in preparation for battle. In addition to the passant stance of the lamb, suggestions of battle can be seen in the staff, or banner, that the lamb carries.

THE BANNER OF VICTORY

The Agnus Dei in the form of the passant lamb, also called the Triumphal Lamb, is always depicted with what is referred to as a banner of victory. While the illustrations of this banner are often varied in different contexts, this symbol in its most basic form is a white flag with a red cross, carried on a wooden staff. In some contexts, this banner looks more like a traditional flag (see Appendix A). Other times, this element is depicted more like a banner, hanging from a wooden cross (see Appendix B).

According to Patricia Klein in her book, *Worship Without Words: The Signs and Symbols of our Faith*, banners used in Christian contexts are designed to portray the doctrine and work of the church. They often represent military service and are hung in the church or carried in a procession.⁷³

The Lamb is not always depicted carrying the banner. Sometimes it is shown reclining while holding the banner. According to Thomas Stafford, this depiction of the Lamb without the

⁷² Ibid., 52-54.

⁷³ Patricia S. Klein, *Worship Without Words: The Signs and Symbols of Our Faith* (Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2007): 17, 75.

banner emphasizes the significance of the Lamb's suffering rather than the victory.⁷⁴ The banner is often called the Easter or Resurrection banner, symbolizing Christ's victory over death.

As noted in chapter four, the banner is depicted in white with a red cross. Stafford explains that this is symbolic of Christ's body, pure in its victory and sacrificial, the red representing the blood that was shed in His sacrifice. The pennant is often attached to a cruciform staff (see Appendix B), which is symbolic of Christ's death on a cross.⁷⁵

The banner carried by the Lamb is significant in that it not only depicts victory but also is often used in reference to marching into battle. Normally, one would assume that if a victory flag is being carried, then the battle is over. It is ironic that the banner represents victory as well as a call into battle. This, however, is in keeping with the Christian belief that although Christ has already won the victory, the battle is still ongoing. I Corinthians 15:57-58 states, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."⁷⁶

The banner functions as a representation of the upcoming and ongoing battle, yet also acts as reassurance that the victory has already been won. The banner is central and significant in understanding the meaning and function of the seal.

HALO

In Christian symbolism, the halo is often used to distinguish a saint. This halo is often also referred to as a nimbus, from the Latin word for "cloud," which is a section of light behind

⁷⁴ Thomas Stafford, *Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1942): 43.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷⁶ King James Version, I Cor.15:57-58.

the head of a sacred or divine being in a painting or statue to indicate their dignity.⁷⁷ As Patricia Klein explains, the symbol of the halo was carried over from Greek and Roman depictions of gods and civil rulers.

According to Fern Sears, any bright or shining radiance that surrounds a figure is called a “Glory,” and is most often depicted as a halo. Sears states, “The ‘Glory’ in all its forms, halo, aureoles, vesicas, etc. in Christianity designated the power of the Almighty.”⁷⁸ Historically, light became associated with wisdom and virtue through its use in Christian art, particularly in association with saints. The halo was added to depictions of persons who made spiritual contributions to the world.

In Christian art, the halo typically comes in the shape of a circle, square, or triangle. Different shapes are used to depict different characters. Saints and martyrs are depicted with disc-shaped halos. The Virgin Mary is portrayed with a circular nimbus, often decorated with a ring of stars. God the Father is depicted with a triangular nimbus, and God the Son is typically depicted with a ring.

The power of God is sometimes represented by the Sun, and the halo, or nimbus, is often seen in a simple form with rays of light surrounding a figure’s head or an entire figure that is considered sacred, illustrating the power of God within an individual. The round, flat disc that often surrounds the heads of saints, is never used for a living person. Sears states that it is most unusual for a living person to be considered holy enough to wear a halo, but they would be surrounded by a rectangular outline if a nimbus were given.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Klein, *Worship Without Words*, 68.

⁷⁸ Sears, *Let Me Speak! Christian Symbols*, 8.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

The single line halo, most often seen in pictures of saints, is referred to as an earth halo. This is not the case in the halo on the Moravian seal, indicating that the Lamb is more than an earthly being. As Sears goes on to explain, the tri-radiant halo depicts Christ as member of the Trinity, which includes God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁸⁰ This tri-radiant halo is most often worn by Christ and is often called a cruciform halo. Sears states that the tri-radiant beams represent the three upper bars of the Greek cross. The tri-radiant nimbus that the lamb wears symbolizes Christ as part of the Trinity.⁸¹

Klein states that the halo also represents a holy life. It is significant that the lamb depicted in the Moravian seal wears a halo, first because it clearly asserts the Lamb as a depiction of Christ. If any doubt was left as to the symbolism of Christ as the Lamb, the halo clearly sets it apart as a depiction of Christ. Second, the halo not only represents a Deity, but also represents a holy life. Just as the white color of the lamb and the banner represents purity, so the halo reinforces and illustrates the pure life of Christ. The halo is significant in its depiction of the holy life of Christ and acts to illustrate and define Christ as a holy figure, certainly one worth following into battle.

Having analyzed the lamb, banner, and halo seen in the seal of the Moravian church, it is important to understand how these objects function together. Each of these symbolic representations point to Christ as a Deity and a Victor. The peaceful Lamb, wearing a halo that represents a holy life, and carrying a banner used in war and depicting victory is significantly ironic. This, however, is in keeping with the message of Scripture. While there is a calling to Christians to live at peace with all mankind, there is also a call to wage battle and war with the

⁸⁰ Klein, *Worship Without Words*, 68.

⁸¹ Sears, *Let Me Speak! Christian Symbols*, 8-10.

enemy. Romans 12:18 states, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone,” and II Corinthians 10:3-6 states, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.”⁸² These seemingly contradictory ideas come together much like the victorious, conquering Lamb in the seal of the Moravian Church.

SHAPE

As was noted in chapter four, the shape of the seal also functions to promote unity. Historically, the circle has held significant meaning in the Christian church. Patricia Klein suggests that it means eternity and completeness, because it has no beginning and no end.⁸³ Author Thomas Stafford states that the circle, when used in Christian art, is symbolic of the eternal existence of God.⁸⁴ In both of these interpretations, the circle represents an unending unity. There is no beginning and there is no end. This could represent the everlasting commitment of the call to follow Christ or the eternal life that is promised when one’s life is committed to the Lamb. It could also represent the eternal victory of the Lamb. This is described in II Corinthians 4:16-18 which states as follows:

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us

⁸² New International Version, Rom. 12:18, II Cor. 10:3-6

⁸³ Klein, *Worship Without Words*, 191.

⁸⁴ Stafford, *Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches*, 86.

an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.⁸⁵

Another shape could have easily encapsulated the contents of this image, but no other shape could have reinforced the concept of unity, God's eternal existence, and eternal life as poignantly as the circle does in this representation.

UNSEEN SYMBOLS

Having noted the elements that make up the seal, it is also important to note some elements that are not included in the seal that one might expect to see in a visual representation of a people group. First, there is no mention of the Moravian Church itself. The average viewer might not know that it was a representation of this particular church except by its placement within the Moravian church. Rhetorically, this has great significance. As was discussed in chapter one, these peaceful people are most well known for their work as missionaries. Their goal and purpose is unity, within their own church and with all other Christian believers. As their motto states, "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, love."⁸⁶

While this symbol is called the seal of the Moravian Church, most Moravians would say that it is a symbol of the Christian brethren. Moravians are careful not to put themselves in a group separated by denomination. Their purpose is clear in that their unity is with all other believers in Christ. It could be said, then, that this visual representation is much more than a depiction of one denomination, and it could actually act as a symbolic logo for Christians worldwide. Its message and function are parallel and in keeping with Scripture, promoting the

⁸⁵ New International Version, II Cor. 4:16-18

⁸⁶ *The Moravian Church*, Moravian Church in North America, <http://www.moravian.org/> (2010).

message advocated in all Christian churches. As such, the Moravian seal accomplishes much more than representing Moravians. It represents the uniting of Christian brethren worldwide.

As Robert McManus explains in his essay entitled, “Southern Gospel Music vs. Contemporary Christian Music: Competing for the Soul of Evangelicalism,” Maurice Charland created a theory that he calls “constitutive rhetoric,” which is designed to account for the process of constituting a people group. Charland’s theory of constitutive rhetoric helps to define how an image or object works rhetorically to reaffirm an ideology held by a group of people.⁸⁷

This theory holds that rhetoric acts to call existing groups of people into being, setting them apart under a certain ideology. Charland calls this process of defining a people group interpellation, based on the work of Louis Althusser. Charland references Althusser who explains the process of interpellation as follows: “I shall then suggest that ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing; ‘Hey, you there!’”⁸⁸ Charland’s theory of constitutive rhetoric helps explain how the seal of the Moravian Church functions to define the people of the Moravian Brethren.

In the case of McManus’ chapter, Charland’s theory is employed to explain how Southern Gospel Music acts to define an orthodox evangelical people group. Charland’s theory is helpful in the present study as it aids in explaining how the seal of the Moravian Church acts to define and reconstitute a group of people. While the seal holds meaning and value for all

⁸⁷ Robert McManus, “Southern Gospel Music vs. Contemporary Christian Music: Competing for the Soul of Evangelicalism.” In Michael P. Graves and David Fillingim *More Precious Memories: The Rhetoric of Southern Gospel Music* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2004): 77-82.

⁸⁸ Quoted in McManus, “Southern Gospel Music vs. Contemporary Christian Music” in Graves and Fillingim, *More than Precious Memories*, 79 from Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric,” 138 from Louis Althusser’s *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971) 174.

Christian churches, it functions specifically as a representation of the Moravian Church. Through the process of interpellation, the seal defines the existing Moravian Church as a decisively united group.

A second unseen symbol of the Moravian seal is its lack of representation of the oppression of this people group. As noted in chapter one, the Brethren suffered greatly during the Thirty Years' War when persecution raged against this group. They were reduced from three million to eight hundred thousand, yet the seal does not reflect their affliction, oppression, or suffering. The seal still reflects victory and triumph. Not including their suffering in the visual representation of their church shows great humility. It also supports the evidence presented by other elements of the seal that the focus of the Moravian church is not inward. Rather than promoting their own suffering, they promote Christ. Certainly forgiveness is a theme depicted in the seal in its omission of elements that reflect the hardships of the Moravian church.

There is a sense of resignation to the oppression that the Moravians faced. It is incredibly ironic, given the history of this church, that there is no mention of the church itself and there is no representation of their suffering. The church itself is not depicted visually, only the Lamb, banner, sky, and earth. Rhetorically, this shifts the focus from an internal focal point to a Christ-focused theme. This seems to make the church more of an observer and responder to the seal and to Christ's position as a conquering Lamb.

The Moravian Church was founded on the idea of humility, dating back to its early beginnings when Count Zinzendorf instructed the people to promote the cause of Christ above all else. As chapter one discussed, Zinzendorf was the landowner of Herrnhut, the land where the Moravians settled after the Thirty Years' War and the breeding ground for their rebirth as the Brethren. Zinzendorf acted as the leader of the Moravians while at Herrnhut and advocated missionary work and the cause of Christ. Even after the great persecution of the Thirty Years'

War, Zinzendorf promoted selfless advocacy of Christ. John Weinlick writes about Zinzendorf's methods when he says the following:

Zinzendorf imbued his missionary staff with a spirit of self-effacement. No missionary biographies were ever published as long as he remained on the scene... The count laid down exacting standards for mission service. Fortunately he had the genius to infect his followers with his driving energy and enthusiasm. His warrior band of apostles to the heathen never lacked for volunteers."⁸⁹

Zinzendorf's message of self-effacement has carried over for nearly three hundred years. Even in the visual representations of their church, the Moravians do not advocate themselves or illustrate their suffering. Instead, they promote the victory of Christ and their calling as His people. In this way, the seal acts as not only a visual representation of the Moravian Church, but as a reminder to its members that they are not to be the focus of their life's work. Life's sufferings should not be pronounced above the cross of Christ.

The seal also acts as a reminder that there is no suffering in this life that was not experienced by Christ Himself. His death was unwarranted and sacrificial. He suffered so that His followers could be saved. As Count Zinzendorf suggested, missionary work and one's life work should focus on following the Lamb who has already conquered rather than concentrating on the sufferings endured on behalf of His name.

As this chapter has illustrated, the function of the seal of the Moravian church is to depict Christ as a peaceful yet powerful victor, one worth following into battle. It advocates humility, unity, selflessness, and the cause of Christ above all else. The function of the seal certainly lies much deeper than the images alone represent. By assessing not only the represented images, but also those that are not a part of the seal, the viewer can better understand how these elements

⁸⁹ Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 100-101.

function as a reminder, challenge, and calling. The following chapter applies the final phase of Foss' theoretical framework to the Moravian seal and provides an evaluation of the image.

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION OF THE IMAGE

“Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before.”⁹⁰
-A hymn of the Moravian Church

Scholars who apply Foss’ theory of visual rhetoric, finally, focus on an evaluation of the image, which ties the first two stages together. The goal is to determine whether the image accomplishes the function suggested by the image itself. The following is an evaluation of the seal of the Moravian church with reference to the function of the seal in accordance with the implied or obvious nature of the image.

In light of the analysis of the Moravian seal found in chapters four and five of this study, several themes and purposes emerge as objectives of the seal. Specifically, four purposes arise in the mind of this researcher that this seal accomplishes:

1. Representation
2. Calling
3. Promise
4. Reminder

The following provides a more thorough explanation of these themes.

REPRESENTATION

Perhaps the most obvious purpose of the seal is its role as a representation of the Moravian Church. As this project outlined in the analysis of the history of the seal, this symbolic representation was created for the purpose of identifying the Moravian people in churches, letters, and other publications. It fulfills its purpose as a representation not by its text or including

⁹⁰ *Hymnal and Liturgies of the Moravian Church*, Published by the Authority of the Provincial Synods of the Moravian Church in America (Elk Grove: Walter M. Cargueville, 1969): 255.

the name of the church in its depictions, but because it has been used in all associations of the church and so expressively represents the beliefs of the Brethren.

As this project has demonstrated, the seal not only acts as a representation of the Moravian Church, but as a symbolic depiction of Christians worldwide. This seal functions to promote and advocate the beliefs of not only the Moravian Church, but also the Christian Church and the Bible, upon which this group was founded.

CALLING

This symbol is much more than a representation of this body of believers; it is a calling that demands sacrifice. In addition to representing the Christian church, the Moravian seal acts as a calling to its viewers. This symbolic representation of the Moravian church most often appears in some relation to the altar such as a sanctuary window, on the door of the tabernacle, or upon vestments.⁹¹ As Christ was the sacrificial lamb and rose victorious, so the Moravian people use this symbol as a calling to symbolically sacrifice their own needs and desires for the cause of Christ.

The Moravian Church does not aim to promote its own cause for its namesake, but rather for the Lamb's. This, in and of itself, is a depiction of the sacrificial calling put forth by the seal. It is a call to sacrifice and a call to follow. This calling requires a denial of one's self in order to promote the cause of the Lamb, which is Jesus Christ. As Matthew 16:24-25 and again in Luke 9:23 state, "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.'"⁹²

⁹¹ Wilson, *An Outline of Christian Symbolism*, 30.

⁹² New International Version, Mt. 16:24-25, Lk. 9:23

The language and symbols used in the seal metaphorically represent a call into battle, as this project has previously discussed. Throughout the Bible, the metaphor of war is used, and multiple callings into battle are made to believers. Ephesians 6:10-17 calls believers to put on the armor necessary for battle, stating as follows:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.⁹³

As these Scriptures have illustrated, the metaphor of battle is no new concept in the Christian church. In fact, the well-known hymn, “Onward Christian Soldiers,” was written in 1865, just a few years before the seal began circulating in the manner we see it depicted in today.⁹⁴ It has become a beloved hymn in the Moravian and Christian church since its creation, appearing in Moravian hymnals worldwide. Its verses perfectly depict and reinforce the call put forth in the seal. The hymn states:

⁹³ King James Version, Eph. 6:10-17

⁹⁴ Louis Fitzgerald Benson, *Studies of Familiar Hymns* (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1917): 107-110.

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
with the cross of Jesus going on before.
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;
forward into battle see his banners go!

(Refrain)

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
with the cross of Jesus going on before.

At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee;
on then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise;
brothers, lift your voices, loud your anthems raise.
(Refrain)

Like a mighty army moves the church of God;
brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.
We are not divided, all one body we,
one in hope and doctrine, one in charity.
(Refrain)

Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,
but the church of Jesus constant will remain.
Gates of hell can never against that church prevail;
we have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail.
(Refrain)

Onward then, ye people, join our happy throng,
blend with ours your voices in the triumph song.
Glory, laud, and honor unto Christ the King,
this through countless ages men and angels sing.
(Refrain)⁹⁵

The seal of the Moravian church presents a calling to battle that is echoed in the teachings, worship, and beliefs of the Moravian church. As the hymn and Scriptures have illustrated, the calling set forth by the seal is prominent and powerful in the Moravian and Christian church.

PROMISE

⁹⁵ *Hymnal and Liturgies of the Moravian Church*, Published by the Authority of the Provincial Synods of the Moravian Church in America (Elk Grove: Walter M. Cargueville, 1969): 255.

In addition to the sacrifice it demands, the seal encapsulates a promise: victory will follow. The text obviously suggests that “Our Lamb has conquered,” but the symbols also represent this idea and act as an affirmation that there is victory when the believers follow the Lamb.

The calling set forth by the text and symbols of the seal do not come without affirmation of the victory. As earlier noted, the irony of marching into battle yet already claiming victory is a perfect depiction of the Christian belief that although battle is ever raging, Christ has already won the victory. As Paul writes in Romans 8:36-37, “As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”⁹⁶

REMINDER

As the seal functions as a representation, a calling, and a promise, it culminates as a reminder to its viewers of each of these purposes. Its prominence in all Moravian churches and publications is no small fact. Every time it is seen, it acts as a reminder to the viewer of the purpose as a representation, calling, and promise.

Every church bears the symbol in at least one capacity, but most often it is depicted on multiple surfaces in prominent places throughout the church. Appendix B is a picture of the seal in the form of a stained glass window in a Moravian church in Northern Virginia. Members cannot participate in the Moravian church without encountering the seal. This is certainly purposeful and is necessary for the seal to fulfill its function as a reminder of the importance of representing the Christian church, the calling set forth by the seal and the cross where Christ was the sacrificial Lamb, and the promise given to all His followers if they will obey the call set forth.

⁹⁶ New International Version, Rom. 8:36-37.

This symbolic representation of the Moravian Church depicts the goals and calling that this people group strives to attain. It represents their Savior in a manner that is victorious and hardly peaceful, yet in its subtle ironies, uses a lamb, perhaps one of the most peaceful animals, to champion their pacifistic message. This symbol acts not only as a representation, but as a calling to the church body to live victoriously, proclaiming peace and victory from the spiritual powers of darkness that wage war within.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

“In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, love.”⁹⁷

The purpose of this study was to build on the framework of previous studies and apply Foss’ schema for the rhetorical study of visual phenomenon to a new case. Accordingly, this qualitative study explored the rhetorical value of the seal of the Moravian church, finding that it functions as a representation, a calling, a promise and a reminder. The following section provides a review of the chapters in this study, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

Chapter one explored the history of the Moravian church, specifically their early beginnings and purposes as the United Brethren. Their history focused on unity and mission work, and has posited them as a peaceful group despite the oppression and persecution they faced.

The second chapter assessed two frameworks for analyzing visual images rhetorically. Sonja Foss’ framework focuses on an analysis of the nature of the image, the function of the image, and an evaluation of the image. These three stages come together as a way of evaluating the themes, concepts, elements, and purposes of an image. Foss’ theory of visual rhetoric proved to be an effective framework for discovering rhetorical functions of visual images.

Secondly, this study explored Cara Finnegan’s image vernacular as a method of assessing the history of the image. Contrary to Foss’ framework, which holds that an image stands apart from the creator’s intention once it has been created, Finnegan’s framework states that the history of an image must be explored to uncover how its creation impacts its message. Using Finnegan’s frameworks, this study then analyzed the history of the Moravian seal in chapter

⁹⁷ *The Moravian Church*, Moravian Church in North America, <http://www.moravian.org/> (2010).

three. The seal's origins as a representation of the Moravian Church proved to be important for understanding the rhetorical function of the image.

Chapter four assessed the nature of the image in accordance with Foss' theory of visual rhetoric. Specifically, this chapter assessed the obvious elements as well as the implied themes and concepts. The function of the image was analyzed in chapter five, with an examination of the parts and their functions individually. Finally, chapter six provided an evaluation of the image, finding that the seal of the Moravian church serves as more than a representation but also as a calling, promise, and reminder. These conclusions were reached based on an exploration of the origins of the seal, the obvious as well as implied themes and elements of the image, its purpose as a work of Christian art, and its function as an element of constitutive rhetoric, serving to call a group of people into being under a certain ideology.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The Moravian Seal is an artifact that allows for many different avenues of research unexplored here. This study used Foss' theory of visual rhetoric and Finnegan's image vernacular, but other methods of assessing visual images rhetorically could be used to explore otherwise unseen themes or concepts.

It would be interesting to do a survey about the functions of the seal among church members to see if they perceive the themes suggested in this study. Perhaps assessing what themes church members detect within the seal would provide a different perspective on the purposes that the seal fulfills. Researchers could assess how strongly the members believe that the seal and the themes detected reflect the contemporary church. This type of research would be effective for evaluating whether the seal continues to function as an accurate portrayal of the modern day Moravian Church. Having assessed the seal's purpose and function, future research

could assess whether these themes are still accurate in representing the Moravian Church as it functions today.

Another avenue that could be explored in future research could assess the many different forms of the seal. Most Moravian Churches portray the seal in the form of a stained glass window or etched in wood or stone in a prominent place within the church building. In addition, the seal can be seen in the form of a mosaic, a tapestry, or on paper. Future research could assess these many different forms of the seal to explore whether the differences in material affect the themes and functions. The seal functions as a logo and letterhead for all outgoing printing from the Moravian Church, and assessing the difference in the printed version and the stained glass version of the seal might uncover new ideas, themes, or functions.

Future research could also assess how the positioning of the seal affects its function. As this study noted, it is most often used in conjunction with an altar, representing a calling, but it is also used in other forms. Assessing the placement of the seal might provide further analysis of its functions.

There are also many small differences that can be seen in different depictions of the seal. These differences could be assessed to uncover whether the themes and functions are consistent in the many different forms of the seal. For example, some depictions of the seal show a flag (as in Appendix A) while other forms depict it more as a banner (as in Appendix B). Other differences might be found if more forms of the seal were assessed. Future research could assess the different materials, forms, and depictions of the seal.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a summary of previous chapters and suggested recommendations for future research. As this chapter has illustrated, there are many different avenues of research that have yet to be explored concerning the seal of the Moravian Church.

Based on the research provided in this study, it can be concluded that the seal of the Moravian Church has multi-faceted purposes and serves to not only represent the church, but to also act as a calling, a promise, and a reminder. This seal sets forth a portrayal of the kind of world we could all hope for and hope to participate in. The beliefs and ideas advocated by the Moravian church are passionate, yet peaceful, and ultimately advocate a world of unity, liberty, and love.

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Appendix A⁹⁸



⁹⁸ Seal of the Moravian Church, provided by the Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, NC

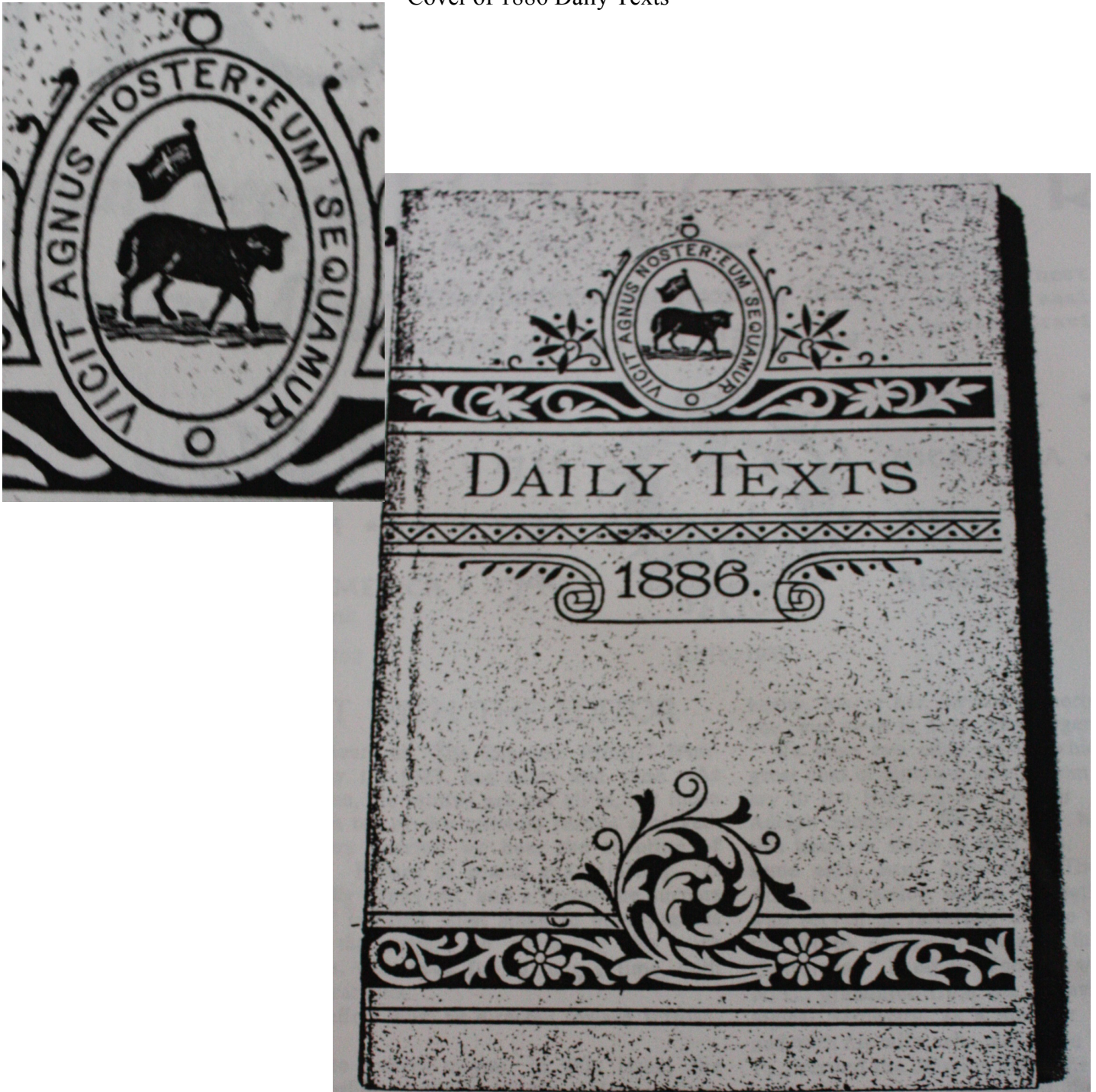
Appendix B⁹⁹



⁹⁹ Stained glass window in a Moravian Church in Northern Virginia

Appendix C

Cover of 1886 Daily Texts¹⁰⁰

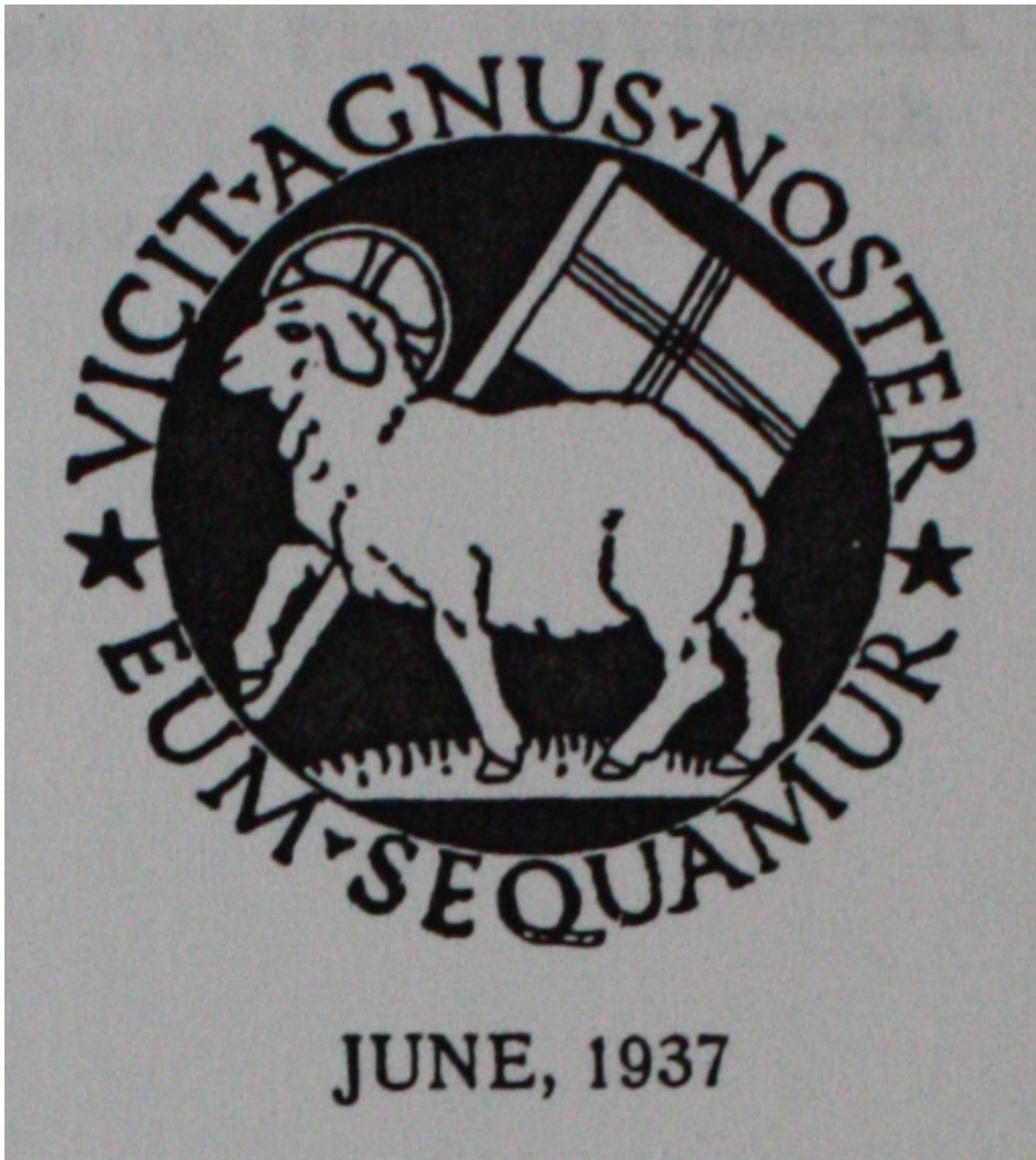


¹⁰⁰ Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal*, Appendix E.

Appendix D

Cover of 1937 Moravian Missionary

Drawn by Ernest Detterer¹⁰¹



¹⁰¹ Hauptert, *Report on the Moravian Seal*, Appendix F.