

"I'm really surprised to hear that there are stamps with Pietist themes!"

INTRODUCTION.

I have been interested in Pietism for some time, and recently corresponded with the editor of the Pietist journal *Pietisten*. I mentioned my interest in Pietist stamps, and he replied, "I'm really surprised to hear that there are stamps with Pietist themes."

I have two favourite books on Pietism looking at both German and Scandinavian Pietism. The books tell the story of Pietist figures with a short biography and a selection of writings. I came across a stamp featuring a Pietist and using the books as a guide started a thematic collection. It is remarkable, in what might be seen by some to be an obscure topic, exactly how many stamps I was able to collect. It is also apparent that there is not necessarily a direct relationship between someone's importance and any philatelic commemoration.

Martin Luther:
leader of the
Protestant
Reformation.



Philipp Jacob Spener:
the pioneer of Pietism.



August Hermann Franke: Deutsche Bundespost & MZZ-Briefdienst GmbH



500th Anniversary of the Reformation
celebrated in a controversial Vatican
City stamp.

GERMAN PIETISM.

Most stamps are German where the movement started. There are many stamps depicting Martin Luther, the charismatic figure that ignited what became the Protestant Reformation. There is a controversial Vatican stamp that commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation much to the dismay of many traditionalists. However, after 100 years the Reformation itself was becoming stale and itself needed a reformation, and this was accomplished by the early Pietists.

German stamps show many Pietists including Paul Gerhardt, Philipp Jacob Spener, August Hermann Franke, Gerhard Tersteegen, Johann Albrecht Bengel, and Nicholas Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf.

Whilst the privatisation of the German postal services resulted in an improved service, a privatised local German courier service is not necessarily giving a good service. August Hermann Franke worked in the city of Halle, and their local courier service MZZ-Briefdienst GmbH, has appalling reviews for their service. However MZZ-Briefdienst GmbH has issued quite beautiful stamps showing Franke and his orphanage in Halle.

SCANDINAVIAN PIETISM.

Many Scandinavian stamps depict Pietists. Whilst the movement in Scandinavia was very influential it's remarkable that, whilst Norway, Denmark and Finland have philatelically celebrated their Pietists, Sweden, in spite of having many influential Pietists, has commemorated none of them.

These include Hans Nielsen Hauge from Norway, Nikolai F S Grundtvig from Denmark, and Paavo Ruotsalainen and Lars Levi Laestadius from Finland.

Nicholas Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf gave assistance to the Moravian Church (known in Germany as the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine), which is one of the oldest Protestant denominations in the world. It dates back to the Bohemian Reformation of the 15th century, to the reformer Jan Hus, and the Brethren founded in the Kingdom of Bohemia. The resultant Hussite Wars are depicted in stamps and the themes of nationalism are still very relevant today.

The Moravians were very active in missionary work and therefore stamps from all over the world are available. There are several stamp sets illustrating Moravian churches and chapel buildings.



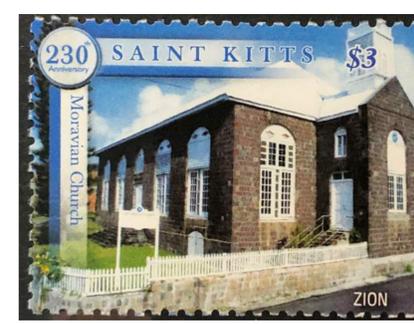
Hans Nielsen Hauge and a Pietist small
group/conventicle.



Stamps commemorating the Hussite wars.



Nicholas Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf.



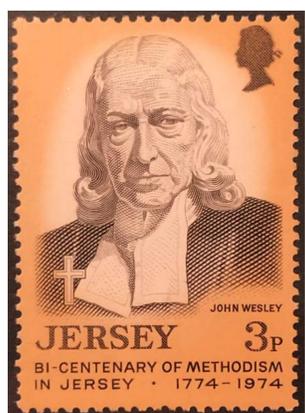
Moravian church on Saint Kitts: Zion Chapel.

CONCLUSIONS.

The Pietist influences have been enormous. Much of what is now taken for granted, such as Bible study in small groups and house churches, has Pietistic origins.

The subject of philately in Pietism is surprisingly large. Other stamps include depictions of the theologians Fredrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth; the founder of Methodism John Wesley; the philosopher Søren Aabye Kierkegaard; and Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was executed by Adolf Hitler.

I have been asked to write a piece for the journal *Pietisten* and perhaps potential Pietist philatelists will be encouraged!



John Wesley.

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard



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