
*One in the Lord* is a slim volume covering about 150 years of regional church history. It is "to recognize the significance of Christian movement among Native American Methodists, Spanish-speaking Methodists, and Black Methodists . . . [and] to awaken a sense of humble pride" (p. vi).

The accounts are informative, educational, and at various points, painful. The ups and downs of Christian ministries (primarily through preaching and teaching) in the three ethnic communities are reflective of the church’s faithfulness and faithlessness to the Gospel. The heavy impact of social events, e.g., "The Trail of Tears," the Civil War, and the Mexican Revolution, on the development of Christian work among Native Americans, Hispanics, and Blacks is partially revealed in the stories.

The book is a useful introduction to the work among Native Americans in Oklahoma, among Hispanics in Texas and New Mexico, and among Blacks in the South Central Jurisdiction. For persons interested in "roots," it is noteworthy that Indian Mission Conference gave birth to Oklahoma Annual Conference, and wise episcopal leadership was decisive for the development of Hispanic work. The frustration and the triumph of the Hispanic experience offer some clues to ministries with persons of other ethnic/language groups. The increasing involvement of Black Methodists in the General Church presents a vital testimony to the exhilarating benefits of liberation and inclusion.

As indicated, the book is introductory. It is not a critical analysis of Methodist work among ethnic people in the South Central Jurisdiction; neither is it a comprehensive history of Methodist work among ethnic minorities in the same region. In their accounts of ethnic experiences, Vernon and Graham have at times presented a chronicle of names, and Nanez is selective in his presentation. None of them, perhaps by design, writes out of a "theoretical framework." The same history can probably be re-written from the perspective of continuing frustration of ethnic aspirations!

In one sense, the book is a collection of three essays. It has not shown explicitly the common elements of the three diverse conditions or elaborated on the meaning of the expression "One in the Lord." A brief
summary chapter would have been useful. Also, the book might have a map of the region showing the extent of the South Central Jurisdiction. Finally, one must note that Asian Americans are excluded from the presentation. Is there no Asian American work among United Methodists in the South Central Jurisdiction?

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This anthology consists of ten essays of high quality by eminent scholars on the origins and nature of denominations and denominationalism in America. Most of the essays are historical in approach and treat the origins of denominations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These are not "denominational" essays in the propagandistic sense, but they are attempts to come to grips with the nature of denominations and denominationalism.

Although some of the ten essays are more strongly supported by evidence than others, they all will stimulate thought and debate. Winthrop S. Hudson maintains that the arguments undergirding the concept of denominationalism were developed by seventeenth century English Puritans and were eventually reflected in the Toleration Act of 1689. Timothy L. Smith's thesis is that the needs of church congregations gave rise to denominations. The essay by Sidney E. Mead develops the idea that by 1850 the denomination was a "purposive" and voluntary organization with fixed characteristics which changed little thereafter. The theses of Elwyn A. Smith and Fred J. Hood are similar: the American denomination had evolved by 1840 into its modern form with executive and promotional boards adequate to carry out its own purposes without dependence on outside agencies. Methodism is examined by Russell E. Richey who argues that the form of the American denomination owes much to the form of Methodist organization.

The ethnic characteristics of denominations are explored by Timothy L. Smith, E. Franklin Frazier, and Martin E. Marty. Smith's examination of early twentieth century Minnesota mining towns indicated that Finnish, Slovenian, and Polish blood was thicker than holy water as a basis for establishing congregations. Frazier demonstrates that the black church was the center of black social and political life. Marty's essay is an examination of the major types of interpretation of religion in America. He finds that after 1950 the major interpreters have ignored ethnicity which really constitutes the skeletal framework (as well
as the "skeleton in the closet") for the study of religion in America.

H. Richard Niebuhr's interpretation of American religious institutions is pessimistic. To him the Kingdom of God is a vital and dynamic movement. When the movement is institutionalized in denominations, the new institutions lack vitality, point to themselves, become defensive, and deny what they should affirm.

This anthology raises many questions which need further investigation. When does a religious group become a denomination; when it reaches a particular stage of organization or when it self-consciously differentiates itself? How did the practical political necessity of reconciling the divergent views of Presbyterians, Catholics, Anglicans, and Puritans in England and the colonies affect the rise of denominations? How did black denominations arise? Were ethnic or class cultural factors more significant in the shaping of denominations?

These excellent readings may be used for college classroom, personal information, or church study groups.

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