THE ORIGIN OF THE ARTICLES OF FAITH OF THE
UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Harold P. Scanlin

When the United Evangelical Church was officially organized in 1894, following its split with the Evangelical Association, it was faced with the task of writing a new discipline. This task was undertaken at the first General Conference of the United Evangelical Church, held in Naperville, Ill., November 29th to December 13th, 1894.1 This was a crucial task, because many of the issues in the controversy were directly related to matters of organization and administration, including the power of the bishops, the authority of the East Pennsylvania Conference, and the rights of local congregations. Although doctrinal issues were not in the fore-front of the controversy, there was sufficient concern over doctrinal matters that the founders of the United Evangelical Church did feel compelled to rewrite the Articles of Faith. Chief among doctrinal differences was the issue of Christian Perfection. The controversy of a previous generation revolved around the exposition of the doctrine of Christian Perfection by Solomon Neitz.2 Although respected as a great preacher, Neitz, because of his views on Christian Perfection, was never able to gain sufficient support to be elected bishop. Those who supported Neitz’s views did find a man whom they could support and elect to the office of bishop, namely Rudolph Dubs. Dubs then emerged as the leader of the “Minority” group, in opposition to J.J. Esher, the leader of the “Majority”.3

The first general conference of the United Evangelical Church, under the leadership of Bishop Dubs, determined “that in the framing of a Discipline, the Discipline of the Evangelical Association as it existed in 1891, together with the changes made by the General

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1Proceedings of the First General Conference of the United Evangelical Church, Naperville, Ill., 1894.
Conference in Philadelphia in that year, be taken as a basis, . . .”4 Several committees were appointed on November 30 to formulate the chapters of the Discipline, including a committee of the bishops to write the “Introduction, Articles of Faith and the article on Christian Perfection.”5 On December 12th the committee made its first report, Articles I to XIV, which was approved, except for Article IV, On the Holy Scriptures, which was referred back to the committee.6 That same day Articles XV to XXIV were also approved, except Article XXII, On the Lord’s Supper, which was also referred back to the committee. The article on the Holy Scriptures was then approved. In addition, Article XXV, On the Evangelization of the World, was approved.7 The next day, at the closing session the only remaining Article, XXII on the Lord’s Supper, which had been referred back to the committee was approved.8 It would appear that, with the exception of the articles on the Holy Scriptures (IV) and the Lord’s Supper (XXII) the Articles of Faith were handled with dispatch. Even those which were referred back to committee for revision were not long delayed in representation by a committee composed of busy bishops.

What was the source of the text of the Articles of Faith? R.S. Wilson states, “The committee which presented these statements of faith used as a basis, a compilation of doctrine prepared by Professor Milton S. Terry, . . .”9 Terry, a faculty member of Garrett Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill., “was active in formulating the Articles of Faith of the new denomination [United Evangelical

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4Proceedings of the First General Conference, 1894, p. 12-13. The Philadelphia General Conference of 1891 was the one called by the “Minority” under the leadership of Dubs. At the same time the “Majority” met in General Conference sessions at Indianapolis under the leadership of Escher. The revisions of the Discipline adopted by the Philadelphia Conference were mostly concerned with the “democratization” of the church and the limitation of the power of the bishops. A concurrent meeting of the “First General Lay Convention of the Evangelical Association” recommended to the General Conference full lay representation to the annual conferences. The ministerial delegates modified the proposal by authorizing five lay delegates per Presiding Elder district. By 1894 this proposal was changed to allow for equal ministerial and lay representation from each charge (Discipline, para. 72). There were no revisions to the Articles of Faith or other doctrinal statements made at the Philadelphia Conference of 1891. The revisions may be found on p. 57-59 in Proceedings of the General Conference of the Evangelical Association, Philadelphia, Pa., 1891. The proceedings and resolutions of the Lay Convention are found in the same volume, p. 80-104.

5Proceedings, 1894, p. 13.
6Proceedings, 1894, p. 41.
7Proceedings, 1894, p. 42.
8Proceedings, 1894, p. 48.
The terms of this working relationship are not now known. Until recently, neither was the extent of the dependence on the work of Terry known. However, a recent comparison of a small pamphlet by Terry with the Articles of Faith of the United Evangelical Church adopted in 1894 reveals that the formulators of the Articles depended heavily on Terry's earlier work. Milton Terry's pamphlet, *Doctrines of Arminian Methodism* (Evanston: University Press Print, 1887) presents his proposal for a "concise statement of the doctrines universally accepted by Arminian Methodism."  

The extensive verbal agreement between Terry's doctrinal statement and the Articles of Faith accepted by the United Evangelical Church can be clearly seen in the following presentation. The middle column records the entire text of Terry's 25 articles as presented in the pamphlet of 1887. The right hand column contains the verbal changes made by the 1894 Conference. In a few cases it can be seen that the United Evangelical formulation departs from Terry's text. In these cases the U.E. Articles revert to the Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Association (*Discipline* of 1890). In such cases the relevant text from the Evangelical Association Articles is given in the left hand column.

Abbreviations and Symbols: (used in the columns below)

- **E.A.**: Evangelical Association, *Discipline* of 1890.
- **Terry**: Milton S. Terry, *Doctrines of Arminian Methodism*, 1887.
- **U.E.**: United Evangelical Church, *Discipline*, 1894.

Symbols used in the U.E. Column designate the following correspondences with Terry and E.A.:

- [ ] material from Terry omitted in U.E.
- ___ material not in Terry added to U.E.
- | material in U.E. which differs substantially from Terry, but is paralleled by E.A.

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1¹Frederick A. Norwood, *From Dawn to Midday at Garrett*, Evanston, Ill.: Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 1978, p. 227. Norwood refers to a letter to Terry from Jacob Hartzler, dated 12 February 1902 (Garrett Archives, Ayres Papers 12). Hartzler was a protagonist in the Evangelical Association controversy. It was his work in the Association mission to Japan that was severely criticized by Bishop Esher. The ensuing conflict, involving Hartzler's brother, H. B. Hartzler, editor of the *Evangelical Messenger*, escalated into an unfortunate series of trials and dismissals, ultimately leading to the split in the church.

1²Milton S. Terry, *Doctrines of Arminian Methodism*, Evanston, Ill.: University Press Print, 1887, p. 3. The entire pamphlet is only seven pages in length.
I. Of the Holy Trinity

There is but one true and living God, an eternal BEING, a Spirit without body, . . . [rest of text identical to U.E., except:] of all things visible and invisible. And in this . . .

1. Of God

There is but one God, the Eternal Spirit, fountain of life and of light, almighty and all-wise; he fills all things with his presence, and is infinite in holiness and love. In the unity of this Godhead subsist the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, essentially one in nature, power and glory, but distinct in personality and relations to the salvation of man.

2. Of Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only begotten Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary, grew into perfect manhood, and became acquainted with all the infirmities, temptations and sorrows of men. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead, so that, uniting Deity and humanity in one Christ, he is sole Mediator between God and man. He

II. Of Jesus Christ

manhood [ ] and became
gave his life a ransom for all, and by his death on the cross made a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. He rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, wherein he abideth, our great High-Priest and King, and must reign until all things are put in subjection under him.

3. Of the Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, and of essentially the same eternal nature, power and glory, is everywhere present with men to convict of sin, work newness of life in them that believe, and lead them unto all truth.

IV. Of the Holy Scriptures
By the Holy Scriptures we understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, which the Church has at all times in-
dubiously received as such.

The Names of the Canonical Books. [the books are listed in order: Genesis to Twelve Minor Prophets and Matthew to Revelation.]

The Holy Scriptures contain the will of God, so far as it is necessary for us to know for our salvation; so that whatsoever is not contained therein, nor can be proved thereby, is not to be enjoined on any as an article of faith, or as a doctrine essential to salvation.

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and contain the revelation of all things necessary to salvation. They are to be accepted as oracles of God, and devoutly searched for instruction in the knowledge of Christ, and in the duties of and practice of a holy life.

5. Of Human Depravity

All men have sinned, and they suffer a depravity of nature which is continually propagated in the entire race of Adam. This corruption of nature so far removes them from the original righteousness of man that of themselves they have no ability to recover from their fallen condition,
but are continually inclined to do that which is evil.

6. Of Salvation Through Christ  
The love of God has made salvation possible to all through the mediation of Jesus Christ, whereby every man is graciously provided with freedom of will to accept or reject the offer of eternal life.

7. Of Repentance  
Repentance is sorrow for sin wrought in the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. The awakened sinner is thereby made to recognize the holiness of God, the righteousness of his law, and the guilt and shame of his own perverse nature. Thus deeply humbled, he turns unto God and forsakes his sins.

8. Of Justification  
Justification by faith is that act of God by which, when we yield
ourselves in full confidence to our Savior, Jesus Christ, we are freely acquitted from the guilt of sin, and are accounted righteous in his sight. We are accordingly justified, not by works which we perform, but by faith in him who died for us.

9. Of Regeneration
Regeneration is that work of the Holy Spirit wrought in us, whereby we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and experience newness of life in Christ Jesus. By this new birth the believer becomes a child of God, receives the Spirit of adoption, and is made an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

10. Of the Witness of the Spirit
The witness of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God, the heavenly Comforter, immediately convinces the regenerate believer that he has passed from death unto

Saviour
and [ ] accounted righteous

IX. Of Regeneration
wrought in us [ ] whereby

X. Of the Witness of the Spirit
life, that his sins are all forgiven, and that he is a child of God.

11. Of Sanctification

Entire sanctification, or Christian Perfection, is a state of righteousness and true holiness, which every regenerate believer may attain. It consists in being cleansed from all sin, loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. This gracious state of perfect love is attainable in this life by faith, both gradually and instantaneously, and should be earnestly sought by every child of God; but it does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance, and mistakes which are common to man.

12. Of Good Works

The Holy Spirit dwelling in man begets within him love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, temperance, and all other ennobling
virtues, and these show themselves in numerous outward acts, which become so many evidences of a living faith. Although such good works cannot put away sin, they are ever well-pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God.

13. Of Apostasy
The gracious help of God is pledged to all those who continue steadfast in faith; but, on account of man's free will, which no power may coerce, apostasy from God is possible so long as we continue in the flesh. Wherefore constant watchfulness, prayer and holy living are necessary on the part of man, lest he fall away from the grace of God, grieve and quench the Holy Spirit, and lose his soul at last.

14. Of Immortality
The soul of man is immortal, and, on its separation from the body at death, continues in a conscious state
of existence in the world of spirits. It there either enters into bliss, or undergoes torment, according to its character as formed and fixed in the present life.

15. Of the Resurrection
Christ did truly rise from the dead, and took again his own body, and therewith ascended into heaven. Likewise all the dead shall ultimately be raised up by the power of God through Christ, both the just and the unjust; but those who have done good shall come forth unto an eternal life of glory, and those who have wrought wickedness shall be adjudged to everlasting punishment.

16. Of the Final Judgment
God has appointed a day in which he will judge all men by Jesus Christ, to whom is committed the judgment of this world. We must all, accordingly, appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and have
our eternal destiny determined according to our works.

17. Of Heaven
Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has provided for his redeemed a place of heavenly and eternal rest, into which he purposed ultimately to gather them all, and dwell with them in unspeakable glory. There shall be no more sorrow, pain or death, and the glorified saints shall see God, and walk in his light for ever and ever.

18. Of Hell
The incorrigible sinner, having rejected Christ and all the offers and opportunities of grace, is without God and without hope in the world, and makes himself a child of Satan. When he dies, his soul awakes to the torment of Hell, from which there is no promise or hope of deliverance, but in the final judgment he is sentenced to the

XVII. Of Heaven
Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has provided for those who are redeemed by his grace a heavenly and eternal rest, gather them [ ] and dwell with them no more sorrow, pain, or death in his light for ever. [ ]

XVIII. Of Hell
When he dies [ ] his torment of hell, but [ ]
everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels.

19. Of the Church
The Holy Catholic Church consists of the great body of believers who confess the Lord Jesus Christ, and have life in him. The individual Church is a congregation or society of Christian believers, in which the pure worship of God is maintained, his holy word is preached, and his commandments and ordinances are sacredly observed.

20. Of the Ministry
The ministry of the Gospel is a sacred office and calling, ordained by Christ for the proclamation of his truth in all the world, and for the orderly administration of the sacraments, the worship, and the disciplines of the Church. No man may assume this office without the conviction of a divine call thereto,
XVI. Of the Lord's Supper

The Supper of the Lord is not merely a token of love and union that Christians ought to have among themselves, but is rather a mystery or a representation of our redemption by the sufferings and death of Christ; insomuch, that such as rightly, worthily and faithfully receive the same, partake of the body and blood of Christ by faith, as the imparting means, not in a bodily, but in a spiritual manner, in eating the broken bread, and the recognition and ratification of that call by the Church.

21. Of Baptism

The sacrament of baptism is the formal application of water to an infant or to an adult believer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as a visible sign and seal that the person so consecrated stands in a holy covenant relation to God and his people.

XXI. Of Baptism

Infant, or [ ] believer, in the name of the Father, and [ ] Son, and

22. Of the Lord's Supper

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the formal eating of bread and drinking of wine in solemn remembrance that Christ died for us, and shed his most precious blood for the remission of sins.

We thereby continually show forth

XXII. Of the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is not merely a token of love and union that Christians ought to have among themselves, but is a sacrament instituted in memory of the sufferings and death of Christ; whereby those who rightly, and worthily, receive the same, partake of the body and blood of Christ by faith, not in a bodily, but in a spiritual manner, in eating the broken bread,
bodily, but in a spiritual manner,...

our Christian faith and hope, and are made partakers of the body and blood of Christ.

23. Of Church Polity
The Lord Jesus Christ ordained no particular form of government for his Church, so that whatever polity, rules, regulations rites and ceremonies are adopted and approved by common authority, and are not repugnant to the word of God, may be acknowledged as sufficient to constitute a true Church of the living God. Such polity, rules, rites and ceremonies may be lawfully changed from time to time, as the needs of men and the diversity of nations, countries and manners may require.

24. Of Civil Government
Civil government is an ordinance of God, grounded in the necessities of human nature, and essential to the maintenance of public order, the security of personal rights, and the

and in drinking the blessed cup. We thereby also continually show forth our Christian faith and hope. [ ]

XXIII. Of Church Polity
his church regulations, rites, and ceremonies
true church

countries, and manners

XXIV. Of Civil Government

Articles of Faith

23
The Doctrine of Christian Perfection

"... sin has, as it were, lost all its power against such a one. . ."

"... That such a state is attainable, even in this life, is very evident,..."

punishment of evil doers. It is the duty of all men to be subject to the supreme authority of the country in which they reside, and to respect and honor the civil magistrates.

25. Of the Evangelization of the World

The Gospel is designed for all nations, its field of operation is the whole world, and the Church and people of God are under solemn obligation to make known its saving truth and power among the heathen. To this great work we are impelled and encouraged by the command of the Lord, and the promises and prophecies of the Holy Scriptures.

XXV. Of the Evangelization of the World

The church

Christian Perfection

"We believe the doctrine of Christian Perfection to be clearly taught in the Word of God. For this reason it is accepted as one of the cherished doctrines of the United
"By experience we are fully persuaded that such a state is attainable, and has been attained by many, . . ."

"Many others had attained it, but for want of watchfulness lost it again. . . . But experience has likewise taught that this blessed state, after it has been lost through negligence, may again be attained by the grace of God, . . ."

"Experience has moreover taught that, ordinarily, this state of Christian perfection is attained gradually, . . . however, during this gradation, this work is perfected in the soul, sooner or later, by a sudden and powerful influence of grace and outpouring of the Divine Spirit."

Evangelical Church. . .

"As to the character of this work of grace, the time attainable, and its effect upon its possessor, that most excellent summary of statement given by John Wesley in the year 1784, fully meets our views. . . . These propositions are as follows:

[Wesley’s eleven point summary at the conclusion of A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, first edition, 1766, is quoted. Note: the date 1784 as given in the U.E. Discipline is probably a typographical error for 1764, Wesley’s date for the writing of his summary: “In the year 1764, upon a review of the whole subject, I wrote down the sum of what I had observed, in the following short propositions:--”]
SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

It is quite evident that the United Evangelical Church, in preparing their Articles of Faith, essentially used Terry’s formulation as published in his pamphlet of 1887. The changes which were made are of three types:

1. Differences of Substance: Article I, Of God; Article IV, Of the Holy Scriptures; Article XXII, Of the Lord’s Supper. Two of the three articles, IV on Scriptures and XXII on the Lord’s Supper, were the only ones which were referred back to committee by the Conference. In all three cases the literary dependence of U.E. on E.A. is evident, although there has been some editorial reworking.

2. Minor Verbal Differences, mostly of an editorial nature: Examples of this type of change are found in Article III, Of the Holy Spirit -- Terry says, “of essentially the same eternal nature” while U.E. says, “of the same nature.” Without further records it is probably impossible to determine whether such a change is stylistic or theological. If “essentially” is understood to mean “of the same essence” the word would surely be fully theologica. If, on the other hand, “essentially” implies “essentially but not necessarily identical” there may have been theological reasons for omitting the word. Other verbal deletions in U.E. are: VIII. “Justification” for “Justification by faith.” XV. “and ascended into heaven” for “and therewith ascended into heaven.” “Likewise all the dead shall be raised up” for “likewise all the dead shall ultimately be raised up.” XXI. “application of water to an infant, or believer” for “application of water to an infant or to an adult believer.” U.E. additions or verbal changes from Terry are: XVII, Of Heaven -- “those who are redeemed by his grace” for “his redeemed.” XIX, “Holy General Church” for “Holy Catholic Church.” There are other slight verbal differences which are editorial in nature.

3. Minor Stylistic Differences, in punctuation and capitalization. Terry capitalizes “Church”, while U.E. does not. Terry capitalizes “Hell”, while U.E. does not. Terry omits the comma between the last two members of a series of coordinate nouns; U.E. inserts the comma. This may be of some significance in one case: XXIII. Of Church Polity -- Terry’s series reads “whatever polity, rules, regulations rites and ceremonies.” The last member of the series in Terry is the Hendiadys “rites and ceremonies,” while in U.E. all members are taken as individual items, “polity, rules, regulations, rites, and ceremonies.” The remaining differences seem to imply no difference in meaning.

The leaders of the newly-founded United Evangelical Church had in the work of Milton Terry a doctrinal statement with which they

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12Supra, p. 2.
were in substantial agreement. They must have found statements such as the one on Sanctification to their liking. The article on Church Polity harmonized well with their own concept of church government. By adopting the doctrinal formulation of a Methodist professor of Old Testament and Theology from Garrett, which formulation the author described as "doctrines of Arminian Methodism," the United Evangelical Church aligned itself with a doctrinal expression which represented, in Robert Chiles' phrase, a transition in American Methodist theology from the "liberal evangelicalism" of Miley and others to the "evangelical liberalism" of Terry, Sheldon and others. 13 While Milton Terry may be considered a transitional theologian who considered theology to be "a progressive and improvable science,"14 the United Evangelical Church determined that "the Articles of Faith shall never be changed."15

**APPENDIX: LATER DEVELOPMENTS**

The complete text of the Articles of Faith of the United Evangelical as adopted in 1894 remained the creedal statement of the church throughout its existence. When the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church completed a Basis of Union in 1921 designed to reunite the two churches, The Doctrines of the Church were composed of I. Articles of Faith, being the nineteen articles of the Evangelical Association, and II. The Doctrines of Regeneration, Sanctification and Christian Perfection. This latter section begins with three Articles taken directly from the United Evangelical Articles of Faith, namely, IX. Of Regeneration; X. Of the Witness of the Spirit; and XI. Of Sanctification, followed by the statement on Christian Perfection which had previously appeared as a supplement to the Association Articles of Faith. This doctrinal statement was approved at the merging General Conference of 1922 and included in *Doctrines and Discipline of the Evangelical Church, 1923.*

Some of the United Evangelical churches, especially from the East Pennsylvania Conference, refused to enter the merger of 1922. Not entering the newly-founded church, they considered themselves to be the continuation of the United Evangelical Church. They later changed their name to the Evangelical Congregational Church but retained the 25 articles of faith as formulated by the United Evangelical Church in 1894. These Articles remain unchanged in the *Creed, Ritual and Discipline of the Evangelical Congregational Church, 1972.*

15*The Doctrines and Discipline of the United Evangelical Church,* Harrisburg, Pa.: Board of Publications, 1894, p. 57.
The main body of the merged church, now named the Evangelical Church, continued to use the combined statement as described above as its doctrinal statement until its merger with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in 1946, forming the Evangelical United Brethren Church. For a time the Confession of Faith of the Church was simply an unaltered presentation of both doctrinal statements from the churches, including the three carry-over Articles from the old United Evangelical Church.

At the General Conference of 1962 the Evangelical United Brethren Church adopted a single creedal statement of belief, consisting of sixteen articles. The language of portions of the former U.E. Articles on Regeneration and Sanctification was incorporated into Article IX—Justification and Regeneration, and Article XI—Sanctification and Christian Perfection respectively. The carry-over text of Regeneration is:

". . .whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature and experience newness of life. By this new birth the believer becomes reconciled to God [U.E. reads “becomes a child of God]. . .”

The incorporated text of Sanctification is:

"Entire sanctification is a state of perfect love, righteousness and true holiness which every regenerate believer may obtain [U.E.: attain] by being delivered [U.E.: “cleansed”] from the power of [U.E.: all] sin, by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving one’s neighbor as one’s self. [U.E.: “ourselves”]. Through faith in Jesus Christ this gracious gift [U.E.: state] may be received in this life both gradually and instantaneously, and should be sought earnestly by every child of God.” (Verbal changes in the E.U.B. statement are in italics. U.E. wording is given in brackets.)

This 16 article Confession of Faith, as first published in The Discipline of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, 1963 edition, now appears in The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1968, following immediately after the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church, as a combined doctrinal statement of the United Methodist Church, established in 1968, and thus has become a stipulated reference in the Restrictive Rules and is “deemed congruent if not identical in their doctrinal perspectives and not in conflict.” (p. 36, Book of Discipline, 1968).