

BOOK REVIEWS

J. Bruce Behney and Paul H. Eller, *The History of the Evangelical United Brethren Church*, edited by Kenneth W. Krueger. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979, pp. 423, illus., index. \$17.95.

"A brief responsible history of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and its antecedents," the United Brethren in Christ (U.B.C.) and the Evangelical Church, is what the authors claim as their goal for this important book. The work is, in fact, broader in scope than earlier studies limited to biographical or topical interests and is more detailed than the previous general history of the E.U.B. Church. (Paul H. Eller, *These Evangelical United Brethren*. Dayton, Ohio: Otterbein Press, 1957.) Furthermore, the authors eschew "Vapid generalizations and direct endeavors to plumb the denominational psyche. . . ." (Both quotations are from page 9.) Indeed, the emphasis is on positions and achievements reflected in official church decisions. In short, what we have is a responsible, though not-so-brief, middle-of-the-road chronicle of the official life of an important constituent stream of the United Methodist Church.

Another significant characteristic is that this *History* is an insider's book. Its co-authors are senior historians of the E.U.B. tradition and its editor is a pastor of the same background. For decades each of the authors has lived and breathed E.U.B. history as teacher, author, and clergyperson. As masters of the detail and practitioners of the spirit of E.U.B. Christianity they have admirably been able to evoke its distinctives without falling into uncritical narrowness. But the book is written about the Church, for a Church audience, by Church persons.

Two principles dictate the form of the book: chronology and church organization. Since the U.B.C. and the Evangelical Church were separate organizations until 1946, the authors have traced their respective histories in parallel by period. The reader completes a chapter covering several decades of the U.B.C. and then begins another on the same period for the Evangelicals. 1815, 1840, 1890, 1920 and 1946 are the years chosen to divide the periods. 1815/16 marks the first general conferences, 1840/41 the conclusion of important constitutional developments, the 1890s the end of an era of schisms, the 1920s church reunification among the Evangelicals, and 1946 the formation of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

Within this form, the authors strive to define and depict the distinct singularity of the E.U.B. church character. That character, it turns out, has much to do with a series of tensions that enlivened the constituent churches and, at times, ripped them apart. The first tension is the struggle between the German and English languages and

culture. Since the movement began in Pennsylvania and Maryland as a religious revival among German immigrants, the history is studded with names like Jakob Albrecht and Wilhelm Otterbein, Boehm, Breyfogel and Dreisbach. But even in early decades English began to take over. For example, the Evangelical founder Albrecht was commonly known as Jacob Albright. By the twentieth century, though traces of the German heritage remained, the English language was used practically universally in worship, official meetings and publications.

Another theme is the strong, though diverse, reformed traditions of the early founders, who were German Reformed, Lutheran, and Mennonite, in tension with the evangelistic zeal that drew them together with each other and toward fellowship with the revivalistic, sanctification-preaching Methodists of the time. The authors depict this tension as relaxing quickly due to the rapid fading of the various reformed doctrines and practices as preachers adopted revival techniques and stressed free will.

Still other themes emerge. The warm, familial relations that characterized these relatively small U.B. and Evangelical churches contrast with the bitter disputes that wracked and divided them. The simple reliance of most preachers on the Bible and common sense strains against a continuously growing emphasis on formal education and thought. But the overall, two-century sweep is the story of Americanization, regularization, and organization, resulting in the loss of uniqueness and in a timely merger with Methodism in 1968 out of a sense of strength rather than of crisis.

Perhaps one could legitimately ask for more from a work of this significance. While acknowledging the rightfulness of eschewing "vapid generalizations," one still craves for more general judgments about the contributions of this religious movement to American religious and cultural history, and about its strengths and weaknesses relative to the broader church. And while respecting the authors' decision not to attempt to "plumb the denominational psyche," the reader will probably want to learn more about the forces that drew people by the thousands in places as distant from rural Lancaster County as Los Angeles, Seattle and Saskatchewan, to say nothing of Freetown, Berlin and Tokyo, to join forces with these Evangelical United Brethren. Some contemporary concerns, such as the significant role played by women in this Church and as its intellectual and theological history, are scarcely emphasized. In addition, further attention to the continuity of the reformed doctrines of Otterbein among the U.B.s and of formal liturgical practices among some Evangelicals would have been of great interest. A study treating such questions would require at-

tention to the broader body of source materials and to other analytical techniques. One book cannot do everything, and most probably Behney and Eller would join in suggesting that E.U.B. history could sustain and would reward this more interpretive sort of study.

One abrupt transition stands out and seems to call for further explanation. On page 55 one reads, "...the German and the English Methodist movements did not coalesce," referring to the year 1784. This language could be misunderstood and probably should read, "...the German and the English movements did not coalesce." That would clarify the situation by making it impossible to think that the United Brethren in Christ thought of themselves as Methodists at this time.

Gratitude should be expressed to the editor, Kenneth W. Kreuger, for making this publication possible. Reportedly the basic manuscript was brought nearly to completion by the authors some years earlier, about 1968, but never made entirely ready for publication. This, incidentally, may account for some of the limitations of the work mentioned above. Kreuger worked the manuscript into publishable form in the late 1970s. If it had not been for his initiative the study might never have been published.

On balance, within their self-imposed limits, the authors have achieved their goal of a "responsible" history as well as, and probably better than, any other scholars could have. Enormous scholarship has gone into the book and it is warmed by insights gleaned from decades of study and reflection. It will undoubtedly join the corpus of key texts on United Methodist history and will probably never be surpassed as the authoritative general survey of its E.U.B. constituent. It will always serve as a key reference book. It should be found in every public, undergraduate and graduate library that collects American church history, in the libraries of all United Methodist agencies, and on the home bookshelves of all persons who have even a moderate interest in E.U.B. history.

— Darrell Reeck
University of Puget Sound

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign Against Lynching*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979, pp. xvi, 373, \$14.95.

Jessie Daniel Ames has not been part of the folklore of the Southern struggle for racial and sexual justice. But she should be. In this excellent study of her life from 1883 to 1972 and of her leadership of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching from 1930-42, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has given Ames and the

thousands of middle-class white Southern churchwomen, largely Methodist, who worked with her, the recognition and scholarly analysis which they merit.

Early in her life in Texas, in her relationships with father, brothers, and husband, Ames perceived the "trade-off" demanded by the code of Southern chivalry: for protection Southern ladies paid with lifetimes of subjection to men. "The crown of chivalry," she later wrote, "has been pressed like a crown of thorns on our heads." As a young widow and mother at the time of World War I, she began her personal redefinition of the image of the Southern lady. In partnership with her widowed mother, she became a successful businesswoman and entered Texas politics as a suffragist. Yet then and always she used the protective guise of the respectable Southern lady and the language of female evangelicalism to political advantage.

As a young woman she also learned that "Southern trees bear a strange fruit, Blood on the leaves and blood at the root, Black body swinging in the Southern breeze, Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees." After World War I she moved "beyond progressivism 'for whites only' into the interracial movement." In 1924 she launched her major lifework when she became a salaried field worker in Texas for the Atlanta-based Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC). Four years later she moved to Atlanta as Director of Woman's Work for the CIC. In this position her main work was the organization of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching.

Based in church women's missionary societies across the south, the Association launched an elaborate and courageous single-issue campaign against the lynching of blacks. Engineered by Ames, the energetic and aggressive organizer, the campaign of the ASWPL was also fueled by her profound conviction that lynching was peculiarly a white woman's issue and responsibility. "A truly subversive affair," as Lillian Smith called it, the Association rejected the frequently used white male rationale that lynching was necessary for the protection of white Southern womanhood from interracial rape. In public speeches as in private confrontations with Southern sheriffs, the organization's 43,000 members made clear "to their red-handed 'protectors' that they want no more of this rope-and-faggot courtesy." Thus, under Ames' guidance the anti-lynching campaign became an important step in the liberation of many conventional women in the South. The parallels between her career and that of another, more famous Methodist laywoman, Frances Willard, appear marked. As Willard had marshalled an autonomous, ecumenical women's organization, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, largely composed of conservative churchwomen, in the campaign against alcohol, Ames

marshalled the ASWPL against lynching. Thereby both of them involved thousands of churchwomen in a world larger than home and church.

In Hall's telling, the story of Jessie Daniel Ames and the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching becomes a profound exploration of the "nexus between private experience and public activity and shed[s] light not only on political motivation and leadership style but also on the often inaccessible emotional realities of women's lives." From her skillful analysis Jessie Daniel Ames emerges as "both a flawed and a brilliant leader of organized southern women," "fighting every step of the way," "failing to love and to be loved," "a paradoxical mixture of triumph and defeat, optimism and disillusion, estrangement and bondedness."

The history of Ames and the Association provides an illuminating case study of the "tenacity and motivating power of the ideal of female solidarity" transcending racial barriers. At the same time the author makes clear the racist and classist assumptions and practices of Ames and many of her white, middle-class co-workers and their inability to form lasting alliances with black women based on mutual respect and equality. One of the few black women who understood Ames and remained her ally was Mary McLeod Bethune, the distinguished Methodist educator.

The extent to which Ames was not amenable to agendas important to blacks becomes clear in Hall's account of her opposition to the movement supporting the passage of a federal anti-lynching law and her disagreement on this issue with Will Alexander, Director of the CIC, and with Walter White, Executive Secretary of the NAACP. From first to last she remained devoted to the Association's program of education and moral persuasion and to the importance of state, not federal, action against lynching. When the Women's Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, endorsed the federal anti-lynching legislation in 1934, she began to lose significant support among the more liberal women of her constituency. By 1937 she had been "bypassed by the southern liberal mainstream." Forced to resign from her position with the CIC (now the Southern Regional Council) in 1944, she retired to North Carolina and "reconstructed her familiar role as teacher, organizer, and gadfly to a female constituency" with The Methodist Church as her base.

In *Revolt Against Chivalry* Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has made an extremely significant contribution to the history of the struggle for racial and sexual justice in the South, shedding new light on Methodism's interaction with that struggle.

— Norma Taylor Mitchell
Troy State University

Lester E. Suzuki, *Ministry in the Assembly and Relocation Centers of World War II*. Berkeley: Yardbird Publishing Co., 1979. 375 pp., \$10.50 Paperback.

Those of us who are involved in the history of the minorities in America are well acquainted with the injustice and unfair policy of the U.S. Government against the Japanese-Americans during World War II. There are many books and articles which reveal some of their experiences but few are written by the internees themselves. Rev. Suzuki's new book deals with these very personal experiences from a Christian's point of view.

The book can be classified in two major parts: the first half concentrates on the details of daily routine at the Assembly and Relocation Centers, and the second half of the book deals with the religious aspects of the life experiences. The author has carefully researched those figures, dates, places, and names of the leaders of the various religious groups as well as the worship experiences under their restricted condition.

Understandably, the people were simply angry at the U. S. Government for the way they were treated. The Army and the War Relocation Authority had no sympathy for these Japanese-Americans, and the unconstitutional act against them by the government was not of their concern under the name of "national security." Under such difficult circumstances, the Christian churches had provided many religious and social services in order to give them hope and aspiration in American life. The author illustrated these points with full details which are rather unique in the book.

As a whole, the book is very informative and an inspiring one. Living through those days of darkness in American history, one can fully empathize with the author. The author is, however, reluctant to criticize the unfair, unconstitutional, and unjust policy of the American government and follows much of "silent citizens" approach. We can learn from history if only we understand it correctly. Otherwise, history may repeat itself.

I expect more than a matter of fact type description saying that "the Japanese have weathered through much prejudice, much poverty, and hardship" (p. 263) from the book. One can imagine that Rev. Suzuki had served many who were angry, frustrated, disappointed, disillusioned about democracy, freedom, justice as known in America, and the book should have shared some of those inner painful feelings that his congregation must have held if not overtly expressed.

They were told that they could not be trusted, and their American citizenship was of no value. Did they just take these immoral and unconstitutional condemnations sitting down? What were their

reactions? The author should have carefully spelled them out for us because they are precious human experiences.

In spite of this short-coming in the book, the book has much to offer. It tells much about the untold stories about the Japanese-Americans during World War II. Anyone who is interested in the United Methodist Church's involvement in the Assembly and Relocation Centers should, by all means, get a copy of Rev. Suzuki's book and read it.

— Harold Sunoo
Central Methodist College