THE VISION OF GERMAN-AMERICAN EVANGELICALISM:  
THE CENTRAL ROLE OF MISSIONS IN THE  
EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN TRADITION  
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The purpose of this paper is to identify and explicate the role of mission in the formation and development of the Evangelical United Brethren Church (1946–1968) and its predecessor traditions, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ (1800–1946) and the Evangelical Association (1803–1921), later renamed the Evangelical Church (1921–1946).

Attention will first be given to the ethos in which the EUB was formed, and the contributions of its principal founders to the early formation of its missionary impulse. This may be referred to as the creative phase. Second, attention will be given to the principal institutional developments that were related to the concern for missions. Third, we consider the role of missions in what may be called the ecumenical phase, which led to a series of church unions (1921–1968). At appropriate junctures, comparisons will be made with the mission concerns of Episcopal Methodism.

I

The ethos from which the concern for missions in the United Brethren in Christ (UBC) emerged can be traced to a remarkable center of German Reformed Pietism in the German Rhineland, the Herborn Academy. Philip William Otterbein (1726–1813), the principal founder of the UBC, and five of his brothers received their theological education in this irenic center of the German Reformed Church. Three features distinguished its pedagogy:

1) From the date of its founding in 1584 by Count Johann of Nassau,¹ Herborn had become the center within the Holy Roman Empire for the promotion of the teachings of the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), which was perhaps the most irenic and warmly evangelical doctrinal standard of the Protestant Reformation. Its co-author, Caspar Olevianus, became the first professor of theology at Herborn, after the Catechism had been banished from its original home in Heidelberg by the strict Lutheran party. The Catechism intentionally downplayed the Calvinist doctrine of unconditional

¹Count Johann was the brother of the leader of the Dutch war for independence, Willem the Silent. See J. S. O'Malley, Pilgrimage of Faith; The Legacy of the Otterbeins; ATLA Monograph Series No. 3 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1973), Part I.
predestination. Instead, its experiential theological tenor was set in Question 1: “What is your only comfort in life and in death? A: That I belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. . . .” Herein lay an incipient theology of mission that exceeded the narrow, territorial concept of the church that was then prevalent post-Reformation Europe, according to the terms of the Peace of Augsburg (1555). Christ is spoken of as the central unifying point of all who seek release from human misery, occasioned by the fall. In addition, the church is spoken of, not in narrowly-defined “confessional” terms, but as being that community of all those being summoned and gathered through all generations (and in all places!) whose heartfelt desire is a total consecration to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

These missional aspects of the Heidelberg Catechism were later reflected in the United Brethren Confession of Faith, (1814), whose origin can be traced to Otterbein’s ministry in the “Evangelical” Reformed congregation that he served in Baltimore between 1784 and his death in 1813. That Confession likewise speaks of Christ as “. . . the Savior and Redeemer of the whole world, that all people can become blessed through Him, if they will, . . . and that He will return on the last day to judge the living and the dead.” The Confession reflects the “order of salvation” (Heilsordnung) of the Catechism, and, in Reformed Pietist fashion, extends that process on to the total renovation of the imago dei. Hence, in the article (#3) concerning the Holy Spirit, we read, “. . . that we must be sanctified through Him and attain unto that faith which purifies us from all blemishes of the flesh and of the spirit.” This Heilsordnung, that was central to the Reformed Pietists’ interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism, is also reflected in Article 4 of the Confession, concerning the Scriptures:

We believe that the Bible is God’s Word, that it contains the true way to our soul’s salvation, and that every true Christian must take this, with the influence of the Spirit of God, as his sole guide (Richtschnur).  

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2 Question 1, The Heidelberg Catechism (Philadelphia; The United Church Press, 1962).
3 The Peace of Augsburg (1555) provided that the prince of each principality within the Empire would have the prerogative of determining the religion of his realm, (“cuius regio euius religio”). Because the Reformed faith was excluded from the provisions of this treaty, the Elector of the Palatinate was required to defend his Reformed faith before the imperial Diet (1563), a task which he executed so successfully that he earned the title Frederick “the Pious.”
5 “Art. 4. Wir glauben das die Bibel Gottes wort ist, daß sie den wahren zu unserm seelenheil und seeligkeit enthalte, das ein jeder wahrer Christ, dieselbe, mit den einfussen des geister-
It should be recognized that the theology of this *Confession* is formulated in a terse, earthy, and non-technical form, since it originated as a working document of an informal movement of sundry “awakened” preachers among the German immigrants of the American colonies. Still, the lines of continuity are unmistakable: Otterbein himself was nurtured in the theology of the *Heidelberg Catechism* at Herborn, he served as the distributor of two extensive volumes of sermons on the *Catechism* by his brother Georg, and he referred to his practice of discipling by catechizing his parishioners at Baltimore.

(2) In addition to its emphasis upon the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the pedagogy at the Herborn Academy was also characterized by an “anti-scholastic” method of catechetical instruction, in which Christian content was to be conveyed to seekers of salvation “without bondage to words and forms.” This outlook enabled the theologians at Herborn to develop a series of instructional aids and simplified versions of the *Catechism* that were suited for teaching the faith in a non-technical and contextual manner among persons of varied backgrounds. Hence, when Otterbein discipled his converts in North America, it was in accordance with this non-technical and extra-parochial style of catechizing.

(3) A final contribution of Herborn as the formative ethos for the UBC was its reputation as being the home of Pietism within the Reformed Church of Germany. The first Pietist work published in the Reformed Church of Germany was printed there. From there went forth Jan Comenius (1592–1670), the Reformed missionary to Bohemia who succeeded in retrieving and reorganizing the scattered followers of Jan Hus, laying the foundations for the modern Moravian movement. In the Otterbein’s day, the school was known as a lone surviving citadel of churchly, non-separatist Pietism whose mission now was to stem the tide of rationalistic unbelief of the “Aufklärung” (Enlightenment). Otterbein’s chief theological textbook was a compend of the writings of the great Reformed Pietists, Lampe (a practical systematician) and Vitringa (a Biblical scholar, whose symbolic-prophetic interpretation of Scripture was followed by

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Gott, einzig und allein zu seiner Richtschnur nehmen mußte....” Drury, *Doctrines and Disciplines*, Part II, 3.

7A subscription list found in Volume Two of Georg G. Otterbein’s *Predigten über den Heidelbergschen Katechismus* (Duisburg, 1800) lists P. W. Otterbein as the distributor for this work in North America.


9O’Malley, 19.

10E.g., an important “encyclopedia” of Christian topics, following the Ramist non-Aristotelian style of pedagogy, was prepared at Herborn by Heinrich Alsted in the seventeenth century.

Bengel, and, in turn, by John Wesley). These men taught a coming transformation of the world by the advancing gospel of Christ.  

Given this mission focus, it was no coincidence that the Reformed authorities in Amsterdam, whose Synod was responsible for all mission activity in North America, would look to Herborn when it came time to recruit missionary personnel for America. Upon the recommendation of his teachers, Otterbein was one of six candidates who responded to the missionary appeal of Michael Schlatter in 1752. His mother Wilhelmina had astutely observed, “Ah William, . . . this place is too narrow for you. You will find your work elsewhere! . . . You will have to become a missionary.” She was speaking in response to the opposition he had experienced in attempting to introduce pietistic measures to promote Christian discipleship in his German parish at Ockersdorf, that had included the introduction of conventicles.

In his long tenure as a German Reformed missionary to North America (1752–1813), P. W. Otterbein emerged as the leader of the pietistic wing of the Reformed coetus in the colonies. He retained his relationship to that body, despite changes of heterodoxy voiced by the anti-Pietist, “orthodox” party, that attacked him for his missionary zeal in reaching out beyond the borders of the Reformed parishes he served, in order to find and serve the “lost” among the numerous German immigrants to Pennsylvania and Maryland. His zeal led him to participate in the so-called “unsectarian” meetings with such non-Reformed, “awakened” preachers as the Mennonite Martin Boehm (d. 1812). It was on Pentecost, 1767, that the now famous meeting between Otterbein and Boehm occurred at the barn meeting in Lancaster County. There Otterbein, the Reformed missionary, was sufficiently moved by the testimony to the new birth given by Boehm, that Otterbein embraced the Anabaptist with the enduring words, “Wir sind Bruder!” United Brethren trace their inception to that moment.

There are two factors that indicate the direction of the emerging missions emphasis of this “Otterbein-Boehm” awakening movement. First, Otterbein had already set forth a theological base for this emphasis in a programmatic sermon preached in 1760 entitled, “The Salvation Bringing Incarnation and Glorious Victory of Jesus Christ over the Devil and Death” (Hebrews 2:14–15). Reflecting the federalism of Lampe, this sermon located its urgent appeal to the new birth and discipleship within the larger scope of God’s ordering of salvation history (i.e., one’s *Heilsordnung* was understood in terms of the *Heilsgeschichte*). Its theology of

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14 This sermon was published in Germantown, PA (1763) and was published in English translation in Core, 77–90.
mission is without Methodist influence, for it was a full six years before
the first Methodists appeared in the American colonies.

Second, Otterbein's mission strategy, unlike that of Wesley, was
parish-based, with a plan of itinerant preaching radiating out from that
base, which was his Evangelical Reformed congregation in Baltimore. This
strategy placed him in touch with other similarly “awakened” ministers,
such as Boehm. These men sought, often without success, to retain
membership in their parent churches, while simultaneously participating
in this new “unpartisan” movement—the name that appears in the early
protocol of the UBC. The early meetings of these “United” ministers con­s­
isted largely of pietistic ministers within the German Reformed coetus.
These were called the “Pipe Creek” conferences of 1774-76. When the
meetings resumed after the Revolutionary War, the participants
represented other church traditions, especially Mennonites, indicating a
broadening of the mission base of this para-ecclesial renewal movement.
Whereas Methodism had emerged in England as a renewal movement
within one state church, this movement sought to be a leaven of renewal
within all the existing German churches of the middle colonies, including
the so-called “church Dutch” (Reformed and Lutheran) and the “plain
Dutch” (Mennonite, Dunker, and others). In becoming a trusted spiritual
mentor to Francis Asbury, Otterbein also indicated his desire for infor­
mal fellowship with the awakening that was being spearheaded by the
English-speaking Methodists.

The Otterbein-Boehm movement acquired institutional form with the
adoption of a name (“The United Brotherhood in Christ Jesus”) and the
selection of Otterbein and Boehm as “Elders” in 1800. In place of the
episcopally ordered itinerant system that had by then appeared among the
Methodists, UB decided in the brotherhood of the conferences how best
to “arrange their plan.” Based on Otterbein’s precedent set shortly before
his death in 1813, when he ordained two brethren to become missionaries
to the “West” (Ohio), the UBC adopted a single order (elder) view of
ministry. This was congenial to the Reformed tradition in which he was
ordained.

By limiting ordination to the office of elder, the UBC emphasized its
role as a preaching movement, called to bear witness to Christ among
spiritually “deadened” persons, both among the “churched” and the “un­
churched.” However, most UB ministers remained non-ordained, lay
preachers, and, in contrast with Methodism, they held membership in the

15 O’Malley, 172, 182.
16 See Protocol of the United Brethren, Core, 128.
17 Unlike the Anglican tradition, in which ministerial candidates were first ordained deacon and
then elder, Calvin had implemented a fourfold order of pastor, teacher, deacon, and elder,
in which deacon and elder functions as two separate orders of ministry. In time, pastors and
teachers were called “teaching elders” as distinct from those elders responsible for discipline.
congregations they served (as well as in the annual conference), reflecting Otterbein's parish-based mode of evangelism. Also in contrast with episcopal Methodism, non-itinerating local preachers, as well as itinerant preachers, held voting membership in annual conferences, presiding elders were elected by the members of the annual conferences, and bishops (first called elders) were elected for four-year terms. These features reflect the intention of the early UBC to avoid creating a clerical hierarchy and to accentuate democratic features in their informal structure, that was designed to reach the agrarian people of the frontier with a message and style that would communicate in the common idiom.

These features also came into usage following the adoption of a discipline, against the protests of the Anabaptist elements in the UBC, at the first General Conference of 1815. It is noteworthy that these steps toward institutionalization of the movement took place shortly after the death of the founders (Otterbein died in 1813, Boehm in 1812). However, their successors, who were led by the western missionary Christian Newcomer (1768–1834), carefully avoided the designation of “Kirche” (church). They desired instead to remain a spiritual fellowship of “awakened” brethren, a “brotherhood” reflecting their harsh experience with state churches.

In several respects, the mission focus among the “Albright People,” as the early Evangelicals were called, was more akin to that of episcopal Methodism, insofar as their organizational structure more nearly paralleled that of the Methodists. What distinguished their outlook was their strong German orientation and the German idiom in which the mystical Wesleyan piety of their key leaders was expressed.

The Evangelicals’ distinctive ethos was fashioned by the impact of the life and ministry of their founder, Jacob Albright (1759–1808). Being a Pennsylvania-born, Lutheran-bred farmer/tile maker, and family head, Albright’s lay ministry was launched late in his life out of his profound burden for the salvation of his German-speaking neighbors. They were overlooked by the English-speaking revival movements of the young American republic of the 1790s, including the Methodists.

Albright entered this scene as a melancholy, spiritually tormented religious seeker. He had experienced health impediments, severe farm accidents, and the sudden loss of several children to cholera. As he explained in his autobiography, these events dispelled his illusions that his was a benign world under the lordship of a benevolent God. Caught in the throes of a Luther-like anxiety “anfechtung,” Albright endured a prolonged penitential struggle (“Bußkampf”) that, in Hallensian Pietist fashion, resulted in his breakthrough (“Durchbruch”) into a profound experience

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19 See G. Miller, *Jacob Albrecht* (Reading: Johan Ritter, 1811).
of the new birth ("der Wiedergeburt"). This crisis event occurred under the mentoring of a UB lay preacher, Adam Riegel, and it resulted in his being admitted to membership in a nearly Methodist class meeting, in the house of Isaac Davies.

As he related in his autobiography, he still found no peace of soul due to his burden for the "lost" condition of his fellow Pennsylvania Germans. After his prayers for a missionary to be sent among his people went unanswered, he sensed the voice of the Spirit directing him to take up the task of preaching to his neighbors. Unlike Wesley and Otterbein, he lacked theological training, ecclesial ordination, and clerical support, but he had a controlling sense of mission. His preparation was to immerse himself in scriptural meditation, combined with the spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting, that he carried to such excess that his health was imperiled. When he first stepped into an open market place to preach, his countenance was so transfigured that some witnesses reported that he "was beautiful as an angel."

Albright viewed his indigenous environment as a mission field. Some Germans had migrated to Penn's colony to conduct experiments in Christian community, like the German Baptist Brethren at Germantown and the Ephrata brethren, but the greater number had come to escape economic and political hindrances in Europe. The Revolutionary War era had further eroded the religious base of the colony, and church attendance and public morality came to an all-time low. Even among the observant, the tone of spirituality, as well as the level of social morality, were abysmal, a condition that was often compounded by weak leadership and inadequate resources within the existing church bodies.

In the midst of this situation, Albright appealed to his hearers to come to terms with the experiential message of the new birth in Christ and not to take false comfort in religious formality, whether it be of the "church Dutch" or "plain Dutch" variety. He once preached,

You Lutherans of course, think you have Luther ... but your sinful lives prove that you are not Lutherans, for you live contrary to God's Word and Luther's teaching. And you German Reformed—what does it mean to be Reformed? It means to be restored, to be converted from the world to God, but your lives prove that you have turned from God and toward the world. You Dunkards and Mennonites, with your peculiar dress, ... you will be lost without the new birth. ... Be not astonished that I said you must be born again, for these are the words of our Savior and Judge.

After the fashion of the Methodist preachers, Albright challenged his listeners to seek the power, and not merely the form of godliness. However,

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20 Miller, 14-18.
21 Raymond Albright, History of the Evangelical Church (Harrisburg: The Evangelical Press, 1956), 57.
22 Albright, 8-15.
23 Reminiscence of Henry Spayth, quoted in Albright, 52.
he even went so far as to reject entirely the importance of formal church membership, apart from a deep, experiential appropriation of conscious regeneration. He was appalled by the disparity between formal religious profession and the prevailing godlessness at all levels of corporate living, beginning with family life. At the same time, he was not an iconoclast. He took care to respect the sanctity of all existing planes of Christian worship.

Above all, Albright esteemed the Methodist plan of organization, as reflected in its *Book of Discipline*, which became to him an important guide in strategizing how his mission to German compatriots should proceed. This esteem was manifested in several particulars. He organized his first converts into a class in 1803. He issued licenses to preach to his lay assistants. He forbade them, and himself, from administering the sacraments, because they lacked ecclesial ordination, a stipulation that he adopted without the extrinsic motivation that had guided Wesley, as an Anglican, in this action. The first official name that his followers adopted was “The Newly-Formed Methodist Conference.”

Despite this affinity for Methodism, there were overt reasons why his movement took an independent course. The Methodists, under Asbury’s directive, declined to dispatch missionaries to the numerous German-Americans, in the belief that their field was to remain with Anglo-speakers and that the German language would soon disappear in the United States.24 Little did he realize that there would be six million immigrants to this nation in the 19th century alone. As long as that flow continued, a sufficient mission field of labor for the spiritual heirs of Albright was assured.

There was of course another option open to the Albright brethren, and that was to unite their work with that of the newly-organized (1800) UBC, that was then ministering solely in German. Both groups did share a common mission field and their descendants did join in organic union nearly one and one-half centuries later, in 1946. The initial difficulty here was that Albright prized Methodist order and discipline, whereas there was then a strong contingent within the UBC of former Mennonites who resisted efforts to establish organizational structures, including the keeping of class rolls.25 Asbury criticized Otterbein, whom he otherwise venerated, for failing to press the implementation of Methodist structures, in order to perfect the work among the Germans.26 Asbury apparently did not acknowledge that Otterbein was oriented to a Reformed rather

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24 John Dreisbach, the earliest Evangelical Presiding Elder, reportedly met with Bishop Asbury to request Methodist mission work among the Germans, and received this negative response. See Albright, 48.
than an episcopal polity, as the preferred structure for implementing the mission of the UBC.

Once an independent course was set, Albright’s brethren moved in their conference of 1807 to lay ordaining hands upon their leader. Their sanction was not apostolic succession but their common recognition that he was “a truly evangelical preacher” by virtue of the grace, gifts, and fruit he had manifested among them. 27 He was then made bishop (“Ältesten”) through election by his brethren in 1807. 28 The designation given Albright at his ordination gave an impetus for his followers to rename their mission, following his death, when the first General Conference in 1809 voted to adopt as their official name “Die Evangelische Gemeinschaft” (The Evangelical Association of North America). Like the UBC, they too carefully avoided the use of the word “kirche” (church), because of its odious state church (“landeskirchlich”) implications.

Before his death, Albright was commissioned by the conference to prepare a set of doctrinal articles and a book of Discipline a task that fell to his colleague George Miller to fulfil. Miller chose to adapt and abridge the twenty-five Methodist Articles of Religion, that became the sixteen Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Association. There was the addition of an article on the Last Judgment, possibly derived from the Lutheran Augsburg Confession, and an extended statement on Entire Sanctification appended to the articles. 29 As a result, the mission of this new church was implemented with a stronger disciplinary articulation of the message of scriptural holiness than was the case even with episcopal Methodism itself. 30

While Albright’s resources for launching an effective mission to the Germans in America was severely limited, given his lack of formal theological education and ecclesial ordination and support, he was providentially surrounded with a team of gifted convert/followers, who succeeded in carrying forward his work in the organizational phase.

II

Having examined the phase of creativity that launched the missions of the UBC and the EA, respectively, we turn now to a comparative study

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27 Albright, 66. This lack of a regular “ordination would prejudice other denominations against the Evangelicals for the next half century, with the result that the ordination of their ministers was not accepted as being on a parity with those of other denominations.

28 Albright, 85.

29 Miller presumably worked from a German translation of the M. E. Discipline that was prepared by a physician, Dr. Ignatius Römer, under the supervision of Henry Boehm. However, Römer adds 11 paragraphs on Christian perfection that are Wesleyan tenor but can be traced to no previous source in Wesley on Methodism. See K. E. Rowe, “Discovery,” in *Methodist History* (October 1975), 68.

30 At present, the major statement on Christian Perfection is found in the EUB Confession of Faith in the 1992 *Book of Discipline*, 68.
of the early institutional phase of the two movements. Attention will be
given to the founding of mission societies, their strategies for selecting
mission fields, and their efforts to sustain those missions amid the dif­
ficulties posed by long range, cross cultural ministry.

For both groups, evangelization and missionary work were at first
indistinguishable. By 1813, the last year of Otterbein's life, the areas of
initial evangelization in Maryland and south central Pennsylvania were
already being viewed as a home base. This was the year in which Chris­
tian Newcomer returned from the "West" to receive ordination from Ot­
terbein at Baltimore. He had ventured beyond the Alleghenies into western
Pennsylvania in 1799 and into Ohio in 1810, with the Miami Conference
being formed that year in the Dayton area. 31 Somewhat later, in 1826,
the EA organized a Western Conference, in response to a petition from
the itinerant preachers in Ohio, for whom the extended trip to eastern
Pennsylvania to attend the Eastern Conference sessions had become
unbearable. 32 Further, the ordering of circuits in the EA, in accordance
with their Book of Discipline (1809), closely followed the Methodist plan
of itineracy. 33 By contrast, this structure was adopted later and less com­
pletely by the UB, who were contending with organizational resistance
from a sizeable Mennonite contingent within their ranks. This factor, plus
the fact that Otterbein's German Reformed Church at Baltimore had
followed a presbyterial polity, meant that UB missionary expansion would
follow a less centralized plan of development. 34

As missions, circuits, and new annual conferences were formed in
the "West," financial help from the "home" base began to be collected.
For UB, this task fell to the Benevolent Society Fund, that was also charged
with assisting "worn-out preachers" and their families. 35 Annual conference
missionary societies, that required membership dues, were formed begin­
ing in 1838, and new missions were projected within and beyond the
bounds of the respective conferences. For example, in 1836 the Penn­
sylvania UB Conference assigned Jacob Erb as missionary to Ontario,
Canada, 36 and the White River Conference in Indiana appointed the first
UB missionary to Oregon in 1852. 37 Annual conference missionary societies

31 Drury, History, 289-299.
32 Albright, 160-161.
33 Albright had suggested at the 1807 conference that the episcopal form of government be
adopted, and the name temporarily adopted in that year was the "Newly-Formed Methodist
Conference." Albright, 85, 94-95.
34 The 1812 UB protocol had stated "... that the circuit plan shall be maintained as long
as possible" (Rule 6); and the Miami Conference ministers of August 13, 1810, had stated
that "We have agreed in outward observances to bear with one another, as far as is agreeable
with the Word of God." (Rule 3). Drury, History, 279, 299.
35 Drury, History, 437, 583.
36 Drury, History, 584.
37 The "contemplated Oregon mission" had been the first UB "foreign" mission project, for
which funds were collected by the Parent Mission Society in 1849. Drury, History, 436.
were also formed, and these became auxiliary to the Parent Missionary Society of the UBC, that was organized in 1841. That Society was replaced in 1841 by the Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society, that was impelled by the new goal of evangelizing non-Christian lands, or, as commonly said, the “heathen.” Its first secretary, J. C. Bright, has been called the “father” of missionary work in the UBC. Less than two weeks after its organization, the Society met under Bright’s leadership and ambitiously “determined to establish a missionary station on the Big Boom River, in the interior of Africa, at an early period.”

Like the UB, the main home missionary expansion of the EA was westward, in pursuit of German settlements, with a secondary thrust southward into Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley. In addition, another secondary thrust was directed northward into western New York. Overall, EA expansion was more concentrated in the upper mid-Atlantic and midwestern states, with UB strength concentrated in the lower sectors of those states. The EA would direct its mission more toward reaching the successive waves of German immigrants into the United States. To that end, its major periodical, *Die Christliche Botschafter*, became the longest lasting German religious periodical published in North America (1839–1946).

In order to facilitate its mission, the EA, like the UB, found it necessary to organize its expansion efforts into a missionary society (1838). It was organized within the Eastern Conference under the title of “The German Evangelical Missionary Society of North America” under the presidency of W. W. Orwig. Dues were to be collected from members, and local auxiliaries were to be organized by clerical members of the Society. Its chief goal, the expansion of Christ’s Kingdom on earth through the conversion of the lost, reflected the prevailing post-millennial outlook of that era. The dynamic for its work was chiefly provided by John Seybert, who in 1839 became both the first constitutional bishop of the EA and the first president of the newly constituted Missionary Society of the Evangelical Association of North America.

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38 Drury, *History*, 436.
44 Seybert traveled over 175,000 miles in his missionary career, and the membership of the EA rose from 429 at the time of his conversion (1810) to over 40,000 at his death (1860). Samuel Spreng, *The Life and Labors of Bishop John Seybert* (Cleveland: Ev. Press, 1888); and Eller, *History of Missions*, 19.
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work in the English language. After an appeal from a lay preacher of the EA in Germany, the Society decided to send its first foreign missionaries in 1850 to the German “Fatherland.” This action, coupled with the rapidly expanding “homeland” mission work in the American west, led to a revision of the Missionary Society charter that provided for a full-time corresponding Secretary for missions.

In assessing the strategies used in selecting overseas mission fields, the UB were initially guided by the goal of bringing the gospel to the “heathen” (hence the Africa mission in 1853), while the EA was initially guided by their goal of reaching the lost within the German “Fatherland” with the gospel (1850). Only later, did the EA select a mission site in the Third World, and when that occurred, clear distinction would be drawn between missions to the “Fatherland” and to the “heathen.” Although the UB also entered Germany at a later date, in an abortive mission effort, their literature (which by that era had become largely Anglicized) does not reflect such a qualitative distinction between the two kinds of missions. In addition, the EA venture in southern Germany was initiated as a response to requests for missionaries that came from the “Fatherland,” whereas the UB initiated their venture in West Africa without such an indigenous appeal from their missions field. Nevertheless, the ultimate success of the UB African mission was going to become dependent upon leadership provided by African Americans who would serve more effectively on that field than did their caucasian co-laborers. A further probing of these varying UB and EA strategies will indicate the distinctive features of each.

The choice of Africa was an outgrowth of the strong UB antislavery stance. Having contended for the downtrodden African-Americans in slavery, “. . . now the gospel should be carried to the African in his native land, shrouded in the superstitions and steeped in the vices of untold ages.” The earliest UB interest in West Africa can be traced to the visionary and zealous leadership of the first secretary of their Missionary Society, J. C. Bright. His zeal for that work assumed inordinate proportions. In January 1855, three missionaries sent by the Society sailed in a vessel from New York to Freetown in the British protectorate of Sierra Leone. When two of the three, suffering from the “African fever,” returned home within five months, Bright chastised them with the suggestion that, “. . . some missionary graves in Africa might have good effect on the church.”

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46 Reuben Yeakel was elected to this post. Eller, *History of Missions*, 21.
48 One of the two; D. C. Kumler, reportedly replied that “. . . a dead man is worth no more in Africa than he would be in America!” Drury, *History*, 589.
D. K. Flickinger, the lone missionary who stayed on the field, left a candid journal account of his toils, in which he described with shock the gross superstitions of the “generally pleasant-tempered heathen.” “They hate work and love play / They worship snakes and alligators / They delight to keep their wom(en) in ignorance / They kill their children who are born deformed and others who become so from accident(s) / The heads of distinguished men when but partially decomposed are hung up and chalk placed under them to catch the dripping (that) is then rubbed on the foreheads of the living so that they will imbibe the wisdom of (that) person.” 49 Two significant UB ethical positions are also reflected in Flickinger’s journal: (1) he cites the presence of “secret societies” among the heathen men and women; his description is that of occult practices, but he describes them with the anti-masonic language that was a chief feature of the early UB; 50 (2) he also bemoans the rise of the violence in the African culture that he attributes to “that horrible hellish system, the slave trade,” a statement that reflects the militant anti-slavery stance of American United Brethren. 51 Flickinger was later (1885) elected to be the first missionary bishop of the UBC. 52

The UB Missionary Society was determined that its work in Sierra Leone would prevail, despite the fact that 109 of its missionaries died on the field during the first twenty-five years of the work there. 53 Turning points included the conversion to Christ of family members of the native chieftain and the recruiting of an African-American, John Gomer, a

49 Unpublished journal of D. K. Flickinger, July 6, 1855, and February 1, 1857.
50 Journal entry for February 1, 1855. The partial relaxation of this anti-masonic stance in the constitutional revision of 1889 precipitated the “Old Constitution” secession under the leadership of Bishop Milton Wright.
51 Journal entry for August 23, 1855. Unlike the position of Methodists in the early nineteenth century, the UB General Conference of 1821 decreed . . . that in no sense of the word shall slavery in whatsoever form it may exist, be tolerated in our church, and that no slaveholder, making application for membership, shall be received, and that if any member be found to possess slaves, he cannot remain a member unless he manumits his slaves as soon as notified to do so by the annual conference. . . .” General Conference Minutes (1821) cited in Behney and Eller, 124.
52 UB bishops were elected for quadrennial terms. Flickinger later served a term as bishop in the Old Constitution UBC, and still later returned to his mother church. He was author of several missionary titles, including Missionary Life in West Africa (Dayton, n.d.), traveled frequently to Africa and Germany. Drury, History, 494. Flickinger also published a report on the early Africa mission in the UB periodical, the Religious Telescope on “My Return from Africa,” (December 17, 1861).
53 Drury, History, 589, 594-5. One missionary reported in 1908 that “Outside of Freetown our (UB) church is decidedly in the front of the missionary work in this province” and “We need at least 10 families within a year to take important new stations. . . .” – I. J. Bear, “A Message from Africa,” The Religious Telescope (February 5, 1908), 10. This urgency was underscored in a letter from the bishop presiding over the West Africa Conference, W. R. Funk, entitled “An Important Message from Dr. Funk,” in The Religious Telescope (February 5, 1908), 22.
layman of the Third UB Church in Dayton, who had excellent rapport with the native population during his service in Sierra Leone from 1870 until his death in 1892. UB schools in Sierra Leone, especially the Albert Academy in Freetown (established in 1907), made a major contribution to the education of the native population in preparation for their independence that finally came in 1960.

Unlike the UB, the earliest EA overseas mission thrust was the result of factors external to the parent denomination in North America. The same year (1850) that marked the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the EA (the “Jubilee Year”) was also marked by a resolution from the Missionary Society for the founding of a mission in Germany. In 1845, a German immigrant to America, Sebastian Kurz, who had become a lay member of the EA, returned to his native Württemberg. He was eager to share with his neighbors his new found joy in the gospel. Without any church support, his incessant preaching efforts resulted in the formation of three classes of believers, to whom he taught the doctrines and discipline of the EA. *Der Christliche Botschafter* printed a descriptive letter of his work that awakened interest in the EA for this mission. Upon the initiative of the East Pennsylvania Conference, a committee was formed to devise a plan for the mission, and this plan received the support of the bishops. In the notice that followed in the church papers, it was stated that the missionaries to Württemberg, shall have leave to labor for the glory of God in any part of this kingdom, as they may meet with open doors and reoption; as well as in the adjoining countries, and (excepting Bremen, where the Methodists have erected a mission,) in the different cities of Germany, as Providence may open the way.

Mr. & Mrs. John C. Link, the first missionaries appointed to Germany, arrived in Bremen after a stormy sea crossing, and Link proceeded to preach his way through Hesse-Darmstadt to Bonlanden, near Stuttgart, where he took steps to meet Kurz. Considerable opposition from state church authorities surfaced. Additional missionaries soon arrived, led

55 Membership in the West Africa Conference peaked at 558 before the massacre in 1897; it stood at 1507 in 1924. Drury, *History*, 594-5, 792.
56 *Evangelical Messenger*, (April 8, 1850), 20. Stapleton, *Annals*, 292-295, writes that in 1850 “the entire church was alive with a missionary and educational spirit.”
57 Eller, 138.
58 Letter of Sebastian Kurz to Christian Hall, *Der Christliche Botschafter* (October 15, 1845), n.p.
59 “Appointment of the Mission to Germany,” *The Evangelical Messenger* (October 8, 1850), n.p.; trans. from the announcement in German in *Der Christliche Botschafter*.
by J. G. Wollpert, and soon indigenous German preachers were being raised up for the expanding mission. The first and preeminent among them was Gottlieb Füße, who would become the long-term editor of the official publication of the EA in Germany, Der Evangelische Botschafter (1863–1918). 61 He was converted at a meeting held in a sheep stable at Plöchingen, near Stuttgart, that was to become the center of the EA mission. By 1859, there were forty preaching places reported in that vicinity. 62

The 1850s was a decade of high missionary zeal in the parent body of the EA in North America, and that commitment was crucial for the success of the far-flung German mission. One writer extolled this mission spirit in the columns of the Evangelical Messenger as follows:

Dear brethren, my heart feels warm, when I consider the missionary operation of our Association, which commenced only some fourteen years ago, when our missionary society was formed. And thank the good Lord, while looking over Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, Chicago, and Milwaukee, I behold splendid churches erected in those places, where congregations assemble, and the word of God is preached in power and purity. . . . The work is going on, not only in the happy soil of the United States; but even in the British dominions of Canada . . . and even Germany! O Germany! our Fatherland, for whom many tears have been shed, and volleys of prayers. . . . while large sums in cash have been sent to their poor. . . . Good friends of our Zion, go on! 63

The EA General Conference of 1863, meeting amid critical wartime uncertainties, boldly resolved to establish a Germany Conference, and it also decided to establish a missionary training center in Germany (the future Seminary at Reutlingen, established in 1877), before such an EA school existed in North America. 64 The Missionary Board then decided that Bishop J. J. Esher should go to Germany at the earliest opportunity, after the end of the War, to organize the new conference. This action occurred in spring 1865 with the new conference meeting in a Jewish synagogue in Stuttgart! 65 A Germany Conference missionary society was also organized, with 126 charter members. 66

The loose confederation of German states, that existed when the mission was founded, was replaced by successive regimes (the North German

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62 Eller, 43.
64 Eller, 144-145. Editor T. G. Cleven wrote to The Evangelical Messenger from the General Conference of 1863, “what becomes of the Germany mission? It was resolved that a good, pious, thoroughly Evangelical man . . . should take charge of the work there, in the character of superintendent or Presiding Elder.” “Letter from General Conference,” The Evangelical Messenger (October 24, 1863), 240.
65 Of the six clergy members of the new conference, there were American missionaries and there were indigenous Germans, including Füße. Eller, 145.
66 Eller, 145.
Confederation of 1866 and the Empire in 1871) in which there was a growing uniformity of political control in religious matters. Even the most liberal states, like Württemberg, had forbidden EA missionaries to preach in public, and elsewhere, missionary collections were forbidden, as were extra-parochial religious assemblies of over 20 persons (Baden.)\(^67\) As late as the 1890s, preaching was occasionally permitted the “sectarians,” but not “worship.” Throughout this time the property of the mission had to be held in private hands.\(^68\) By 1898, this conference had grown to 8,057 members and 62 preachers traveling a field that stretched from the Rhine to East Prussia.\(^69\) This expanse necessitated the separation of the Switzerland Conference in 1880 and then the division of the former into the North and South Germany Conferences in 1990.\(^70\) A European Central Conference was eventually formed in 1922 under G. Heinmiller, who was elected bishop for Europe.\(^71\) This represented a move toward autonomy on the part of the European mission. American and European sectors of the EA had tragically found themselves on opposing sides in the First World War, a situation that gave impetus to the subsequent push for autonomy and for the election of a bishop who would reside in Germany. Heinmiller’s untimely death necessitated a delay in the inauguration of the new conference structure, but it was finally implemented under the leadership of Bishop S. J. Umbreit (1926–1934).

With the emergence of Adolph Hitler as the German “Reichskanzler” in 1933, the EA Central Conference entered a new phase of domination by the state, to which the Conference initially gave some acquiescence due to government actions extending property rights to the conference. However, the censure of church activities gradually became severe. Umbreit withdrew to America in 1934, and the Central Conference petitioned General Conference in 1938 for the privilege of selecting their own bishop, who would preside over a reorganized, nationalistic, all-German “Reichskonferenz.”\(^73\) It would control all work in Europe except the churches in neutral Switzerland and in France. General Conference felt obliged to approve this request. The new Reichskonferenz organized itself in session

\(^{67}\) At Grossingersheim, Wollpert once announced a text (Matthew 16:26) and outlined “what I would have said, if I had been permitted to preach.” (!)

\(^{68}\) The right of the mission to hold title to its property was first granted with limitations in 1920. J. S. O’Malley, “The Fatherland Revisited: The Relationship of the Evangelical Association in Europe to the American Mother Church (1912–1940),” *Methodist History* (April, 1994), 166.

\(^{69}\) Eller, 145.

\(^{70}\) O’Malley, “Der Europäische Zweig,” 41–42.

\(^{71}\) O’Malley, “Der Europäische Zweig,” 49.

\(^{72}\) The European Central Conference held its first meeting in Stuttgart in 1926 under the chair of Bishop L. H. Seager—who, to the disappointment of some German delegates, could not speak the German language!—O’Malley, “The Fatherland Revisited,” 167.

\(^{73}\) Eller, 145.
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at Christ Church, Berlin, and elected E. Pieper, chair. Ensuing war conditions prevented effective church leadership and overted the election of the proposed Reichsbishop.\textsuperscript{74}

A key aspect in the early promotion of missions in both the EA and the UB was the work of their Women’s Missionary Societies. For the EA, the first local WMS chapter was organized in Philadelphia in 1839, for the purpose of raising funds for the Eastern Conference Missionary Society.\textsuperscript{75} This group disappeared after the departure of their pastor (J. T. Vogelback) who had organized them. Much later this work was renewed by the initiative of Rachel Hudson, a missionary to Japan. When she relayed her concern for such a support group, her appeal was taken to heart by Ella Yost, an Evangelical woman who issued a bold summons, in a conference address, entitled a “Call to the Women of our Church.”\textsuperscript{76} She called for a mission society that would cooperate with the mission agencies of the denomination, while remaining self-supporting. Despite support from the editor of \textit{The Evangelical Messenger}, the Board of Missions initially opposed the women’s appeal, supposing that existing structures were adequate. However, faced with mounting indebtedness, the Board relented in 1884, after General Conference approved a petition that had the backing of the several local societies that were by then in existence.\textsuperscript{77} Male lay representation on the Board of Missions also began in 1895.\textsuperscript{79} The WMS became sacrificially devoted to its course, and in some fields, such as Nigeria, the first missionaries were supported privately by WMS auxiliaries.\textsuperscript{79}

Another significant EA women’s ministry, that had a distinct mission focus, was the diaconal order, founded in Elberfeld, Germany in 1885 as the Bethesda Deaconess Society, a non-profit institution organized “to care for the sick by regular, organized, associated labor by sisters specially set apart, and regularly trained for this type of work.”\textsuperscript{80} Their work was later extended to include service as parish workers and pastors’ assistants. Branches were eventually established in 10 major German cities. By 1901 there were 301 sisters in service in Europe.\textsuperscript{81} Hospitals were established

\textsuperscript{74} Membership in the European Conferences peaked by the first World War, including both members and the larger constituency of “friends”. The world wars took a heavy toll in members and property.
\textsuperscript{75} Eller, 23.
\textsuperscript{76} Eller, 24.
\textsuperscript{77} See the Report of the First Quadrennial Meeting of the Women’s Missionary Society, in \textit{The Evangelical Messenger} (September 18, 1895), 596–7.
\textsuperscript{78} Eller, 25–26.
\textsuperscript{79} Eller, 271.
\textsuperscript{80} Eller, 58.
\textsuperscript{81} K. Steckel u. C. E. Sommer, \textit{Geschichte der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirch} (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1982), 175–6. EA Deaconesses were even used in the family of Prince von Bismarck! Eller, 158.
in connection with the work in 5 German cities. In addition, 8 deaconess hospitals were established in the U.S.A. between 1903 and 1926.82

In the UBC, the WMA was established earlier, in 1875, with the support of the secretary of the Missionary Society, D. K. Flickinger, to which it would afford auxiliary support. Its work included a girls school in Sierra Leone, a home mission in Barnett’s Creek, Kentucky, and the printing of missions promotional literature. Feeling the effect of the Great Depression, the number of societies dropped from 1837 to 1424 between 1929 and 1945, and membership dropped proportionately, although revenue almost doubled during this same period!83 A UB Deaconess Society was also founded in 1897, for service in the local church, but it failed to materialize,84 perhaps partly due to the granting of licenses to preach to women in the UBC, a practice never recognized in the EA.

When the early UB mission in Sierra Leone was at its least promising stage in 1869, their Missionary Society turned its attention toward Germany. It was honored as the home of Otterbein but it was not referred to by the title of the “Fatherland” (as with the EA), for the UB were by now a largely English-speaking denomination. Their first appointed missionaries were Mr. & Mrs. Christian Bischoff, who arrived in his native Bavaria and proceeded to reorganize an indigenous free church fellowship, that he had earlier headed, into a UB mission. Extreme political restrictions were imposed against them from the staunchly Roman Catholic state government, until the center of mission activity was shifted outside Bavaria (at Weimar). Further support came from the Women’s Missionary Association and from the Ohio German Conference (UB). After reaching a peak of 1000 members, nine churches, and 10–12 missionaries, the work came to a standstill. In 1905, the General Conference voted to concentrate its efforts in more promising areas and to transfer the membership and property of the mission to the Methodist Episcopal mission in Germany.85

More promising UB work was established in China (1889), when the WMA voted to send George Sickafoose to Canton. He and his wife had administered a school for Chinese at Portland, Oregon (1882–1889), and he now led a party of four, that included his former calaborer at the Portland school, Moy Ling.86 Despite local opposition, that was founded by a wave of nativism, other missionaries arrived, including a physician (H. K. Shumaker, 1897). A mission conference was organized in 1908, that included dispensaries, hospitals, and a seminary for young women,

82Behney and Eller, 297–298.
83Behney and Eller, 264. The WMA and Deaconess work in the EA also suffered losses in this era. Its hospital system in the USA failed to survive the era, although it remained strong in Europe.
84Behney and Eller, 234.
85Drury, History, 602.
86Drury, History, 603.
and the membership grew to 1098 by 1924. Work began in Japan by Japanese-Americans sent by the Missions Board in 1895. A. T. Howard became superintendent in 1898, and a mission conference was organized in 1902. Other UB overseas missions were established in 1899 in Puerto Rico, where UB work joined with six other evangelical bodies in forming the Evangelical Union of Puerto Rico and in the Philippines, where UB work was consigned to three provinces in northwestern Luzon in 1901.

UB home mission work, under direction of the Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society, had begun in 1853 with Oregon, Southwestern Missouri, Canada, Michigan, and the German settlements in Ohio and Indiana. To these were added (in 1857) Tennessee, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, California, New York, and New England. A mission to freed slaves was established by the UB in Vicksburg, Mississippi, between 1863 and 1866, and in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. A result of the Vicksburg mission was the work of Sarah Dickey, who established Mt. Holyoke Seminary for African American women in Clinton, Mississippi. The UB began licensing women preachers, especially for home missionary service, as early as 1847, when the White River Conference (Indiana) licensed Charity Ophera as “an acceptable laborer in the gospel and in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.”

In 1905, the Home, Frontier, and Foreign Missionary Society was replaced by the Foreign and the Home Missionary Societies. By 1914, the latter group had assisted in founding 272 missions, of which 140 had become self-supporting. Included in this work was a mission to Hispanic Americans that began at Valerde, New Mexico, in 1913.

In 1905, S. S. Hough became secretary of the newly constituted Foreign Missionary Society. Apparently he was influenced by the self-support missionary philosophy of Methodist Bishop William Taylor. In reporting his visit to the orient in 1912, Hough stated that the aim there is, “. . . to make every local church a mighty evangelistic center, and powerful in the principles of self-support and self-extension.”

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87 Drury, History, 605, 792.
88 The leading indigenous preacher was Tekejiro Ishigura (d. 1914); membership had risen to 1947 by 1924. Drury, History, 605-7, 792.
89 Membership in Puerto Rico was 1593 (1924) and 3444 in the Philippines (1924). Drury, History, 607-610, 791.
90 Drury, History, 612.
91 Drury, History, 613.
93 Victories Under the Flag (Dayton: The UB Home Missionary Society, 1914), 3.
94 S. S. Hough, Report of a Visit to Japan, China, and the Philippine Islands with Recommendations on Aims and Policies (Dayton: Foreign Missionary Society of the United Brethren in Christ, 1912). Discussions of Taylor’s missions philosophy had appeared in The Religious Telescope (UB) (December 7, 1898) 1557; and in The Evangelical Messenger (EA) (February 10, 1885), 85, and (October 20, 1885), 661.
A contributing factor in the new outburst of UB mission activity in the early 20th century was the influence of the UB Mission Council which convened in Dayton in 1910, which met to, “. . . map out a policy to evangelize our share of the non-Christian world.”

The Missions Secretary reported that the Protestant denominations of Christendom have created to give the gospel to the entire heathen world at the earliest possible date. The recent General Conference of the UBC accepted five million people as our minimum share of the unevangelized world. . . . 96

All segments of the denomination, especially the Sunday schools, were to be mobilized for this purpose, and a tract titled, “Our Five Million,” soon was being mass produced. This optimistic effort was surely influenced by the idealism of John R. Mott and the Student Volunteer Movement, whose goal was the evangelization of the world in the first generation of the 20th century. 97 One result of this effort for the UB was the formation of a Mission Council in 1913 which had authority to cooperate and federate with mission programs of other denominations. 98

Whereas Germany was the one primary mission field for the EA, its secondary fields were legion, beginning with Japan. The call to found a mission in Asia began to be heard in 1853, and a decade later, The Evangelical Messenger continued to plead its case. As distinct from the Fatherland (Germany) mission, it was called the “Heathen Mission,” which again “. . . has been deferred for the time being . . .” since “under the existing circumstances in our country, it would not be properly supported. . . .” 99 However, the hour finally arrived in October 1875, when General Conference, after a season of prayer for guidance, unanimously endorsed a resolution to enter Japan. 100 The first missionary team appointed to go to Yokohama was itself an international body: Karl A. P. Halmhuber, a member of the Switzerland Conference, an American teacher, Miss Rachel Hudson, and an American physician, Dr. F. C. Krecker. 101 A major breakthrough into the Japanese culture occurred when an aristocratic youth of the Samurai class was miraculously converted to

97See Ahlstrom, 865. Hough wrote that “all plans, prayers, efforts, and offerings in each church [are] related to the evangelization of the whole world in this generation.” The Religious Telescope (February 2, 1910), 24.
98The office of a foreign missions bishop was also established (A. T. Howard filled this post until 1921, when that office was replaced by that of an associate secretary.). Behney and Eller, 237.
100Stapleton, 398.
101A Hymn entitled “Go Seek and Save the Lost and Dying” was composed for the occasion by H. B. Hartzler, assistant editor of The Evangelical Messenger.
Christ under Krecker’s ministry. Soon a Bible training school was established in Tokyo and the Board of Missions sent a superintendent for the mission in 1880. Other institutions that were founded included an English school, a Deaf-Oral School, a theological school (founded in 1881 and later united with American Methodist school in 1914) in Tokyo, and a boat ministry, launched in 1930, among the masses who lived on canal boats. In 1940, EA and UB mission work in Japan was united with the new national church, the Church of Christ in Japan.

In the difficulty of the ensuing war years, there were heroic sagas of missionaries who remained at their post, at great personal sacrifice. One, Laura Mank (1886–1962), had served effectively as a English Bible teacher at the Tokyo Bible school of the EA. Many EA leaders in Japan had been her students. After deciding to “die with the Japanese people rather than flee safely,” she was interned in a prison camp from 1942–1945. During her last night in the camp, news of Japan’s surrender came, and it was reported that all prisoners would now be shot. As she prayed, she saw a vision of Jesus seated in her room. Their eyes met, as He said to her, “Be not afraid; just keep your eyes on me.” She survived the ordeal in peace, and remained in postwar Japan to serve as a bridge between the American occupation army and the Japanese people.

The heirs of Albright entered the China mission field as divided brethren. The EA division of 1891–94 resulted in a three-fifths (the EA) and a two-fifths split (the United Evangelical Church). The dedication of the UEC to missions was underscored by their adoption in 1894 of a new article of faith on world mission for their Book of Discipline. The UEC Mission Board opened a field in Hunan in 1900, under the leading of Dr. C. Newton Dubs, M.D. The work proceeded, despite great opposition, and it was augmented by the arrival of missionaries from the EA in 1903, led by the superintendent of the Japan Mission, F. W. Vogelein, and an annual conference was formed in 1937.

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102 “Our First Heathen Convert”, in The Evangelical Messenger, as noted in Eller, History of Missions, 201. His name was Chikamichi Horinouchi.

103 Jacob H. Hartzler, who, with Krecker, assisted in producing the first Japanese translation of the entire Bible. Eller, 204.

104 See Eller, 211–226, membership in Japan was 2994 in 1940. Albright, 462.


106 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 the 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.” S. L. Wiest, Evangelical Missions (Home, Foreign, and Missionary Society of the United Evangelical Church, 1919), 90.

EA work in Nigeria began with the UEC in 1906, where their missionaries assumed responsibility for the conversion of a major tribe, the Wurkum.\textsuperscript{108} In addition, the EA developed work in Poland, Latvia, France, as well as an Italian mission in several midwestern cities before the second World War.\textsuperscript{109} The Eastern European work that included East Prussia, was largely destroyed by 1945.\textsuperscript{110} The UEC developed a significant home mission field in Beverly, Kentucky, in 1921, that is now known as the Red Bird Missionary Conference.\textsuperscript{111}

III

This era actually began with the reunion of the EA and the UEC to form the Evangelical Church (1922). It came to greater fruition in the EC-UB union of 1946, that formed the Evangelical United Brethren Church, a denomination that then numbered over 700,000 members worldwide. Numerous adjustments were required in order to effect that union, including the adoption of the UB preachers of a single ordination (elder) for clergy.\textsuperscript{112}

A major consequence of the 1946 church union was the need for consolidating and restructuring the mission work of the two former bodies. A thorough review of this work was presented in one of the final issues of \textit{The Evangelical Messenger}, that contains the observation that, "If the church would meet the demands of this [atomic] age and fulfill her responsibility toward it, she must in all seriousness fully accept the world mission given to her by her Lord. . . ."\textsuperscript{113} Three days after this message was published, the first meeting of the new united board of missions convened with Bishop G. E. Epp elected its president.\textsuperscript{114} The name chosen for the mission emphasis of the united church was "The Kingdom Advance Program."\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{108} Albright, 442.
\textsuperscript{109} Home missions were also established among other immigrant groups, including Swedes, Hungarians, Poles, and Chinese. These had short duration.
\textsuperscript{110} Missions in Latvia and Poland fell into Russian hands. Little is known concerning the status of these missions, at the end of 1946. The three German Conferences experienced great losses: 265 churches destroyed or severely damaged; 15 ministers killed; 100 congregations and preaching places were lost to the church. Mrs. J. S. Stamm, \textit{Twelve More Years of the Abiding Past, 1934–1946} (Cleveland: Ev. Press, 1946), 56.
\textsuperscript{111} Behney and Eller, 294.
\textsuperscript{112} Out of 4,702 congregations, none were lost in the 1946 union; by contrast, the East Pennsylvania Conference of the UEC had seceded in 1922 to form the Evangelical Congregational Church. Behney and Eller, 357, 312.
\textsuperscript{113} The Episcopal Message, The General Conference of the Evangelical Church, in \textit{The Evangelical Messenger} (November 16, 1946), 10.
\textsuperscript{114} S. G. Ziegler, "Board of Missions Starts Work," \textit{The Telescope-Messenger} (March 1, 1947), 14.
\textsuperscript{115} News Notes, Board of Missions Meeting, February 4–6, \textit{The Evangelical Messenger} (March 1, 1947), 15. A total of $2,477,318 was collected by 1950. Behney and Eller, 370.
A sum of $2,000,000 was budgeted for this program, with initial priority given to assistance of EA churches in war-torn Europe. 116 The Board of Missions was to operate under three divisions: the Departments of World Missions, Home Missions and Church Extension, and Women's Service. The later operated auxiliary to the Board under the name of the Women's Society of World Service, the successor to the earlier WMA of the predecessor denominations. Denominational programs were coordinated under a general Council of Administration, the forerunner of the Council on Ministries of the UMC.

In addition to European and Japanese war relief, the World Division was faced with the closing of its work in mainland China, including its hospitals, schools, and churches, and the restriction of its work (under the aegis of the United Church of Christ in China) to Hong Kong. 117 A similar inter-church mission effort was developed in Japan (1946), the Philippines (1948), Puerto Rico (1954), Brazil (1948), and Ecuador (1946 and 1967). 118 The Sierra Leone Mission became an annual conference in 1950, and the Central Conference of Europe was reinstated, comprising the three German and the Swiss annual conferences.

The Department of Home Missions, which came to be called the Division of North American Missions, strengthened existing home mission projects in Kentucky, New Mexico, and Florida. It also established a director of rural life (1947) and a rural life fellowship (appropriately, since the EUB was possibly the most rural of all major American denominations of the era), as well as an urban life commission (1950). Funding for world and home missions continued to be procured through the Advance programs, as well as by the WSWS efforts, and by the regular denominational budget. 119

IV

By the 1960s mission efforts in the EUB Church were becoming at least partially eclipsed by the rising interest in renewed inter-church dialog, this time with the Methodist Church, with whom Otterbein, Boehm, and Albright had originally found such cordial relations. By this decade, the distinctive German Pietist and frontier/revivalist ethos of the tradition had largely disappeared, except in a continuing and often pervasive spiritual atmosphere that, for many, gave local EUB congregations their

116 The name EA was retained in German-speaking Europe, due to the lack of a UB presence there.
117 Behney and Eller, 365.
118 In 1954, General Conference granted the ecumenical Evangelical Church of Puerto Rico the status of a "special overseas conference" with representation at General Conference. Behney and Eller, 366–7.
distinctive ethos. On the statistical side, the per capita giving (including missions) and the percentage of active church members were unusually high for the EUB.\footnote{The EUB was one of 12 such bodies that joined in the Consultation on Church Union (1960). These statistics are born out in the records of the EUB Yearbook (1968), 56–64, as provided by Paul Church, Executive Secretary of the Council of Administration and Program Director.}

In the issues of the last official bimonthly EUB publication titled, \textit{Church and Home}, the long-term purpose and mission of the denomination was probed from a variety of angles as the dateline events leading toward final union with the Methodists approached. In one series of articles on the Pietist heritage in the EUB Church, it was affirmed that the Pietist stream of ecumenism is to stress the centrality of individual conversion and the imperative that every convert to Christ, \textit{“... participate in the common task of evangelism and mission.”} \footnote{A. C. Core, \textit{“Ponderings on Pietism: The Relevancy of Pietism Today,” Church and Home} (July 7, 1962), 7. This Pietist stream of ecumenism was contrasted with the Erasmian tradition (that stresses unity based on “common agreement concerning a few necessary and fundamental points of doctrine”), and church-centered ecumenism (that speaks of “God’s design in calling His people” in corporate, ecclesial terms).} Beyond that generalization, this research has pointed to a theology of history that lay at the base of the early missionary vision of Otterbein and his co-laborers, which was also reflected in the literature of the early Albright brethren through the common German Pietist idiom in which they shared. Rooted in the “federal” (or covenantal) tradition of the Reformed Pietists, it was a view that expectantly discerned the signs of Christ’s emerging millennial kingdom on earth. The appearance of this kingdom was being hastened by the outpouring of the Spirit’s regenerative work in the lives of lost souls in both hemispheres, and in the formation of new, “unsectarian” expressions of kingdom life that would overcome the long travail of human oppression in the name of organized religion. The fact that both groups adopted institutional forms of mission expression meant that structural limitations would be placed upon that primeval vision. At the same time, those structures, generously supported by a generally non-affluent membership constituency, provided the means for engaging that missional vision.

The pioneer Evangelical bishop, John Seybert (1791–1860), embodied that \textit{“watch and pray”} attitude that characterized the early mission of the Evangelical Association, and of the United Brethren in Christ, when he preached these words in a sermon on Job, to a frontier congregation:

\begin{quote}
The devil hates no one so much as those Christians who are so entirely swallowed up in God. . . . Oh my brothers and sisters! Whatever you do, press deeply into God. Watch and pray, submit yourselves wholly unto the Lord, and trust Him in the greatest adversities.\footnote{From Seybert’s sermon on Job, in J. S. O’Malley, \textit{Touched by Godliness: Bishop John Seybert and the Evangelical Heritage} (Topeka, KS: Granite Press, 1986), 266.}
\end{quote}
From that basis, the work of mission would proceed and this world, "... shall no longer belong to the father of lies, but to the Lord Jesus, ... for the truth has already triumphed."123

123 From the unpublished *Journal* of Bishop John Seybert, entry for “spring, 1844.”