Everyone calls it "The Cross and Flame." It was never officially named, but spontaneously people began to use those words to describe the emblem of The United Methodist Church after its formation in 1968.

Since that time the Cross and Flame has become firmly established as the identifying mark for the denomination. It is used in official publications, on church letterheads and name cards, in stained glass windows and on the facades of church buildings. It functions for The United Methodist Church the way trademarks function for commercial enterprises. (Figure 1)

It seems appropriate to put into the record the story of how the insigne was authorized and created. Since I was one who was involved in the process I am offering this personal memoir.  

Previous Symbols

At the time of the union of the Evangelical United Brethren and The Methodist Church there had been a history of church symbols, some officially authorized and some unofficial. That history prepared the way for the decision to have an official insigne for the new denomination.

Prior to the 1946 union of the Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, neither of the official periodicals, The Evangelical Messenger nor The Religious Telescope displayed a denominational insigne. In the Evangelical Church the Missionary Society used a seal. 3 It was based on a design used by the Missionary Society of the preceding Evangelical Association. The seal appeared in Missionary Society reports from 1922 through 1946.

Editions of the United Brethren Discipline from 1895 through 1945 carried on the title page a device composed of a torch, a quill pen and

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2Since this is a personal memoir, the author assumes responsibility for any undocumented facts or judgments. The manuscript has been reviewed by Mrs. Helen Greenwalt, widow of Howard Greenwalt, Edward J. Mikula, the artist, and Dr. Curtis A. Chambers, member of the Joint Commission on Church Union, co-editor of the Plan of Union and the 1968 Book of Discipline, later general secretary of United Methodist Communications. Others have helped to authenticate particular points.

3Missions of the Evangelical Church, Annual Report 1942-43 (Cleveland, Ohio: Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church), title page.
a book, with the words “Lux et Veritas,” but this appears to be more of a publisher’s colophon than a denominational symbol.⁴

Seals of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association are preserved as banners at Otterbein Home in Lebanon, Ohio. The former shows in full figure the historic 1767 meeting of Philip William Otterbein and Martin Boehm with Otterbein’s words in English, “We are brethren.” This design was used in some United Brethren publications. The main feature of the other seal is a cross, surrounded in a circle by the words, “The Evangelical Association’s Conference Seal.” The design also includes two stars and the letters “L S.”⁵

At the 1958 General Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church the General Council on Administration recommended adoption of an insigne and offered a proposed design. The recommendation was approved.⁶ Previously the Council on Administration had asked the Rev. Ralph M. Holdeman “to design a denominational symbol patterned in some degree after the present denominational road-sign.”⁷ The result was a circular insigne (Figure 2)

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⁵ “The Story of the Hangings,” undated leaflet in the archives of Otterbein Home, Lebanon, Ohio; presumed to have been issued in 1975 at the dedication of the banners.


⁷ Blue Book of Reports and Memorials of the Thirty-ninth General Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, Harrisburg, Pa., October 9–17, 1958 (Dayton, Ohio, General Council on Administration of the EUB Church, 1958), 34.
in which the church name surrounded a bold Latin cross with clasped hands in the foreground—recalling the 1946 handshake by the senior bishops, Arthur R. Chippinger and John S. Stamm, at the Uniting Conference in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.\(^8\)

The road sign already had entered use as an unofficial EUB symbol. The clasped-hands design had found other uses as well. For example, as early as 1951 the Nebraska Annual Conference had a seal based on that design.\(^9\)

Dr. Holdeman, incidentally, was a craftsman as well as a designer. Over the years he made many liturgical objects for use in churches and after 1968 he crafted many renditions of the Cross and Flame.

\(^8\)The Johnstown handshake is described in *The Evangelical Messenger*, Nov. 30, 1946, 13.
\(^9\) *Proceedings of the Nebraska Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, June 20–24, 1951* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1951), title page.
In 1966 the Women's Society of World Service of the Evangelical United Brethren Church introduced a pin in silver or gold depicting a cross with a two-tongued flame superimposed. On the Methodist side, union in 1939 brought together the Methodist Protestant Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church. There is no evidence of use of an insigne by any of those denominations. However, the Methodist *Disciplines*, like those of the United Brethren, carried on the title page a device that most likely was a publisher's colophon. It was used from 1912 through 1936 and depicted the sun, a seven-branched candlestick, an open scroll, and the Latin words “Litterae Lux Fax Deus.”

During the years of the Methodist Church the Methodist Publishing House had a colophon for its publishing arm, Abingdon Press, and identified the work of the House as a whole with a symbol depicting a circuit rider on horseback with the words, “Since 1789.” Other general agencies used symbols of their own from time to time. For many years the “Golden Cross” had been a symbol of offerings for Methodist hospitals. But there was none to represent the denomination as a whole.

In 1956 the Rev. Howard Greenwalt came from California to Chicago to be associate general secretary of the Commission on Promotion and Cultivation. He worked with a Chicago commercial artist, Burton M. Cherry, and they devised the “World Parish Cross.” It consisted of a gold-colored cross in block style with a polar projection of the globe in red where the arms crossed (Figure 3). It was introduced in 1957 and was used by the commission in the promotion of giving for the various benevolence funds. It became quite popular, particularly as a lapel pin. The Commission made it available as a mat or cut for printing, a stencil inset for duplicating machines, and a reproduction proof. The lapel pins and necklaces in gold, silver and brass were sold in Cokesbury Book Stores.

Dr. Greenwalt aspired to official recognition of the World Parish Cross. In 1961 he offered it to the World Methodist Council but the offer was declined in favor of a triangular insigne offered by Bishop Ferdinand Sigg of Switzerland (still in use in 1995). A petition to the 1964 General Conference asked for it to be declared the official symbol for the Methodist denomination, but the proposal was not accepted. Notwithstanding the lack of official endorsement, it was widely used.

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11 *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1912 and 1936* (New York: Methodist Book Concern), title pages.
Looking Toward Church Union

By this time the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church had committed themselves to work toward union. A Joint Commission on Church Union, representing the two bodies, was set up to devise the Plan of Union. Dr. Greenwalt approached the Joint Commission and won acceptance of the idea that the new church should have an official insigne. The Commission wrote this into the Plan of Union. Moreover, it authorized his agency to develop the insigne and wrote into the new Discipline that use of the emblem should be supervised by its successor, the Division of Interpretation of the Program Council.\(^\text{15}\)

Authorization for the Commission on Promotion and Cultivation to proceed with design of an insigne must have been received in 1966, because by 1967 the design team was well into its work. Dr. Greenwalt appointed two of his staff to develop the design. They were Edward J. Mikula, art director, and Edwin H. Maynard, editorial director. A small advisory committee, equally representing the two churches, was formed.\(^\text{16}\)

\(^{15}\text{Maynard, 64.}\)
\(^{16}\text{Transcript of oral history interview with Howard Greenwalt, October, 1981, 17. Original of transcript is in the archives of United Methodist Communications.}\)
The artist was well prepared for his role. Trained at the Art Institute of Chicago, he was experienced in the graphic arts and had created logos for the Illinois Farm Supply Company and the Associated Church Press. His partner brought editorial experience and had read in the fields of Christian symbolism and theology.

The design team began by collecting a small library representing, on one hand, corporate logos and trademarks, and on the other, Christian symbolism. They also collected examples of insignia in use by other denominations. (Paradoxically, they did not see the Evangelical United Brethren women's pin.)

Early on they established principles for the design: that it should be simple, bold, instantly recognizable, obviously Christian and uniquely Wesleyan. They determined that it should have official colors, but also be capable of reproduction in black and white. They planned to make it in two versions, with and without words. They determined that the insignie's "primary attributes must be simplicity, distinctiveness, easy recognition, and easy remembering." Mikula declared: "You can't have elegance without simplicity."

Aided by input from the advisory committee and staff colleagues, the design team explored numerous ideas—some two dozen in all. These were sketched and circulated for comment. A consensus gradually formed around a combination of the cross, as the obvious Christian symbol, and some representation of the Holy Spirit as a mark of Wesleyan theological thought. The latter might be represented by a dove, or by a flame, with its overtones of Pentecost (Acts 2:3). Finally, two designs were made ready for submission to the Commission on Promotion and Cultivation of The Methodist Church at its final meeting in the fall of 1967.

One of the designs is the one known today as the Cross and Flame. The other was similar, but with the addition of a globe to represent the Creator God and the mission of the church in the world. The cross was described as representing Christ's sacrifice and also "the giving of self for others—which in turn suggests service, a dominant factor in the Wesleyan tradition." The flame was identified as one of the traditional symbols of the Holy Spirit, "appropriately included because a substantial part of the Wesleyan contribution in theological understanding involves the work of the Holy Spirit." The description for commission members continued: "The flame is also symbolic of Pentecost, with its implication for the

19 Mikula interview.
20 "Proposed Emblem for The United Methodist Church." A staff memorandum dated July, 1967, to accompany presentation of the proposed design to the Commission on Promotion and Cultivation.
21 Mikula interview.
evangelization of men [sic]. The fact that this particular flame has two tongues can be seen as representing the two bodies that are uniting in 1968 to form the United Methodist Church."22 For others the flame recalled Wesley's "heartwarming experience" at Aldersgate.23

The Commission on Promotion and Cultivation chose the simpler, bolder version and commended it to its successor body in the new church. For those concerned that the symbol should be trinitarian, an explanation was offered later: "Thus it relates the church to God the Father by way of the second and third persons of the Holy Trinity—God the Son, symbolized by the cross, and God the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the flame."24

A New Church, A New Emblem

The Uniting Conference, meeting in Dallas, Texas, April 21 to May 4, 1968, adopted as part of the new Discipline the recommendation from the Joint Commission on Church Union that there should be an official insigne, designed and created by what would become the Division of Interpretation of the Program Council.25 The legislation specifically authorized use of the insigne by various units within the church and directed the Division of Interpretation to provide patterns for authorized use and to protect the insigne from infringement.

The Program Council of the new church convened in Dayton, Ohio, October 1, 1968. Members who had been elected to the Division of Interpretation met to organize that work. One item before them was the design of the insigne, presented by the transitional staff. The Cross and Flame design, as recommended by the Methodist Commission on Promotion and Cultivation, was presented in hand-made posters and hand-out sheets in two forms: one with no words and one inscribed, "The United Methodist Church." There were sketches to show possible uses. Official colors were designated as black and a shade of red known in the printing industry as "PMS Warm Red." There was discussion and two or three persons suggested modifications, but the vote for the designs as presented was overwhelming. When actions of the Division of Interpretation were ratified by the entire Program Council, the church had its identifying mark (Figure 4).

Staff moved quickly to make the new insigne available to the entire church. The emblem appeared on the cover of Methodist Story-Spotlight in November, along with an interpretation,26 and the "patterns" called

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22 "Proposed Emblem . . ."
23 Mikula interview.
26 Methodist Story-Spotlight, November, 1968, 2.
for by the *Discipline* were issued as placards 8½ by 11 inches and sheets of reproduction proofs. There also were stencil insets for printing with stencil duplicators, in common use by churches at the time, and decals.\(^{27}\)

The Division of Interpretation registered the design with the United States Patent and Trademark Office—technically not as a trademark, but as a “service mark.”\(^{28}\) The protection has been renewed through the years.

The United Methodist Publishing House was already in the production process of the 1968 edition of *The Book of Discipline* by the time the Cross and Flame had been adopted in the Program Council, so it could not appear on that book. The Publishing House before union had created a Cross and Crown insignia, using a plain Latin cross and beneath it a crown in a shape resembling the letter “M.” This device, already used on the 1964 editions of *The Methodist Hymnal* and *The Book of Worship*, was used on the 1968 editions of *The Book of Discipline*, and *The Book of Worship*, and on copies of the 1964 hymnal produced after church union. However, the Publishing House joined forces with the Division of Interpretation and before long items of costume jewelry and other forms of the Cross and Flame were being distributed through Cokesbury Book Stores. Editions of *The Book of Discipline* from 1972 on carried the Cross and Flame, as did subsequent printings of *The Book of Hymns* and *The United Methodist Hymnal* of 1989. Highway signs to direct motorists to United Methodist churches carried the new emblem by 1970.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{27}\) *A Mark Known the World Over*, leaflet issued by United Methodist Communications, 1988. This leaflet to interpret the insignia was first published in 1979 and originally written by Ruth D. Fuller. Revised editions over a number of years were printed in large quantities and made available to local churches for distribution to members. Quotations here are from the 1988 version.

\(^{28}\) The original certificate is on file in the archives of United Methodist Communications.

\(^{29}\) Advertised in *Daily Christian Advocate*, April, 20, 1970, 55.
The Cross and Flame quickly began to appear on letterheads and name cards of local churches and pastors and in newspaper advertising by churches. Annual conferences and church agencies used it, sometimes incorporating it into a design to represent the agency (as, for example, in the emblem of United Methodist Women).

In less than two years, at the special session of the General Conference in 1970, Bishop J. Gordon Howard would say in the Episcopal Address:

> We have become familiar with our United Methodist symbol: the Cross and the Flame—the Cross of giving and sharing, of serving and sacrifice; the Flame of renewing and regenerating, of new life leading to appropriate action.... They must cease being decorative and become incarnate. They must take hold of us until we become sources of the life which is reconciled both with God and with man. 30

**The Rest Is History**

The trite saying, "The rest is history," applies to the Cross and Flame. Once it had been introduced, uses multiplied. It was seen on highway signs, on the facades of churches, and on bell towers. Inside church buildings it appeared on stoles and choir robes and sometimes on the communion table—and many times in stained glass windows. It has been used on countless banners and on a United Methodist flag. It has been imprinted on church bulletins and embossed on business cards, certificates and stationery. 31

Less formally, it has been stamped onto T-shirts and used on neckties, scarves, bumper stickers, coffee mugs and placemats. It has been used in needlepoint, bead work and quilts. It has been carved into wood and stone, including numbers of cornerstones. The trade association for stone carvers obtained permission for its use on tombstones of clergy and others closely related to the church. It is incorporated into designs for special occasions, for example in the logo used by the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference for its sesquicentennial in 1994. 32

Wherever there are Central Conferences of The United Methodist Church, the Cross and Flame will be seen. This includes countries such as the Philippines, Norway, Germany, Zaire or Zimbabwe. During days of the Iron Curtain it could be seen inside the Soviet Union in Estonia and in more recent years it has appeared at United Methodist churches inside Russia.

In 1969 Astronaut Alan L. Bean, a charter member of Clear Lake United Methodist Church in Clear Lake City, Texas, carried the Cross and Flame half a million miles in space. It was part of a crewel-work banner

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30 *Daily Christian Advocate*, April 21, 1970, 68.
31 *A Mark Known the World Over*.
32 *New World Outlook*, September–October, 1994, 4-5.
of Christian symbols made by a church member, carried by Bean on the Apollo XII mission, and then presented to the church. On that mission Bean became the fourth person to reach the moon.\textsuperscript{33}

The need for the insigne to be used with languages other than English became evident. By December of 1968 the Division of Interpretation issued reproduction proofs for the Cross and Flame with lettering in Spanish (Figure 5). United Methodist Communications now has it also with lettering in Korean (Figure 6) and permission has been granted for churches in Central Conferences to adapt it for languages in use locally. It has been adapted by some autonomous national churches, for example in South Korea and Kenya.

Meanwhile attempts to use the symbol for causes other than The United Methodist Church have been challenged. Occasionally a lawsuit has been threatened, but usually the transgressors have been quick to cease misusing the protected United Methodist service mark. Strict rules for reproduction control the integrity of the design. The cross has slanted ends on the vertical and crossbar members. A noticeable distance separates the flame from the cross—assuring that it is a cross \textit{and} flame, not a burning cross.\textsuperscript{34}

There has been no infringement, but a flattering kind of imitation, in the fact that three denominations that have adopted official insignia in recent years have incorporated a cross and a flame as major elements in their designs. They are the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), the newly formed Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the also new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.


\textsuperscript{34}A Mark Known the World Over.
There have been changes in structure. In 1972 the General Commission on Communication (United Methodist Communications, or UMCom) was formed and what had been the Division of Interpretation of the Program Council became UMCom’s Division of Program and Benevolence Interpretation. That agency continues to make the Cross and Flame available for United Methodist use, to protect integrity of the design in authorized use, and to guard against improper use. Authorization in the 1992 Book of Discipline is changed only slightly from the language of 1968.35

One may say that the Cross and Flame has succeeded in fulfilling its original purpose—to help provide identity for the United Methodist denomination. In hundreds of communities it is easy to find the local United Methodist church because the insigne is prominently displayed. Churches, districts, annual conferences and institutions have proudly displayed the emblem to identify themselves with the parent body. Individuals display it in pins and necklaces to identify themselves with their church.

Those who have been involved not only with its creation, but with its protection and use over twenty-seven years, can take satisfaction that the Cross and Flame is a successful design that has contributed in its way to the life and mission of the church.

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