

BOOK REVIEWS

Don W. Holter, *The Lure of Kansas: The Story of the Evangelicals and the United Brethren, 1853-1968*. Kansas West Commission on Archives and History and Kansas East Commission on Archives and History, 1990. 176 pp. \$10.00 Hardback \$6.00 paperback. Order from Archives and History, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS 66006.

"The present United Methodist Church in Kansas," explains Don Holter, "is the lengthened shadow of those devoted people who were lured by the stars over Kansas." This book is a brief account of the fortunes and misfortunes of the followers of Jacob Albright and Philip William Otterbein who settled under those stars.

Each segment of both the Evangelical and the United Brethren witness is convincingly illuminated by the author's style of describing both the external forces swirling about the social milieu of each decade and the internal struggles of the Evangelicals and the United Brethren to establish and present a positive Christian affirmation.

For instance, the author's discussion of why both the Evangelicals and the United Brethren grew at such a slow pace in the first half of this century not only includes internal ecclesiastical analysis but enumerates negative social forces then at work in Kansas that nullified positive growth. "In accounting for this lack of growth we must not forget the effects of the Great Depression and the damage of the drought in the 1930s on rural areas. One other factor," Holter reports, "entered in. The prejudice against the German people fomented by the hatred of the people during World War I was continued during the 20s and the 30s. The rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan and its spread of intolerant opposition toward Roman Catholics, Jews, Blacks and foreigners was especially virulent in Kansas. The rise of Hitler renewed suspicions of all Germans. Therefore, when people moved to a new place, they often avoided German churches."

This book is required reading for all pastors and lay persons seeking to understand their United Methodist roots in Kansas. It is highly recommended to all potential writers of conference histories as a model on how to report the impact of annual conference events and programs, honor past leadership, and explain the complexities of the rise and fall of educational and benevolent institutions over a period of many decades within the framework of its social surroundings.

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Lee A. Dew and Richard A. Weiss, *In Pursuit of the Dream: A History of Kentucky Wesleyan College*. Owensboro, KY: Kentucky Wesleyan College Press, 1992. 370 pp. \$15.95 soft cover; \$28.00 hard cover.

Methodist higher education in Kentucky has followed a long, rocky, winding road. Although the state's first Methodist conference in 1790 voted to establish a school, Methodist attempts to begin a lasting college failed until Kentucky Wesleyan College opened in Millersburg in 1866. Like most small, denominational colleges, KWC continuously faced economic difficulties. KWC also suffered from having twenty, short-term presidents (except David Wesley Batson) 1866–1937 before settling down to six presidents in its last half century. The college also managed to survive moves to Winchester (1890), to Owensboro (1950), a fire (1904), and competition from a local, public college. Other turns in KWC's course included moving from deliberately excluding women when KWC began to becoming the first Kentucky college to admit women (1892) and awarding KWC's first honorary degree to a woman (1916), from a long-standing ban on intercollegiate athletics to fame as a national leader in N.C.A.A. Division II basketball, from an enrollment low of 97 in 1944 to a peak of 1,055 in 1984, and from segregation by the Board Trustees as late as 1956 to integration in 1958.

The historian, Dew, and the professor of German and archivist, Weiss, do not shrink from presenting the school's problems, controversies, and personality conflicts along with its achievements. They set KWC's story into the context of local, state and national history, but would have contributed more to Kentucky, Methodist, and Southern history by more comparisons of KWC and other colleges. They could have improved their good, chronological, but episodic, coverage of student activities by presenting it in a separate chapter. While their extensive use of KWC's archives permits excellent, in-depth explanations of developments, their repeated, detailed descriptions of the leaders and courses of the continual fundraising campaigns become repetitive and confusing and detract from the overall narrative. They wisely omit many lists, e.g., teachers, deans, teams, buildings, or trustees, but lists of presidents, enrollments, and debts, along with a map to show KWC's moves might have added to their excellent endnotes and index.

Dew and Weiss conclude by noting KWC's "renewed sense of mission" in the 1990s, but the only content of that mission or of its founders' "dreams" the authors note is "[KWC] was a survivor . . . [and its] endurance," (p. 327) along with its success in sports and recognition as a good "buy" by national magazines (p. 326). But what of its value as a religious college? Since in 1983 Dean Donald D. Douglass reported, "total failure on the . . . goal, 'The increased spiritual stature of the faculty' " (pp. 315–16) and Kentucky's United Methodist conferences refusal to aid

KWC's 1984 fundraising campaign (p. 318). The authors leave readers wondering about the current significance of "Wesleyan" in Kentucky Wesleyan College.

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