

THE OTHER TEMPERANCE CHURCHES: THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN TRADITION AND ALCOHOL

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As the author of a book on why Methodists use grape juice in Communion, and as a historian of temperance, I have a certain conversation with most people when I tell them what my book is about. “Ah! Charles Welch! He was a Methodist!” they say.¹ If they know anything about temperance and Prohibition, they are aware of the role Methodists played, and they have opinions about it.

But if I were to ask these same people what they knew about the contributions of the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) tradition to the temperance movement, most of them would be puzzled. Secular temperance literature seems unaware the EUB tradition exists.² Even in the nineteenth century, the Evangelical Association (EA) and the United Brethren in Christ (UBC) groups seldom made their way into general surveys of temperance history.³ Yet one of the similarities that the EUB brought to the 1968 union was that temperance support in the EUB tradition was every bit as firm as that in the Methodist tradition—if not firmer.

The modern Church of the UBC, previously the UBC (Old Constitution), is undoubtedly aware of its temperance history. On its news website, *UBCentral.org*, it gives the following account:

By the time General Conference ended on May 17, 1821, we had waded deep into the waters of social action. The delegates took strong stands against two evils in society: slavery, and alcohol. In both cases, they were ahead of their time . . . In 1826, five years after we took a stand, the American Temperance Society formed and other evangelical denominations entered the fray. We, wrote [UBC historian John] Lawrence with mixed metaphors, “were among the pioneers in the temperance

¹ Jennifer Woodruff Tait, *The Poisoned Chalice: Eucharistic Grape Juice and Common-Sense Realism in Victorian Methodism* (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2011). The real story involving Welch is more complicated, but not directly relevant to this paper.

² For example, Jack Blocker’s well-regarded *Give to the Winds Thy Fears: The Women’s Temperance Crusade, 1873–1874* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), does not refer to the EA or UBC traditions despite the fact that the heart of the crusade occurred in Ohio and a column by Milton Wright in the March 11, 1874, issue of the *Religious Telescope* makes it clear that UBC women in Dayton were participating. See Timothy S. G. Binkley, ed., *A Higher Moral and Spiritual Stand: Selected Writings of Milton Wright* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 93–95.

³ One survey history from the nineteenth century, *One Hundred Years of Temperance: A Memorial Volume of the Centennial Temperance Conference Held in Philadelphia, Pa., September 1885* (New York: National Temperance Society, 1886) has a chapter on the UBC by E. S. Lorenz, “The United Brethren in Christ,” 348–352. But many popular survey histories of temperance—such as Daniel Dorchester’s *The Liquor Problem in All Ages* (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1884)—do not.

movement, and have always fought in the advanced columns.”⁴

United Brethren in Christ Polity Regarding Alcohol

Early Americans were heavy drinkers, and the UBC’s beginnings betrayed a certain ambivalence towards alcohol, as E. S. Lorenz noted in the late nineteenth century:

The organization of the denomination in 1800 took place in a dwelling situated over the storeroom of a distillery owned by a Christian layman whose hospitality the members of that Conference were enjoying. Yet the worldly and sensual aspects of the evil were denounced without stint from the pulpit and in private, as we may learn from a letter written in 1807 by Otterbein to a former parishioner who had become a confirmed drunkard . . . [Otterbein wrote:] “Some of your friends had a suspicion of your drinking while you were yet in Baltimore.” After urging the ruin [the drunkard] was bringing upon himself, and the disgrace he was heaping upon his family and upon the Church and cause of Christ, [Otterbein] continues, “You must either decide to go to hell or give up drinking. There is no other way and this you know and believe. But you must give up strong drink . . . You must give it up entirely.” This idea of total abstinence was applied, however, only to the drunkard’s case, for there is evidence that Otterbein did not refuse an occasional glass of wine offered by a hospitable parishioner.⁵

The first published UBC *Discipline* in 1815 did not include a statement on temperance, though the 1814 manuscript “Rules of the UBC” has an article about it: “Every member shall abstain from strong drink, and use it only on necessity, as medicine” (*Ein jedes glied soll sich starkes enthalten und es nur zur noth, als arzenen, und metizin gebrauchen*).⁶ In 1821, the third UBC General Conference resolved “that neither preachers nor lay members shall be allowed to carry on a distillery . . . and that it shall be the duty of the preachers to labor against the evils of intemperance.” Lorenz writes, “This was not published in the printed minutes, being intended to prepare the way for definite legislation at the next General Conference. . . . There were, however, too many of both clergy and laity financially interested in the manufacture of liquor.”⁷

⁴ “On This Day in UB History: May 17 (Slavery and Alcohol),” accessed May 17, 2017, <http://ubcentral.org/2017/05/17/on-this-day-in-ub-history-may-17-slavery-and-alcohol/>. The UBC (they dropped the “Old Constitution” designation after the New Constitution group went into the EUB in 1946) prohibited members from drinking alcohol until 2005; pastors are still prohibited—see “Questions Asked of Candidates for Ordination,” accessed October 19, 2018, <http://ub.org/pmh/pm-questions/>. The Evangelical Church of North America, which includes former EUB churches that did not join the 1968 merger, still strongly cautions against alcohol consumption, writing in their 2014 *Discipline*, “Due to the negative influence on the human body and the devastating effects in personal lives, personal relationships and society at large, we urge followers of Christ to abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages and non-medically prescribed drugs” (*The Discipline of the Evangelical Church*, 2014), ¶ 219; accessed October 19, 2018, https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/dd/dddd24e7-396f-4fe1-8c03-b8a6a08fbc2f/documents/2014_DISCIPLINE.pdf.

⁵ Lorenz, 348–349; see also A. W. Drury, *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ* (Dayton: Otterbein Press, 1953), 338–340. For a fuller exploration of the amount of alcohol consumed in early America, see Woodruff Tait, 9.

⁶ *Disciplines of the United Brethren in Christ, 1814–1841*, ed. A. W. Drury (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1895), part I, 5 (English); part II, 5 (German).

⁷ Lorenz, 349.

It would be 1833 when the first prohibition finally appeared in the *Discipline*, “making it an offence punishable with expulsion for an exhorter, preacher, or elder to manufacture or sell ardent spirits. That a year of grace was allowed [to] offending parties to close out their business without financial loss proves that some of the clerical members of the denomination were so engaged.”⁸ In 1837, a circular from the General Conference was appended to the *Discipline*; it “in the most affectionate terms beseech[ed]” both members and clergy “by the mercies of him . . . by whose authority it is said that no drunkard shall inherit eternal life” to stop distilling and vending ardent spirits; evidently the year of grace had not been enough.⁹

In 1840 General Conference stopped beseeching and began requiring that

The distilling and vending of ardent spirits as a beverage shall hereafter be forbidden throughout our whole society. Should any preacher, exhorter, leader or layman be engaged in distilling or vending ardent spirits, he shall be accountable to the class, the Quarterly or Annual Conference to which he belongs. If the offending brother be an exhorter, leader, or layman it shall be the duty of the preacher in charge, to admonish him in meekness; if he be a preacher it shall be the duty of the Presiding Officer of a Quarterly or Annual Conference to admonish him to desist from his unholy employment; and if all friendly admonitions fail such offending person or persons shall no longer be considered members of our church but be expelled from the same.—Provided, however, that this rule shall not be so construed as to prevent druggists and others from vending for medicinal or mechanical purposes.¹⁰

In 1848, the word “use” was added to several places in the statement, so that from that point on it was forbidden to UBC members and clergy to drink ardent spirits as well as to make and sell them.¹¹

In the 1880s, the UBC turned its attention to the use of wine in the Lord’s Supper, a discussion which had been consuming northern Methodists since 1860.¹² Betty O’Brien—whose 1993 article on the subject is one of the few commonly cited pieces of temperance historiography to refer to UBC and EA perspectives—records the debate:

The 1881 Book of Discipline included an “earnest” recommendation for stewards to provide unfermented wine at the Lord’s Supper. Four years later, the Book of Discipline changed the phrase to read “always securing, if at all possible, unfermented wine.” The twentieth United Brethren in Christ General Conference (1889) amended the instruction to stewards by striking the words “if at all possible,” but the vote was close: “ayes 39, noes 38.”¹³

By 1901, as part of the *Discipline*’s rule on temperance, churches were re-

⁸ Lorenz, 350.

⁹ *Disciplines of the UBC, 1814–1841*, part I, 191.

¹⁰ *Disciplines of the UBC, 1814–1841*, part I, 225.

¹¹ Lorenz, 350. John Lawrence’s influential history of the church, *The History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, Vol. 2 (Dayton, OH: United Brethren Printing, 1861), 151–152, dates the prohibition of drinking ardent spirits to 1841, but the *Disciplines* do not bear this out: the version he quotes is actually the 1848 version of the rule.

¹² Woodruff Tait, 12.

¹³ Betty O’Brien, “The Lord’s Supper: Fruit of the Vine or Cup of Devils?” *Methodist History* 31.4 (July 1993): 216.

quested to observe the fourth Sunday in October as Temperance Day.¹⁴

Evangelical Association Polity Regarding Alcohol

As far as we know, Jacob Albright was a total abstainer “in a time when this standard was unusual even among the clergy.”¹⁵ The EA predated the UBC in encoding temperance legislation in their printed discipline, as the 1809 *Discipline* prohibited the drinking of intoxicating liquors and the 1817 *Discipline* urged members “to avoid intemperance and uncleanness, of whatever kind it may be, particularly drunkenness and unnecessary use of strong drink.”¹⁶ A late nineteenth-century history of the EA claimed, “At that early day the sentiment of Christian Churches on the temperance question was by no means what it is today, and with the possible exception of one or two other denominations the Evangelical Association stood alone in her attitude toward the temperance cause.”¹⁷

In 1839, “the use or selling of intoxicating liquors” was prohibited—doing things in the opposite order from the UBC, who had attacked the liquor traffic before they attacked liquor consumption. Historian Raymond Albright claims many EA preachers were temperance converts and speakers by this time, due in part to the influence of Bishop Seybert, an enthusiastic temperance supporter. Seybert recorded of his preaching in Pennsylvania in the late 1830s: “The passion for drink was so great, that brandy was lugged on their shoulders a distance of twenty miles . . . Soon, however, some of the worst swearers began to pray, and some of the worst drunkards became sober.”¹⁸ During continual debates over the Maine Law, a prohibitory liquor law passed in the state of Maine in 1851 and eventually copied in other states, the EA’s newspaper *Der Christliche Botschafter* “took a very decided stand in favor [of the law] . . . and several annual conferences also expressed themselves very favorably toward it.” Nineteenth-century writer Reuben Yeakel took this as evidence that “The Evangelical Association is also a strict Temperance Association.”¹⁹

In 1871, the EA General Conference reasserted in strong form the church position of total abstinence:

Whereas, we are more than ever convinced of the pernicious and enormous evils caused by the use of intoxicating liquors; and Whereas, systematic and gigantic efforts are being made by the enemies of total abstinence to deluge this fair land with a flood of intemperance; and Whereas, we believe the cause of temperance is a Church work, and that true religion and sound morality will be served by a closer union of

¹⁴ *Origin, Doctrine, Constitution, and Discipline of the UBC, 1901* (Dayton, OH: U. B. Publishing House, 1901), 79.

¹⁵ Raymond W. Albright, *A History of the Evangelical Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Evangelical Press, 1942), 231–232. See also Reuben Yeakel, *History of the Evangelical Association*, Vol. 2 (Cleveland: J. Lamb, 1909), 37.

¹⁶ Albright, 232.

¹⁷ G. C. Knobel, ed., *The Congress of the Evangelical Association* (Cleveland: Thomas and Mattill, 1894), 222.

¹⁸ Albright, 232.

¹⁹ Yeakel, 37.

the Church with the cause of temperance, and holding it to be the duty of every Christian to deny himself of whatever may be a hindrance to the purity of the Church and injurious to the welfare of society; therefore Resolved, That we again reiterate our firm convictions in the principles of total abstinence.²⁰

The EA may, in fact, have been among the first to discuss replacing sacramental wine. According to one nineteenth-century writer, “The Pennsylvania Conference of the Evangelical Association . . . in 1835 . . . adopted a resolution asserting that the use of fermented wine in the Lord’s Supper was “contrary to the total-abstinence principles of our church.”²¹ However, a church-wide prohibition never came to fruition. In 1871 a resolution requiring unfermented wine in the Lord’s Supper was introduced to General Conference, but there was little interest in the motion, and the only thing that actually passed was a motion asking the church “to use only the pure juice of the grape [as opposed to the common practice of adulterating the wine] for this holy purpose.” In 1899, the Committee on Public Morals recommended unfermented wine to the General Conference, but again no action was taken. After the EA reunited in 1922 with members of the United Evangelical Church split, the Evangelical Church (as the merged denomination now named itself) did advise stewards that “in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper only unfermented wine be used.”²²

How Did the EUB Tradition Resemble Other Temperance Churches?

Commitment to common-sense realism

Nineteenth-century temperance reformers had drunk deeply at the well of Scottish common-sense realism, a philosophy which placed a premium on the need to perceive the physical world accurately in order to make moral judgements and which therefore rejected not just alcohol but a number of other lifestyle issues—such as tobacco, swearing, the theater, dancing, reading inappropriate literature, and even overeating—as interfering with moral functioning by physical means. My description of Methodist reformers applies equally to the UBC and the EA:

For nineteenth-century reformers, consuming [unfermented wine] did not cloud the human mind’s ability to perceive external reality and derive moral acts from those physical perceptions. For these reformers, the holy nature of an act or substance existed in direct proportion to that act or substance’s ability to enable clear moral perception and action.²³

Early ambiguity about alcohol followed by a later attempt to narrate founders closer to a teetotal position

The UBC and EA also shared with other temperance denominations, such as Methodists, a rocky evolution of their temperance rules, especial-

²⁰ Knobel, 222.

²¹ O’Brien, 208.

²² O’Brien, 216–217, 217.

²³ Woodruff Tait, 121–122, 121.

ly regarding total abstinence—and an embarrassment about this fact later.²⁴ Lorenz sadly remarked about his UBC forbearers in the early nineteenth century, “Total abstinence from even distilled liquors was not required nor were the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits considered inconsistent with the profoundest piety.”²⁵

By the early twentieth century, several decades after Lorenz contributed his essay on the UBC to a temperance centennial book, a catechism prepared for the UBC included a section on temperance; in itself this was a sign of solidarity with other denominations’ methods, as temperance catechisms were prevalent methods of advocating for total abstinence in this era.²⁶ Marion Drury, the catechism’s author, stated, somewhat disingenuously, “The General Conference took advanced ground in favor of total abstinence in 1821, and the Church has ever since been loyal to that position . . . *Is the Church then a temperance society?* It is, and one of the best, and all who join it promise to practice the principles of temperance.”²⁷

Belief that the moral nature of drunkenness prevents salvation

The idea that no one can be saved while they are drunk runs through much temperance literature. Methodist author Leon Field wrote in one Biblical commentary, “Drunkenness in all its stages is a state of insavableness. It is a condition in which one not only *is* not, but *can* not be saved . . . Insavableness *inheres* in wine as its essential characteristic.”²⁸ Similar language repeats in EA and UBC materials. For example, a temperance address reprinted in the *Religious Telescope* claimed:

The drunkard is on the high way to everlasting perdition. He is wasting his strength, impairing his health, and preparing for himself an early death. He is weakening his understanding, benumbing his sensibilities, paralyzing his moral powers, debauching his conscience, and loading himself with incalculable, guilt. Nothing can be more certain, than that if he does not repent and reform, he shall be excluded from heaven, and everlasting bliss. No “Drunkard,” saith the sacred scriptures, “shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.”—The gates of the celestial city are even now barred against him, and never will or can they be opened for him, till he casts away his cups and becomes a sober man.²⁹

Support of “respectable” temperance organizations and distrust of “emotional” temperance reform

Criticism of unnecessarily demonstrative temperance reformers—who were also often lower-class like the Washingtonians or Roman Catholic like Father Mathew—were common among many mainstream Protestant temperance advocates. The EA and UBC agreed. The *Religious Telescope* noted

²⁴ Woodruff Tait, 11, 41.

²⁵ Lorenz, 348.

²⁶ Woodruff Tait, 16.

²⁷ Marion R. Drury, *Our Catechism* (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1907).

²⁸ Woodruff Tait, 104–105.

²⁹ George Duffield, “Substance of a Temperance Address,” *Religious Telescope*, January 28, 1835, 1. Hereafter designated as *RT*.

in 1851, possibly speaking of the Washingtonians:

Who does not know that a few years ago it was thought that intemperance could be suppressed without the aid of religion and the church[?] Wicked men were lecturing all over the land; and because they were temperance-lecturers, and could create a good deal of mirth by their anecdotes, they were admitted into the sacred desk. Where are these enthusiastic reformers now? Mainly where they were before they were reformed[?]³⁰

Connection maintained between drunkenness and other social sins

Temperance authors of all Protestant denominations connected alcohol abuse to the many other signs of “worldliness” that clustered around their commitment to common-sense realism.³¹ Though there were several important differences to be discussed below, EA and UBC authors were also generally happy to connect drunkenness to other social problems. Lorenz, for instance, noted about the early UBC:

For a number of years after the formal organization which occurred in 1800 no printed or even written discipline existed. But the unwritten laws against all forms of worldliness, idle talk, theatre-going, dancing, games of chance, immoderate drinking, [and] slave-holding and like evils, were strong and rigidly enforced.³²

The 1901 *Discipline* of the UBC urged Sabbath-keeping “in view of the growing tendency [to avoid church] as seen in the open saloon, the beer-garden, the base-ball games, the social dance, [and] excursion trains.”³³ The EA was originally somewhat more ambivalent about tobacco, but eventually came around to a clear condemnation of it, and the movement always maintained a “strict observance of the Lord’s Day” and encouraged the wearing of extremely frugal and sober clothing.³⁴

Unique Features of the EUB Temperance Tradition

Despite their commitment to the usual complex of social sins that troubled nineteenth-century reformers, the UBC and EA traditions exemplified a greater emphasis on issues of slavery, war, oaths, and secret societies as moral issues which needed to be witnessed to along with temperance. In Methodist *Disciplines* from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, while Wesley’s General Rules persist as a statement against social sins, those issues repeatedly called out for special treatment to include slavery (until the 1844 split, after which point Methodist Episcopal Church, South, MECS) *Disciplines* obviously do not include it), intemperance, and divorce,

³⁰ “Moral Reforms,” *RT*, March 19, 1851, 114. In 1854, the *Telescope* published a report of a temperance meeting which made it clear that the UBC was part of a rotation of churches cooperating with the mayor and others to address the liquor traffic. See “Temperance Meeting in the Fifth Ward,” *RT*, June 14, 1854, 158.

³¹ Woodruff Tait, 121.

³² Lorenz, 348.

³³ *Discipline of the UBC* (1901), 80.

³⁴ Albright, 234–235. See also A. Stapleton, *Flashlights on Evangelical History* (York, PA; The Author, 1908).

but not secret societies or war. For example, in 1888 issues of simplicity in dress, divorce, marriage with unbelievers, temperance, and slavery are all addressed in the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) *Discipline*; the 1900 MEC *Discipline* discusses temperance, dress, marriage, divorce, and slavery.³⁵ The 1910 MECS, *Discipline* has an entire address on worldliness and a whole chapter on temperance, but never mentions secret societies or war.³⁶

The UBC tradition, of course, made a statement against slavery as early as its 1821 *Discipline*.³⁷ In 1833 Freemasonry was condemned, and these two issues were joined in the 1841 *Discipline* by the prohibition of the making and selling of ardent spirits.³⁸ This did not mean these positions had been arrived at without controversy. In 1837 there was a debate over whether the *Religious Telescope* was too abolitionist; the editor, William Rhinehart, was “outspoken” on both temperance and slavery, and while his temperance thoughts were uncontroversial, members of the Virginia Conference protested his stance on slavery.³⁹ The controversy was resolved in favor of the *Telescope* remaining “open for the discussion of Slavery as well as intemperance, Sabbath breaking and every other evil of the land.”⁴⁰ In 1851 the *Telescope* condemned the MECS stance on slavery and the moderation of the MEC on the issue despite the MEC maintaining an anti-slavery statement in its *Discipline*: “The Church, South, now is fairly and squarely on the side of oppression. And the Church, North, had better expunge the same section.”⁴¹

The UBC 1850 *Discipline* has statements against oaths, slavery, ardent spirits, Freemasonry, and war.⁴² Later *Disciplines* would add divorce and Sabbath-breaking to the list. By 1945 the last *Discipline* before union with the Evangelical Church contained a section on “Social Action and Moral Reform” which witnessed to the UBC position on labor relations, temperance, Sabbath observance, slavery, oaths, international relations, race rela-

³⁵ *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1888* (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1888), ¶ 270–277; *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1900* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, 1900), ¶ 34–40. Given space limitations, you may understand this and the following footnote to be accurately representative of the range of later nineteenth-century Methodist *Disciplines*.

³⁶ *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1910* (Nashville: Publishing House, MECS, 1911), v-x, ¶ 220–222.

³⁷ *Disciplines of the UBC, 1814–1841*, part 1, 90–91. The 1814 manuscript Discipline forbid strong drink (as we have seen) and Sabbath-breaking (*Disciplines of the UBC, 1814–1841*, part 1, 5).

³⁸ *Disciplines of the UBC, 1814–1841*, part 1, 160.

³⁹ John H. Ness, *One Hundred Fifty Years: A History of Publishing in the Evangelical United Brethren Church* (Dayton: Board of Publication of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, 1966), 279.

⁴⁰ Ness, 281.

⁴¹ “The Rule Expunged,” *RT*, June 14, 1854, 158. The same issue of the *Telescope* published the minutes of a Board of Missions meeting noting that “This Missionary Board will make it a primary object to give the gospel of Christ to all men, in all countries, in its unmingled and original purity, wholly unconnected with the popular sins of the age; such as slavery, secret oath-bound societies, intemperance and caste” (“Meeting of the Board of Missions,” *RT*, June 14, 1854, 158.).

⁴² *Origin, Doctrine, Constitution, and Discipline of the United Brethren in Christ* (Circleville, OH: Conference Office, 1850).

tions, and marriage and divorce.⁴³ Among its statements were ones in favor of labor rights and against war as “contrary to the spirit of Christ,” and abolitionism and temperance were especially noted as long-standing commitments of the church.⁴⁴

No doubt some unflagging commitment in the UBC was due to Milton Wright’s tenure as editor of the *Religious Telescope*, where he made a practice of uniting these issues. In an early editorial after he assumed the job in 1869, he wrote, “On Slavery, Temperance, Secret Societies, and other moral questions, the *Telescope* has made a record which it is to be hoped will never be reversed or tarnished.”⁴⁵ A few years later he was eulogizing Bishop David Edwards as “friend of the oppressed slave, open enemy of intemperance, and not less so of the secret lodge, and all clans.”⁴⁶ In an April, 1877, editorial he explained that the testimony of the UBC against slavery and temperance went back to 1821 and their opposition to secret societies to 1838: “Will God not remember the church which has stood faithful, through evil report as well as good report, against the three great evils of our age and country—slavery, intemperance, and secret societies?”⁴⁷

The EA also generally witnessed against slavery, war (although this became a source of conflict during the Civil War), tobacco, and “questionable” amusements.⁴⁸ It actually differed from the UBC on the issue of oath-bound societies, partially *because* of its support for temperance. In 1847, the EA General Conference forbid membership in the Freemasons and asked a minister who was a Freemason to withdraw; but when a resolution was proposed forbidding membership in all oath-bound societies, one minister from Pennsylvania objected because, he said, “I belong to the Sons of Temperance, which is an oath-bound order. We find secrecy necessary to lay our plans and carry on our work to keep ahead of the whiskey men. The resolution you passed will cut off all the temperance workers in the church.” After a heated debate, the proposer of the resolution withdrew his motion.⁴⁹

The UBC, however, privileged the call against secret societies over the call for temperance activism; an 1868 *Religious Telescope* article reprinted conference minutes from Iowa, stating that

Whereas, We are willing, as ever, to cooperate with that political party, or any temperance society, which has for its object, or incorporated in its policy, the suppression of the manufacture, sale, or using for a beverage, any or all, intoxicating fluids . . . and, Whereas, There are temperance societies making efforts to carry forward the cause of temperance under-a system of secrecy . . . Resolved, That we will vote the Republican ticket as a temperance ticket, and cooperate with all temperance so-

⁴³ *Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1945-1949* (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1945), 80–96.

⁴⁴ *Discipline of the UBC, 1945–1949*, 94.

⁴⁵ Binkley, 12.

⁴⁶ Binkley, 160.

⁴⁷ Binkley, 164–165.

⁴⁸ Albright, 299–304. There was even a strong encouragement against costly and ostentatious funerals.

⁴⁹ Albright, 189–190; Stapleton, 5–6.

cieties, but enter our earnest protest against secret organizations in the temperance cause, believing they are injurious to the object sought, and earnestly ask all temperance men to join in public organizations for the final overthrow of the great evil.⁵⁰

Conclusions

Despite the remarkable *unremarkability* of the EUB temperance tradition, why are these differences present? I will suggest only a few preliminary conclusions, which hopefully will be taken up by future researchers.

First, the lack of an academic journal among the UBC and EA may have pushed temperance debates in a different direction than among Methodists and Presbyterians, who tended more and more as the century wore on to focus on the exegetical and scientific issues in their academic presses.⁵¹ This certainly may explain the far less heated discussions of unfermented Communion wine in the UBC and EA as well as their willingness to allow medicinal exceptions to distilling prohibitions.⁵²

Secondly, Germans and Irish were often the villains in temperance literature.⁵³ But the UBC and EA movements *were* German and had to maintain their support for temperance in the face of strong cultural pressures to drink alcohol and cultural prejudice against them as Germans. Such a stance may have given them a stronger and more unified witness.⁵⁴

Finally, though Methodism had Pietistic roots, Methodism also involved an Anglican heritage of state-supported religion which Wesley never repudiated. While Methodism was never an established church in the U.S., it functioned almost as America's state church for decades, and its position of cultural hegemony gave its lifestyle strictures a different emphasis. The UBC and EA, on the other hand, claimed not only a Mennonite founder (Boehm) but also Reformed and Lutheran founders (Otterbein and Albright) who had explicitly rejected their state churches.⁵⁵ They were also self-consciously immigrant movements trying to be missionaries to an immigrant population.⁵⁶ One EA historian attributed the fear of secret societies directly to the "aversion which these pietistic German people had for any object or order which in any slight way might show evidence of placing a shadow upon the supremacy of Jesus Christ and his church."⁵⁷ As we consider how best to follow Christ today, it is worth thinking about to what extent they were right.

⁵⁰ "Conference Minutes: West Des Moines," *RT*, October 21, 1868, 50.

⁵¹ Woodruff Tait, 15–16.

⁵² O'Brien notes that "the delegates appeared to be more interested in adjourning than in discussing the issue" at the UBC's 1889 General Conference (O'Brien, 216).

⁵³ Woodruff Tait, 29–30.

⁵⁴ It would be fruitful to compare UBC and EA temperance writings to temperance statements of German MEC conferences, a line of research outside my scope here.

⁵⁵ Echoes of Mennonite resistance may be seen in UBC statements against war and oaths, for example. The 1850 UBC *Discipline* calls war "unholy and antichristian" (*Discipline of the UBC, 1850*, 87).

⁵⁶ See "Efforts for the Spread of Evangelical Religion in Germany," *RT*, March 19, 1851, for an expression of concern for the UBC homeland.

⁵⁷ Albright, 190.