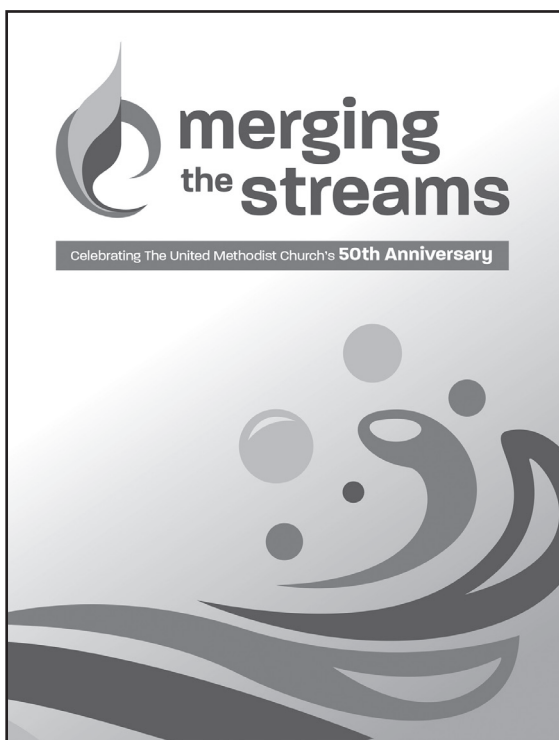


METHODIST HISTORY

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SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE



LOGO FOR THE "MERGING THE STREAMS" HISTORICAL CONVOCATION
CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UMC



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Cover: The cover image is the logo for the “Merging the Streams” Historical Convocation celebrating the 50th anniversary of the UMC. Held July 9–12, 2018 at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, the theme of the event was “Pietism, Transatlantic Revivalism, and the EUB Legacy in United Methodism.”

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METHODIST HISTORY

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Luther Oconer, Guest Editor

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GUEST EDITOR'S NOTE

On April 23, 1968, Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) Bishop Reuben H. Mueller and Methodist Bishop Lloyd C. Wicke joined hands at the constituting General Conference in Dallas, Texas, declaring, “Lord of the Church, we are united in Thee, in Thy Church and now in The United Methodist Church.” With a combined membership of eleven million members, the newly-formed United Methodist Church (UMC) became the largest Protestant denomination in North America. The event was a bright spot in what was otherwise a tumultuous year in American history; nineteen days prior, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, and six weeks later Senator Robert Kennedy would meet a similar fate in Los Angeles. Racial tensions ran high, and the country was embroiled in an unpopular war in Vietnam. Despite the enthusiasm that accompanied the Dallas gathering, the union left former EUB and Methodist congregations and conferences grappling with the monumental task of consolidating their mission, personnel, and resources. The EUBs, in particular, expressed anxiety over being swallowed up by the Methodists, who were fourteen times bigger than them.

Fast-forward fifty years later, the fears expressed by EUBs in 1968 have turned out to be not unfounded. Institutions that have been a source of pride for them have long since disappeared. Many former EUB churches barely reflect their rich Evangelical or United Brethren (UB) past. Nevertheless, people’s interest on the once fledging EUB tradition has not been entirely muted. This interest was demonstrated recently at the “Merging the Streams” Historical Convocation, when over a hundred historians, archivists, pastors, and lay leaders gathered to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the UMC. Held on July 9–12, 2018, at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, the theme of the event was “Pietism, Transatlantic Revivalism, and the EUB Legacy in United Methodism.” The four-day gathering celebrated the legacy of the EUB tradition and the ways by which it shaped United Methodist identity. Important motifs were explored to discern this legacy, namely, the merging streams of Pietism, revivalism, ecumenism, and egalitarianism that have been deeply embedded in the DNA of the EUB tradition. Consequently, in addition to the heart–religion aspects of EUB history, the Merging the Streams Convocation also recognized the ways by which the EUB tradition enlarged the spheres of women and promoted racial inclusion and healing; two highly engaging plenaries were dedicated to these two themes.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure that we present this special double issue of *Methodist History* featuring eight (out of the eleven) keynote addresses presented during the convocation which enable us not only to gaze into

the past but also look forward into the future. The first article, by J. Steven O'Malley, "Merging the Streams: Pietism and Transatlantic Revival in the Colonial Era and the Birth of the Evangelical Association and the United Brethren in Christ," focuses on the Pietist and German revivalist roots of the EUB and how the confluence of the "breadth" and "depth" theological dimensions of Pietism gave rise to it.

From O'Malley's EUB prehistory, we then shift to early UB history in the United States through Russell Richey's "Repairing Episcopacy by Tracking that of Bishop Christian Newcomer." In this article, Richey probes the episcopal leadership of the pioneering UB bishop as a model worth emulating by our leaders today. Another UB bishop was the focus of a paper by Scott Kisker, "Unpopular Religion: Bishop Milton Wright and the United Brethren Schism of 1889," which looks into the life and ministry of Bishop Wright and the issues and circumstances that led him to lead a splinter UB denomination in 1889. It is worth mentioning that some aspects of Kisker's account around the split bear some uncanny resemblance to the current impasse in the UMC surrounding same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBTQ clergy. After looking into a controversial era in UB history, we shift our attention to another moralizing tendency within the EUB tradition in Jennifer Woodruff Tait's "The Other Temperance Churches: The Evangelical United Brethren Tradition and Alcohol," which explores the contributions of the Evangelicals and UBs to the temperance movement.

After focusing on the revival roots of the EUB as well as its implications, we then turn our attention to studies highlighting egalitarian impulses and some reflections on the merger of 1968. We first begin with EUB women in ministry. Wendy Deichmann's "'If God Calls, Dare We Falter?': The Strategic Founding and Independence of the Woman's Missionary Association of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1869–1877," provides a window for discerning the struggles and triumphs of UB women to contribute significantly to the mission of the church. Deichmann's article is followed by "Maintaining the Tradition: The Ordination of Women in the Evangelical United Brethren Church—What Really Happened?" by Patricia Thompson who sheds light on women's ordination in the EUB Church after its formation in 1946 and prior to the merger of 1968.

From EUB women, we shift our attention to racial inclusion via Ian Straker's "Non-Merging Streams: The Continuing Problem of Race in American Methodism." While Straker's article does not directly deal with EUB history, he provides a stark reminder that despite the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction, made possible by the merger of 1968, we still have a long way to go in healing the racial divide in the UMC. Lastly, Ted Campbell's "The United Methodist Church Union Fifty Years Later: The Abiding Problems of a Modernist Vision of Union" traces our current predicament in the UMC as arising from the Modernist vision of union inherent in the merger of 1968. Campbell also advocates the formation of connectional conferences designed to carry on the traditions of the UMC in new situations and new contexts instead of the currently proposed options oriented entirely

around sexuality issues.

We are grateful to all our presenters, including those whose papers are not featured in this issue. Also, we acknowledge the sponsoring organizations that made *Merging the Streams* possible. These are the Historical Society of the UMC, the North Central Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History, the General Commission on Archives and History, the West Ohio Commission on Archives and History, and the Center for Evangelical United Brethren Heritage at United Theological Seminary. I am also deeply indebted to Rev. Alfred T. Day for the opportunity to serve as guest editor and represent the Center for Evangelical United Brethren Heritage at United Theological Seminary in this special issue.

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