

NEWS

from the **EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED HISTORICAL SOCIETY UCC**

Sponsored Agency of the Historical Council, United Church of Christ

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Volume 26, no. 1

OCTOBER ANNUAL MEETING AT ST. PETER UNITED CHURCH, HOUSTON, TEXAS

The Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society will hold its next annual meeting on October 10, 1998 at St. Peter United Church, Houston, Texas. The Society will share in the celebration of St. Peter's 150th anniversary. This will be the first time in its history for the ERHS to meet in Texas and in the South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ. The program will focus on the experience of the Evangelical Synod in Texas and of St. Peter United Church in particular. The Rev. Frank H. Horak, Jr. will give a lecture on the topic, "Faith Expressions on the Prairie." David Nussmann will present an impersonation, "The Rev. Karl Kniker, President of Texas District of the Evangelical Synod: A Visit from 1898." Mr. Horak served churches in Houston, Weimar and Clifton, Texas for 42 years. During the entire course of his ministry he was a leader in Outdoor Christian Education, having played a major role in the establishment of the Slumber Falls Camp and Retreat Center in 1958 for the Texas Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Mr. Nussmann, who is a member of First Congregational Church, Houston, has his roots in the German Evangelical Church and is knowledgeable about the Evangelical and the Evangelical and Reformed as well as the Congregationalist traditions in South Central Conference.

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UCC HISTORICAL COUNCIL AT CAMBRIDGE PLATFORM 350TH ANNIVERSARY IN OCTOBER

The United Church of Christ Historical Council will meet in connection with the 350th Anniversary of the Cambridge Platform in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Wednesday, October 28, and Thursday, October 29, 1998. The Historical Council will convene at the Congregational Library (14 Beacon Street, Boston) on Thursday afternoon, October 29, following the Cambridge Platform meeting and will meet through noon on Friday, October 30.

The Cambridge Platform Anniversary Meeting will commence with worship at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday to be followed by a keynote presentation by the Rev. Dr. Charles Hambrick-Stowe at 11:00 a.m. In the afternoon beginning at 2:00 p.m. there will be seminars on the following topics: "Role of an Essentially Sectarian Polity in an Ecumenical and Multicultural World," "Blurring the Distinctions of Congregational and other Ecclesiastical Polities," "Feminist Response and Interpretation of the Cambridge Platform," "What is the Role of Lay Leadership in the Life of the Congregation?", "What is the Nature of the Churches' Public Voice?", "What is the Nature of Ordained Ministry?". At 6:30 p.m. a banquet will take place and at 7:30 p.m. a special program of music is scheduled. The Wednesday meeting will take place at First Parish Unitarian Univer-

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ANNUAL MEETING AT ST. PETER UNITED CHURCH, HOUSTON (cont'd from page 1)

In addition to these presentations the program will feature a video prepared by St. Peter Church for its 150th anniversary which will be shown during the luncheon. After the luncheon the annual business meeting will take place. Following the business meeting there will be a tour of St. Peter Church and other area churches.

On Saturday evening, October 10, at 7 p.m., Dr. Paul Sherry, President of the United Church of Christ, will hold a Town Meeting for all interested clergy and laity in the sanctuary of St. Peter United Church. He will also preach at St. Peter's on Sunday morning, October 11. After the service on Sunday there will be a Texas barbecue.

Block reservations have been made for nights of October 9, 10 and 11 at the Hampton Inn 1-10 West, 11333 Katy Freeway, Houston, TX 77079; Phone 713-935-0222; FAX 713-935-0989. The cost is at a flat \$50.00 rate per night (plus applicable taxes) for a King Size or Double-Doubles room. Please make your reservations as soon as possible and refer to the ERHS meeting when doing so.

Directions to Hampton Inn: From 1-10 East Bound take Kirkwood exit, stay on Feeder 1 mile. From 1-10 West take Kirkwood exit. At the light make U turn to East Bound Feeder, 3/4 mile.

Directions to St. Peter United Church from Hampton Inn: Take I-10 (Katy Freeway East) to Campbell Road. Turn left going north on Campbell Road to Long Point Road. Turn right on to Long Point Road and the church is immediately on the left, on the corner of Long Point and Campbell Roads.

The Board of Directors will meet on Friday afternoon, October 9, at 3:30 p.m. in the Memorial Lounge of St. Peter's Church. The board has been invited for dinner that evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roland Beach.

HISTORICAL COUNCIL AT CAMBRIDGE PLATFORM ANNIVERSARY (cont'd from page 1)

salist, 3 Church Street, Cambridge.

On Thursday, October 29, the meeting will move to First Church Congregational, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge, where after morning prayer at 8:30 a.m., there will be a keynote presentation by Dr. Francis J. Bremer. Following the lecture a dialogue on "The Permanent and the Transient in the Cambridge Platform" will take place with Executive Ministers of the Inheriting Fellowships (National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, Conservative Congregational Churches, Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ). A closing worship will take place at the Harvard Memorial Chapel at 12:15 p.m.

To register, call or write the Rev. Dr. Harold F. Worthley, Congregational Library, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108; (617) 523-0470; FAX (617) 523-0491.

MELANCHTHON AND THE REFORMED TRADITION, [Summary of Lecture Presented at 1997 Annual Meeting], By Lowell H. Zuck

This year [1997] the Lutherans and others of the world are remembering the 500th anniversary of Melanchthon's birth, and it is fitting that the humble Reformed descendants of the mighty Lutheran reform effort should also celebrate the ambiguous accomplishments of his chief helper, Philip Melanchthon.

Melanchthon was and is a paradox: important/forgotten; a hero/a traitor; a bad intellectualist/a balanced humanistic reformer; a diplomat/a weakling, etc. etc. Moreover, to keep us on guard he needs in this context to be clearly identified as a Lutheran, since the Reformed never quite made it into that dominant 16th century Protestant Germanic theological category.

I would like to re-present Melanchthon today as a humanistic Reformation theologian in a positive light, especially as he fits into and influences the emerging Reformed tradition on the German scene especially. Taking a hint from a recent article by Oswald Bayer, [Kerygma und Dogma, 1990, pp.218-244] I would like to refer specifically to a verse from I Timothy 4:13 commented on by Melanchthon in a way that I think makes him an advocate of what the Heidelberg Catechism of the Reformed tradition teaches in terms of its key word, "comfort." Surely it is no accident that one of the chief writers of the Heidelberg Catechism was Melanchthon's favorite student, Zacharias Ursinus.

Melanchthon was open to the perspectives of the emerging Reformed community regarding the Eucharist and in other respects, while he of course remained a Lutheran all of his life, and also sought compromise with Catholics. Melanchthon commented on the Timothy passage ["Keep on reading the scriptures in worship, and don't stop teaching and preaching."] using the Latin terms "lectio," "doctrina" and "consolatio," which are usually translated as public reading of Scripture, teaching and exhorting, the latter also being translated as consoling, comforting or helping. Here we note in the third term precisely what the Heidelberg Catechism most prominently emphasizes in its overall structure. The connection with Melanchthon is not accidental, I think, though it could also have been derived from Luther or Calvin. Since our UCC tradition is and remains irenic and unionist, the possibly conflicting and perplexing influences on the emerging Reformed tradition as well as in Melanchthon himself ought not confound us so much as give us opportunity to appreciate again the rich interconnections within all of the Protestant (and Catholic) traditions in our own heritage.

The German Reformed Church was not only an import into Germany of Swiss theology, whether Zwinglian-Bullingerian from Zurich, Calvinist-Bezan from Geneva, or some sort of upper German Butzerian tradition. It was the above, but it is more. Luther's leading associate, Melanchthon, contributed significantly to the emergence of the German Reformed Church, enabling it (along with the church of Melanchthon's friend, Calvin) to claim confessional validity within the then established Lutheran tradition, necessary for legal reasons at that time.

MELANCHTHON AND THE REFORMED TRADITION (cont'd from page 3)

Turning to the direct relation between Melanchthon and the Reformed tradition in Heidelberg, I referred to his two direct interventions of 1559, written six months before his death. Since Heidelberg was undecided at this time as to what its confession should be, its appeal to Melanchthon coincided with his own desperate struggle with his emerging conservative Lutheran opponents, the Gnesio-Lutherans, led by the outspoken Lutheran Croat, Flacius Illyricus.

At Heidelberg, the new Elector Frederick III asked Melanchthon how to handle the strife between his Zwinglian clergyman, Klebitz, and a Melanchthonian superintendent, Heshus, who had recently turned against Melanchthon. In his reply, Melanchthon urged Frederick to suppress Heshus' Gnesio-Lutheranism as well as Klebitz' Zwinglianism. Frederick did just that, and the appointment of the Melanchthonian Ursinus and the Calvinist Olevianus followed, along with the preparation of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Together with this letter, Melanchthon sent Frederick a judgment about the Lord's Supper controversy, for the first time clearly condemning the Gnesio-Lutheran "monstrosities" that the "bread is the substantial body of Christ" or that ubiquity must be taught. Here Melanchthon repudiated Heshus, his former follower. Frederick followed Melanchthon's advice, and the introduction of the Reformed faith at Heidelberg was the result.

My conclusion about Melanchthon's significant contribution to the emergence of the Reformed tradition fits into the further development of that tradition in the United Church of Christ as follows. Though the UCC proudly affirms pluralism in its constituency, the predominant character of UCC theology and life today remains Reformed. The affirmation which the American Lutherans have made recently about us indicates the newer happy ability of formerly polemical traditions to recognize their positive inter-relations with each other. And these include Anabaptist and Methodist as well as Anglican and Catholic strands which also belong very much to our history and our present life.

To be sure, the UCC is not a theologically ferocious advocate of Calvinism, which makes us uncomfortable when it appears. Also, the part of the UCC, the former Evangelical Synod, which was predominantly Lutheran in ethos, today relates more positively to the Reformed than to the Lutheran tradition, and in a milder form than Lutherans sometimes affirm. Thus it is probably correct to say that almost every part of the UCC today relates more positively to the Reformed than to any other tradition. Former Congregationalists are most thoroughly Reformed historically, though as Unitarianism proved and liberation theology and feminism affirm, that tradition continues to stress progress and change over theologically traditional rigid stances. Both the former Reformed and the former Evangelical parts of the UCC continue, with some diffidence, to derive directly from the original Reformed and Lutheran Reformation traditions in a churchly way, though they have both been willing to surrender their names and some of their emphases to new perspectives. Though complicated in tradition, the former Christian and the still separate but covenantal Disciples traditions not only stress the term "Reformed," but also give it their own peculiarly American restorationist flavor.

MELANCHTHON AND THE REFORMED TRADITION (cont'd from page 4)

Thus the current UCC theological stance derives not so much from whether or not we consciously relate to Melanchthon and to 1560's developments, but rather to the still lively ability (sometimes without overt awareness of what one is doing) of UCC people to be in continuity with and faithful to the best aspects of Reformed theology. It is a proud and living tradition, and we need not be afraid to confess it!

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Fox, Merle Upton, An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Rev. Henry Harbaugh, D.D. Hanover, Pa.: The Sheridan Press, 1997. This volume is the author's thesis for the Master of Sacred Theology Degree at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa. This detailed annotated bibliography of Harbaugh's writings is preceded by a section on the background of Henry Harbaugh in the Reformed Church and the Mercersburg Theology.

Hambrick-Stowe, Charles, Editor. The Living Theological Heritage of the United Church of Christ (Barbara Brown Zikmund, General Editor). Volume 3: Colonial and National Beginnings. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998. Through carefully selected documents this volume traces the theological consciousness of the Congregational tradition from the early seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century and of the German Reformed tradition from the early eighteenth century to past the middle of the nineteenth century. The book contains a general introduction setting forth the major themes of both traditions which are illustrated in the text and short statements introducing each document.

Previous volumes in this series: Volume 1: Ancient and Medieval Legacies (1996), ed. Reinhard Ulrich; Volume 2: Reformation Roots (1997), ed. John B. Payne.

Pranger, Gary K. Philip Schaff (1819-1893): Portrait of an Immigrant Theologian. Swiss American Historical Society Publications, Vol. 11. 1997.

Toulouse, Mark G. and Duke, James O., Editors. Makers of Christian Theology in America. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997. This volume includes essays on four prominent theologians of the Evangelical and Reformed tradition: "John W. Nevin" by John B. Payne, "Philip Schaff" by Klaus Penzel, "Reinhold Niebuhr" by Robin W. Lovin and "H. Richard Niebuhr" by C. David Grant.

WANTED

The Society is seeking copies of all editions of the Evangelical and Reformed *Book of Worship*. The staff often receives requests from individuals wanting to purchase a copy of the *Book of Worship*. Currently there are only three extra copies available. If you have copies you would be willing to donate please send to the ERHS, 555 W. James St., Lancaster, PA 17603-2830 or contact our office. (717-290-8734) By making such a donation you will also be helping to raise additional funds for the projects and programs of the Society. Thanks for you help and support.

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ARCHIVES AND THE SEARCH FOR A NEW ARCHIVIST

The United Church of Christ Archives probably will be moved sometime during this fall to the national offices in Cleveland. A search committee for a new archivist has been formed and is expected to be interviewing candidates soon. As was reported in the last newsletter, the membership of this society may rest assured that the ERHS archival collection will remain in its present space on the second floor of the Philip Schaff Library, Lancaster Theological Seminary. The archives are now open from 9:00 to 4:00, Monday - Thursday. Patrons are well served by Diane Rimert, Dianne Russell and Cynthia Garis, who recently joined the staff. Richard Berg is the part-time ERHS Archivist.

ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1998

- 9:00 a.m. Registration and Coffee at St. Peter United Church,
9022 Long Point Road, Houston
- 9:30 a.m. Greetings and Worship in the Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. Frank H. Horak, Jr., "Faith Expressions on the Prairie"
- 10:30 a.m. Break
- 10:45 a.m. David Nussmann, "The Rev. Karl Kniker, President of the Texas
District of the Evangelical Synod: A Visit from 1898"
- 11:30 a.m. Discussion
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch
Presentation of Video on St. Peter United Church
- 1:30 p.m. Annual Business Meeting of the Evangelical and Reformed
Historical Society
- 2:30 p.m. Tour of Houston's United Church of Christ Churches
- 7:00 p.m. Town Hall Meeting with Dr. Paul Sherry
St. Peter's Sanctuary

REGISTRATION FOR LUNCH AT ANNUAL MEETING
SATURDAY , OCTOBER 10, 1998
HOUSTON, TEXAS

NAME

ADDRESS

Please make reservations for lunch for _____ (#) of persons on Saturday, October 10. RSVP by **September 15, 1998**. The cost of the lunch is \$5.00 per person. Make your check payable to St. Peter United Church.

Enclose this form and mail to: St. Peter United Church
9022 Long Point Road
Houston, TX 77055

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please enroll me as a member of the ERHS for 1998. Enclosed is my check for the following amount:

MEMBERSHIPS

_____ Donor	\$25
_____ Student	\$ 7

_____ Sponsor \$100
Institution \$50

Life \$250

NAME _____

ADDRESS

Please include check made payable to: Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society, and mail to: ERHS, 555 W. James Street, Lancaster, PA 17603-2830.

If you wish to be a member of both the Congregational Christian and the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Societies, make your check payable to: UCC Historical Council and mail to: UCC Historical Council, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115.

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