

NEWS

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

Sponsored Agency of the Historical Council, United Church of Christ

July 2001

Volume 29, No. 1

FALL ANNUAL MEETING TO TAKE PLACE IN NORTH CAROLINA

The Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society will hold its next Annual Meeting at two locations in North Carolina. On Friday evening, October 12, 2001, the meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a banquet at Catawba College, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. At the banquet Dr. William Palmer, Catawba College Archivist, will make a presentation on the history of the college. Afterwards there will be a reception for society members and out-of-town guests at the home of Catawba's President and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Cowher.

On Saturday morning the meeting will move to First Reformed United Church of Christ, Lexington, where the program will consist of a video of 100th Anniversary events at First Reformed Church and a presentation, "Dr. J.C. Leonard Speaks for Himself" by Rev. Banks Shepherd and Mr. Devin Odom. After lunch at the church there will be a tour of historic churches and Nazareth Children's Home, which will be concluded by a meal at Shiloh United Church of Christ, Faith, North Carolina.

On Sunday members and guests are invited to worship at Beck's United Church of Christ, Lexington and remain there for lunch after the service.

Block reservations have been made with the Hampton Inn, 1001 Klumac Road, Salisbury, NC 28144 for Friday, October 12 and Saturday, October 13. Telephone 704-

FALL 2002 ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD AT TRAPPE, PENNSYLVANIA

St. Luke's United Church of Christ, Trappe, Pennsylvania will be the site of the Society's Annual Meeting October 11-12, 2002. St. Luke's is celebrating its 260th Anniversary next year. The theme will concern the relations between Reformed and Lutheran pastors and people in the 18th century in Pennsylvania.

The subject is especially appropriate in light of the recent ratification of the Formula of Agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the communions of Reformed heritage, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Reformed Church in America.

Dr. John C. Shetler, former Conference Minister of Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, Museum Director of Muhlenberg House and Historian of the Historical Society of Trappe, as well as Historian of St. Luke's UCC, will present a lecture on the topic, "Ecumenical Acts of Boehm and Muhlenberg in Trappe and the Perkiomen Valley in the 18th Century." Plans also call for the inclusion on the program of a speaker from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America.

In addition to St. Luke's Church, Society members will have the opportunity to visit historic Old Augustus Lutheran Church which was built in 1743 and Muhlenberg House which is directly across the street from St. Luke's. Further details concerning this meeting will appear in the January, 2002 newsletter.

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FALL ANNUAL MEETING (Continued from page 1)

637-8000. The per room cost is \$62.00. Half of the rooms have two double beds and the other half have king-size beds. Deadline for reservations is Sunday, September 9, 2001. Make reservations directly with the Hampton Inn. The reservation code is ERHIST.

Registration for meals must be made by September 24. Please use the form provided in this newsletter and send registrations to Rev. Richard Cheek, 107 Bradford Court, Salisbury, NC 28146. See page 9 for meeting schedule and registration form.

All persons are cordially invited to attend what will surely be an excellent meeting which will be punctuated by delightful Southern hospitality and cooking.

FALL HERITAGE TOUR TO ANNUAL MEETING FROM PENNSYLVANIA

The tour from Pennsylvania to the October Annual Meeting in North Carolina will depart from Lancaster at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 10 and visit Monticello and the University of Virginia in the afternoon and evening. After an overnight in Charlottesville, the tour will visit on Thursday morning the nearby home of James Madison, Ashlawn. In the late morning the tour will continue along the Blue Ridge Parkway to view the beautiful fall color and then proceed to Natural Bridge, called "The Bridge of God" by the Monacan Indians. After an overnight stop further south along I-81 the group will travel to Winston-Salem in time for lunch and a tour of Old Salem before proceeding in the afternoon to Salisbury for the Annual Meeting. After the Saturday morning meeting in Lexington the group will join other participants for a tour of historic Reformed churches in the area. After worship at Beck's United Church of Christ, Lexington, on Sunday morning, October 14, the tour will return to Lancaster, Pa. arriving in the late evening.

The anticipated cost for travel and accommodations is \$300 per person for a double room and \$420 for a single. These figures do not include meals. See the article on the annual meeting for the cost of meals in connection with this meeting.

If you are interested in taking part in what promises to be a most interesting and enjoyable trip, please call or e-mail one of the following persons as soon as possible: Glenn Rader (717) 898-7099, krader@epix.net; Robert Hunsicker (717) 394-3311; John Payne (717) 290-8735, jpayne@lts.org. Deadline: August 20, 2001.

FALL HERITAGE TOUR TO THE NORTH CAROLINA MEETING FROM ST. LOUIS

The bus tour from St. Louis to the October Annual Meeting will depart from St. Louis on Tuesday, October 9th, and return on Monday, October 15. Places to visit along the way include New Harmony, Indiana; Nashville, Tennessee; Cherokee, North Carolina; the Biltmore estate in Asheville; overnight at Black Mountain or Montreat Conference Center; and Old Salem in Winston-Salem. Besides attending the meeting on the weekend of

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FAMILY SQUABBLES: THE NIEBUHRS AND THE EVANGELICAL SYNOD

by Rev. John C. Helt

In the history of Eden Theological Seminary, *Ethos and Ecumenism: An Ecumenical Blend*, Walter Brueggemann said that Eden's parent Evangelical Synod was more an ethos or church culture than a denomination.¹ The Evangelical Synod (1840-1934) was never known for particular doctrinal strengths or creedal formulations. It was an irenic church culture, not a confessional church. Piety and spiritual formation were more important than orthodoxy. "The heart makes the theologian," was the way Synod president Adolf Baltzer (1817-1880) put it.² Creed was the servant of character.

Irenic Evangelical pietism was also ecumenical, or at least unionist. Evangelical Synod culture self-consciously celebrated its Lutheran piety and Reformed social ethics. The cover of the 1912 *Evangelical Year Book* said, "The Evangelical Church in America stands for Lutheranism minus the narrowness, and for Calvinism, plus a vision."³ This was the year young Helmut Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962) graduated from the German Evangelical Synod's preseminary at Elmhurst, Illinois, and headed down to St. Louis for seminary education at Eden.⁴

Evangelical Synod culture also embraced the Social Gospel, as the cover of the 1914 *Evangelical year Book* proclaimed: "The Evangelical Church is conservative enough to stand for the old-fashioned Gospel and nothing but that Gospel, and progressive enough to apply truth and power of that Gospel to every human need."⁵ This was the year young Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) completed parochial Synod seminary education in St. Louis and moved on to the more sophisticated Yale Divinity School for an academic supplement and further Americanization.⁶ Twenty years later, Reinhold still reflected the church culture of his youth when he wrote, "Adequate spiritual guidance can come only through a more radical political orientation and more conservative religious convictions than are comprehended in the culture of our era."⁷

In addition to irenic pietism and ecumenical social progressivism, German Evangelical Synod culture was deeply committed to serious academic work with intellectual and theological integrity. Synod theologian Andreas Irion, according to the editor of the Synod's theological magazine, H. Kampenhausen, "taught our ministers to think while at the same time making them aware that believing means living, not holding options."⁸ Reinhold and Helmut Niebuhr admired their Synod pastor father, Gustav Niebuhr, and their academic father, seminary professor Samuel Press, for their intellectual rigor, but they were often critical of the Synod's lackluster commitment to higher education. Neither Elmhurst College nor Eden Seminary enjoyed adequate funding or freedom in the church culture that gave them birth.⁹

A final characteristic of Evangelical culture was the fervent mission impulse. It began with the German and Swiss mission houses in Barmen and Basel that trained the nineteenth century missionaries to North America who became the Synod's first pastors.¹⁰ The Niebuhrs' maternal grandfather, E. J. Hosto, was one such German-born missionary pastor.

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FAMILY SQUABBLES: (continued from page 3)

Father Gustav, also German-born, became an advocate of home mission work within the Synod in the 1890s, shortly after Reinhold, Helmut and elder siblings Hulda and Walter were born.¹¹ The wider world, especially that world beyond their own immigrant group and its church, would always catch the eye of the Niebuhr children.

The Niebuhr children were born shortly after the peak of German-American immigration and pride of ethnic heritage. Brothers Reinhold and Helmut were serving German Evangelical congregations in Detroit and St. Louis during the so-called Great War, when "100% American" nativism was at its peak in the United States. Attitudes toward German-Americans shifted radically during the Niebuhr brothers' first twenty-five years of life as "hyphenates." Many German Evangelical congregations adopted the English language or scaled back their use of German during the war, also during which all three Niebuhr brothers helped their church to assimilate. Their leadership on the Americanization side of the Synod squabble, began in their youth. They marched with their parents in this cause.

When the Evangelical Synod finally dropped "German" from its name in 1925, Helmut Niebuhr was the thirty-one-year-old Americanizing president of Elmhurst College. Old Guard Synod men had reason to be concerned about this radical youngster at the helm of its first institution for higher education beyond the parochial school level. They managed to make President Niebuhr's life difficult by maintaining a tight rein on Synod purse strings. They would agree to allow "Prexy" to build a tennis court on campus, but they would not fund a backstop or a fence. "Do you have any idea how difficult it is to play the game without a backstop?" Niebuhr asked in a frustrated letter to the Synod treasurer.¹² Brother Reinhold, on the Elmhurst governing board, had led the development effort of the Synod to build a new college library in memory of the Evangelical Synod young men who died fighting in their old homeland.¹³

At the same time, Helmut chaired the Synod committee that he hoped would create a three-way German-American Protestant union to be called "The United Church in America." When the result of this effort included but two of the three conversation partners, which in the next decade would become the Evangelical and Reformed Church, President Niebuhr scaled back his involvement in the process. His first book, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, may be understood as an intellectual statement of his disappointment in this outcome.

But the Evangelical Synod could not contain the Niebuhr family. Nor could either of its successor church bodies, the Evangelical and Reformed Church (1934) and the United Church of Christ (1957). After Reinhold's Detroit pastorate (1915-1928), he went on to teach at Union Theological Seminary in New York. After Helmut's academic and administrative work at the Synod's college and seminary in the 1920s, he went on to teach at Yale Divinity School. Dropping the German "Helmut" from his name on the way east, to become "H. Richard" or simply "Richard," is a telling symbolic shift in identity. Future generations would refer to his son as "Richard R." to distinguish the two Richard Niebuhrs.

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FAMILY SQUABBLES: (continued from page 4)

(The latter "R." is, of course, Reinhold!) Close Synod friends and family members would still call him "Hem." After sister Hulda's Evangelical Synod Sunday school work, both in parishes and at the national level, she went on to receive a degree from Boston College and to become director of Christian education at the prestigious Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. She later joined the faculty of the Presbyterian-related McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.¹⁴ Brother Walter spent much of this time in Europe as a playwright and pioneering cinematographer.¹⁵

The socially progressive, theologically ecumenical and intellectually global commitments, learned at the feet of their parents, grandparents and other Evangelical Synod teachers, drove the Niebuhrs to higher platforms of conversation and service in broader church cultures. In the paradigm of the youngest Niebuhr sibling's most enduring work, the family and its church culture would live on the string of a pendulum swinging between Christ and culture. Theirs would be the "double wrestle of the church with its Lord and with the cultural society with which it lives in symbiosis."¹⁶

Finding a meaningful place and making a difference within a wider church and cultural circle would become the identifying marks of both the Evangelical Synod of North America and its most historically significant family. The Niebuhrs led the progressive, ecumenical and global side in the family squabble, a squabble that had to do with the expansion and cultural relevance of a small denomination in a large world. Or, we might recognize that Evangelical Synod culture disallowed denominational development, although some of Niebuhr's adversaries never wearied of trying to force the Synod in that direction. Especially following Father Gustav's early death in Lincoln, Illinois, in 1914, the Niebuhrs began to move away from the more provincial of their church squabbles. The Niebuhr family did what it could to keep its home church true to its theological and cultural heritage while living in Midwestern German Evangelical Synod parsonages. But, in the end (beginning around 1930), with the family center shifted eastward to New York and New Haven, Mother Lydia and her children--Hulda, Walter, Reiny and Hem--both the Niebuhrs and the Evangelical Synod moved on. The church and culture "double wrestle" and symbiosis" continued, but the playing field had changed.

Notes

¹ Brueggemann defines "ethos" as "the deeply valued assumptions, values and loyalties which are pervasive and controlling."

² The story of Adolf Baltzer, unpublished manuscript, Eden Archives. The quotation comes from Baltzer's teacher at Berlin, church historian J.A.W. Neander (1789-1850). Note that President Baltzer was born in the same year as the creation of the United Evangelical Church of Prussia, considered by the North American Evangelicals to be their *Mutterkirche*.

³ A complete set of Evangelical Synod year books is to be found in the Eden-Webster Library, Webster Groves, Missouri.

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FAMILY SQUABBLES: (continued from page 5)

⁴ The best biography of H. R. Niebuhr in relation to his Evangelical Synod roots is that of Jon Diefenthaler, subtitled, *A Lifetime of Reflections on Church and Society*, 1986.

⁵ See note 3.

⁶ Biographies of Reinhold Niebuhr are plentiful. All but Richard Fox's are dependable. The first and most accessible is June Bingham, *Courage to Change*, 1961. Charles Brown, *Reinhold Niebuhr and His Age*, 1992 may be the best intellectual biography.

⁷ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Reflections on the End of an Era*, 1934.

⁷ H. Kampenhausen, *The Religious Life of the German Evangelical Synod of North America*, Eden Archives.

⁹ William G. Chrystal, *The Young Reinhold Niebuhr: His Early Writings*, 1977.

¹⁰ Carl Schneider, *The German Church on the American Frontier*, 1975.

¹¹ William G. Chrystal, *A Father's Mantle: A Biography of Gustav Niebuhr*, 1982 and John Helt, "Lydia Hosto Niebuhr: Evangelical Matriarch," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 1994.

¹² Stephen Crocco, "President H. Richard Niebuhr: His Elmhurst College Years," an unpublished paper in possession of the author.

¹³ John Helt, "Lydia Hosto Niebuhr: Evangelical Matriarch."

¹⁴ Elizabeth Caldwell, *A Mysterious Mantle: The Life of Hulda Niebuhr*, 1992. Hulda received no higher education from an Evangelical Synod sponsored institution, since both Elmhurst College and Eden Seminary were for men only until much later.

¹⁵ William G. Chrystal, "The Other Niebuhr Brother: Walter," an unpublished paper in possession of the author.

¹⁶ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 1951.

FALL TOUR FROM ST. LOUIS (Continued from page 2)

October 12-13, the group will attend a worship service at Beck's United Church of Christ on Sunday morning before returning home that afternoon.

It is estimated that the cost of the trip would be about \$650 for transportation, meals and lodging. Persons interested in joining this tour should call as soon as possible either Barbara Greer 314-965-5049 or Betty Tope 314-426-0503 or Lolly Wehrli 636-861-0287. There are only a few seats left on the bus.

PLANNED GIFTS FOR THE EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Please consider making the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society of the United Church of Christ the beneficiary of a bequest from a will and/or a planned gift annuity through an agreement with the United Church of Christ Financial Development Office. A UCC Gift Annuity is an irrevocable agreement by which one transfers assets to the United Church Foundation in return for a lifetime income of a fixed amount. The agreement also includes the designation of the congregation, conference, national ministry or other UCC

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PLANNED GIFTS (continued from page 6)

related entity one wishes to benefit with one's gift after death. A person is entitled to take a Federal Income Tax deduction for a charitable contribution in the year that he or she makes the gift and part of the annual lifetime income is tax free. For further information on this and other forms of Planned Giving by which one could guarantee lifetime income for oneself and at the same time receive a tax deduction while also benefiting the E & R Historical Society or other UCC related entity of your choice, write or call Lynne Hansen, Gift Administrator, UCC Financial Development Office, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115-1100; 800-846-6822 or 216-736-2103.

NEWS FROM THE LANCASTER ARCHIVES

CHANGES IN PERSONNEL

After 12 years of outstanding service Diane Rimert has left her position at the ERHS as she and her family move to Berwyn, Pa. where her husband, Rev. Richard Rimert has been appointed to the United Methodist Church. Diane has regularized our office procedures, helped countless persons with research questions, accessioned thousands of items, and processed many collections. Her efficiency and bright spirit will be missed. The ERHS staff and volunteers honored Diane at a luncheon and presented her with a house fraktur as a thank you and a remembrance. She was also honored along with departing Lancaster Theological Seminary staff at a luncheon at the close of the academic year in May.

On July 1 Nancy Rainey began work at ERHS. Nancy had been the full-time acquisitions/circulation assistant in the Schaff Library until she enrolled in a Master's Degree program at Loyola College which necessitated finding part-time work. Nancy has seamlessly picked up where Diane left off maintaining membership records, processing collections, accessioning items, and handling research requests all with a winning smile and spirit.

Eunice Mozingo, whose salary was paid by the Lancaster County Council on Aging, completed her two year term with the ERHS on June 1 and is now working with the Lancaster County Historical Society. Eunice completed a project of placing all pastors' photographs in acid free mylar sleeves and was working on photocopying the deteriorating contents of the Unger Genealogy Collection. We appreciated her work and extend our profound thanks the Lancaster County Council on Aging for providing this program and enabling the ERHS to participate in it.

Dianne Russell continues to serve as our part-time researcher for which we are grateful. Dianne's work with genealogists has helped to increase our membership through contributions by persons who are pleased with Dianne's help.

George Parrish continues as our part-time volunteer. We are grateful for George's continued help with special projects.

RECENT ACCESSIONS

The ERHS has recently been given a library by Myerstown UCC. This library consists primarily of books belonging to Rev. George Wolf, pastor of the church in the mid-19th century. With the church's understanding, all books not added to the ERHS collection will be sold with funds helping to support the Society's budget. The Society hopes to partner with the Philip Schaff Library to sell unwanted titles through the Amazon.com Internet auction. If you would like to help with this venture, Please call Nancy Rainey (717-290-8734) or Dick Berg (717-290-8704) to volunteer for searching, organizing, and shipping books. Donating books for this project is also an excellent way to make a contribution to the Society. We want to thank Myerstown UCC for this valuable contribution.

We continue to receive records from closed churches. This insures the preservation not only of our Reformed heritage but also baptism, marriage, and death records so important to genealogists. Currently we are negotiating with First Reformed Church, Bellaire, Ohio for the transfer of their records. Not only does the Society receive records of closed churches. Recently, the Consistory of St. Peter's UCC, Lancaster, Pa. voted to have all but their most current records deposited with the Society since the church has no suitable space which would insure their proper storage and care. If you know churches that are closing please have them call the Society at 290-8734.

FUTURE ARTICLES

The ERHS Newsletter has primarily included reports of the annual and executive board meetings as well as the texts of the lectures presented during the annual meetings and news from the archives at Lancaster, Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis and Catawba College, Salisbury, NC. We want to continue to inform you, the membership, of the decisions of the board and the actions taken at the annual meeting. Papers presented at the annual meeting are a rich source of our Reformed heritage and we anticipate printing those. However, this newsletter is for you, the membership. What kind of articles or ongoing columns would you like to see in each issue? Some societies have a genealogy column which prints names people are searching for, others have articles on local history or church history. We want to hear from you as to what you would like to see in the newsletter. Please drop us a note, send an email to erhs@lts.org, or call us at 717-290-8734.

SCHEDULE FOR ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER 12-13, 2001, CO-HOSTED BY FIRST REFORMED UCC, LEXINGTON, NC; CATAWBA COLLEGE, SALISBURY, NC; AND SOUTHERN CHAPTER OF ERHS

Friday, Oct. 12	3:30 PM	Board of Directors' Meeting at Hampton Inn, Salisbury, NC
	5:45 PM	Visit Archives at Catawba College Library
	6:30 PM	Banquet at Catawba College, Crystal Lounge in Community Center
	7:30 PM	Presentation on Catawba College Dr. William Palmer, Catawba College Archivist Dr. Fred Corriher, President of Catawba College
	8:30 PM	Reception at President's Home, Catawba College, hosted by President and Mrs. Fred Corriher for members of ERHS and out-of-town guests
Saturday, Oct. 13	9:00 AM	Registration and refreshments at First Reformed UCC, 104 East Center Street, Lexington in Fellowship Hall
	9:30 AM	Welcome and Opening Worship--Sanctuary
	9:45 AM	Video of 100th Anniversary Events of First Church
	10:00 AM	Presentation "Dr. J.C. Leonard Speaks For Himself" by Rev. Banks Shepherd and Mr. Devin Odom
	10:45 AM	Break (Fellowship Hall)
	11:15 AM	ERHS Business Meeting in Chapel
	12:30 PM	Meal in Fellowship Hall by First Church
	1:30 PM	Tour of History Room
	2:00 PM	Bus/Van Trip to Pilgrim UCC, Nazareth Children's Home, Grace Lowerstone UCC, Rockwell
	5:30 PM	Meal at Shiloh UCC, P.O. Box 308, Faith NC 28041
Sunday, Oct. 14	11:00 AM	Worship and lunch at Beck's UCC, Lexington

Registration for Meals for ERHS Meeting and related activities must be made by Sept. 24:
Number of Persons:

_____ Friday, Oct. 12 (\$7.00 per person) at Catawba College Crystal Lounge

_____ Saturday, Oct. 13 Lunch (\$6.00 per person) at First Reformed UCC, 104 East Center Street, Lexington NC 27292

_____ Saturday, Oct. 13 Dinner (\$6.00 per person) at Shiloh UCC, 100 Main Street, Faith, NC 28041

_____ Sunday, Oct. 14 Dinner (\$7.00 per person) at Beck's UCC, 2845 Beck's Church Road, Lexington, NC 27292 **Total for all meals is \$26.00**

_____ Enclosed

Registration and payment should be sent to Rev. Richard Cheek, 107 Bradford Court, Salisbury, NC 28146 by September 24, 2001. Make checks payable to UCC Historical Society--Southern Chapter.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please enroll me as a member of the ERHS for 2001. Enclosed is my check for the following amount:

MEMBERSHIPS

_____ Donor \$25	_____ Sponsor \$100
_____ Student \$ 7	_____ Institution \$50
_____ Life (Individuals only) \$250	

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

Please include check made payable to: Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society, and mail to: ERHS, 555 W. James Street, Lancaster, Pennsylvania 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, Ohio 44115.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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