

1817: THE YEAR OF A GREAT BEGINNING

The spirit which characterizes contemporary American Church life is the spirit of ecumenism. The union of the Congregational Christian Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church of 1957 symbolizes for us this spirit. It was ten years ago that the United Church of Christ became a historical reality. We Protestants no longer think in simple historical-confessional categories but rather in terms of ecumenical Protestantism, even in terms of a broader ecumenical Christendom.

The year 1967 is significant. It marks the 150th anniversary of the first ecumenical ventures in Protestantism, resulting ultimately in the ECU. The first denominational merger took place in Germany in 1817. A merger between the Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church, both children of the 16th century Reformation, had become a reality.

Attempts in the lifetime of the Reformers had failed. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648, bringing The Thirty Years' War to a close, had recognized the separate confessions as legitimate churches. However, when in 1817 the 300th anniversary of the Reformation was to be fittingly observed, the leaders of the two churches felt that "the way to celebrate this event would be to reunite the separate confessions" in the German lands.

The theological discussions of Schleiermacher, Sock, Ammon, Harms and Tittmann added very little to the movement which had been started. Their theological and doctrinal feuds, however, could not stop the desire of the evangelicals to unite. The political leaders, lords and kings, fostered the spirit of confessional unity. Many questions concerning the motives which led these leaders to advocate church union could be raised. But this is not the place for it. On August 6, 1817 thirty-eight ministers in the state of Nassau met to discuss union "since there was no real reason for continued separation."

In Prussia, already in the 17th century, both confessions, the Reformed and the Lutheran, enjoyed the same rights. The House of Hohenzollern has been considered "the carrier and promoter of the idea of church union." On September 27, 1817 the king suggested in a statement that neither confession needs to surrender any of its cherished beliefs, but that they should unite, since both share the fundamental essentials of the Protestant faith. He also emphasized that neither confession should try to regulate the details of faith and practice of the other.

It was in all a glorious beginning, A world which was ripped apart by political and cultural tensions found in the church an emblem of the unity which alone can give meaning and stability to any age. What is meaningful for us is that "the joining of the union was left to the free decision of each congregation."

1817 is a great year for Protestantism. The two great Protestant bodies, the Reformed and the Lutheran, joined hands and have marched unitedly through these many decades. The ECU, the "Evangelische Kirchliche Union" (Evangelical Church Union) of Germany stands before us as a symbol of early ecumenism.

— Rudolf G. Schade

The Congregational Christian Historical Society held its Annual Meeting on May 2, 1967 in the Barrington Congregational Church in Barrington, Rhode Island.

The following officers were unanimously elected: President, Mervin M. Deems; Vice Presidents: Fred Field Goodsell, Arthur E. Wilson and Harold C. Burdon; Treasurer, S. Carlisle Crosby; Clerk, Harold F. Worthley, Executive Secretary, Arthur S. Wheelock. Members of the Executive Committee: Officers, plus Matthew C. Mitchell, Albert J. Penner and Virginia A. Knox. Co-opted Members, Fred S. Buschmeyer, Russell McGown and James F. English. New additions to the fifty members of the Board of Governors were Cornelius E. Clark and Robert S. Paul. James H. Lightbourne, former Treasurer and Vice President, was made an Honorary Member of the Board of Governors.

The address was given by Dr. William T. Scott, Director of Church Relations for Elon College in North Carolina, who is also Historian of the Southern Convention. He gave a most interesting talk on the history, belief and contribution of the Christian Church that united with the Congregational Churches in forming the Congregational Christian fellowship which in 1957 became part of the United Church of Christ.

A seminar for Church Historians was led by Dr. James F. English. Greetings were received from Dr. Rudolf G. Schade, Chairman of the Historical Commission of the United Church of Christ, and Dr. Charles D. Spotts, President of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society.

New Quarters for Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society

The Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society will move into their new quarters in the Philip Schaff Library during the summer months. The new library building on the campus of the Lancaster Theological Seminary will be completed about July 1st.

The library of the Society and the Archives of the United Church of Christ will occupy approximately two thousand square feet on the second floor of the building. In addition to a large reader-book area, two offices have been provided for the staff. The entrance to the quarters will feature a lounge area in which are located modern museum cases to house the many memorabilia and rare books of the Society. Adjacent to the Society rooms is an assembly room in the Hafer Audio Visual Center which will seat two hundred people. On the same floor are two seminar rooms that can be used for committee meetings and scholarly research.

The Society's library and archives will be open to students, scholars, and the public from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday thru Friday and on Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. The many valued books, records and manuscripts do not normally circulate but provisions have been made for xeroxing and microfilming.

The space provided for the Society in the new building is a memorial given by Mrs. Samuel F. Newman of Waynesboro, Pa. in memory of her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Omwake, and will be designated the Omwake Room. The Omwake family were prominent in the educational life of the Reformed Church.

Two sons of Henry Omwake were college presidents: George Leslie Omyake, of Ursinus College, and Howard Rufus Omwake of Catawba College.

For the past twenty-nine years, the Society's quarters have been in the Fackenthal Library of Franklin and Marshall College. Before that time the collection was housed in the old library of the Theological Seminary.

Dr. George H. Bricker, the librarian of the Philip Schaff Library will assume the position as librarian of the Society on July 1st. Dr. Herbert B. Anstaett, who has served as librarian for twenty-six years, and along with his duties as librarian served as the administrative officer of the Society, has been elected Executive Secretary. For the present, he will continue to have his office in the Fackenthal Library.

The Philip Schaff Library will be dedicated on Saturday, October 14th. The speaker for the occasion will be Dean Samuel H. Miller of Harvard Divinity School. The Annual Meeting of the Society will be held on Sunday, October 15th, the day following the dedication.

Miss Elizabeth Clarke Kieffer Retires

The vitality and activity of almost every historical society depends upon the services of a small number of dedicated people. This has certainly been true of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society throughout its history of over a century. During the past decade Miss Elizabeth Clarke Kieffer has been a very important person in the organization and work of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society, serving as Archivist from January, 1959 to December, 1966 when she retired.

Miss Kieffer was born in Frederick, Maryland, November 21, 1899. She graduated from Goucher College in the class of 1921. Her entire professional career was spent in the library field—the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, 1921-1927; Reference Librarian, Franklin and Mar-

shall College, 1928-1956; Lancaster County Historical Society, 1956-1958; Archivist, Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society, 1959-1966.

She is a granddaughter of the late Dr. Joseph Henry Dubbs, who was the Audenried Professor of History and Archaeology at Franklin and Marshall College from 1875 to 1910. Dr. Dubbs was a former President of the Historical Society of the Reformed Church. It was, therefore, most appropriate that Miss Kieffer should have closed her professional career in the tradition of her ancestors. Like her grandfather she made contributions to the written history of the former Reformed Church. Her most important contribution was a biography of Dr. Henry Harbaugh, which was published by the Pennsylvania German Society, Volume 51, 1945, *Henry Harbaugh: Pennsylvania Dutchman, 1817-1867*, an illustrated volume, with an appendix, containing the writings of Harbaugh in the dialect.

In Memoriam

Rockwell Harmon Potter 1874-1967

The Rev. Dr. Rockwell Harmon Potter, beloved pastor and teacher, died in Hartford, Connecticut on May 15, 1967, at the age of 92. Dr. Potter served on the Board of Governors of the Congregational Christian Historical Society from 1952 until his death, having been elected as an Honorary member of the Board in 1966.

Minister of the First Church of Christ in Hartford from 1900 to 1928, Dr. Potter became nationally known for his wit and eloquence. He was Moderator of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches from 1923 to 1925; President of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions from 1925 to 1940; Dean of the Hartford Theological Seminary from 1928 to his retirement in 1943. He will be long re-

membered for "his rare gifts of voice and expression, his moral discernment, his unfailing friendliness, and his utter devotion to Jesus Christ, His church and His cause in all the life and world of men." For all the richness of his long life we give thanks to God.

The First Regional Meeting of United Church of Christ historians was held last October 18th in the First-Plymouth Congregational Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. It was sponsored by the History Commission of the Nebraska Conference (The Rev. I. C. G. Campbell, Chairman).

Interesting and enlightening talks were given by Mr. Clarence Henkel on "Church History and the Local Area Historian"; by Professor Charles J. Kennedy on "The Role of the Congregational Churches in the Frontier Process during 1830-1860"; by Rev. B. E. Reiger on "German Congregational History"; and by Rev. I. C. G. Campbell on "Experiences as Historian of the Nebraska Conference." It is hoped that the success of this meeting will inspire similar regional meetings in other parts of the country.

Membership Drive for 1968

The Congregational Christian Historical Society and the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society are joining again under the leadership of the Historical Commission for a membership drive for this coming year.

The question has been asked, Why do these Societies have a membership drive, why are they not a part of the unified budget as all other agencies of the church?

The reasons for this are numerous. We want to enlist as many pastors and lay members and create in them an awareness of the great past upon which our United Church of Christ wants to build a greater future. We want Conferences, Associations and churches to become members of the Societies by the member-

ship contribution which they make, indicating thereby the deep appreciation they share for the founding fathers of the United Church.

These memberships help to support our Historical Societies and the work they do in keeping alive the great story of the past and in maintaining the Historical Archives at Lancaster Seminary, Eden Seminary and 14 Beacon Street, Boston.

Please respond promptly when you receive our letter this fall. Send your annual contribution to help the work of the Historical Commission.

— Rudolf G. Schade

A Century of Service

First Congregational UCC in Corpus Christi, Texas recently celebrated a century of ministry.

First Church, enjoying the honor of being the oldest Negro church in Texas, saw the light of day in the midst of strife and warfare. The city of Corpus Christi was an important base in the Mexican War in 1845, when Texas was annexed to the United States. At the close of the Civil War in 1865, three Negro regiments were stationed in the city, the 128th, the 122nd and the 10th of Virginia. The chaplains of these regiments saw the need for a church for Negroes and in November, 1866 the church was organized as Freedmen Congregational Church.

Because of its restrained emotionalism and the formality of its worship, First Church never became a large congregation. However, they contributed significantly to the life of the community. The first library for Negroes was in First Church. Bethune Day Nursery was begun, and for a time used the facilities of the church. Recent years have seen an increase of commercial and industrial use of the community, and First hopes to move into the neighboring Hillcrest area where it can continue to minister on into the second century. Rev. Norman Maunz is the current pastor.

THE EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Omwake Room of the Philip Schaff Library
Lancaster Theological Seminary
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

You are cordially invited to the Annual Meeting and Supper of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society to be held on Sunday, October 15, 1967 at 2:30 P.M. in the Society headquarters, the Omwake Room of the Philip Schaff Library, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.

- 9:30 A.M. Executive Committee Meeting
- 2:30 P.M. Registration
- 3:00 P.M. Annual Business Meeting
- 4:00 P.M. Address by Dr. Louis W. Goebel,
first full-time president of the Evangelical and Reformed Church,
from 1938 to 1953 when he retired.
- 5:00 P.M. Supper in the Refectory, followed by Address by
Professor George H. Bricker, Lancaster, Pa. on
"The Function of Regional Chapters of the Historical Society."

The Annual Business Meeting at 3:00 P.M. will include reports of officers and committees, election of officers, adoption of budget and such other matters as may be brought before the Society.

Charles D. Spotts, President
Herbert B. Anstactt, Executive Secretary

If you wish overnight accommodations, reservations should be made direct either at Host Town Motel, 30 Keller Avenue, Lancaster, Pa. or Holiday Inn, 1492 Lititz Pike, Lancaster, Pa.

Please send in reservations for supper on the form below.

Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society
Philip Schaff Library of the Lancaster Theological Seminary
West James & Pine Streets
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603

Kindly reserve place(s) for the undersigned for the Supper, October 15th
in the Refectory of Lancaster Theological Seminary at \$1.50 per plate.

Signed

Date

Address

No reservations received after
October 8, 1967.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Room 206, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. 02108

Rudolf G. Schade
Chairman

James F. English
Vice Chairman

Ray Carlton Jones
Secretary

Arthur S. Wheelock
Editor

George H. Bricker
Associate Editor

Nonprofit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

BOSTON, MASS.

Permit No. 59426