

434). One must question if Degler really understands the meaning of those constraints.

DePauw University,
Greencastle, Ind.

Barbara J. Steinson

The History of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. By J. Bruce Behney and Paul H. Eller. Edited by Kenneth W. Krueger (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979. Pp. 423. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$17.95.)

This is the faithfully recorded story of two Protestant religious bodies that came into being as the eighteenth century yielded to the nineteenth. It is the history of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association. The book captures the drama of Philip William Otterbein, a Reformed preacher in his German homeland, and Martin Boehm, a Mennonite, who at a Boehm revival on a Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, farm in 1767 joined hands and declared: "Wir Sind Brüder!" ("We are Brethren!"). It brings to life the struggle of Jacob Albright, an "honest tilemaker," who was licensed to preach by the Methodists. The need for a German-language ministry led him to bring together in 1803 five of his congregations to form the Evangelical Association. After holding conferences from 1789 on, the United Brethren had been formally organized as a church in 1800.

Through a century and a half these two fellowships with their common Pennsylvania origin and their initial commitment to the German-speaking people—mostly distressed and poor—developed side by side and moved westward concurrently. Their leaders proclaimed Christian assurance. Their golden text might well have been: "It is the Spirit himself bearing witness to our spirit that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). This assurance brought joy, optimism, and confidence. In addition, sanctification, a John Wesley doctrine, was espoused as a summons to Christian growth in personal and ethical living.

On their pilgrimage the two denominations prospered moderately, recording their share of triumphs and reverses. The Evangelical Association merged with the United Evangelical church and in the process lost a number of congregations, which continued their more conservative way in the Evangelical Congregational church. The United Brethren, as they grew and mingled with other churches, were abandoned by a section of their fellowship which became the United Brethren (Old

Constitution). The main bodies found it relatively easy to join in 1946 to form the Evangelical United Brethren church. By the time of their merger with the Methodist church in 1968, the "EUB's" represented a constituency of 768,099 members in 4,048 local churches, which had compiled an annual giving record of \$59,819,189 (\$80.00 per member).

J. Bruce Behney and Paul H. Eller divided their auctorial chores at the year 1890, Behney writing the story up to that year and Eller covering the subsequent period. Readers of their book will be impressed with the emphasis on factual material and the relative lack of psychological analysis. The treatment centers on "when" and "how" rather than "why." The authors do not claim any detached objectivity; they confess their esteem and respect for the church they have chronicled. They do not, however, gloss over the schisms and littleness that could be branded faults in the fellowships they love. Overall, Behney and Eller have come up with a genuine contribution to American religious history.

*National Council of the Churches
of Christ, Indianapolis*

Grover L. Hartman