

## **EDITOR ' S PREFACE**

On behalf of the Historical Society of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church, I am pleased to introduce volume III of THE CHRONICLE. The lead article on the Judge Thomas White home presents the results of significant new scholarly research that will be of interest to all United Methodists.

We thank Professor Clark for the high standards of scholarship his paper brings to THE CHRONICLE and are indebted to him for selecting THE CHRONICLE to publish this material.

We also appreciate the willingness of the family of Rev. Oren R. Williams to allow THE CHRONICLE to reprint his privately produced manuscript "WE." This remarkable document tells the story of forty-four years of ministry in the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Episcopal, Methodist and United Methodist churches. The paper covers the years 1925 to 1969 in a manner that is at once honest, informative and insightful. The situations and incidents described are recent enough to be relevant, yet far enough in past to be related honestly without giving offense. The style is personal enough to be entertaining, yet objective enough to be the story of ministry in the Central Pennsylvania Conference and not merely the saga of a few isolated individuals. We agree with the assessment of Bishop John B. Warman, in a personal letter to the author, that the manuscript stands as "an important page of our church history."

Continuing the practice of presenting a series of articles on a particular topic, this volume of THE CHRONICLE features three papers on the doctrine and practice of baptism among Central Pennsylvania United Methodists. Because (1) the General Conference has appointed a Baptism Study Committee to consider the matter and to make recommendations and (2) the Central Pennsylvania area is one strong in the various traditions of the predecessor denominations within United Methodism, such a series is both timely and appropriate. As the journal of the Conference Historical Society, THE CHRONICLE does not seek to promote one particular viewpoint. It is our hope that the articles will both (a) give present readers an awareness of and appreciation for their historical roots and (b) provide future historians with an objective account of United Methodism's current study of the issues involved.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: The Judge Thomas White house as photographed about 1957 by E. Farley Sharp.