

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

On behalf of the Historical Society of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church, I present volume XV of THE CHRONICLE. For fifteen years, the society has produced a mix of scholarly, entertaining, informative and inspiring stories of United Methodism connected by some theme. This volume continues that tradition with a look back at the separations and unions that define the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The three major papers on this theme were written for college or seminary courses by United Methodist students from the Conference. They are presented in chronological order by content.

Ken Loyer is a ministerial student at Duke Divinity School. His 2003 paper, *Soldiers of the Lord: Francis Asbury and Freeborn Garrettson Struggle with Wesley, War and Warfare*, deals with the emergence of American Methodism as a separate denomination.

David Oberlin is an administrative assistant in the Mifflinburg Area School District. His 1979 paper, *Two Separate Unions Formed One United Church*, was written for the course in historical methods while he was a student at Lycoming College. It investigates the effect upon the local churches in Union County of the 1946 denominational union that formed the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the 1968 denominational union that formed the United Methodist Church.

Edward Hunter is an undergraduate ministerial student at Lycoming College. His 2003 paper, *Convergence of Identity: Two United Methodist Churches of Williamsport PA (1968-2002)*, was also written for the course in historical methods. It examines what happened when neighboring Pine Street Methodist Church and First Evangelical United Brethren Church, each the flagship congregation of its own denomination in the Greater Williamsport area, became United Methodist. An additional complication was the presence of Lycoming College, and possible competition over being the "college church."

The issue continues with a behind the scenes look, from the 1963 perspective of Bishop Fred Pierce Corson of the Philadelphia Area of the Methodist Church, at the 1968 union that produced the United Methodist Church. Because of the special significance of Bishop Corson's comments and the mysterious circumstances surrounding their distribution, the original document is coupled with an explanatory introduction by the editor.

The issue concludes with a collection of shorter articles and letters, presented in chronological order, relating to various proposed and realized unions that have produced our present denomination. Written as these unions were developing, the material reveals honest feelings and assessment unmodified by "20-20 hindsight." We trust that this year's volume of THE CHRONICLE will both inform and inspire those seeking to learn more about their United Methodist heritage.