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The Sages: Preparation

Compiled by
Robert L. Frey

The following article is the first of a three-part series that tells the story of two of the first missionaries to Sierra Leone, West Africa. One of them was the first female graduate of Union Biblical Seminary, now United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

William Sanford Sage, the son of John Wesley Sage (1829-1896) and Catharine M. Miller (1836-1902), was born June 8, 1859. The Sages came to the United States from Wales in 1652, although the name has Scandinavian origins. By the time William was born, John Wesley was farming in Richmond Township, Huron County (the farm was located between Attica and Willard in northern Ohio). William's mother, Catharine, came from a Pennsylvania "Dutch" Mennonite family that had moved from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Huron County in 1849.

John Wesley and Catharine had four children, Julia, William Sanford, Charles, and Mary. Despite the lack of formal education, Catharine (Kate), in particular, was an avid writer. Some of her letters as well as the letters of her children have survived in the family. These, along with journals by William Sanford (usually called Sanford and San by his immediate family) and his future wife provide most of the information Sanford's grand-niece Mary Cay Carlson Wells used in writing a book titled: *The Sages: 1880-1890* (self-published in Westerville, Ohio in 2007). It is from this book that this account has been derived and the page references that follow are also to this book.

There is little information about the first 20 years of William Sanford's life. At a relatively early age, however, he appeared to have sensed a call to ministry, although he probably assisted his father with farming tasks for a number of years. Why Sanford decided to attend seminary rather than going through a course of study to become a minister is not clear. Although his level of education was probably not beyond grade school (usually 8th grade) he was admitted to Union Biblical Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, and began his studies there in January, 1880.

He was required to take a preparatory track to qualify him for admission to the "regular" program at the seminary.

Although the preparatory academic work was hard for Sanford, he was admitted to the regular program in the fall of 1880. Advice from home came from his mother's letters that carried a consistent theme: ". . . eat well, don't study too hard, take care of yourself, and keep the faith . . ." (p. 28). It appears that parental advice has not change much over the years. But his mother also added some interesting academic advice when she suggested he drop one of his foreign languages (either Greek or Hebrew) to make his route easier. Like most sons away at school it does not appear that Sanford paid much attention to these bits of advice, as he tells his mother "I find that the Greek and Hebrew makes the Bible much plainer than English." (p. 31)

Despite Sanford's modest academic background his grades for the first year fell in the low B to low A range by today's standards. Since the student body was small, the four faculty members knew the progress of each student quite well. What is surprising is Sanford's observation in a number of letters that he had few friends and did not seem to relate well to his fellow students. Particularly during his first year his letters indicated a homesickness and loneliness. To be sure this might have indicated his inexperience with relating to "strangers" since during most of his first 20 years he was surrounded with extended family and had little need to make "new friends." It could also mean that he had to spend so much time preparing for classes that he did not have time to "socialize."

During Sanford's three years in seminary he lived in one of the rooms in the seminary building. In one letter his sister, Julia, asked him to mark a picture

of his room in a photograph of the seminary building. Sanford's roommate for the first two years was R.N. West who was to exert a significant influence on Sanford's life during and after seminary.

The practice at that time was for students to form a "club," primarily to arrange for food service to be provided for them. Sometimes this was facilitated by the school and other times the students made arrangements on their own. Exactly how the club arrangements worked at Union Biblical Seminary is not entirely clear, but since the school did not have any food service this was an expedient that allowed the students to eat at a reasonable cost.

Like many students Sanford appeared reluctant to ask his family for financial assistance. Clearly he was sensitive to the cost of his education and the burden this might impose on his family. Of course the family had no experience with "higher education" and had no way of knowing what Sanford's needs were. Financial concerns continued to appear in his letters to family members for the remainder of his seminary years. Nonetheless, when Sanford asked for money, it was supplied.

For example, in a letter to his father, Sanford listed his expenses for the first term of the second year as: \$2 a week for board, \$20 for books, \$8 for coal, \$5 for washing [clothes], and \$15 for car fare for a total of about \$130 for the term. (p. 36) The car fare amount seems high and probably included railroad tickets for trips home in addition to local trolley or bus transportation. Sanford asked his father if he could afford to provide this money. Shortly afterwards Sanford acknowledged receipt of the funds. During the second half of his "middler" (second) year in order to save money he did not pay for board (food) and fended for himself in order to have money for books. But this did not last long and he soon returned to the club in a quest for better food. Remember his mother told him to eat well.

Academically the second year was an even greater success for Sanford. With the exception of theology, all of his grades fell in the A category. His courses included theology, Greek, Hebrew, Christian history, Bible companion, and rhetoric. The faculty of the seminary at this time included Lewis Davis, George A. Funkhouser, A.W. Drury, and J.P.Landis. It appears that Rev. Funkhouser was Sanford's favorite professor. Each of these men, however, have become legends in their own right in United Brethren hagiography.

During his second and third years in seminary Sanford became involved in a controversy in his home church. Named Union Bethel, the church structure was shared by two congregations: the

United Brethren of Sanford's family and the Church of God (Winebrennarians). This was not an uncommon arrangement, most commonly seen among Lutheran and Reformed congregations, and it did save money. But it did not always go without problems. Sanford's mother, Kate, had taught a Sunday school class that included members from both congregations. By Sanford's senior year, however, disagreements over the use of curriculum materials split the two congregations. This was egged on by the Church of God minister who during what appeared to have been a revival suggested that all people who were not members of the Church of God were going to hell.

Sanford's advice to his mother is most interesting:

I am truly glad that you are not unsettled by Mr. Oliver's talk, mother, Mr. Oliver is most sadly mistaken when he says that their sect is the "Church of God," Do look at him and at his members and compare them with our church or the Methodist &c and are they much superior far from it. Look at Oliver's conduct that evening do you think he was acting as a true Christian minister should. Is the life, work, and gospel of Christ reflected through his works? I think not. (p. 69)

This conflict resulted in a change of pastors for the United Brethren congregation. The new minister was disliked by Sanford's parents. When he discovered this he wrote:

There is one thing some people stumble over and that is this: *they do not like their pastor*. But dear parents remember that it is not the man that speaks, it is not his words and ideas, but he is an instrument in the hands of God. . . . And another is some people do not like to work with another denomination. If a brother does not think as I do it is not my place to condemn him. (pp. 70-71)

Clearly Union Biblical Seminary was imparting good advice to its students, as Sanford's comments show significant maturity and could well apply to any number of situations in today's United Methodist Church.

One interesting "glitch" during Sanford's seminary days was the failure of his initial application for a license to preach to pass the quarterly conference. Sanford's mother attributed this failure to a difference of opinion on the holiness issue between the recommending pastor and the pastor chairing the conference. But the actual reason may

have been because two-thirds of the class was not present as required by the *Discipline*, therefore, the chair was reluctant to approve the request for license. Indeed the presiding chair's letter to Sanford immediately after the meeting indicates this was the reason. In any event the license was granted at the next quarterly conference. Of course the holiness issue was a divisive issue within Methodism, the United Brethren and the Evangelical denominations in the 1880s and beyond.

In his last two years at seminary, Sanford gave increasing thought to life beyond graduation. His mother and sister were more than willing to give him advice on the matter. Both wanted him to take a pastorate near the family home, but it is clear that Sanford was undecided even after graduation. He did not appear to have asked for an appointment following graduation on the afternoon of May 3, 1883. But his inclination toward foreign mission work was accelerated by R.N. West, Sanford's roommate for his first two years. At the beginning of Sanford's senior year West accepted appointment to mission work in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Sanford and West kept in contact during Sanford's senior year and West was a major factor in the decision about Sanford's future.¹

There is little to indicate that Sanford had any romantic relationships before his senior year in seminary. At the beginning of his "middler" year he mentioned the arrival of "another Lady student" implying the existence of a previous lady student. Esther Selina Balmer had arrived without fanfare in 1881. The reason her arrival at the seminary was not controversial was probably because of the heavy Otterbein College influence on the faculty. Otterbein was the second college in the United States to admit women on an equal footing with men and Dr. Lewis Davis had been president of Otterbein before coming to the seminary.

Interestingly, Esther Balmer maintained a journal of her own. This journal was available to Mary Cay Carlson Wells in writing her book on the Sages. In the three years Sanford and Esther were at Union Biblical Seminary they crossed paths frequently. Although probably in different programs, they had classes together, belonged to the same literary society, and to the same Saturday morning group. Furthermore, Sanford's roommate, R.N. West, eventually married Lida Miller who was Esther's roommate for her first two years. Such interactions and eventual marriages were not uncommon in such a small group of students. The total number of students during any one of Sanford's three years was no more than 25.

It appears, however, that Sanford and Esther did not have a formal date until about the time of their graduation.² As the summer of 1883 dawned Sanford returned home to Huron County and Esther to her home in Smithville, Ohio (near Wooster). But matters soon took a major turn when Dr. Daniel K. Flickinger³ contacted Sanford asking him to go to Sierra Leone as a missionary. It was not until July 24th, however, that he was actually appointed to his missionary assignment.⁴ The day after his interview for appointment as a missionary took place, he left Dayton, not for home, but for Smithville—Esther's home.

In his journal, Sanford recorded his somewhat unusual proposal of marriage to Esther which in the world of the 21st century sounds more like a job offer:

[I told] her I was appointed to the Africa work . . . I could not go alone, and after telling her about the work I asked her to join with me in the great work of life, to share in its joys and sorrows, to go with me to Africa and there share in the work of the Master. (p. 118)

Esther's reply was evidently a resounding "Yes," as she records in her journal:

An eventful day. I have pledged my trust to one whom I love as I do my own life and I humbly ask God to continue to let his blessings and guiding spirit attend me. I have at last found a resting place for my heart's affections. (p. 118)

The "at last" comment in the final sentence indicates frustration over a time in attempting to find a "heart-mate." Sanford summed up the week with the following comment: "I can never forget the events of the past week. . . my appointment to Africa and my engagement in marriage. . ." (pp. 118-119). Certainly this was an understatement as Sanford's life, unclear on the morning of July 24th, was totally clear by the evening of the 25th. His proposal also probably indicated a closer and longer relationship between Sanford and Esther than their letters or journals revealed.

In preparation for his trip to Africa, Sanford spent several weeks studying medicine under the tutelage of a local doctor. Apparently Sanford was well aware of a problem in Africa equal to saving souls and that was curing diseases. Of course he could not acquire an adequate medical training in such a short time. It appears that he learned more about medications and their purposes than he did actual medical diagnoses and treatments. He recorded that he took a medicine case and bottles of medicine with him to Africa (p. 122).

The wedding of William Sanford Sage and Esther Selina Balmer took place on Tuesday, September 4, 1883 in the parlor of the parents of the bride. Several public receptions were held for the newly married couple in Smithville and in Huron Country before they embarked for Africa. Later in the month Sanford joined the Sandusky Conference of the United Brethren Church and was ordained. Esther, too, was consecrated for the work by the bishop—probably Bishop Jacob John Glossbrenner.

Although Sanford had been briefed by several people on the conditions he and Esther were to face in Africa, there was still a great deal of uncertainty about what they needed to take with them or what they would experience in Sierra Leone. Nonetheless with a strong faith in their calling and in God, Sanford and Esther eagerly boarded the train on October 1st headed for New York. There they met Dr. Flickinger for further orientation and on Saturday, October 6, 1883 boarded the *Liberia*, a relatively small three-masted bark, for their lengthy trip to Sierra Leone. What awaited them? Would they ever return to the United States? What experiences were in store for them? Certainly many thoughts of this sort must have run through their minds as the *Liberia* cast off for the trip.

In retrospect one must look with awe and respect at this young couple heading for a part of the world

little known in the United States. Yet their strong faith in God and in their mission to save souls, along with the support of their families and friends, apparently gave them all they needed to face the future with an optimism that we see over and over again in the men and women then and now who put their lives on the line in such missionary work.

1. Although Wells' book indicates that West graduated in the Class of 1882, the official class picture for that year printed in *The Bonebrake Theological Seminary Bulletin: Pageant of Progress* (Vol. XLV, No. 3, 1946), p. 10, does not show him to be a member of that class. In fact, his name does not appear on any of the class pictures of that time.

2. Esther Balmer was the first woman to graduate from the regular program of Union Biblical Seminary. But in the *Pageant of Progress* book, page 11, she is listed parenthetically in the graduation picture as Mrs. W.S. Sage. It is likely that the photographic collage was put together some months after the graduation when the seminary knew she was married, although this is not clear to anyone looking at the photo.

3. Dr. Flickinger was in the first group of missionaries to go to Sierra Leone. By the time Sanford was chosen for work in Africa, Dr. Flickinger was the head or director of missionary work. Later he was elected bishop for this work.

4. Sanford was interviewed and appointed by the Board of Missions of the United Brethren denomination.

The Pacific Northwest Conferences: A Brief History 1855-1968

by

Theodore R. Buzzard

The following article was extracted from a paper titled "A Historical Summary of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Methodist Church" presented at the initiation of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Methodist Church. The paper was sent to the editor by Janet L. Smith of Des Moines, Washington.

Church of the United Brethren in Christ

The missionaries of the United Brethren Church (UBC) came to Oregon about 10 years before those of the Evangelical Association. In 1841 the General Conference of the UBC created a "Parent Missionary Society" for the two-fold purpose of taking the gospel both to foreign lands and to the frontier of the United States. From the perspective of the early 21st century, it is amusing to note that the mission to Oregon was considered a foreign missionary endeavor. About the only lasting venture of this initial Missionary Society was the work in Oregon.

It was not until 1853 that T.J. Conner of Indiana and Jeremiah Kenoyer were appointed missionaries to Oregon and they began to gather a company of ministers and laymen to join them. On March 15th at

Council Bluffs, Iowa, a company of 98 persons representing 16 families with 30 wagons began the journey to Oregon country. They arrived in Albany on October 6, 1853. Connor's work was largely in Benton and Linn County while Kenoyer worked in the Salem area.

The work of these two men yielded results and the Oregon Conference was organized on August 30, 1855 in Linn County. Under the strong, capable leadership of Connor and Kenoyer the Conference grew steadily in Oregon and in the coastal towns of Washington Territory. Soon there were churches in Coos County, North Bend, Marshfield, Medford, Roseburg, Yaquina, Nehalem, Corvallis, Eugene, Philomath, Albany, Hopewell, Salem, Portland, Seattle, and Everett.

Rev. Milton Wright, later elected bishop and the father of Wilbur and Orville Wright came to Oregon as a missionary in 1856. He also served as principal of a small college known as Sublimity College, near Scio, from 1857 to 1859.

T.J. Connor was instrumental in establishing Philomath College in 1867 when the State of Oregon was only nine years old. The little town of Philomath was primitive and the living was rugged, but the citizens of the community pledged \$17,500 if the institution would locate there. Philomath College, which was first a seminary¹ and later a college, proved to be a vital force in the life of the Conference, the community, and the State. It provided Oregon with over 600 teachers, 150 ministers, and many other solid citizens. Inability to meet new accreditation standards adopted by the State of Oregon finally forced the college to close in 1929.

It is also significant that from 1882 to 1906 a large school for Chinese was conducted in Portland by UB people with a Chinese pastor to serve the worshipping congregation. Most of the finances for this undertaking were raised by the Women's Missionary Society.

In September, 1865, in Vancouver, Washington Territory, the Cascade Conference was formed. It included that part of Washington Territory east of the Cascade Range and north of the Columbia River. In 1873 the name was changed to the Walla Walla Conference and in 1893 to the Columbia River Conference. The churches in the coastal towns of Washington Territory remained in the Oregon Conference.

The work in Eastern Washington had its roots in the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804. Their discoveries of the great region of the Snake, Walla Walla, and Columbia rivers with the friendly Indian tribes who needed the Gospel led the Methodists and Presbyterians to send missionaries to the area. Methodists Jason and Daniel Lee and Presbyterians Samuel Parker and Marcus Whitman

were among the early missionaries to minister to the Nez Perce, Cayuse, and Walla Walla Indian tribes.

In 1865 a United Brethren pastor from Oregon named Rev. Adams and a singer whose last name was Powell travelled from Fort Vancouver up the Columbia River to Wallula and by stage to Walla Walla. They began evangelistic meetings in the Maxon School six miles west of Walla Walla. These services lasted six weeks and reached people from at least 25 miles around. Many were converted and although most of them joined a Methodist Church nearby, enough were left to begin UB work in the area.

From this point evangelistic work spread west down the Columbia River to The Dalles, the Mt. Hood area, south to Weston and Joseph, north to Spokane, east to the Grand Ronde River area, and even into Idaho. By 1882 there were 38 appointments and 24 organized churches.

The severe conditions under which these early pastors worked are hard to imagine today. Besides the severe climatic nature of the area, many of these early pastors had large families to support and found it impossible to survive on the pittances they received—often as little as \$10 a month. Many were forced to leave the work while others found it impossible to travel their circuits since the area covered 75,000 square miles with rugged mountains, deep canyons, and swift rivers. A spirit of despair and gloom spread over the work for several years.

Bishop Milton Wright led the work from 1886 to 1890 and during these years new hope and growth came. By the early 1890s there were 74 appointments, 48 organized churches, and over 1,000 members. But the split within the UBC in the 1890s was a disaster for the Conference. Over half of the members left the UBC to join the “radicals” who held out for strict rules against church members belonging to any secret society.² Since Bishop Wright was a leader of the “radicals,” he influenced many of the Conference members to follow his course.

Those who remained courageously set to work recovering from the schism. The influx of new settlers to the area partially because of the completion of more railroad lines to the area led to expanded opportunities for evangelism and resulted in new growth and strength. By 1920 there were strong churches in Spokane, Oakesdale, Elberton, Walla Walla, Weston, and in many small crossroads towns and rural areas. In the following five years a special emphasis was placed on the erection of church buildings and the development of urban congregations. Far too many congregations were still using rented quarters for worship and too much of the work was in remote rural areas with little chance of growth.

Because of the increased ease of transportation across the entire states of Oregon and Washington, in 1925 the Columbia River Conference merged with the Oregon Conference. The combined conference had 43 organized churches and a total membership of 2,446. Modest growth continued over the next 20 years, but it was not as extensive as hoped by many of the leaders of the denomination.

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Evangelical Association

In 1863 the General Conference of the Evangelical Association (EA) voted to send missionaries to California and Oregon primarily in response to appeals from EA people who had settled in these areas. On May 13, 1864, James Crossman of the Pittsburgh Conference and his family, C.F. Deininger and his family, and John Guhl of the East Pennsylvania Conference set sail from New York on the *Ocean Queen*. They crossed the Isthmus of Panama by rail and sailed on to San Francisco. Deininger and Guhl remained in San Francisco, but Crossman and his family proceeded north to Portland.

On Crossman's first Sunday he attended a Methodist Church and was invited to preach. Crossman was fluent in both English and German and the work he started in Oregon was the first English-speaking work in the EA. After that first Sunday he went by river steamer to Salem arriving on June 13, 1864. He preached the first Sunday in a Congregational Church and the next Sunday in a Methodist Church. But he soon organized a congregation that met in the courthouse described as "a cold and uncomfortable building." In the following years, however, this congregation grew and was able to build an imposing church structure at the corner of Liberty and Center streets which was dedicated on September 2, 1886.

James Crossman stayed in Oregon four years and was replaced by C.F. Deininger for two years. Then came Josiah Bowersox. Josiah and his wife rode the Union Pacific Railroad west to San Francisco and then traveled by steamer to Portland. There a riverboat took them to Salem where they arrived on May 30, 1870. Under these three men the work grew until in 1876 the General Conference of the EA authorized the formation of the Pacific Conference which included California and Oregon. This Conference held its first session on September 28, 1876 in Salem, Oregon.

Because of continued growth, in 1883 the General Conference separated the Oregon churches from the California churches and the Oregon Conference was established. It held its first session at Corvallis in 1884. Growth continued as the work expanded into Washington Territory in the following years. LeCamas was the first mentioned preaching point across the Columbia River. In 1886 mention was made of Spokane as a mission, and in 1888 a Washington District was formed with appointments at Spokane, Spokane Falls, and Sprague. Work spread to Tacoma and Seattle shortly thereafter. Not to be outdone by the Oregon churches, in 1889 Lafayette Seminary was established.

The EA, like the UBC, suffered a major split in the 1890s partially over personalities and partially over theological beliefs. The theological differences had been troubling the denomination for many years and by the 1890s resulted in the division between the majority—the EA, and the minority—the United Evangelical Church (UEC). A sizable majority of the Oregon Conference members separated at the time of the Annual Conference at

Albany and formed a new group that became part of the UEC.

About the time of the split the EA General Conference detached the churches in eastern Washington from the Oregon Conference to create a Washington Missionary Conference. By then there were 23 churches from Spokane to the Yakima Valley (east of the Cascade Mountains). The churches in Western Washington remained in the Oregon Conference.

Fortunately the EA and the UEC were able to maintain their congregations and even achieve some growth over the next several decades. And in 1922 reconciliation took place when the two groups reunited as the Evangelical Church (EC). In 1935 the Washington Missionary Conference and the Oregon Conference were merged to form the Oregon-Washington Conference. At that time there were 68 churches with 5,412 members and 71 ministers. Twenty-one of the 68 churches were in Washington.

Evangelical United Brethren Church

The Oregon conference of the UBC and the Oregon-Washington Conference of the EC worked diligently in the Northwest through the 1930s and 1940s. In November, 1946, at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, the two denominations were officially united to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church (EUBC). This union was the culmination of slow and patient efforts over many years. Efforts at merger in the early history of the denominations were unsuccessful. Each denomination considered other merger partners, but in 1933 a Commission on Union was approved by both General Conferences. It was not easy, however, and it was not until 1942 that a Basis of Union was adopted by the EC and until 1945 before the UBC approved it.

Although union was effected at the general church level immediately after merger (where it went most smoothly), the annual conferences were allowed to continue to operate separately without a time limit. Many of the conferences merged quickly, but it took nine years before a basis of union was developed and approved by the Oregon Conference and the Oregon-Washington Conference. In July 1955 they merged to form the Pacific Northwest Conference (PNC). Initially it included 85 churches in Oregon, Washington, and northern Idaho, 132 ministers, and 11,333 members spread across three districts.

The EUB General Conferences of 1950 and 1954 declared the need for a continued, aggressive ecumenical stance and instructed its Commission on Church Federation and Union to explore every possibility of merger with other evangelical denominations. In 1958 the Commission reported that definite progress was being made in conversations with the Commission on Union of the Methodist Church. The General Conference authorized the Commission to continue such conversations for the purpose of developing a possible Plan and Basis of Union.

Strong opposition to such a proposal was voiced in the 1958 annual session of the PNC and a resolution opposing

the proposed merger was adopted. In 1959 the Annual Conference appointed a Committee on Church Federation and Union, whose specific purpose was "to study the ramifications of denominational merger with the Methodist Church and recommend ways and means of organizing opposition to such a union." As the General Church moved steadily toward union with the Methodists, opposition to it mounted in the PNC.

In 1962 the EUB General Conference heard a report from its Commission on Church Federation and Union that their studies discovered "no insurmountable barriers to union with the Methodists," and the Commission was given authority to prepare, if possible, a Basis of Union for presentation to the 1966 General Conference. Subsequently, the PNC submitted a petition to General Conference requesting that, in the event of merger, each local congregation be allowed to decide its future and that those voting against merger be allowed to leave the EUBC with clear title to their property.

During the years 1962 to 1966 polarization increased within the PNC. A minority emerged who refused to support the strong and vocal opposition to the merger despite the fact that many members of this minority had little enthusiasm for the proposed merger. But they were not in favor of withdrawal from the denomination if union did occur and began openly to advocate remaining within the denomination.

The regular session of the General Conference of the EUBC and a special session of the Methodist Church met in Chicago in November, 1966 to refine the proposed Plan and Basis of Union and vote upon it. Both bodies approved the Plan with sizeable majorities and passed it on to the annual conferences for their approval. The petition of the PNC was denied and a special Commission on Unity was appointed to work with the PNC and other conferences where there was strong opposition to the merger. This was an effort to preserve unity and to bring these conferences into the union without major withdrawals.

During the next two years meetings were held throughout the PNC in a variety of settings to interpret the Plan of Union and to explain the connectional system. In spite of the efforts of the special Commission and an *ad hoc* committee from within the PNC appointed by Bishop W. Maynard Sparks to work with the Commission on

Unity, many members withdrew from local churches prior to April 23, 1968 when union officially took place in Dallas, Texas. The vote of the PNC was 134 against and 30 for the Plan of Union.

At a special session of the PNC held on June 3, 1968 at Milwaukie, Oregon, 79 ministers asked to be dismissed and 54 congregations were declared discontinued and their properties placed in the hands of the Conference Board of Trustees. This loss represented about three-fourths of the strength of the PNC.

On June 4, 1968 the regular session of the truncated PNC convened and a total reorganization was effected. Three of the discontinued churches were reopened as "mission opportunities." Of the 23 churches that made up the PNC at that time, only 18 survived to become part of the United Methodist Church.

During 1969 the *ad hoc* Committee and a Special Commission developed a plan of settlement whereby the properties of the discontinued congregations were sold to those who withdrew at a fraction of their true value. A large portion of the money recovered in these sales was used to fund pension rights, even for those who withdrew. Some of the churches that withdrew became independent churches, some joined other denominations, but the majority formed a new denomination known as the Evangelical Church of North America.

In 1969 a Joint Committee on Conference Union was named by Bishop Sparks and a Basis of Union was soon drafted calling for union in 1971. This was presented to each affected annual conference in its 1970 sessions and each conference voted to accept the Plan of Union. This union was officially initiated shortly thereafter.

Bishop W. Maynard Sparks gave episcopal leadership to the PNC for 12 stormy and difficult years. He steadfastly hoped for the best even in the face of determined opposition. His charitable spirit, his fairness and yet his firmness helped many pastors and laity through some dismal days. But in the final analysis his hopes for unity were not realized.

1. A seminary in this instance was primarily a high school with perhaps some college work.

2. The split had more to do with procedures for amending the constitution of the church.

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From the Editor

The first story in this issue about Sanford and Esther Sage fell neatly into three stages. Since the entire story was too long for one issue, I decided to extend it over three issues. The next issue will recount the Sage's first missionary assignment to Sierra Leone and the following issue will tell about their second tour. Don't miss the entire story.

Rev. Theodore R. Buzzard was a United Brethren, EUB, and United Methodist pastor and conference superintendent who has written an excellent history of EUB work in the Pacific Northwest titled, *Lest We Forget: A History of the Evangelical United Brethren Church in the Pacific Northwest* (Portland, Oregon: 1988). Fortuitously, a copy of a paper Rev. Buzzard presented about 1970 was sent to me and is the basis for the second article in this issue. Perhaps this paper initiated his work on the above mentioned book.

Finally, I call your attention to the membership application on the bottom of page 7. Our membership numbers have been declining, primarily, I suppose, because we keep mailing this publication to you whether you send in a membership fee or not. But I want to make a special appeal for your support for this publication and for the work of the entire Center for the EUB Heritage at least at the \$20 level. It will be much appreciated.

Robert L. Frey