

## **GERMAN METHODISM'S OHIO ROOTS**

by

**JOHN R. SINNEMA**

Baldwin-Wallace College

When one speaks of German churches in America, one quite naturally thinks first of those which existed as denominations in German-speaking countries before the beginning of the great German migrations of the 1830's. These include, of course, the Catholic, Lutheran, Mennonite, and German Reformed churches. Indeed, one source indicates that there were 71 German Reformed, 260 Lutheran, and 160 Mennonite churches in Ohio before 1850.<sup>1</sup> In the Lutheran Synod of Ohio there were twenty pastors serving 195 congregations in the years 1837 and 1838 at the very time that German Methodism was in its infancy here without one single church building.<sup>2</sup> Yet in these days the Methodist Episcopal Church, the mother church which promoted the German Methodist work here, had many more churches than any other, almost as many as other protestant denominations combined.<sup>3</sup> That is, one element of the German Methodist Church, as known in Europe today, sprang from the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. More specifically, it came into being in Ohio. Another constituent of Methodism in Germany is the former offshoot of Wesleyan Methodism from England.

When these two movements came to Germany, they were, so to speak, paying a debt which Methodism owed to German culture and religious thought, for Methodism's founder, John Wesley, had been strongly influenced by the Moravians. When he undertook a journey to Georgia in 1735, he learned German in order to communicate with the twenty-six Moravians traveling on the same ship. He participated in their worship services and was so enthused by their joyous singing that he translated thirty-three of their hymns into English, later including them

in the the Methodist hymnals.<sup>4</sup> He noted also their optimism, confidence, and evidence of faith, particularly in times of stress. Discussions with the leaders in Georgia, then with Peter Böhler in England, and later with Zinzendorf in Herrnhut, Saxony, centered on the Moravians' serene confidence in their salvation based on a personal religious experience. When Wesley felt his "heart strangely warmed" within him in a meeting on May 24, 1738, he believed that he had also had this important personal experience. He remained within the Church of England until his death in 1788, though he was not welcome to preach in its pulpits, owing to the evangelistic character of his sermons.<sup>5</sup> In 1791 the organization which Wesley had built severed connections with the Church of England and became known in England as the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

Even in its early years Methodism reciprocated by exerting an influence on Germans who came to the British Isles. In 1758 Wesley's evangelism reached a small settlement of German-Irish whose parents had left the Palatinate about 1710 and had established themselves near Limerick in Ireland. A small group of these, including Philip Embury and his cousin, Barbara Heck, set out in 1760 for the New World. Six years later Barbara broke up a card game among friends by throwing the cards into the fire. She then aroused Embury to preach the morality their group had learned as Methodists in Ireland.<sup>6</sup> Within five years Embury's followers grew in number to 600, ten of them preachers.

A native German, Christoph Gottlob Müller of Winnenden in Württemberg, came to England in 1806 at the time of the unrest of the Napoleonic campaigns. He was attracted to a Methodist church service by the hearty singing and remained to become affected by the sermon. He followed the sequence of joining a Methodist class, becoming a class leader, and then receiving an exhorter's license. He visited his home in Winnenden several times, once in the year 1830 when his father was ill. On this occasion he held devotional services in his father's home. After he returned to England, members of one of the

Methodist classes he had formed in Winnenden petitioned the Missionary Committee in London in a letter dated November 15, 1830, that Müller be appointed to Winnenden as a missionary.<sup>7</sup> This was done and Müller became the founder of Wesleyan Methodism in Southern Germany. This movement prospered and in 1897 merged with the German Methodist Episcopal conference introduced from America into Northern Germany in 1849.

Methodism among Germans in America did not emerge from the German-Irish group whose spokesman was Embury, nor was there a German who became converted to Methodism in England and then brought it to the Germans of the New World. Rather it came into being in America among the German-speaking persons.

In the autumn of 1771 John Wesley sent Francis Asbury, a young minister twenty-six years of age, to become head of the itinerant ministry in America. The purpose of the itinerant ministry was to bring Methodism to outlying areas and to the frontiers long before churches were built. The ministers or missionaries were horseback circuit riders who visited twelve or twenty-four preaching points on a circuit of 100 to 200 miles distance round-trip. As soon as possible the circuit rider formed classes of eight or more persons, perhaps even two dozen, who entered their names on class lists as Methodists. Each class was under supervision of a lay leader between visits of the missionary. Several classes constituted a society or a church congregation with a pastor. When the number of churches in a territory warranted the appointment of a supervisor or presiding elder, a district was organized, and several districts became a conference which held annual meetings.

The structures of Methodism and its itinerant ministry were admirably suited to frontier America, the land of freedom. The organization made it possible to show great concern for the individual person of any station or rank in life without regard for his previous religious connection. It approached him wherever he was, in a burgeoning city or a lonely wood. It

provided a place for him in a small organized group within a larger flexible structure even before a church home could be built for him, and it also supported these small groups.

Methodism had in common with another eighteenth century movement, Storm and Stress, its appeal to the heart of the human being. It was also conformable to the demand for personal, human rights in the revolutionary age. America, being a haven for Europeans oriented toward freedom and change in their life styles, was thus a propitious field for Methodist evangelism.

Even though the worst religious persecutions had lessened in the eighteenth century, yet many Europeans migrated to seek refuge from oppression or domination abroad, e.g., the Salzburg refugees and the Herrnhuter.<sup>8</sup> The atmosphere in America, even before 1776, was one of freedom from restriction and control. The guarantees of the Constitution after the American Revolution underscored freedom of religion as an official position.<sup>9</sup> There was to be no state church, nor even one favored by the state.

Though diverse in national background, language, and religion, the immigrants to the new nation had in common a spirit of freedom and adventure and a readiness to adapt to their unfamiliar surroundings. As they adjusted to the new environment, they loosened ties to the European Christianity they had known, and they modified or adapted it to their needs here.<sup>10</sup> This resulted in many schisms, and these often created new sects. In some instances differences among sects or denominations were not necessarily doctrinal, but rather organizational, or perhaps differences of language. This was true of the relationship of the Methodist Episcopal Church to other religious movements, particularly among the Germans here. Two such churches must be mentioned here, since they merged in 1946 as the Evangelical United Brethren, and in 1966 this E.U.B. Church merged with the Methodist Church to become the United Methodist Church of the present day.

One of the components of the Evangelical United Brethren Church was the United Brethren in Christ (*Die vereinigten*

*Brüder in Christo*). It took its name from the exclamation "*Wir sind Brüder*" by Philip William Otterbein when he expressed wholehearted agreement with Mennonite Bishop Martin Boehm after he had heard the latter's German sermon in a barn meeting near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The church established by these two men was Arminian in doctrine and evangelistic like the Methodist Episcopal Church. It became organized along similar lines in that it established classes and societies of new members and also held conferences of its preachers. Martin Boehm, a Pennsylvania German, was excommunicated by the Mennonite Church for his association with other societies.<sup>11</sup> He became a bishop in the United Brethren Church and also was a member of a Methodist class for the last ten years of his life. Boehm's son Henry is listed as a preacher in the records of the conference of the United Brethren in Christ held in Frederick, Maryland, on September 25, 1800.<sup>12</sup> He became an itinerant Methodist minister who traveled with Bishop Asbury.

Philip William Otterbein was recruited by Michael Schlatter for ministry in the German Reformed Church in America. Though he was a founder of the United Brethren Church, he maintained his Reformed connection throughout his life. His association with Asbury and the Methodists was also close. When Asbury was ordained bishop in 1784, he requested that Otterbein assist in the ordination service. When Asbury submitted some original poetry to Otterbein for criticism, Otterbein was reputed to have said, "Brother Asbury, I don't think you was born a poet."<sup>13</sup>

The other component of the E.U.B. Church was named the Evangelical Association in 1816. Before that, it had often been called the Albrights or Albright Methodists after the founder, born Jacob Albrecht, a Pennsylvania German. Albright had suffered deep emotional stress upon the death of several of his children and, after experiencing a radical change of heart, joined a Methodist class which had been formed by Bishop Asbury along with Martin Boehm and Benjamin Abbott.<sup>14</sup> In 1796 he began to preach independently among the Pennsylvania

Germans. As his adherents increased in number, he was able to form a conference under the temporary name "The Newly Formed Methodist Conference."<sup>15</sup> At this conference in 1807 Albright was made a bishop of the new church and he, in turn, ordained John Dreisbach as a preacher. Dreisbach became the leader of the church when Albright died, May 18, 1808.

The question has often been asked why the Methodist Episcopal Church did not merge with these two churches at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Their doctrines, methods, and organizations were similar. Their bishops and ministers were friendly, they joined each other in visitations and services, and at least two leaders, Bishop Martin Boehm and Bishop Albright, were enrolled as Methodist class members. Henry Boehm was listed as preacher in two churches.<sup>16</sup> Most of Bishop Asbury's comments about the Germans indicate his concern and admiration for them.<sup>17</sup> He often praised the work of Otterbein and seemed to recognize the work among the Germans as Otterbein's province. He called him "the German apostle to America" and said "I have heard a great work among the Germans toward Lancaster."<sup>18</sup> He did, however, wish that he could recruit more bilingual preachers for Methodism.<sup>19</sup>

In an article on "Bishop Asbury and the Germans," Paul F. Blankenship concludes that the union of the German churches and the Methodist Episcopal Church probably did not come early "because of organizational difference and not primarily because of a difference of language."<sup>20</sup> He notes that in 1810 the Albrights had 528 members, and the United Brethren Church had 10,000. At this time the Methodists numbered 174,560.<sup>21</sup> The Albright organization was then ten years old, the United Brethren somewhat over twenty, and American Methodism approximately forty years. Otterbein's missionary activity, however, had penetrated Ohio so far that in 1810 a United Brethren conference was organized in the Miami Valley.<sup>22</sup> Asbury believed, to be sure, that rapid, certain growth depended on a strong, orderly structure of the itinerant

work.<sup>23</sup> He was convinced that Otterbein's work would have grown even faster if his church had adopted a set of regulations similar to the Methodist Discipline. This the United Brethren did in 1815.

Bishop Asbury was convinced that the German migration would slacken and that the need for a German-language ministry would decrease after another generation. He could not have foreseen that the opposite was true. Within a generation the failure of European farm crops, particularly of the potato, and the deterioration of economic conditions brought more, rather than fewer, immigrants to America. From 1827 to 1836 the immigration grew rapidly. In the year 1836, 80,000 immigrants came. Of these, 60,000 landed at New York, the others at other eastern ports and New Orleans. In one decade 120,000 Germans came to the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Many Germans left Europe on French cotton boats headed for New Orleans. In search of a climate more suitable than that of the Deep South, some of them went up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, others continued via the Ohio River to Cincinnati.<sup>25</sup> These contributed to the German character of the Cincinnati population when added to the cluster of earlier German settlers from Pennsylvania and other eastern states and to the very large number of newcomers who entered at New York and then followed the new routes westward.<sup>26</sup> It was natural that a sizable settlement of German-speaking persons would have attracted still more. Approximately one-third of Cincinnati's population between 1830 and 1840 was German.<sup>27</sup> In numbers this was between 10,000 and 13,000, larger than that of any other nationality group.

It should be remembered that no German countries had established successful colonies in America and that the flight of the 1830's was from several different German countries, not any specific one. Germans who came to Cincinnati had migrated for economic reasons and out of dissatisfaction with political conditions. When they clustered with other speakers of German in places like Cincinnati, they did so without a

sense of allegiance to a foreign country. Being without obligations to their native lands and yet seeming to be foreigners because of their language, they impressed the ministers of the evangelistic denominations as being lost and lonely. If, additionally, the ties with the church to which they belonged in Europe were loosened, they appeared to the evangelists as "sheep without a shepherd."<sup>28</sup>

Recalling in later years the early itinerant missionary efforts in Ohio, William Nast wrote that it was "the sad religious condition of the Germans in their midst" which prompted the Methodists to approach them.<sup>29</sup> He also noted that thousands of Protestants were "too poor and too scattered to support a preacher."<sup>30</sup> William Strickland, in writing on the Methodist appeal to Germans here at home, stated, "To care for our own, in first making provision for the native population of our country, is not only perfectly natural, but our most obvious duty . . ."<sup>31</sup> Leonidas Hamline and William Raper noted that the German immigrants should be given evangelistic attention, for "Neither they nor their ancestor, either Catholic or Protestant, have ever enjoyed the opportunity to test the power of religion as inculcated by John Wesley . . . All that which has been done for England and the United States, . . . is yet to be wrought for neglected Germany."<sup>32</sup> Adam Miller, in writing on the *Origin and Progress of the German Missions in the Methodist Episcopal Church*, conceded that "There are, however, evangelical Gospel ministers in Germany, who stand up against the darkness and corruptions that pervade the whole community; but these are comparatively few and far between."<sup>33</sup> He also explained that the Germans in Ohio, so plentiful that they had their own schools, were "more sensible of the privileges they enjoy in this, their adopted country," because of the "oppression which they have endured in their fatherland."<sup>34</sup>

While William Nast is acclaimed as the founder of German Methodism in America, much credit for early interest in preaching Methodism to Germans in Ohio and even for in-



fluencing Nast must be given to Adam Miller, a native of Maryland, raised in the Amish church. As a boy he became a Methodist at Shanesville, Ohio, and set about diligently to prepare himself for the ministry.<sup>36</sup> He had to begin by perfecting his command of English. He was licensed to preach as a probationer in 1830 and accepted "into full connection" as a deacon in 1834. In the new Methodist weekly paper published in Cincinnati, *The Western Christian Advocate*, he noticed a call from Bishop Emory for a minister who could preach German and French in the South. On March 9, 1835, Miller wrote to Thomas A. Morris, editor of *The Western Christian Advocate*, expressing his own interest in preaching German. The letter was obviously welcomed by Morris, for it elicited an entire column on the need to preach Methodism to the Germans in America. *The Western Christian Advocate* published other letters promoting the recruitment of German-speaking preachers. Miller determined to seek a competent tutor to help him learn the "European German language," for his own childhood language was Pennsylvania German. He had heard of William Nast, who had been engaged to teach at Kenyon College in Gambier. The contact with Nast was beneficial to both men and was influential in Nast's becoming a Methodist minister. At the annual Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in Springfield, William Nast was appointed on August 19, 1835, as a "German Missionary" to the Cincinnati District.<sup>37</sup>

Nast was a well-educated native German. He had attended the preparatory seminary at Blaubeuren studying under Ferdinand Christian Baur, founder of the critical textual methodology in Biblical studies.<sup>38</sup> Among Nast's classmates were the German poet Eduard Mörike and the theologian David Friedrich Strauss, later author of *Das Leben Jesu*, the controversial demythologizing work. With his classmates Nast moved on to the University of Tübingen. He left the university because he was dissatisfied and sought out his favorite poet, the romanticist Ludwig Tieck, for advice. Tieck suggested that he return to Tübingen, but Nast rather followed the counsel of

his sister and brother-in-law. They advised him to go to America and try to find his niche there.

Nast's first year as German missionary was disappointing. In a letter published in the *Western Christian Advocate* of February 5, 1836, Nast admitted his discouragement, but wrote, "I beseech my brethren not to give up the German cause." He was able to form only one class in his year in Cincinnati, but one of his three converts was a Swiss named John Zwahlen who became a stalwart preacher and a co-founder of German Methodism.

Nast's English-speaking colleagues did not abandon the German work, but he was assigned a new territory for the year 1836-37, the German mission of the Columbus District.<sup>39</sup> He therefore became a circuit rider who traveled three hundred miles each five weeks, preaching in Columbus, Thornville, Danville, Bucyrus, and Delaware on successive Sundays, but also making weekday stops at places like Newark, Mt. Vernon, Loudonville, Mansfield, and Galion.

Nast was not, however, a horseman. He was thrown from his horse often and had to chase it to catch it. Once he hitched the beast and knelt down to pray "to the Lord to control the bad disposition of his horse." Nast often related that he had been told that "he must take good care of his own horse, curry and feed him well." With this advice in mind, he once went to the stable to perform these chores. As he finished the task, another man entered and said, "Mr. Nast, why did you go to the trouble of currying and feeding my horse? I could have done it myself." Only then did Nast see that it was not his own horse.<sup>40</sup>

At the end of this second year, some Methodist ministers advocated abandoning the German work, one reason being that only one German missionary was available, yet both Cincinnati and the Columbus District needed attention. Nast made a strong appeal for continuance, stressing that among the most recent immigrants were "many well-educated and wealthy men" who were planning conventions "to perpetuate

the German language and literature, German sentiments and customs." He feared that if efforts were not made to influence these persons, such conventions might be organized into "a party strongly opposed to the religious observance of the Sabbath, and the benevolent institutions of this Gospel favored country."<sup>41</sup>

Nast then finished his report with a plea for German printed matter to help in his ministry, noting that even private publishing houses had entered the field of German religious publications for profit. He reasoned that the church could also risk such a venture. He added, "But it might be objected, will not the Albright Church provide for the wants of the Germans? I answer, they try to do it to some degree, but their resources in money and learning are limited; they are yet a small people, and principally confined to the country. Though it might be of great use to make them officially acquainted with our design, in order to invite their cooperation and patronage, prevent any feelings of jealousy, and convince them of our disinterested [i.e., unselfish] desire to lend them a helping hand in spreading the Gospel among the Germans. For I believe it would be highly desirable to bring their Church, which is a genuine scion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, into cordial fraternal relationship with ours."<sup>42</sup> The "Journals of the Ohio Annual Conference" for the annual session at Xenia in 1837 state that Nast was authorized "to translate the articles of religion and the General Rules of the Methodist Discipline and the Wesleyan Chatechism [sic] into the German language and publish them in tract form." At this conference Nast was again assigned to Cincinnati. The "Journals" for the year 1838 indicate that the Ohio Conference approved "the establishment of a German religious paper to be published at Cincinnati."<sup>43</sup> Plans were laid to seek donations of ten dollars from each of three hundred persons who wished to underwrite the project initially. Evidence of substantial support was received and publication of *Der Christliche Apologete* (*The Christian Apologist*) was planned for the beginning of the calendar year 1839, with Nast as editor. Strong interest came from the Pittsburgh

Conference where John Zwahlen, licensed as an exhorter, had been sent to solicit subscriptions and where Nathaniel Calender, an American-born minister of German extraction, had risen to the position of presiding elder.

Nast's first difficult years began to bear fruit in the years 1838 and 1839. In addition to the appearance of the *Apologete* which was destined to enjoy a full century of existence, Nast was able to form a society or congregation which met for services in the Asbury Chapel, a frame house on Main Street in Cincinnati.<sup>44</sup> This was the first German Methodist Episcopal congregation. The second congregation was organized in Pittsburgh where there was a nucleus of eight to ten German pietists in one of the English-language Methodist churches. Nast was invited to spend two weeks with them. An additional group joined the society during these weeks.

Zwahlen's efforts to raise funds for the *Apologete* also yielded other results in the Pittsburgh Conference, particularly in Wheeling, West Virginia, where he formed a society which was able to build a church edifice, the first German Methodist Church building, dedicated March 22, 1840. Later additions to the building were so arranged that when the centennial of the congregation's founding was celebrated in 1939, the larger building of the Central Methodist Episcopal Church still contained portions of the original walls.<sup>45</sup>

In the year 1839 the first German Methodist hymnal was published, the work of Nast and Peter Schmucker. The latter had been a Lutheran clergyman who as a young man had been strongly influenced by the United Brethren. He exhibited evangelistic tendencies which caused him to be decried as a Methodist. Nast encouraged him to become a Methodist, and when he did so in 1838, he was assigned to Cincinnati to replace Nast when the latter became editor of the *Apologete*. Adam Miller was appointed to Milford, near Cincinnati, in order that he might be near Nast to continue to improve his own command of German and also to be of assistance to Nast.

The number of Methodists available for preaching in German increased remarkably in the years 1838 and 1839. Like

Miller and Callender, both American-born Methodists of German extraction, Carl Best of the Erie Conference and John Kisling from the Indiana Conference made themselves available as German preachers. Like Peter Schmucker, George Danker had been a Lutheran clergyman and found himself more suited to the evangelistic style of the Methodists. As was the case with John Zwahlen, Engelhardt Riemenschneider and Ludwig S. Jacoby had been members of other denominations, joined the Methodists after hearing Nast preach, and then entered the ministry. George Breunig had been a Roman Catholic, joined a Methodist Episcopal society in Detroit, and then came to Cincinnati to work with the Germans. J. M. Hartmann, a member of the new Wesleyan Methodist movement in Germany, came to America and was assigned to the Pittsburgh Conference.<sup>46</sup>

The 1840's saw rapid expansion in the corps of preachers and in the territory served by German Methodism. The 1844 the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church took cognizance of the success of the German work by creating three German districts for efficient, direct supervision of the work. These were the Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis Districts. Moreover, the General Conference authorized sending William Nast to Germany to survey the possibility of an extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church over there. On his journey to Germany Nast conferred with Christoph Gottlob Müller of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Württemberg. Nast concluded that the political climate of the middle 1840's was not favorable for expansion of Methodism in the German states.

After the upheavals in 1848, it seemed more propitious and in 1849 Ludwig Jacoby and his wife, the former Amalie Therese Nuelsen, set out for Germany on the *SS Hermann* on October 20. They arrived in Bremerhaven on November 7 and reached Bremen two days later. Jacoby arranged his first preaching service in the *Krameramtshaus* on December 23, 1849.<sup>47</sup> His audiences ranged from four to five hundred persons in the rented quarters. By the end of February, 1850, he proposed the

construction of a church for a new congregation he had formed in Bremen. On May 21, 1850, the new congregation held its first Quarterly Conference. Jacoby sent a request for more preaching assistance, and in June two other native Germans preparing for the active ministry, Carl H. Döring and Ludwig Nippert, were dispatched to Germany. A year later two more ministers, Engelhardt Riemenschneider and Heinrich Nuelsen, arrived."<sup>48</sup> The 1856 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church authorized an Annual Conference for Germany, an indication that the work was considered well-established. Within twenty-five years of Jacoby's arrival, i.e., by 1874, the year of his death, his work in Europe had grown to approximately 17,000 members in Germany and Switzerland.<sup>49</sup> On June 22, 1897, the American offshoot merged with the Wesleyan Methodist movement in Germany, adding about 2500 members. Thus the Swiss-German Methodist membership rose to about 26,000 in 1900.<sup>50</sup>

In the first twenty-five years, Jacoby's efforts had also resulted in the founding of a publishing house in Bremen and a theological seminary, first opened in Bremen on March 7, 1859, then moved to Frankfurt am Main where it was dedicated on January 17, 1869.<sup>51</sup> The seminary not only trained ministers, but was the proving ground for several professors later engaged at American institutions. Men who had taught in Bremen were: William Warren, later president of Boston University; John F. Hurst, professor at Drew University; Dr. Karl Riemenschneider, professor and later president of German Wallace College in Berea; and Friedrich Paulus, professor and for a short-time vice-president of German Wallace College.

Back home in America the language barrier problem manifested itself within the church as more ministers were needed to preach in German. Many of the persons available were not competent in English and experienced difficulty in comprehending business matters conducted in English. Two movements were undertaken to meet these problems, one to alter the structure of the church still further, the other to train

bilingual preachers. In 1864 the General Conference authorized the formation of four large German annual conferences in which the business could be conducted in German. These conferences eventually divided as needed until a total of ten had been formed by the early twentieth century. Gradually they were dissolved or re-absorbed by the English-speaking conferences between 1925 and 1943. Before this process began, the 1918 German membership had reached 63,336 persons.<sup>52</sup>

German Methodists were active early in promoting programs of training in the German language as well as in English. Conference training courses for probationary preachers for whom German was the native language included English. Not only was it emphasized that preachers had an obligation to become proficient in the language of the country, but also that the German Methodists were deeply indebted to their English-speaking brethren and should therefore exert themselves to remove any language barrier within Methodism.<sup>53</sup>

Persons writing to the *Western Christian Advocate* and the *Christian Advocate* published in New York encouraged English-speaking ministers to learn German in order to render themselves able to help the German immigrants.<sup>54</sup> Others recommended a thorough course for the training of men to preach in both German and English. The most enthusiastic exponent of such education was initially Adam Miller, the Pennsylvania German who had prepared himself so diligently to preach in both languages. Another pioneer preacher, George L. Mulfinger, wrote an article for the *Apologete* of May 26, 1853, in which he urged the establishing of a German course of study at an existing college. The proposal aroused interest, and a year later German was added to the curriculum of a Methodist college in Quincy, Illinois. The German studies prospered, but the college itself disbanded nine years later. The German program was therefore moved to an institution in Warrenton, Missouri, which became known in 1869 as Central Wesleyan College and Orphan Asylum. The institution continued as a four-year college until 1930, when it became a junior college.

In the years 1855 and 1856 Jacob Rothweiler, a native of the Grand Duchy of Baden who had risen to the position of presiding elder of the North Ohio District in the Methodist Episcopal Church, visited John Wheeler, then president of Baldwin University in Berea, for the purpose of discussing the creation of a German Department at Baldwin. President Wheeler and John Baldwin, donor of the property for Baldwin University, were both favorably inclined toward the proposal, and a German Department was opened in 1858 following solicitation of funds for a professorship. After a few years made difficult through the loss of students to service as soldiers in the Civil War, it was thought best to found a separate German college in Berea. Plans were laid at a convention in Berea in June, 1863, and on August 30, 1864, the college opened its doors to forty students. It was called German Wallace College after James Wallace, a trustee of Baldwin University and donor of funds, a building, and land for a campus. A second building was donated by Baldwin University. The college grew slowly but steadily and was merged with Baldwin University as Baldwin-Wallace College in 1913. During the time that it was a separate institution, its courses were taught in German, but students were permitted to enroll at Baldwin University for English and some other courses.

A similar arrangement of cooperation between an English-language Methodist college and a new German Methodist institution in the same town was established at Iowa Wesleyan University, of which John Wheeler had become president, and Mount Pleasant German College, opened in 1873. The latter college was absorbed by Central Wesleyan College in 1909.

German Methodists established five other colleges, one of which, however, was the William Nast College in Kiukiang, China.<sup>55</sup> The courses there were taught in the Mandarin language.

Other institutions founded in America by the German Methodists included four children's homes, four homes for the aged, and three hospitals. In Germany the Methodists established thirty-eight Deaconess Homes and Associations.<sup>56</sup>



It is to be expected that any religious organization would publish innumerable journals, hymnals, teaching aids, brochures, tracts, anniversary volumes, and church histories. The German Methodists also did this. More important perhaps is to note that the German Methodists, usually the preachers, editors, and professors, were active in publication of many scholarly books and some creative didactic literature. In addition to the translation of some 250 books from English into German, eighty-five German Methodists, also published approximately 225 books. It has been noted as an oddity that one of these books was William F. Warren's *Systematische Theologie*, published while he was teaching at the Bremen seminary. It is said to be the first attempt at a statement of basic Methodist beliefs.<sup>57</sup>

The results of German Methodism's appearance on the American scene in the nineteenth century can easily be seen from the preceding enumeration of its institutions and other accomplishments. In a speech delivered after the first thirty years of German Methodism's existence, William Nast also made these claims for its influence in America. He believed that the evangelistic type of preaching had been embraced by other German denominations. He claimed that other churches had also instituted midweek prayer meetings and Sunday evening services after the Methodist pattern. He found that values gained in adherence to the rules of the *Discipline* encouraged other denominations to organize their church regulations in similar fashion. He believed that German Methodism's perseverance even in times of abuse and discouragement made it easier for other so-called sects to gain acceptance in later years. He maintained that German Methodist Sunday Schools assisted in making these as common in German churches as they were in English-language churches. He stated that the publication of *Der Christliche Apologete* encouraged other German churches to inaugurate publication programs. Lastly he asserted that the success of the German mission work encouraged other English-language denominations to evangelize among the Germans in America.<sup>58</sup>

German Methodism filled an important need for about a century. Its demise came only with the diminishing immigration and the passing of the last generation of these persons.

This question remains: Why was Methodism, which was not a German religious movement but rather an English one, successful in America for a century? The answer has these two aspects: one, the contributions of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the other, the nature of the German people to whom it was directed.

The structure of the Methodist Episcopal Church and particularly of its itinerant ministry made it possible to approach each and every person individually, of any rank or social station. The system was adaptable to the circumstances at hand. It was able to function, first under a single missionary, then expand into districts within the English-language conferences, then grant relative autonomy to the ten larger German conferences, and finally to re-absorb these as the need for a German ministry disappeared. The Methodist Episcopal structure also rendered financial support to the ministry to the Germans. Not only was it willing and able to subsidize Nast's first two relatively unsuccessful years, but also to lend aid to his ambitious undertaking in publishing the *Apologete*. In speaking of the support received in this project, William Strickland, said, "As an individual enterprise, it never would have succeeded; but the church, after mature deliberation and prayer, had embarked in it, and most nobly did she come up to sustain the work her hands had begun."<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps even more important was the enthusiastic support afforded by individual English-speaking Methodists, beginning with Bishop Asbury, then Bishops Thomas A. Morris and Leonidas L. Hamline, the Irish soapmaker James Gamble, and many more, including persons like John Baldwin, John Wheeler, and James Wallace. These are but a few of the men who never failed to give encouragement and even generous financial support. These and other Americans must be counted among the stalwart builders of German Methodism.

Concerning the Germans to whom the missionary work was directed, Strickland said, "Of all races of men that exist on the face of the earth, foreign to the Anglo-Saxon, perhaps there are none whose predilections for the United States are greater than that of the Germans."<sup>60</sup> Strickland went on to point out the love of intellectual and moral liberty of the Germans who settled here and to describe them as an intelligent, industrious, virtuous, and religious people. Heinrich Koeneke, one of the pioneer German Methodist preachers, said that he "had often heard much of the religious liberty in this country" and for that reason came here.<sup>61</sup> Like Koeneke, of course, many German immigrants sought freedom from restriction.

Like Nast, many of the Germans in America were of a romanticist temper or type. In the view of Jacques Barzun, romanticists were more united by the problem they faced than by their individual solutions to the problem. Barzun states, "In the romantic period . . . this problem was to create a new world on the ruins of the old."<sup>62</sup> There were signs of society's weakness in the eighteenth century. There had been an intellectual revolution in Europe and particularly in Germany. The French Revolution and its aftermath were the expression of the rebellion against the conditions and left the European scene ready for the rebuilding process.

The romanticists of the early nineteenth century were the creators and builders. The ways in which they approached the task were divergent, accounting for the great contrasts in their views as well as the many attributes, sometimes seemingly conflicting, which are assigned to them. The source or center from which they started on their divergent ways was a common one.

The Germans who came to America were among the creative persons—the ones who took into their own hands the building of a future. Just as their compatriots who remained at home did by literary or journalistic means seek to face and create a new, emerging world, so did these adventurous

Germans who accepted the challenge of a frontier life thus express their own readiness to create a new life here and build for the future not yet clearly seen before them. They had a vision or an ideal yet unrealized, but toward which they would struggle, if not for their own benefit, then at least to be realized in future generations.

These were the people to whom German Methodism could and did appeal. They, the preachers and the Germans to whom they addressed themselves alike, had been dissatisfied with the economic and political world they knew and even with the past as embodied in churches under state control. They felt within their hearts a need for a personal, individual, religious reorientation. It was their searching for a way to satisfy their common need which brought together German Methodism where none had previously existed, beginning here in Ohio and then spreading throughout this country and to Germany.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Chaddock, *Ohio before 1850* (New York, 1908), p. 128, n.1.

<sup>2</sup>Carl Edward Schneider, *The German Church on the American Frontier* (St. Louis, Mo., 1939), p. 79, n.76.

<sup>3</sup>Chaddock, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup>John L. Nuelsen, *John Wesley und das deutsche Kirchenlied* (Bremen, 1938), pp. 65-82.

<sup>5</sup>John L. Nuelsen, Theophil Mann, and J. J. Sommer, *Kurzgefasste Geschichte des Methodismus von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Bremen, 1920), p. 73.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 389 ff.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 543-544.

<sup>8</sup>Josef Lewis Altholz, *The Churches in the Nineteenth Century* (Indianapolis, 1967), pp. 7 ff.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>11</sup>F. Hollingsworth, "Notices of the Life[sic] and Labours of Martin Boehm and William Otterbein also . . .," *Methodist Magazine*, VI (1823), 210-214.

<sup>12</sup>Henry G. Spayth, *History of the United Brethren in Christ* (Circle-ville, Ohio, 1851), p. 82. Henry Boehm denied later his having been a preacher of the United Brethren in Christ. See [Joseph] B[eaumont] Wakeley, *The Patriarch of One Hundred Years; being Reminiscences, Historical and Biographical, of Rev. Henry Boehm* (New York, 1875), p. 388.

- <sup>13</sup>Lucy Forney Bittinger, *German Religious Life in Colonial Times* (Philadelphia and London, 1906), p. 105, n.2; Abel Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 4 vols. (New York, 1867), III, 211, n.5.
- <sup>14</sup>Samuel Spreng, *History of the Evangelical Association*, in vol. 12 of *The American Church History Series*, ed. Philip Schaff et al (New York, 1894), p. 393.
- <sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 405-406.
- <sup>16</sup>See note 12, above.
- <sup>17</sup>Wakeley, pp. 185 and 312; see also Francis Asbury, *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, ed. Elmer T. Clark, J. Manning Potts, and Jacob S. Payton, 3 vols. (Nashville, 1958), I, 760; II, 705, 709; and III, 491.
- <sup>18</sup>Asbury, *Journal*, I, 401; II, 710-711; III, 478-479.
- <sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, III, 555.
- <sup>20</sup>Paul W. Blankenship, "Bishop Asbury and the Germans," *Methodist History*, IV, 3 (April, 1966), 5-13; see p. 7.
- <sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.
- <sup>22</sup>[Daniell] Berger, *A History of the United Brethren in Christ*, in vol. 12 of *The American Church History Series*, ed. Philip Schaff et al (New York, 1894), p. 353.
- <sup>23</sup>Adam Miller, *Origin and Progress of the German Missions in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati, 1943), pp. 242-243.
- <sup>24</sup>*Der Christliche Apologete*, Sept. 27, 1839.
- <sup>25</sup>Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940), p. 188, n.54; quoted from the *Allgemeine Auswanderungs-Zeitung* (Rudolstadt), Jan. 27, 1852.
- <sup>26</sup>Chaddock, pp. 34-35.
- <sup>27</sup>Charles Cist, *Cincinnati in 1841: Its Early Annals and Future Prospects* (Cincinnati, 1841), pp. 38-39; see also Friedrich Wunderlich, *Brückenbauer Gottes*, vol. 7 of *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Methodismus* (Frankfurt A.M.: Anker-Verlag, 1963), pp. 22-23, quoted from Albert Nast's unpublished manuscript "William Nast, Founder of German Methodism;" and also Adam Miller in *Western Christian Advocate*, March 30, 1838.
- <sup>28</sup>The common scriptural figure is encountered frequently. Two examples are found in Wilhelm Nast, *Der Hundertjährige Bestand des Amerikanischen Methodismus* (Cincinnati, 1866), p. 34, and Wakeley, *Reminiscences*, p. 312.
- <sup>29</sup>Nast, *Bestand*, p. 33.
- <sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.
- <sup>31</sup>William Peter Strickland, *History of the Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati, 1850), p. 52.
- <sup>32</sup>*Apologete*, January 4, 1839.
- <sup>33</sup>Miller, *Origin*, p. 15.
- <sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.
- <sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 148.
- <sup>36</sup>See Adam Miller, *Experience of German Methodist Preachers*, ed. D. N. Clark (Cincinnati, 1859), pp. 43-75 for his biography.
- <sup>37</sup>*Western Christian Advocate*, Sept. 4, 1835.
- <sup>38</sup>Altholz, p. 106.
- <sup>39</sup>*Western Christian Advocate*, Oct. 14, 1836, and *Christian Advocate and Journal*, Nov. 4, 1836.
- <sup>40</sup>Miller, *Experience*, pp. 70-71.
- <sup>41</sup>Miller, *Origin*, p. 35.
- <sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>43</sup>From the manuscript copies of the "Journals of the Ohio Annual Conference" in the Ohio Methodist Historical Society Library of the Ohio Wesleyan University Library, Delaware, Ohio. The use of a microfilm copy is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>44</sup>Miller, *Experience*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>45</sup>*The Wheeling Intelligencer*, July 29, 1937.

<sup>46</sup>Information from biographies in the *Geschichte der Zentral Deutschen Konferenz*, ed. C[hristian] Golder, John H. Horst, and J[ohn] G. Schaal (Cincinnati, n.d. [1907]), passim.

<sup>47</sup>Wunderlich, pp. 60-63, passim.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>49</sup>Paul F. Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism* (Cincinnati, 1939), p. 125.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 129; Nuelsen, Mann, and Sommer, p. 579.

<sup>51</sup>Douglass, pp. 154-156, passim.

<sup>52</sup>*Souvenir of the Ninetieth Anniversary of the Organization of German Methodism* (Cincinnati, 1928), p. 58.

<sup>53</sup>*Der Christliche Apologete*, Oct. 30, 1840.

<sup>54</sup>*Western Christian Advocate*, April 10, 1835, and April 13, 1838; *Christian Advocate and Journal*, Dec. 16, 1836.

<sup>55</sup>Others were the Northwest German-English Normal School of Galena, Illinois, which became Charles City College, Iowa, before merging with Morningside College; St. Paul's College, Minnesota, and Enterprise Normal Academy, Kansas, both of which existed for about twenty years; and Blinn Memorial College of Brenham, Texas.

<sup>56</sup>Douglass, pp. 282-285, passim.

<sup>57</sup>*Times Literary Supplement*, No. 3286, 118.

<sup>58</sup>Nast, *Bestand*, 38-39.

<sup>59</sup>Strickland, p. 185.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>61</sup>Miller, *Origin*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>62</sup>Jacques Barzun, *Classic, Romantic, and Modern*, rev. ed. of *Romanticism and the Modern Ego*, 1943 (Boston and Toronto, 1961), p. 14.

## DER HARZ

Die Fichtenfinger weit sich dehnen,  
Todesschatten tiefend schwarz,  
In allem schmerzt ein tiefes Sehnen,  
Golden quillt der Fichten Harz.

HERMAN F. BRAUSE

Rochester, N. Y.