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PENNSYLVANIA SPIRITUALS IN THE UNITED CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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## ABSTRACT

Over two hundred years ago, spirituals sung by the Pennsylvania Dutch were a major part of religious revivalist services in central Pennsylvania. Despite the popularity of the spiritual at that time, the current Pennsylvania Dutch descendants know little about them and their use is almost extinct. An exception is the United Christian Church, a small denomination of churches within the Susquehanna Valley. This thesis explores the history and characteristics of the United Christian Church in relation to the preservation of the spiritual tradition. This thesis concludes that because the United Christian Church was reluctant to allow instrumental music into the worship service and has contained a strong fellowship of Dutch members in the church, the spirituals have been valued as an intimate part of the religious experience and thus, have endured. Background information and common forms of the Pennsylvania Spiritual are also included so that the reader may fully understand how these musical works are an original credit to the culture of the Pennsylvania Dutch at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An appendix of Pennsylvania Spirituals is included for reference.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the people of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture for whom these choruses fulfilled the highest achievement of music: to glorify God.

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## Chapter 1

### Rationale

*The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. – Isaiah 51:11*

### Introduction

In the August 27, 2011 “You Ask, You Answer” section of the *Lancaster Farmer: the Leading Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Farming Newspaper* the following submission appeared:

A Perkasie, Pa., reader was looking for the words to a Pennsylvania Dutch song “Soondags von ich nigh dee karrich gay.” Thanks to a Lebanon, Pa., reader for sending in the following response. She wasn’t sure if this is the song the reader is looking for, but she found a copy of the words to the following song.

Soondags von ich in de gmay gay  
 No doon ich my schwotz mutza awe  
 No duna mea singa und batea  
 Fa really vos vilsht do noch may (Lancaster Farmer 2011, B6)

It has been over three centuries since Germans first immigrated to Germantown, Pennsylvania. Although they were far from their former home, the immigrants were still able to preserve much of their culture including humor, farming techniques, holiday traditions and entertainment (Egle 1883, 12). The strength of community allowed for the Pennsylvania Dutch to have a noticeable outside presence in the surrounding colonies and contributed the first Continental Treasurer, the first German Bible in American, the

naming of George Washington as “father of the country,” the first religious magazine and the first paper mill (Pennsylvania German Society). Although often referred to as “Dutch” it is important to remember that the people who frequent this originated from Germany. “Dutch” is the word that evolved from “Deutsch” or “deitsch” (Grubb 1990).

Today the physical signs of the Pennsylvania Dutch are still prevalent. The hex sign, a bright and colorful design usually depicting birds or flowers within a circle, is seen on barns and houses within the Pennsylvania Dutch region (The Pennsylvania Dutch Welcome Center). German foods such as whoopee pies, long john doughnuts and shoo fly pies can be found at bakeries and farmer’s markets in the area. Also found at the farmer’s markets are household decorations that display Pennsylvania German wit such as this Dutch saying: we grow too soon old and too late smart.

One part of the culture that is out of the ear of the general public, yet remains a strong part of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture, is the folk singing (Boyer et al. 1951, 12). The above ad in the Lancaster Farming points toward this fact. A book published in 1951, *Songs Along the Mahantongo*, was a collection of Dutch folksongs and the first of its kind. At that time many of the singers were “middle-aged or older folks” although occasionally “a child contributed a rhyme or game to us for our collection” (Boyer et al. 1951, 13). Several genres of folk song were highlighted in this book including songs of childhood, courtship and marriage, the farm, the tavern and the camp-ground.

It is these songs of the camp-ground that are the focus of this thesis. They are called by many names including Pennsylvania Spirituals (Yoder 1961), camp meeting choruses, Dutch choruses and even “dutchified” German Spirituals (Buffington 1965).



The last time substantial research has been conducted on their use was in 1961 with Don Yoder's publication, *Pennsylvania Spirituals*. At that time Yoder predicted that the Pennsylvania Spiritual tradition would fade away along with the then current generation (Yoder 1961, 185).

However, as witnessed by the author and many others within her church family, the spirituals remain in use today. They are known as "camp meeting songs" by the younger generation and as "songs we've loved to sing" by the older generation. They are sung periodically at the United Christian Church's annual Cleona Camp meeting (Songs 1996).

### **Purpose**

This research served to investigate a possible link between the practices of the United Christian Church and the preservation of the Pennsylvania Spiritual musical genre. Presented first within the thesis is a brief history of the Pennsylvania Dutch Culture and the United Christian Church. Addressed secondly, is the birth and rapid development of the Pennsylvania Spiritual along with its common forms. Finally this thesis will attempt to explain how the disciplines of the church preserve the spirituals and give an update the use of the spirituals today.

### **Methods and Materials**

*Songs We've Loved to Sing* is a small green booklet put together by members of the United Christian Church in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the annual Campmeeting. The first section of this book contains old hymns that are not found in the

regular hymnal used by the United Christian Church. The second section is a collection of Pennsylvania Spirituals that have been translated into English. The final section contains Pennsylvania Spirituals in German accompanied by music notation that was used with permission from the book *Pennsylvania Spirituals*, authored by Don Yoder. It was this green booklet that gave the author a starting point on which to begin this investigation. As recommended by her advisor, one of the first steps the author took was to type the names of the songs into an internet search engine. This resulted in a few interesting gospel renditions of a few of the English choruses such as the Clark Sister's rendition of *All the Way to Calvary He Went for Me*. A YouTube search rendered similar results: a few example performances but no historical information

The next route to explore was to look into the name "Don Yoder," as referenced in *Songs We've Loved To Sing*. Fortunately, a copy of his book, *Pennsylvania Spirituals*, was available through the Penn State library. For Don Yoder, this book represented the summation of years of research and song collecting from chorus singers throughout the Susquehanna Valley, including some from the United Christian Church. It was only after the author started to read this book that she began to understand what a rich and vast heritage was represented through the choruses she had encountered at the Cleona campmeeting.

*Pennsylvania Spirituals* cited other resources which were fortunately all within the Penn State collection. Several music professors from central Pennsylvania were interested in preserving the Dutch singing heritage and published books containing annotations of Pennsylvania spirituals and the environment in which they thrived. According to volume of published work, Don Yoder was the most avid of these men. He

began to publish articles about these spirituals in journals such as *The Pennsylvanian Dutchman*, *Pennsylvanisch Dietish Eck* and *the Morning Call* in 1947. In 1951 he coauthored a book on Dutch folk music along with Walter E. Boyer and Albert F. Buffington entitled *Songs along the Mahantongo: Pennsylvania Dutch Folksong*. Ten years later he published *Pennsylvania Spirituals*, a key resource in this research. Albert Buffington, a co-author of *Songs along the Mahantongo*, also published his own book, *“Dutchified German” Spirituals*. This book contains many songs sung by the United Christian Church, a central part of this study. It has been nearly a half century since these sources were published and they appear to be the most recent literature on the subject.

In exploring the history and developments of the United Christian Church, several sources aided the author’s work greatly. Mary Catherine Kreider, first brought to the author’s attention by being mentioned in *Pennsylvania Spirituals*, wrote a master’s thesis in 1957 entitled *Languages and Folklore of the “Hoffmansleit” (United Christians)*. This thesis gave the history of the Church along with character insights to the people who populated the Church during the mid-twentieth century. In this thesis, Kreider was able to look at documents concerning the United Christian church that the author has not been able to locate. Other sources for the history include a 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary booklet, *History of the United Christian Church*, published in 1977, the church disciplines from years 1922 and 1950 along with the annual conference minutes from years 1946 and later. Tape recordings of worship services from the annual Cleona Campmeeting were also analyzed. The disciplines, conference minutes and tapes were provided to the author from her grandfather.

Additional background information was gathered through informal talks with members of the author's family. Although none of the information that was gained from these discussions is presented formally in this thesis, it has given the author a new appreciation of what these choruses have meant for these people.

The author did attempt to gather information through an ad in a local newspaper, *The Lancaster Farming*. This publication is tailored for those in the agricultural field and distributed across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as in neighboring states. The ad asked for any anonymous memories of how choruses were sung or used in the past or present. The response to the ad was very slim. The author received three replies: one mentioned a store where one could buy a chorus book in German, another contained two photocopied pages of German choruses and the last response was an offer to sing Pennsylvania Spirituals for the author.

### **Scope**

This research was focused on the current use of Pennsylvania Spirituals within the United Christian Church. It does not address the singing of Pennsylvania Spirituals outside of the United Christian Church. It also does not address the current singing of Dutch secular folk song.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The United Christian Church**

Where there are two Dutchmen, you find a church – but where there are three Dutchmen, you find two churches.

-Saying in Holland

#### **Origins in Europe**

The United Christians trace their religious ancestry back to the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Among the more influential Protestant leaders was Menno Simons of Holland (History 1977, 1). (Later, his followers would acquire the name Mennonites, a sect of people common in the Susquehanna Valley of Pennsylvania.) Many of Menno's followers assimilated to become part of the greater European Anabaptist movement. Anabaptists distinguished themselves from the other two principal Protestant sects, the Lutherans and the Calvinists, by introducing the concepts of voluntary church membership, total separation of church and state and by arguing that infant baptisms were not a legitimate form of baptisms (Hostetler 1985, 422). The name "Anabaptist" stems from the name re-Baptist ("ana" meaning "re"). Instead, these people felt that believer baptism, baptizing only after a person has made a declaration of faith, was the biblically correct form (History 1977, 1).

During the 1600s, Germany, as well as much of Europe, was plagued by political unrest. The War of Palatinate (a region in western Germany), also referred to as the War

of Augsburg, occurred in Germany in 1688. During this conflict French troops pillaged the western region of Germany devastating many cities and towns within the area.

Although ending in 1697, the War of Augsburg was quickly followed by more expansionary conquests, this time from Spain, in the War of Spanish Succession, lasting until from 1703 to 1713. Weary of the continual fighting and economically devastated land, many of the Palatines thought it best to start a new life elsewhere (Grubb 1990).

Queen Anne granted refuge to over 7,000 of the Palatine refugees in 1709 (Egle 1883, 12). When William Penn advertised his land in the new country as a land of religious freedom regardless of creed, the displaced Germans responded. About 3,000 of the German refugees who were granted refuge in England sailed to the Americas and arrived in William Penn's colony, forming the Borough of Germantown in northwest Philadelphia County. However, others were sent to Ireland to strengthen the Protestant presence and a few remaining immigrants were sent to New York to produce tar and pitch for the British Navy. The New York refugees, dissatisfied with working for the British governors, decided to join their fellow Palatines along the Susquehanna River at Tulpehocken, in present day Berks County (Grubb 1990). In response to the sudden influx of German settlers the secretary to the Proprietary, James Logan, wrote, "We have of late great numbers of Palatines poured in upon us without any recommendation or notice which gives the country some uneasiness, for foreigners do not so well among us as our own English people" (Egle 1883, 12).

Following this initial surge of Germans to Pennsylvania, waves of German immigrants continued to flood the area. From 1720 to 1725 Germans came down from Schoharie County in New York to settle near the Susquehanna River (Egle 1883, 12).

The following decade, Germans emigrated heavily from Europe and brought with them the religious traditions of the Lutherans, Moravians, Swenkfelders, Reformed and Roman Catholics. In 1727, James Logan again expressed his unease, “About six thousand Germans more are expected (and also many from Ireland), and these emigrations” he “hopes may be prevented in the future by act of Parliament, else these Colonies will in time be lost to the Crown (Egle 1883, 12).” Immigration by the thousands continued through the mid-1750s, so much so, that Germans in Pennsylvania became a powerful political force. Because of this, from then onward, almost all German immigrants settled in the Pennsylvania (Egle 1883, 12).

Once settled, the Germans successfully adapted their farming techniques to the America farmlands. As early as 1738 they had made a significant contribution to the colony prompting Governor Thomas to write:

This Province has been for some years the asylum of the distressed Protestants of the Palatinate and other parts of Germany, and I believe it may with truth be said that the present flourishing condition of it is in a great measure owing to the industry of those people-it is not altogether the goodness of the soil, but the number and industry of the people that that make a flourishing colony. (Egle 1883, 14)

Along with agriculture knowledge, the Germans also brought with them their own preachers and teachers. This allowed them to establish their own churches and schools and instill their own culture and values into the future generations (Egle 1883, 14).

### **The First Great Awakening**

The First Great Awakening began in America in the 1730s and reached deep into the religiously wandering herds of the all colonies, including Pennsylvania, with a strong and widely sweeping staff. To reach the ‘lost’ of the infant colonies, methods were used

that seemed barbaric to the Old World established churches. A marker of this revival was a seemingly ‘undignified’ wave of frontier emotionalism and hysteria (America.gov archive). Musically, the First Great Awakening introduced the spiritual chorus, a form free from the traditional hymn tunes and dense liturgical texts that were the cornerstones of sacred music in Europe. In essence, it was a revolt against established form in religion (Yoder 1961, 4).

### **United Brethren in Christ Beginnings**

Rev. Michael Schlatter, a Swiss minister during the time of the First Great Awakening, decided to focus his work in the valleys of Central Pennsylvania and began his ministry there in 1746. A few years later, Rev. Schlatter returned to Europe to gather more workers for the spiritual harvest that was growing in the central section of Penn’s Woods. Six young men answered his call, one being Philip William Otterbein, who arrived in America in July 1752 (History 1977, 2).

A short time after starting his ministry in Pennsylvania and Maryland, Otterbein went through a deep religious experience that led him to strongly emphasize the spiritual intimacy of the Christian experience. While attending a service in Lancaster, Otterbein heard speaker Martin Boehm, a Mennonite, who also believed in a more inward spirituality. After the meeting, Otterbein approached Boehm and declared “We are brethren.” Together they began to hold evangelical services across the Susquehanna Valley (History 1977, 3).

The spiritually centered teachings of Otterbein and Boehm were rejected by the leaders of the established Baptist and Mennonite churches, and consequently, Otterbein and Boehm and their converts were told to leave. As the distance between the churches



and the Otterbein/Boehm sect grew more serious and the number of their converts more numerous, the need for an organized church became apparent (History 1977, 3).

In 1800 the first conference of the United Brethren in Christ was held in Frederick County, Maryland to address this need. The church emphasized evangelism and a desire for a deep spiritual connection. Otterbein and Boehm were appointed as Bishops in the United Brethren Church until their deaths in 1812 and 1813, respectively (History 1977, 3).

### **The Second Great Awakening**

The first half of the 1800s issued in another Great Awakening that again shook the religious core of the young American country. This revival, the Second Great Awakening, was a response to the rising focus on education, independence and secularism as a result of the Age of Enlightenment in the colonies (America.gov archive). In many parts of the country, such as New England, the Second Awakening was marked with a return to a sense of reverence, which meant less of the outward emotionalism that was common in the First Great Awakening. This reverence and “respectful silence” appealed to educated people of the emerging Eastern cities. However, in the Appalachian and developing western regions the characteristics remained similar to that of the First Great Awakening with the addition of a new element: the camp meeting (American.gov archive).

A religious gathering of several days’ length, camp meetings originated in the western areas of Tennessee and Kentucky (Yoder 1961, 41). The camp meeting was advertised on bulletins or newspapers and people would come by the hundreds. Attendees saw it as a vacation from the loneliness and struggles of frontier life. In the presence of

crowds and bustling activity attendees were quick to get excited, to dance, and to shout and sing (America.gov archive). The largest camp meeting was located at Can Ridge, Kentucky in 1801 and attracted between 10,000 and 25,000 frontiersmen (America.gov archive).

The camp meeting can almost be seen as a fund raising event, except that instead of lobbying for the money of attendees, the organizers were lobbying for their souls. The Methodists and Baptist were two groups that refined and mastered the camp meeting revival strategy (America.gov archive). Methodists were able to efficiently organize traveling preachers, called circuit riders, to reach remote frontier locations. The Baptists had no formal church organization, and therefore, camp meetings were led by local farmer-preachers who had received “the call” (America.gov archive). Both the Methodist and Baptist tactics were used in camp meetings along the Susquehanna River where the United Brethren in Christ church had a strong presence.

### **The Bush Meeting**

In 1803 the camp meeting arrived in Western Pennsylvania (Yoder 1961, 42). It traveled eastward to Dutch country in 1804 and quickly became a standard religious institution. The first camp meetings were interdenominational with participation from the Methodists, United Brethren and Evangelicals (the three main churches in the region) and also the Mennonites, Lutherans, Presbyterians and Dunkards (Yoder 1961, 42). To prepare for a camp meeting, or “bush meeting,” a location would be chosen and trees would be cleared so that a stage for the speakers could be built. In Dutch, the word for “wood” is “bush.” “Bush meeting” was often viewed as a derogatory term, referring to the more primitive, unrefined behaviors of those who worshiped “in the bush” (Yoder

1961, 46). Seats would be spread out before the stage and typically consisted of a board placed on two stumps. Attendees were expected to bring their own housing either in the form of tents, make-shift shelters, or the covered wagons in which they traveled. Food would be prepared by an army of Dutch wives and eagerly enjoyed by all between the services. Since the bush meetings were both a religious and social affair, a schedule was established for the camp. Curfews were enforced by patrols that went throughout the camp (Yoder 1961, 49).

The revivalist messages were the focal points on which all other activities hinged. At first the meetings in Dutch country were bilingual. In 1810 the first all-German camp meeting was held by the Evangelicals in New Berlin, Union County Pennsylvania (Yoder 1961, 43). This quickly became the standard with which to reach the Dutch of the area. The camp meeting services historically contained great zeal and emotion. A visiting Lutheran minister to a camp meeting in the 1820s wrote with distain, “the preachers storm, snort, clap hands, kick about and in a repulsive way shout themselves hoarse” (Yoder 1961, 70). Often, when one preacher reached the point of exhaustion another preacher would be ready and waiting to take his place (Yoder 1961, 48). The hysteria displayed by the preachers was caught by the congregation and multiplied. The Lutheran minister from the 1820s elaborates:

The audience prays in thorough confusion at the top of their lungs; some fall down, and others lift a triumphal shout, and frequently along with it speak of the Savior of the World in an irreverent, shameless, and presumptuous manner; during which frivolous people laugh, reasonable persons take offence and pious ones sigh over the dishonor which is done to the gospel through this fanaticism. (Yoder 1961, 70)

It is this extreme emotionalism for which the bush-meeting gained its rowdy reputation.

The success of a camp-meeting would often be measured by the frequency of certain impromptu “exercises,” thought to be evidence of the spirit moving throughout the congregation. From 1820 to 1859, Evangelical Bishop Johannes Seybert kept journals where he recorded his reports from the numerous German-language camp meetings where he preached. These entries consistently mentioned “exercises” that began in Midwest camp meetings—shouting, hand clapping, groaning, leaping jumping, hearty laughter and reeling (Yoder 1961, 56). There was also expected to be a “durchbruch” or breakthrough, indicating the climax during the services. At a Manhantongo meeting in 1835, the Bishop noted, “a large measure of blessing came upon us all, so that some were so filled with God’s love that they sank down unconsciously while others leaped and sprang about with joy” (Yoder 1961, 57). Traditionally, on the final night of the camp meeting, the curfew was suspended so that the “exercises” could continue into the early hours of the morning (Yoder 1961, 57).

One can only imagine the scene of thousands of Dutch worshipers being overtaken by these various displays of emotion. The Bishop noted in his journals that at certain camp meeting services the noise and confusion became so great that his preaching could no longer be heard so he decided to sit down. However he did so in a highly elated and jubilant state (Yoder 1961, 57). Likewise, the text to a Dutch chorus defiantly states, “See sawga meer sin so louda leit, In himmel vott’s nuch louter sei (Yoder 1961, 94)!” (Folks do complain how loud we get—in Heaven we’ll be louder yet!)

The following is a first-hand account of a chorus-singing event from the United Brethren congregation in 1840 at Fredericksburg, Lebanon County:

The services were conducted in German. . . The singing, especially during the 'revival season' of 'protracted meetings,' consisted of hymns with a chorus or refrain set to lively and catchy music which was easily learned, and in which everybody could join, and the prayer meetings were often scenes of vociferous and extravagant enthusiasm (Yoder 1961, 141).

Pennsylvania Spirituals were used in the revival services of the United Brethren Congregations. This was the mother congregation of the United Christian Church

### **Emergence of the United Christian Church**

Just after the Civil War some members of the United Brethren in Christ Church in the Susquehanna Valley began to voice their concern over aspects in the church's platform. The three issues of contest were infant baptism (which had since been reinstated in the American Anabaptist strain), the voluntary bearing of arms, and the participation of members in secret societies (History 1977, 4).

It was also at this time that Lebanon Valley College was being established as a school in Lebanon County (Kreider 1957, 8). Founded in 1866 by the eastern section of the United Brethren conference, the college was to serve as a training ground for new pastors. A. W. Drury author of *The History of the United Brethren Church*, 1931 ed., recorded that, "The members [of the local congregation] did not wish to be understood as opposing education, but they regarded spiritual death and formality of many of the churches extant as the legitimate result of collegiate education in the ministry" (Kreider 1957, 8). A. W. Drury later recorded the catalyst behind the formation of a new sect.

. . . right under the shadow of the new institution of learning [Lebanon Valley College-as previously mentioned], direct antagonism presented itself. In the spring of 1868, George W. Hoffman, the college pastor, a man of unusual zeal and preaching ability, aligned himself with a party in the church and others in the town who were opposed to colleges, branding them as 'preacher factories.' The pastor invited Bishop J. Russel, then ex-bishop to preach from the pulpit. Bishop Russel spoke for an hour with

great vehemence against colleges, using for his text the words, ‘knowledge puffeth up.’ The result was a falling off of one fourth of the attendance at the college, and a deep division among the people. George W. Hoffman, John Stamm, another prominent preacher, and some other preachers of like spirit, became the leaders of a number of congregations of come outers, under the name of United Christians, of which there are yet some survivals. The Hoffman mentioned here is the man whose name gave rise to the name “Hoffmanites.” (Krieder 1957, 9)

### **George Hoffman as Presiding Elder**

Following the rather explosive beginning, the infant congregation began to haphazardly meet in homes and available halls with increasing attendance (History 1977, 6). The disorganization was at first encouraged by the leaders, such as Hoffman, believing that too much bureaucracy hindered the freedom of the church. This is characteristic of the Dutch who were thought to regard government and slavery as equal institutions (Egle 1883, 13). However, it soon became apparent that in order to keep converts from returning to the United Brethren Church, the group needed more structure. The first annual conference of the United Christian Church was held in 1869, at which George W. Hoffman was elected to be the pastor. Assistants to Hoffman would be used if needed and would be governed by the Word of God (History 1957, 6). The core principles of the church are outlined in *History of the United Christian Church*:

Later a conference was held at Brightbill’s Meeting House, where, after considerable discussion, a declaration of principles or confession of faith, of which the following is a part, was adopted: “We believe in a universal United Christian Church, and that all truly converted persons belong to this church. We repudiate infant baptism, human slavery, secret societies, and the voluntary bearing of arms.” (History 1957, 7)

Members who wished to join the church were to be asked three questions:

1. Have you now peace with God?
2. Are you a member of oath-bound secret combinations?

3. Conformity to the world in apparel, etc., shall not be allowed (History 1957, 9).

The United Christian Church grew from this unstable beginning to eventually establishing sixteen different congregations through Central Pennsylvania, building a retirement home, and holding an annual week long camp-meeting in the third week in August (History 1957, 12).

### **United Christian Principles**

The first discipline of American Methodism (1784) suggested, “gaining knowledge is a good thing, but saving souls is better – If you can do but one, let your studies alone (Yoder 1961, 82).” This foundational principle, although never formally stated, weaves itself throughout the official documents of the United Church. In the 1922 publication of the Discipline of the United Christian Church, Chapter VI, Ministry of the Church, Section 1 District Conference Preachers How Licensed, Article 1, states:

Any person wishing to obtain license to preach, must obtain, from the class of which he is and has been a member for at least one year, just preceding , a recommendation, supported by at least two-thirds of the votes cast at a meeting called and duly announced for that purpose at least four weeks beforehand, in writing, signed by the leader or preacher in charge, to the district conference of the circuit, station or mission to which he belongs, which may license him, providing he can give satisfactory evidence of his call, experience, soundness in doctrine, and attachment to our church and government. The district conference, and the following questions shall be asked by the chairman.

- (1) Do you believe our Confession of Faith as set forth in our Book of Discipline?
  - (2) Have you now peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?
  - (3) What is your motive in desiring permission to preach the gospel?
  - (4) Are you satisfied with our church government?
  - (5) Will you submit to the counsel of your brethren?
  - (6) What is your knowledge of depravity, or redemption, of faith, of repentance, of justification, and of sanctification?
- (Discipline 1922, 32-33)

The current (2011) Presiding elder of the United Christian Church, David W Heagy, obtained his license by following the above guidelines in 1974. He is by trade a farmer, owning several farms in Lebanon County, distributing Pioneer Seed and specializing in custom farm work. He obtained his preaching license by the process mentioned here, without collegiate training (History 1977, 88). His predecessor in the presiding elder position from 2006 to 2010 was John Graybill (Minutes 2006, 5), who obtained his license by the process mentioned above in 1956 with the date of his Annual License being 1957 (History 1977, 88). John P. Ludwig Jr. served in the position from 1990 to 2006. His District License was issued in 1973, and he, likewise, was not a college graduate. The presiding elder of the church from 1965 to 1990 was Henry C. Heagy. His Date of District License was 1947 and Date of Ordination was 1952 (History 1977, 88). Rev. Heagy, by trade, was a farmer and after hearing the call from God obtained his License from the United Christian church through the above process. In order to supplement and guide his learning he purchased a set of Biblical commentaries and attended evening classes at the Myerstown Seminary.

It has been observed by historians such as Don Yoder that the United Christians seem to be a combination of the “Plain Dutch” and the “Bush-Meeting Dutch.” Although a few of the younger generation have adopted plain dress and the prayer covering, these traditions of “plainness” are more common in the older generations (Yoder 1961, 162). Part of this “Plain Dutch” culture is a resistance towards extensive higher education. Kreider elaborates on this concept in the following paragraph from her Master’s thesis:

Elementary education he [the Dutchman] always considered important; but the advanced education he feared as a disintegrating force, not only in the religious field but also in the social structure-leading away from



simple rural life, and , not least important, from the German to the English language. (Kreider 1957, 8)

### **Summary**

In this chapter the following have been addressed: the settlement of German immigrants in Pennsylvania, the history of the United Brethren in Christ Church and the beginning of the United Christian Church. The Germans immigrated to Pennsylvania in order to escape the political and religious turmoil of Europe. By 1750 they had established a strong community in the central Pennsylvania area which had a positive impact on the growing colony.

The United Brethren in Christ Church was established through the partnership of Philip William Otterbein and Martin Boehm who both worked as preachers in the mid-Atlantic region. They emphasized a spiritual conversion experience. Around the same time as the birth of the United Brethren in Christ Church, a Second Great Awakening was occurring in America. This brought with it the religious institution of the camp meeting which became very popular in the Pennsylvania Dutch region.

The United Christian Church separated from the United Brethren Church over the issues of infant baptism, the voluntary possession of arms and the participation of members in oath-bound societies. The formal education of pastors was also frowned upon by the leaders of the United Christian Church who believed that “knowledge puffeth up.”

### Chapter 3

#### **The Pennsylvania Spiritual**

I do believe without the doubt, the Methodist has a right to shout

-Camp meeting creed (Yoder 1961, 41)

#### **Folk Singing among the Pennsylvania Dutch**

During a camp meeting, singing was used to help transition and fuel the various moods of the emotional exercises. Singing, as it turned out, was a specialty among the Pennsylvania Dutch.

Folk singing in general was enjoyed frequently and heartily by the Pennsylvania Dutch culture for decades before the Second Great Awakening. In contrast to folk music of the Ozark Mountains which favored a “sad” ballade type folk song, the Dutchmen preferred the humorous tale with a spirited melody. They sang about the common topics of a farming community: birth, courtship, marriage, family, and, naturally, farming (Boyer et al. 1951, 15). Cumulative folksongs, also called “pile-up” songs, were very popular among traditional Dutch folksongs. *Songs Along the Mantatongo* records six different pile-up songs ranging from children and courtship songs to songs for drinking (Boyer et al. 1951, 16). A popular piece for men’s chorus, *Johnny Smoker*, arranged by Gary Lewis, is a pile-up song from the Pennsylvania Dutch and encourages animated motions.

#### **Birth of the Pennsylvania Spiritual**

If the bush-meetings provided a vehicle for the Pennsylvania Dutch Spiritual, then the Methodist revival system started the ignition (Yoder 1961, 4). The combination

of the bush meeting needs of a quick easy tune and the Methodist means of providing circuit preachers, who could then carry the spiritual with them from town to town, resulted in a birth of a new kind of religious song, the Pennsylvania Spiritual.

Typically during the bush meetings, spiritual choruses would be started by the preachers or begun spontaneously from within the congregations, with the entire populace able to join in after the first few lines. Don Yoder described this process in the first chapter of *Pennsylvania Spirituals*:

For the camp-meeting crowds, the spiritual replaced the more staid hymnody and psalmody of the colonial sects and churches. The spirituals were live rather than literary. They were folk-dominated rather than clergy dominated. Hymnbooks were discarded. Many of the frontiersmen were illiterate; besides, it was difficult to read the words of a hymn to a flickering torch-light at a night-session of the camp-meeting – or when one had one's arms around a fellow "mourner." Furthermore, with the easily recognizable pattern of the spirituals, the camp-meeting crowds could retain in their memories dozens of songs, and the old-school services of the presenter of the colonial churches, who "lined out" or "deaconed" the literary hymns, were no longer a necessity. Nor was the music complicated; in fact it was so "folksy" that high-church critics of camp-meeting evangelism accused the revivalists of singing "street songs" and "vulgar tunes," and Pennsylvania Presbyterians spoke of them as "Kitty Clyde tunes and 'ragtime' ditties." It was a case where, in John Wesley's words, the church had appropriated the Devils' tunes. (Yoder 1961, 6)

A new type of religious music emerged, not composed by established musicians to the text of educated theologians, but from the voices and hearts of people themselves (Ersben 2002, 8).

The success of a Pennsylvania Spiritual song relied on three main components: the music had to be easy enough to quickly learn, the text had to be simple enough for the illiterate crowds to remember, and the message had to be hearty enough to still have

meaning even after the twentieth repetition. Reflecting the melting pot nature of the Americas, the Pennsylvania Spiritual was a product of many surrounding influences. A spiritual typically has are three elements: the chorus text, the verse text and the tune. Each of these could potentially come from a different source. Each of these elements is addressed in the following sections.

### **Text of the Spirituals**

Some of the lyrics were lines borrowed from English hymns (Buffington 1965, 9). After studying the collection for some time, Don Yoder concluded that about a third of the texts were borrowed from the lighter, gospel hymnody that was prominent in the First Great Awakening and afterwards (Yoder 1961, 343). He was able to attribute over sixty Pennsylvania Spirituals from his collection to this origin. Two examples of this, *Hollich oof Da Reis* (Happy on the way) and *Yaisoo Nawm, O Vee Seess* (Precious Name, Oh How Sweet) (see Appendix.)

Other lyrics depict the salvation experience and the longing to go to home to Heaven. These themes are thought to stem from verses written by American-born German Evangelical hymnists such as Johannes Walter who lived in the Uniontown, Pennsylvania and died in 1818 (Yoder 1961, 354). The German hymns are found in a collection called *Das Geistliche Saitenspiel*, the first collection of spiritual songs published by the Evangelicals specifically for the bush meeting Dutch in 1817 (Buffington 1965, 8). The authors of this book are Johannes Walter, Heinrich Niebel and Johannes Dreisbach (Buffington 1965, 8). This publication was soon followed by other chorus books including *Die Kleine Geistliche Viole* (Buffington 1965, 9). Three hymns in

particular provided favorable “wandering couplet” verses which were used in conjunction with choruses. *Ernuntert, euch, ihr Frommen* was one of the three hymns, written by Laurentius Laurenti sometime in his lifespan from 1660-1722. This hymn contains either ten or six verses, depending on the edition of *Geistliche Viole*, consulted. The second hymn, with no formal title or author, depicts the journey of the pilgrims from the wilderness to the banks of the Jordan. This hymn had ten verses for the bush-meeting Dutch to use as they saw fit. The final hymn mentioned by Buffington had 18 verses (Buffington 1965, 14).

There is only one known instance of a chorus that started out in Dutch country and was adopted by the mainstream Anglo-American churches (Yoder 1961, 348). *Oon Van Dar Komp Fabei Iss* (And When the Battle’s Over) is this exception (see Appendix).

### **Sources of the Tunes**

When singing a text borrowed from an English or Dutch hymn, the Pennsylvania Dutch would also sing the accompanying tune (Yoder 1961, 343). In the other cases, the tunes sometimes came from less formal sources such as popular folk songs. This happened for everyday entertainment purposes as well as for religious purposes. For instance, the tune of *Yankee Doodle* was set by the Dutch to an eight-stanza lament of a boy leaving to become a soldier on the Canadian frontier (Boyer et al. 1951, 174). The tune of *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean* was set to a Dutch sacred text which resulted in the song *O Himmel, O Himmel, Vee Seess Bisht Doo* (O Heaven, O Heaven, How Sweet Thou Art) (see Appendix). The following are the English lyrics to *Come to Jesus Just Now* to the tune of *Found a Peanut Just Now* or *O My Darling Clementine*.

Come to Jesus, come to Jesus, come to Jesus, just now

Just now come to Jesus, come to Jesus, just now

He will save you, etc.  
 He is able, etc.  
 He is willing, etc.  
 He is waiting, etc.  
 He will hear you, etc.  
 He will cleanse you, etc.  
 He'll renew you, etc.  
 He'll forgive you, etc.  
 O believe it, etc.  
 He is calling, etc.  
 Come poor sinners, etc.  
 Come and welcome, etc.  
 Come, my neighbors, etc.  
 Get religion, etc.  
 Do not linger, etc.  
 Christ may leave you, etc.  
 Time is flying, etc.  
 Pray on, brethren, etc. (Behney 1891, 30)

### Common Forms

The common forms of the Pennsylvania Spiritual are greatly influenced by the various sources of origin. The first form carried over from the hymn tradition in what Don Yoder labeled as simple “chorus verse” (Yoder 1961, 13). An example of this is *Loabet Een!* (Praise Him!) (see Appendix) which has an original chorus yet borrows its verse from the Dutch hymn *Mein Gemuth erfreuet sich* (Yoder 1961, 262).

“Friendshoft” or friendship songs are the second category found in the Pennsylvania Spiritual repertoire (Yoder 1961, 16). Instead of adding a new element to each verse, as happened in the pile-up songs, these songs would replace the main subject of the verse, usually with a family position such as father, mother, sister or brother, until all relations have been addressed. An example of this is the Dutch chorus *Keini als*

*Grerchden schauden Gott* (No One But the Righteous Will See God). The following is

an English translation:

Chorus:

No, no, no, no

None but the righteous will see God

No, no, no, no

None but the righteous will see God

1. And when I get to Heaven,  
None but the righteous will see God  
There I'll meet my brothers  
None but the righteous will see God
2. And when I get to Heaven  
None but the righteous will see God  
There I'll meet my sisters  
None but the righteous will see God
3. And when I get to Heaven  
None but the righteous will see God  
There I'll meet my friends  
None but the righteous will see God
4. And when I get to Heaven  
None but the righteous will see God  
There I'll meet my Savior  
None but the righteous will see God  
(Buffington 1965, 129)

An English example of this is "Tis the Old kind of Religion."

Tis the old kind religion, tis the old kind religion,  
Tis the old kind religion, and tis good enough for me.

It was good for our fathers, etc.  
It was good for our mothers, etc.  
It was good for our brothers, etc.  
It was good for our sisters, etc.  
It was good for the praying Daniel, etc.  
It was good for the Hebrew children, etc.  
It was good for Paul and Silas, etc.  
It makes the soul and body happy, etc.

It does lead us home to Heaven, etc.  
 There we'll walk and talk with Jesus, etc. (Behney 1891, 38)

The third classification is identified through the use of an interpolated rhyme pair (Yoder 1961, 14). The defining characteristic of this class is the presence a returning chorus. The chorus would usually contain two lines with an answering phrase, such as “hallelujah” after each line.

Sing on, pray on, we're gaining ground  
 (Oh, halle- Oh, hallelujah)  
 The power of God is coming down  
 (Oh halle- Oh Halleljuah)

Another small variation of this is found in the chorus *Bless the Lord, O My Soul*.

Bless the Lord, O My Soul  
 (Glory Hallelujah)  
 Bless the Lord, O My Soul  
 (Praise Ye the Lord)

Inserted between the chorus repetitions were two lines of rhyming text. This text was either original to the bush meeting Dutch, taken from Dutch hymns or a Dutch translation of an English hymn (Buffington 1965, 8). The following are English translations of verse texts that would “float” among the choruses:

It was so dark I could not see  
 (answer)  
 My savior brought a light to me  
 (answer)

My savior shook the manna tree  
 Some fell for you and some for me

The more the people have to say  
 The more I'll sing, the more I'll pray

I'm going to a better land



The home of Jesus, my best friend

If you get there before I do  
Look out for me I'm coming too

If I get there before you do  
I'll shout to see you coming too (Behney 1891, 51)

This structure lent itself easily to call and response. If all the congregants were not familiar with a particular verse set they would always be able to join in during the responses. This response characteristic is very common among the Pennsylvania Spirituals.

That's how our spirituals were composed! The "chorus" which was sung first, last, and in between, is usually the most important part of the song. What was sung in between the choruses didn't matter too much-it could be two rhyming lines from the hymnbooks, or it could be something that arose spontaneously – out of the spiritual joy of the moment. And what was sung in between from valley to valley, while the choruses, carried as they were from place to place by the circuit riders, stayed pretty much the same. This varying from place to place and the fact that they were often in Pennsylvania Dutch rather than in High German, makes them folksongs rather than literary hymns! (Boyer et al. 1951, 200)

### **Summary**

Presented in this chapter were the circumstances that gave rise to the Pennsylvania Spiritual. This includes the strong folk culture of the Pennsylvania Dutch which included folk singing as well as the camp meeting revival services that relied heavily on emotional outbursts.

Three things were necessary in order for a Pennsylvania Spiritual to stay within the chorus cannon. The tune needed to be easily learned and thus many of the tunes were fragments of existing hymns. Other tunes were taken from popular folk songs at the

time. Second, the text also needed to be easy to remember. A chorus text often consisted of two or three short phrases that were repeated throughout the spiritual. Verse texts would usually rhyme and were often stolen from popular Dutch or English hymns. Call and response tactics were also used to aid in memory. Lastly, the spiritual needed to emphasize an emotional conversion experience as was the platform of the Dutch religious leaders of the day.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Pennsylvania Spirituals in the United Christian Church**

Although the United Brethren and Methodist churches were at one time heavily involved in the spiritual chorus tradition it does not exist in their services today.

However, the United Christian Church, which split away from the United Brethren Church in 1868, does still use the spirituals in their camp meeting services. This chapter explores the developments in the churches that may have led to these results.

#### **Methodist Resistance**

As mentioned in chapter two, Pennsylvania Spirituals were often looked down upon by members of more established churches. They were called “Kitty Clyde tunes and ragtime” (Yoder 1961, 6). Hence, it should come as no surprise that their continued use in services in the second half of the 1800s was met with growing resistance.

The technological advances of the Industrial Revolution brought new wealth to farming communities in the growing American nation (Montagna 2011). As the country towns where many Methodists resided began to adjust socio-economically to the increased wealth, the residents and congregational members fought to distance themselves from the emotional exercises that were signatures of the bush meeting Dutch (Yoder 1961, 139). At the semi-centennial anniversary of American Methodism in 1826, Freeborn Garrettson called on the gathered leaders to return to the neglected service guidelines outlined by John Wesley. A renewed interest in the Methodist liturgical

heritage was born and many educated church members found themselves embracing the formal styles of worship and being enamored by beauty of hymn verse (Kinghorn 1999, 132).

A Methodist circuit preacher of the Phoenixville-Charlestown area noted that at a large, prosperous and “intelligent” gathering, a few members would show protest against the singing of spiritual choruses. He writes, “There were several brothers who were exceedingly opposed to the singing of any but Church Hymns and more especially Choruses. One aged brother would put his fingers in his ears” (Yoder 1961, 139). Soon, the Methodist hymnal (which did not contain the spiritual chorus) became the primary source of repertoire for congregational singing (Yoder 1961, 139). Directions for singing found in the preface of the United Methodist hymnal instruct the following:

II. Sing them [the songs contained] exactly as you see them printed here, without alteration or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can

V. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voice together, so as to make one clear melodious sound. (United Methodist Hymnal 1989, vii)

These two of the seven guidelines, penned by John Wesley in 1761, essentially prohibit the use of the spiritual chorus as sung by the bush meeting Dutch.

### **A Fading Tradition**

In 1861, the members of the United Brethren Church’s General Conference in order to encourage hearty congregational singing decided that “we. . . kindly forbid the introduction of choirs into any of our churches.” However, the reaction against the mandate was strong enough that by 1869 the wording had been changed to “we hereby

earnestly advise our societies to avoid the introduction of choirs and instrumental music into their worship services” (Behney and Eller 1979, 161). The 1896 version of the Methodist Episcopal Church contained a set of guidelines for a new order of public worship (Kinghorn 1999, 132). These developments in the churches’ music platforms caused the spiritual chorus tradition, which relies heavily unaccompanied congregation singing, to flounder in popularity and plausibility.

By the 1900s the trend away from the chorus had been successful enough that they were now used as the subject of nostalgic anecdotes. A Lancaster County native in 1895 stated:

Our fathers were much given to the singing of choruses. The poetry of some of these hymns was rather defective. Figures are often mixed and incongruous; they rhythm and general structure of the verse very inartistic. But they were generally expressive of stern, strong Biblical truth. Sometimes terrifically so. These were sung. Not always or often in accord with the science of music, but uniformly with an impetuosity and volume of sound that would throw any fastidious people of to-day into hysterics. There was a heart in it, and a full heart too. (Yoder 1961, 154)

Dr. Ezra Grumbine of Lebanon County gave this heartfelt memory entitled “An Old Time Religious Meeting,”

How simple were the little hymns sung there! How fervid were their unpretentious Pennsylvania German prayers! How full of music were their quaint choruses and rhythmic chants!

No loud-clanging bell called them together; no deeptoned organ accompanied their hearty voices in song: no learned, college-bred priest explained to them the difference between ecclesiastical tweedledee and tweedledum and yet they carried home with them in their simple hearts much peace and charity on that beautiful Sabbath forenoon three score years ago. (Yoder 1961, 155)

Such was the lament of many a Dutchman at the turn of the twenty-first century. However, this was not the case within the United Christian Church whose foundation was built upon the thought that education and sophistication “puffeth up.”

### **Music in the United Christian Church**

Near the back to the 1922 Discipline of United Christian Church under Chapter XIV, Moral Reform – Temperance, Section VII, Instrumental Music, it states:

While we recognize the value of musical instruments in voice-cultures and musical training, we believe that their introduction into the public worship has a tendency to lead into formality and the introduction of choirs to the restriction of congregational singing, which we believe to be the most spiritual form of singing. In view of this sentiment we advise our classes not to introduce musical instruments into our Sunday School and church services. (Disciple 1922, 77)

Under the same chapter in the 1950 printing of the Discipline, Section IX, Congregational Singing, was added, “All song services shall be limited to congregational singing” (Discipline 1950, 78).

This was in accordance with the viewpoint of Martin Boehm; “worship and Bible study are to be undertaken under the guidance of the Holy Spirit” (Behney and Eller 1979, 40). Songbooks for singing in English were initially banned in the early years of the church but eventually came into regular use (Kreider 1957, 58). One of the approved chorus booklets was a collection of German and English chorus and hymn lyrics printed by W. H. Behney, a member of the Annville United Christian Church. The collection contains hymns such as *Nearer My God, to Thee* and *Pass Me Not* as well as Pennsylvania Spirituals such as *Sing on, Pray on* and *Come to Jesus Just Now*. Another book which contained choruses was the *Die Geistliche Viole* (Kreider 1957, 60). This

little book of Dutch spirituals was first published in 1818 in New Berlin, Pennsylvania and went on to have many later editions (Buffington 1965, 8). The hymn book used by the United Christians for many years was a collection called *Spiritual Songs and Hymns*. This book contained favorites of the gospel tradition such as songs by P.P. Bliss and Fanny Crosby. It does not contain any Dutch choruses or hymns.

Consequently, the United Christian congregations relied heavily on a song base with which they had long been familiar in order to fill their services with singing. The evidence that this tradition remained strong within the church until the 1950s is found in the experiences of church attendees, documented by Don Yoder and Mary Catherine Kreider.

Don Yoder visited a United Christian Prayer Meeting in 1960 (over half a century after Dr. Grumbine's lament) at the United Christian Church in Annville and recorded what he observed:

The service began with song, and enthusiastic chorus-singing punctuated the long periods of prayer and testimony. . . . The choruses were sung with a moving wholeheartedness which characterizes United Christian worship. The singing was from the heart. Some of the songs were harmonized, since the United Christian discourage instrumental accompaniment, and hence develop their congregational singing to heights that few main-stream Protestant congregations reach.

Individuals began choruses. It seems that anyone could "start" a chorus, and as long as verses were forthcoming, the singing continued, using the chorus as basis. Then another chorus and another set of verses—sometimes drawn from the same hymns as previously, but sung now to a different tune. . . .

Since the meeting was bilingual, the invitation to prayer was given in both Dutch and English. . . .

. . . . When the sign for prayer was given, the saints turned about and knelt, facing their chairs. Each one gave his own prayer—for unison prayer would be unthinkable in these groups, where individual expression is exalted over the corporate aspects of church life. When the prayers began and each member gave his own prayer, the room fairly hummed with

prayer, and I multiplied it mentally into what it must have sounded like at the old-time bush-meetings where thousands prayed their agonized prayers at once. . .

After more prayers, and fresh round of chorus-singing, the testimonies began. Some of these were Dutch and some were English, but they all expressed the struggle of life, the joys of salvation, and the hope of heaven.

The United Christian, as one of the smallest of the bush-meeting sects, are among the last to preserve chorus-singing as a socially meaningful function. (Yoder 1961, 184)

Mary Katherine Kreider attended a United Christian Camp-meeting in 1956 and had this to say about the singing:

Most of the songs were sung from memory; others from a small book [Behney]. The songs themselves would seem to fall into three groups: (1) Those brought over from Germany and Switzerland and sung by generations of PG's [Pennsylvania German's]; (2) translations of English and American Songs and choruses; and (3) those improvised within PG communities when emotional fervor ran high in "revival meetin," camp-meeting, or fellowship meetings. This third group was mostly in the nature of choruses or the adaptation of some favorite phrase to a familiar, lively tune—"the Pennsylvania Dutch Spiritual."(Kreider 1957, 59)

The various members of the congregation are at liberty to "raise the tune"; and sometimes different hymns are started at the same time; or, if a number from the book has been announced, several may happen to start the same number at different pitches or by more than one tune; but they achieve unity in an amazingly short interval of time. (Kreider 1957, 58)

All singing is congregational, with evident enjoyment and a ringing zest- in spite of the fact that the singing frequently lags. When the new hired man of one of the farmer preachers attended the UC camp-meeting for the first time, he said, "Datt drowwe singe sie, ass der Bode schittelt" (Up there they sing that the ground shakes.)(Kreider 1957, 58)

The a cappella tradition continued to be very strong from the times of these observations in 1956 and 1960 to the beginning of the next decade. However, in 1975, the debate over appropriate music in the religious service arose at the annual conferences.



This debate continued for five years before being resolved, as is demonstrated in the following:

The Balsbaugh, Manada, and Palmyra District Conference Petitions the Annual Conference to permit the use of other musical instruments besides the piano and the organ in Young People's Groups, Bible Schools, Sunday Schools and Missionary Meetings.

A motion was made to adapt the petition which was seconded and carried. (Minutes 1975, 11)

The District Conference of Balsbaugh, Manada and Palmyra petitions the Annual Conference to delete Chapter Sixteen, Section IX, so as to permit other than congregation singing in our worship service.

It was moved and seconded to adapt the petition.

It was moved to amend the petition that the class would vote to make the final decision. The Amendment was seconded and carried. The motion as amended was lost. (Minutes 1976, 7)

We hereby move to delete Chapter Sixteen, Section IX, so as to permit other than congregational singing in our worship services, provided, however, it shall be approved by the local class before use thereof.

Motion by, C. Enos Heisey  
Seconded by, Amos H. Leman

Motion Lost. (Minutes 1977, 7)

The district conference of Palmyra, Manada, and Balsbaughs petitions Annual Conference to delete Chapter 16, Section 9 so as to permit other than congregational singing in out worship services.

Each class would determine whether it does or does not desire to have other than congregational singing by a majority vote. The votes to be cast at a time and place announced at least four weeks in advanced.

Henry C. Heagy, Presiding Elder  
C. Enos Heisey, Secretary

It was accepted for discussion by supported motion. Seconded and carried.

By supported motion it was moved we adopt this petition. Seconded and adopted by ballot with more than a 2/3 majority. (Minutes 1979, 6-7)

Recordings of United Christian singing have been made in conjunction with the annual camp meeting that occurs during the third week of August. The worship services and evangelistic messages were recorded on tape or CD and made available for purchase. The tapes from the mid-1970s reveal that at this time the singing at the camp-meeting was all a cappella. At first, the sound of the singing is rather harsh, due in part to the condition of the tape, but also displays the heartiness of United Christian singing and chorus singing in general, as the above accounts have mentioned. The minister behind the pulpit microphone was a prominent voice, but a very full chorus of men and women can be heard as well.

Instrumental music was fully accepted by the United Christian Church in 1996.

The minutes from that year's conference state:

The Ministerial Association of the United Christian Church makes the following recommendation in relation to music at the United Christian Campmeeting:

We recommend that Chapter XIII, paragraph 2, (page 47 of the Discipline) be deleted and the following inserted in its place:

“Congregation and/or special singing may be used in all religious services. Musical instruments may also be used.”

It was moved that we adopt this petition. Seconded and passed by a 2/3 majority vote (Minutes 1996, 6-7).

Shortly after this amendment, a piano was brought into the camp-meeting tabernacle to be used during the worship services in order to aid in the singing. Many congregants looked upon this with distrust but the piano remains there to this day and is used regularly during the summer services. At one time there was a United Christian

concert band that would practice periodically and play at special occasions. Youth revival services at the campgrounds utilize guitars.

Pennsylvania Spirituals are kept alive in the United Christian Church through a small green booklet printed in celebration of centennial year of the Cleona Camp-meeting activities. Printed on the first page are these words:

SONGS WE'VE LOVED TO SING is a collection of English and Pennsylvania German songs and choruses sung at Cleona Campmeeting and in our churches over the years.

As far as we know, the English songs with music are no longer within their copyright and are now public domain. Some of those without music we have never seen in print. Our people simply sang them from their hearts and their memories, many times around the altar during the altar call.

Special thanks is given to Don Yoder for giving permission to use several Pennsylvania German songs and choruses included in his book "Pennsylvania Spirituals." We have taken the privilege of making a few slight changes in the wording of some of these songs to reflect our local usage of the Pennsylvania German dialect. The English Choruses added below the German are our words as we sing them.

The booklet is printed with the hope that these songs will help present and future generations to catch the spirit, the fervor, and the faith of our forefathers in their worship. Please join us in singing to the glory of God as we celebrate 100 years of Campmeetings here at Cleona (Songs 1996, 1).

### **Summary**

The focus of this chapter was to contrast the life of the Pennsylvania Spiritual outside of the United Christian Church to that of the life of the Pennsylvania Spiritual within the United Christian Church. In the Methodist and United Brethren Churches the spiritual singing tradition was forgotten due in part to efforts by these churches to appeal to congregants of the rising middle class. The spirituals were seen by some as too unruly and emotional-not appropriate for the house of God.

Within the United Christian Church, the spirituals were valued as an essential part of the Dutch heritage. Based in the beliefs of Martin Boehm, congregational singing was the only musical medium allowed within the United Christian Church up until the 1970s. Although lighter gospel hymns were introduced into the church's musical cannon, the spiritual chorus singing remained strong. In the past decades, with the introduction of instruments into the worship services, the spirituals use has been less frequent.

## Chapter 5

### Summary

The author's interest in this research stemmed from years of fond memories at the United Christian Cleona Camp-grove. Her family, extended and immediate, is intricately involved in the camp meeting that occurs there every third week in August. It was here that she was introduced to what is now known by her to be Pennsylvania Spirituals.

The starting point of the research was *Songs We've Loved to Sing*. This is a small collection of English and Dutch choruses printed by the United Christian Church. The original plan was to track down the sources of the tunes and provide a small history on each of them. However, once it was discovered that *Songs We've Loved to Sing* was the last tattered fragment of a once rich heritage fabric, the focus of the thesis shifted. No longer was the primary concern about locating the source of the tunes (Don Yoder had done this work earlier) but about discovering how and why they are still being sung, two hundred years after their inception. This thesis explores the history and characteristics of the United Christian Church in relation to the preservation of the spiritual tradition.

The first step was to learn everything possible about the Pennsylvania Spiritual. Don Yoder's book, *Pennsylvania Spirituals*, aided greatly in this quest, as well as Dutch folk-singing books by Albert Buffington, and Walter Boyer. The main thing the author

learned by reading these sources was that the Pennsylvania Spiritual was a product of the Dutch folk-singing tradition and the camp meeting institution.

Next, the author looked into the principles and history of the United Christian Church in order to determine why the Pennsylvania Spiritual has been able to continue there; elsewhere it has gone extinct. This was done by looking at historical documents such as the printed history, and annual conference minutes provided to the author by leaders of the United Christian Church. A master's thesis mention in *Pennsylvania Spirituals*, Mary Katherine Kreider's *Languages and Folklore of the "Hoffmansleit" (United Christians)*, also helped. It was discovered that the United Christian Church split away from the United Brethren in Christ Church over disputes about the higher education of preachers, infant baptism, the voluntary bearing of arms and membership in secret societies. Essential also are the facts that the church favors lighter gospel hymns and the chorus tradition and did not allow anything besides congregational singing in the worship services until 1979. In order to supplement the book research, the author also listened to tape recordings of the worship services at the Cleona Campmeeting as well as attending the services. Additionally, she talked to several United Christian members about the use of the spiritual in recent years.

Other research that was conducted includes the history of the Pennsylvania Dutch region. An important resource for this portion was an 800 plus page volume by William Henry Egle, *History of the Counties of Dauphin and Lebanon in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Biographical and Genealogical*. This volume contained interesting insights into the characteristics of the Pennsylvania Dutchmen, such as their distrust of government and their strength of community.

### **Future Research**

The author has only been exposed to the singing traditions of the United Christian Church because of her family's involvement in the church. There are other churches, such as the United Zion Church, in the Pennsylvania Dutch area that broke away from the United Brethren in Christ and Methodist churches before they eliminated the use of the spiritual. Further research is needed to determine if the Pennsylvania Spirituals are still sung in these other Dutch churches.

Further research could also be conducted on the use of Pennsylvania Spirituals within the Plain Mennonite community in the Pennsylvania Dutch region. These communities maintain a strong Pennsylvania Dutch culture and it would not be surprising to discover that they still regularly sing choruses in Dutch. Interestingly, the Amish culture does not use the Pennsylvania Spirituals. They still sing plain chant from the Ausbund hymnal which dates back to 1583 (Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online).

The relationship between the Pennsylvania Spiritual's use within the United Christian Church and the introduction of non-congregational singing and musical instruments in the worship services could also be researched.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

After spending much time researching the Pennsylvania Spiritual and the history and principles of the United Christian Church, it is the author's conclusion that the church's adoption of Philip Otterbein's platform on music in the worship service, the distrust of the higher educational institutions and the decision to continue traditions has led to the preservation of Pennsylvania Spirituals within the United Christian Church.

When researchers such as Don Yoder and Mary Katherine Kreider observed United Christian worship services in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they saw a spiritual chorus tradition that was still very strong. They noted that at that time the original Dutch language was still used in chorus singing. It would still be twenty years before the United Christians would vote to allow non-congregation singing in the service and thirty years before instruments would be acceptable in any United Christian service or program. This indicates that the chorus and gospel hymn tradition continued through the 1970s. It would only be in the 1980s that these longstanding musical pillars would start to crumble under the weight of changing trends in sacred music.

The final generation that grew up learning the spiritual chorus in the United Christian Church is now beginning to enter retirement. The following generations are not as well grounded in the tradition although they still find interest and novelty in it. In order for the spiritual tradition to continue to be valued as a cultural and religious heirloom, the congregants of the United Christian Church must be educated in its use and history. Such education will no doubt leave the bush meeting Dutch descendant with a renewed sense of pride in their heritage.

“The field of folk arts is nurtured in America’s communities, providing for the reinvigoration and sustenance of community strength around the concerns that all American’s share” (Pennecamp 1996, 6). These words, spoken by Peter Pennecamp, preface the *Changing Faces of Tradition* report put out by the National Endowment for the Arts. It is my hope that through the research done for this honors thesis, I will be able to do exactly just that: reinvigorate and build the strength of my community by rediscovering and bringing to light the rich folk music heritage nurtured therein.



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**Appendix**  
**Pennsylvania Spirituals**

The following are taken from *Pennsylvania Spirituals* by Don Yoder (used with permission from the Pennsylvania Folklife Society Collection at Ursinus College).

Happy on the Way (Shoon Hollich Ouf da Reisai)

Precious name, O How Sweet (Yaisoo Nawm, O Vee Seess)

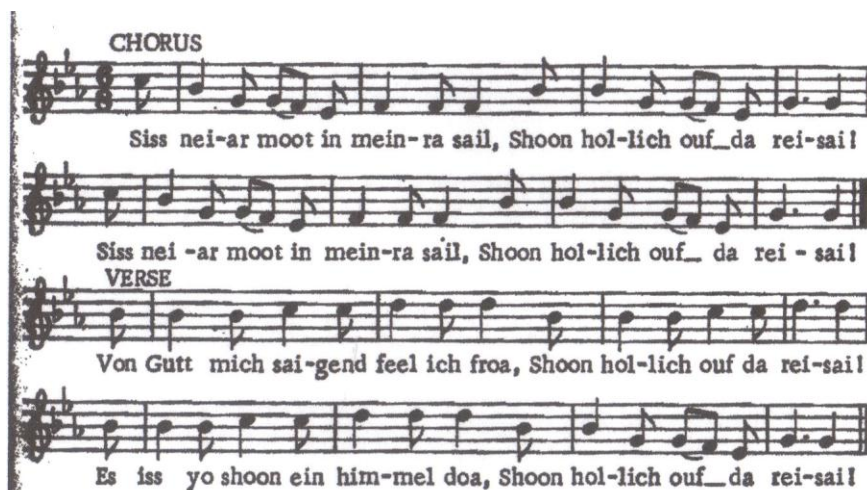
And When The Battle's Over (Oon Von Dar Komp Fabei Iss)

O Heaven, O Heaven, How Sweet Thou Art (O Himmel, O Himmel, Vee  
Seess Bisht Doo)

Praise Him (Loabet Een!)

## #1 – Happy On The Way

CHORUS



Siss nei-ar moot in mein-ra sail, Shoon hol-lich ouf da rei-sail

Siss nei -ar moot in mein-ra sail, Shoon hol-lich ouf da rei - sail

VERSE

Von Gutt mich sai-gend feel ich froa, Shoon hol-lich ouf da rei-sail

Es iss yo shoon ein him-mel doa, Shoon hol-lich ouf da rei-sail

## Chorus

Siss neiar moot in meinra sail,  
Shoon hollich ouf da reisail

## Verse

Ven Gutt mich saigend feel ich froa,  
Shoon hollich ouf da reisail  
Es iss you shoon ein himmel doa,  
Shoon hollich ouf da reisail

*Translation: There's new courage in my soul, already happy on the way! 1. When God blesses me I feel happy—already happy on the way! It's just like Heaven here below—already happy on the way!*

Recorded from Clarence Wagner, Annville, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, March 10, 1961.

## #2- Precious Name, O How Sweet

CHORUS



Yai-soo nawm, o vee seess!— Freid im him-mel oond uuf  
aird! Yai-soo nawm, o vee seess!— Freid im him-mel

VERSE

oond uuf aird! Yai-soo, Yai-soo, broon des lai-bens,  
Shtell, o shtell dich bei oons ein, Doss veer yet - soond  
nicht fer - gai - bens Veer-ken oond bei-som- men sein.

## Chorus

Yaisoo nawm, O vee sess!  
Freid im himmel oond uuf aird.  
Yaisoo nawm, O vee seess!  
Freid im himmel oond uuf aird.

## Verse

1. Yaisoo, Yaisoo, broon des laibens,  
Shtell, O shtell dich bei oons ein,  
Dos veer yetsoond nicht fergaibens  
Veerken oond beisommen sein.
2. Och, se vairden bold mit freiden  
Ous da velt-gamein-shoft gain,  
Oon bei Yaisoo bloot oon leiden  
Fesht oon oon-ba-vaiglich shtain.

*Translation: Jesus' name, O how sweet! Joy in heaven and in earth. 1. Jesus, Jesus, fountain of life, come into our midst, that we may not now work and be together in vain. 2. O, they will soon go rejoicing out of this world community, and stand fast and immovable on Jesus' blood and sufferings.*

Recorded from Clarence Wagner, Annville, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, March 10, 1961. The chorus is "Precious name, O how sweet," which is part of the gospel-song, "Take the name of Jesus with you." It is used here independently of its gospel-song connections and becomes the basis for a spiritual. Verse § 1 comes from the hymn: *Jesu, Jesu, Brunn des Lebens*; verse § 2 from *Wenn's doch alle Seelen wüssten*.

## #3 O Heaven, O Heaven, How Sweet Thou Art

CHORUS



O him-mel, O him-mel vee seess bisht doo, O him-mel, sees-si  
 roo! Ich vair so gairn voo Yai-soos iss, O him-mel,  
 VERSE  
 sees - si roo! Dott sing - en see yo im - met -  
 da De shen -shta me - lo - dee, De nee - moals  
 heer ga - soong - en voar, Im gon-sen lai-ben heer!

## Chorus

O himmel, O himmel, vee seess bisht doo,  
 O himmel, seessi roo!  
 Ich vair so gairn voo Yaisoos iss,  
 O himmel, seessi roo!

## Verse

Dott singen se yo immer dort  
 De shenshta melodee,  
 De neemools heer gasoongen voar  
 Im gonsen laiben heer.

*Translation: O heaven, O heaven, how sweet thou art, O heaven, sweet rest! I should like so much to be where Jesus is—O heaven, sweet rest! 1. Yonder they sing forever the loveliest song, which was never sung in all of life here below.*

Recorded from the United Christian Prayer and Praise Service, Annville, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, October 18, 1961. The verse is from the hymn: *Kommt Brüder, kommt, wir eilen fort*. A similar version was recorded from Peter M. Kershner of Reading, Pennsylvania, December 9, 1950.

## #4 Praise Him

CHORUS

Loa-bet een, loa-bet een! Dar sein lai-ben feer oons gawb,  
 loa-bet een! Den ar kooimt tsoo oons har - op, Bleibt ga -  
 dool-dich bis ons gawb, Dar sein lai- ben feer oons gawb,

VERSE

loa- bet een! Denk-et duch on yai -nen dawg, Doa mon  
 ai-vich lai -ven mawg, Doa mon ai -vich lai-ven mawg,  
 loa-bet een! Mit den glei-der on-ga-tawn, Dee nee-mond tser-  
 reis-sen kon, Dee nee -mond tser-reis-sen kon, loa-bet een!

## Chorus

Loabet een, loabet een!  
 Dar sei laiben feer oons gawb, loabet een!  
 Den ar kooimt tsoo oons har-op,  
 Bleibt gadooldich bis ons gawb,  
 Dar sein laiben feer oons gawb, loabet een!

## Verse

Denket duch on yainen dawg,  
 Doa mon aivich laiven mawg,  
 Doa mon aivich laiven mawg, loabet een!  
 Mit den gleider on-ga-tawn  
 De neemond tser-reissen kon,  
 De neemond tser-reissen kon, loabet een!

*Translation: Praise Him, praise Him! Who gave His life for us, praise Him! For He came down to us, remained patient to the grave. Who gave His life for us, praise Him! 1. Just think of that day, when we may live for eternity . . . praise Him! Dressed in the clothes that no one can wear out . . . praise Him!*

Recorded at the United Christian Prayer and Praise Service, Annville, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, October 18, 1960. The verse is from the hymn: *Mein Gemüth vertraut sich*

## #5 And When the Battle's Over

CHORUS

Oon von dar komp far - bei iss, Gree -ya meer de groan, —  
 Gree -ya meer de groan, Gree -ya meer de groan. Oon von dar komp far -  
 bei iss, Gree -ya meer de groan. In Nei Ya-roo -sa - lem. —  
 Gree -ya de groan, — gree -ya de groan, — Gree -ya de groan, —  
 gree -ya de groan, Oon von dar komp far - bei iss, Gree -ya meer de  
 groan, — In Nei Ya-roo -sa - lem. —

*English Chorus:*

And when the battle's over we shall wear a crown,  
 . . . in the new Jerusalem.



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