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**Review of Ehnle, Kurt, and Jane Ehnle. 2011. *Heritage of Faith: A History of the Church with an Apostolic Christian Focus*. Fairbury, IL: Heritage Press.**

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Review of Ehnle, Kurt, and Jane Ehnle. 2011. *Heritage of Faith: A History of the Church with an Apostolic Christian Focus*. Fairbury, IL: Heritage Press.

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“Heritage of Faith” is a 367 page ten-unit high school level course prepared for students in Apostolic Christian Church schools and homes. The first three units cover church history from the time of Christ through the Reformation. Units four through eight concentrate on Apostolic Christian Church (ACC) history. Unit nine is a brief history of how the Bible came to us, emphasizing the superiority of the King James Version. Unit ten is a history of hymnology with a focus on *Zion’s Harp*, the official ACC hymnal.

Accompanying the course is a student workbook, an extensive teacher’s guide, and a 23 page list of additional resources. Eighteen 10” by 16” sheets compose a color coded timeline including major events of 2000 years of Christian history. The timeline is a valuable teaching tool and supplement to the *Heritage of Faith* course. This timeline could well be posted around the classroom walls. A smaller version, 6.5” by 10.5” sheets, is also available.

The text is interestingly written and attractively illustrated. The two-column format with frequent headings avoids monotonous blocks of reading. Photos, paintings, maps, and sidebars tastefully enhance the text, complementing the written presentation. Personal accounts help keep the history from becoming dry.

Introductions summarize every unit, present a unit outline, and list vocabulary words. Each unit is divided into four or five lessons, making a total of 44 lessons for the course. Each lesson heading includes an appropriate Scripture verse or verses. Beneath the heading is a timeline pertaining to the lesson followed by “thoughts/questions to guide the student’s thinking and focus as they read” (teacher’s guide, X).

In the student workbook, each lesson includes a page for writing the vocabulary definitions and a page of review activities. Review activities may consist of short answer questions, more involved questions that require paragraph answers, or descriptive lists of events or individuals. Timeline and map activities end each unit.

The teacher’s guide includes discussion questions, journal prompts, and answers to all the material in the student workbook. Suggestions for additional activities integrate language arts skills and expand the student’s interaction with the unit objectives. Although the course may be covered in one semester, if the additional activities are pursued, a year-long study would be advantageous.

Looking more specifically at the individual units, the first unit covers the early church to AD 300. Considerable attention is given to individuals and their faithfulness in the face of persecution. Unit two is a brief summary of the Church from AD 300 to AD 1700. Unit three

discusses the Anabaptist movement, ending with a lesson on the *Martyrs' Mirror*.

The founding and spread of the Apostolic Christian Church in Europe occupies units four and five. Samuel Froehlich, born July 4, 1803, experiences a spiritual awakening and conversion around 1825. In his zealous preaching and pursuit of truth Froehlich falls out of favor with the state church of Switzerland. At 28 years of age, in February 1832, he receives adult baptism by Pastor Ami Bost in Geneva, Switzerland.

Although Froehlich had contact with Baptists, Calvinists, and Mennonites, he did not completely agree with any of them. His discussions with an old Mennonite minister did result in the development of a noncombatant stance regarding military service.

Froehlich's preaching journeys to various cantons of Switzerland result in the formation of several congregations and the development of a new denomination called the Evangelical Baptist Church. Along with others outside the state church, Froehlich's followers experience discrimination and persecution in Switzerland and surrounding European countries.

The church providentially grows. Two young men from Hungary travel to Switzerland for further training in the locksmith trade. During this time they come in contact with the Froehlich movement, become believers, and are baptized. One is given the authority to baptize converts. On their return to Hungary, they are not hesitant in sharing their newfound faith. As the ripples spread, the church expands into the Balkans, Romania, and the Ukraine. In the Eastern European countries, the adherents are known as Nazarenes rather than Evangelical Baptist.

Units six and seven detail the beginning and spread of the ACC in America. An Amish-Mennonite congregation in Lewis County, New York was having spiritual difficulties. Someone who was acquainted with Froehlich's Evangelical Baptist Church in Europe was attending the Mennonite meeting. He suggested they write to Froehlich for advice. Hearing of the spiritual needs among the Lewis County Mennonites, Froehlich ordained 28 year-old Benedict Weyeneth as elder to come to America to fulfill the request for spiritual help. Weyeneth preached repentance and baptism by immersion. Both bishops in the Mennonite congregation, as well as many other members, left the Amish Mennonite church and formed the first ACC congregation in America. This congregation was known as the "New Amish Church."

Sometime in the 1850s, because of persecution in Hungary, an elder in the Nazarene (ACC) church immigrated to Sardis, Ohio. He, as well as other leaders in the ACC, lived exemplary lives, preached zealously, traveled extensively, and sacrificially ministered where they heard of those seeking spiritual help. Many of their early adherents had an Anabaptist (Mennonite / Amish) background.

The Apostolic Christian Church ministers emphasized true conversion and repentance, which they felt was often lacking in the Amish-Mennonite congregations. They also stressed the importance of baptism by immersion, a practice held to today for those joining their fellowship.

The waves of European immigration in the latter 1800s and early 1900s contributed to the growth of the ACC. But the church also faced challenges. The cultural differences between the early adherents, many from Amish-Mennonite background, and the later adherents, many from a Nazarene background in Central and Eastern Europe, led to a split in the early 1900s. The ACC remained the larger group, and a smaller group called the Apostolic Christian Church (Nazarene) was formed. Another division occurred in 1932. These divisions, along with the difficulties of World War I and reduced immigration, led to a period of slower growth. However, the ACC has continued to expand, with more recent growth in urban areas.

Unit 8 directs students to study the history of their own congregation. The lessons in this unit guide the student in doing original research. Two research papers are required. This hands-on approach to history has considerable potential and pedagogical value.

The title of unit nine is “How the Bible Came to Us.” Content includes the formation of the Old and New Testaments, Bible translations, and a focus on the *King James Version*. I was surprised to read that “the formal Elizabethan language had passed from the scene almost 300 years before” the *King James Version* was published in 1611 (290). This would place Elizabethan language in the Middle English period (1066 to 1450) rather than the Early Modern English period (1450 to 1690). Hopefully this error will be corrected in future printings.

Unit ten concludes this *Heritage of Faith* course with a study of sacred hymnology spanning the early centuries through the 1800s. Various hymn writers and composers are introduced. *Zion’s Harp*, the principal ACC hymnal, receives considerable attention. A few other hymnals also published by the ACC are briefly mentioned.

Reviewing this course was interesting and informative. The perspective could perhaps best be summed up by quoting from the prologue in *Marching to Zion*, the 810-page recent definitive history of the ACC. “Admittedly, it is a little less than objective at times, and the author’s deep affection for the church probably shows through then. In any case, the intent of the book was to make a historical record that will serve to inspire and delight present and future generations” (Klopfenstein 2007, 8).

I was impressed with both the physical quality of the course material and the pedagogical value. This is a very appropriate course for ACC youth, as well as others interested in becoming more acquainted with this church’s history. This course has the potential to achieve the goal stated by Klopfenstein: “to make a historical record that will serve to inspire and delight present and future generations.”

## Reference

Klopfenstein, Perry. 2007. *Marching to Zion: A History of the Apostolic Christian Church of America, 1847-2007* [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.]. Eureka, IL: Apostolic Christian Publications