

HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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From our GENERAL SECRETARY

It has been three years since the last World Methodist Conference and meeting of the WMHS in Seoul. It will be only two years until the next Conference and meeting in Durban, South Africa in August 4-9, 2011. This is the 1st newsletter since late in 2006. 2007 and 2008 came and went with your general secretary and editor not getting another issue out to you. Hence, this issue in September of 2009. For patience and understanding of the difficulties of knitting together a world organization, we are grateful.

I did represent the WMHS at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council in Sydney, Australia, in September 2007. There was an opportunity to make a report and be a presence at that gathering. Also, I serve as one of four international trustees for the Epworth Old Rectory. (More on the Rectory appears in a separate article.)

I believe that is vitally important that all who care about the legacy bequeathed to us as the spiritual heirs of the Wesleys maintain an organization dedicated to our heritage. In this day of email, communications should be easier than ever before. But a world-wide network does present a challenge. The cost of travel to regional or global meetings is escalating. Those who travel from the United States face the reality of a weak dollar. I would like to invite those who can receive the *Bulletin* by email to do so. We can compile an email list in the office of the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church and send you the newsletter as a pdf. This would enable us to be in more frequent contact without the expense of mailing internationally. All you would have to do is email me at rwilliams@gcah.org and indicate you want the *Bulletin* by email.

The WMHS was preceded by the International Methodist Historical Society and the International Methodist Historical Union. The Constitution of the WMHS was adopted in 1971 with Fred Maser as its first general secretary. We seek your help in keeping this vital network engaged in this work. Your articles and suggestions are welcomed.

- Robert J. Williams

-WMHS-

SOCIETY FINANCIAL REPORT

The largest source of funding for the WMHS is an annual grant of \$2,000 from the Ruck Foundation administered by the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church. The only other consistent source of funds is from the modest membership dues. Currently the Society has \$5,818 in its checking account and \$18,515 invested with the United Methodist Development Fund earning 6% interest.

-WMHS -

OUR RECENT PROJECTS

The Society has supported five important projects:

1. \$500 was contributed for the expenses of the Wesley Historical Society (Great Britain) sponsored conference at Sarum College, April 1-4, 2008.
2. The Wesley Works Editorial Project is in the process of publishing a 35 volume set of the writings of John Wesley. It is about half complete. We contributed \$1,000 toward the editorial expenses of publishing Volume 17 which will contain Wesley's writings on

medical topics. This will be first time that all of these materials have been published in a collected volume. More importantly, it will be the first publication of a critical edition of any of these writings. The editor of this volume is James G. Donat, Ph.D., who has expertise in the history and philosophy of medicine and science.

3. \$500 was contributed to assist with the translation of a biography of Charles Wesley by Gary Best into German. The publisher in Germany was Edition Ruprecht under the leadership of Dr. Reinhilde Ruprecht.

4. Valdo Benecchi, past president of the Methodist Church in Italy, recently completed a book on Wesleyan Spirituality as it can impact the life of the Italian Methodist and Waldensian Church (which merged in Italy in 1975. The Society contributed \$1,000 toward the publication costs of this book.

5. A new venture by Methodist churches in Europe to provide theological education and leadership training by means of the internet has been launched with the names of Methodist e-Academy. The first project is the provision of a program in Methodist studies to be offered to students who are preparing for the ordained ministry. It is expected that a significant number of these students will be people from Eastern Europe. The Society contributed \$1,500 which will fund a lecture to prepare the internet course as a one time expense.

- WMHS -

LETTER FROM THE TRUSTEES OF EPWORTH OLD RECTORY, ENGLAND

Dear Friends,

All of us who look to John Wesley as our spiritual forebear can have a special affinity for the eighteenth-century homestead of the Wesley family. It is no surprise that many churches are named Epworth and at one time the youth program for Methodism was known as the Epworth League. This letter comes to you with the hope that we can unite in creating a strong financial base for caring for the Epworth Old Rectory, Lincolnshire, England.

Governance of this site is a joint venture of the British Methodist Conference and the World

Methodist Council. Trustees are named by both organizations. The signatories of this letter serve as trustees of the Rectory. The current Rectory was built following the fire of February 9, 1709 and served the Anglican parish church until purchased by the Methodists in 1954. Soon the 300th anniversary of that fire will be upon us.

Currently, the trustees are working very hard to formulate a development plan that will make the site more appealing for visitors in order to increase the number of visitors and thus tell the remarkable story of the Wesleys. It is an exciting time to be a part of creating a vision for the future ministry of this site. Methodists from around the world have an opportunity to assist with the future of the Old Rectory.

We have set ourselves a goal of creating a \$300,000 endowment fund, the income of which would support the annual expenses of the Rectory. This fund would be administered by the World Methodist Council which will send to the rectory the realized income of the fund. We believe this is achievable. All that would be needed is a \$300 contribution from 1,000 donors, or if you would prefer, a \$1,000 contribution from 300 donors. We anticipate a lead gift of \$25,000 will be forthcoming by fall. This would be the only appeal for this project. We all face many charitable opportunities but this is a special time in the life of the Rectory as a fresh vision is emerging and world Methodism should mobilize in support. You may send your check, payable to the World Methodist Council, noted for Epworth Old Rectory, to the Council at P. O. Box 518, Lake Junaluska, NC 28745, USA.

We pledge to you our diligence as trustees and invite you to join us in helping the Epworth Old Rectory to fulfill its mission of inspiring all who visit to lives of personal and social holiness.

Signed by: George H. Freeman,
Robert J. Williams
Thelma Crowder
Trustees of the Epworth Old Rectory
September 4, 2008.

FROM OUR OCEANIA REGION ...

THE EUNICE HUNTER LIBRARY AND WMHS RESOURCE CENTRE – SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

To mark the 270th anniversary of the conversions of John and Charles Wesley in May, 1738, we have initiated a new project under the auspice of the Epping Uniting (formerly Methodist) Church. The Eunice Hunter Library incorporates a resource centre for the World Methodist Historical Society in Australia, and a brief background to this development is provided for members' information.

Conveniently located a short walk from a major suburban rail and transport interchange, the Oxford Street Uniting Church and the Eunice Hunter Library are set on an historic site in Australian social history. The present church dates from 1915 and is built on the site of an early convict establishment which was also the scene of the first industrial strike in Australian history.

The Eunice Hunter Library has a range of objectives, including the collection and preservation of library material relevant to the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches throughout Australia and the Pacific, and of encouraging research in church and associated social history in the Pacific and Oceania regions by academic, church, local, and family historians. Related objectives include raising awareness of the shared heritage of these three Christian denominations in Australia.

The former Methodist Church of Australasia entered the Uniting Church in Australia on the inauguration of the Uniting Church in June 1977, together with the great majority of congregations of the former Congregational Union of Australia and many of the congregations of the Presbyterian Church of Australia as constituted prior to the inauguration of the Uniting Church.

In this context, the development of closer relationships between the Archives of the Uniting Church in Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of NSW respectively was identified as a specific goal by the Archivists of the

two denominations nearly 10 years ago in recognition of the shared heritage of both Churches, and also a growing awareness of the historical interdependence of the various denominations, especially in remote and rural areas.

The Eunice Hunter Library has thus been established after several years' formal and informal consultation in both the Uniting and Presbyterian Churches, and following on several years of joint activity in relevant areas. The Library functions co-operatively with the Archives of the Uniting and Presbyterian Churches in NSW, and holds many volumes either donated or loaned to the Library from both repositories, together with a range of material from private collections. The Library has also been entrusted with the long-term loan of a private collection of American Methodist and Presbyterian historical material believed to be unique in Australia.

Staffed by WMHS Oceania Region Vice-President Daryl Lightfoot and Mrs. Sue Pacey, Librarian/Archivist of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, the Eunice Hunter Library can be contacted c/- Epping Uniting Church, PO Box 1071, Epping 1710, NSW, Australia or by email on wmhs.aust@gmail.com.

-WMHS -

OTHER NEWS FROM OCEANIA

Oceania vice president, the Rev. Richard Waugh has just returned to New Zealand after a year at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY in the Beeson D.Min. program. On August 23rd, the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand, which he serves as National Superintendent, opened its new National Resource Center in Auckland. The Center has most Wesleyan Methodist records with others at Laidlaw College Library (formerly known as the Bible College of New Zealand). The Rev. Waugh was presented with a Queen's Service Medal by the Governor General of New Zealand at a ceremony at Government House on September 26th for his services to history and the community.

120 YEARS OF METHODISM IN JOHANNESBURG

Last year marked the official anniversary of Methodism in Johannesburg although at the time there was no ordained minister and the first Methodist services were conducted by a local preacher, John Thornhill Cook. He was the son of the pioneer missionary to the Northern Cape, the Rev. Edward Cook. He was a surveyor who arrived in the newly formed shanty town of Johannesburg in 1886 to make his fortune after gold had been discovered on the Reef. He staked his claim at shaft 5 which is now von Weilligh Street and it was there that the first Methodist sermon was preached.

In April 1887 the Rev. Fred Briscoe arrived as the first ordained Methodist minister for Johannesburg. He preached from the back of his wagon and soon gathered a large congregation. In July of that year the foundation stone of the first Methodist Chapel was laid. The chapel was built on Commissioner Street to accommodate 300 people. The stone was laid by Captain von Brandis and was designed by the local preacher, John Thornhill Cook. Soon it became too small and was sold for 12 thousand pounds. A new site on President Street was bought for five thousand six hundred pounds and a new church building costing a further three thousand five hundred pounds was erected. When it was opened for worship on July 21, 1889 the first preachers were the Rev. George Weavind and J. C. James. This time the church could seat 500 people.

A year later a manse was built adjoining the church. By this time there was also Methodist churches in Jeppetown and Ophirtown and churches in Fordsburg and Turffontein would soon follow. There was also a church built in Albert Street in 1888 for the numerous African tribesmen who had flocked to the Reef from all over South Africa to work on the mines. By 1896 there were thirty-eight preaching places in the circuit and membership had increased to 609. The next Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg was built in 1919 when the church dignitaries from all the church in the city would attend the opening.

Due to the growth of Methodism in Johannesburg the circuit was split into three in 1898 - east, west, and central.

The Albert Street Church became the center for mission in all the surrounding areas. In 1888 the minister was the Rev. John Klassen (a "native assistant missionary," as black probationer ministers were called) who worked under the Rev. Briscoe, and there was a membership of 200. By 1890 there were seventeen local preachers and seven preaching places. This was where the "Band Ministry" of the Witwatersrand mission began. In 1892 Albert Street received their first ordained minister, the Rev. Henry Ntsiko. By 1891 the reports to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in England showed that the church was full to capacity. By this time Matlaping, a candidate minister and Stephen Gqosho, also a candidate, and three lay agents (local preachers in the paid service of the Church) served as the Albert Street or "town" church. In 1899 the Rev. Michael Bowen was ordained at the Albert Street Church and "Nkosi Sikelele iAfrika" sung for the first time in public at his ordination service.

Besides having a Sunday School at the Central Church the Methodists were also involved in education and a day school was run at the Johannesburg church by Mrs. Homer and assistants. There was a grammar school at Jeppe's run by Mr. Graham and also day and night schools run at the Albert Street church. The church was also the social center for many of the miners and a "happy hour" was one of the ways that the church reached out to the lonely who were far from home. These were part of the responsibility of the deaconesses. The first deaconess, Sister Theresa, arrived in 1892 and she was joined a little later by Sister Evelyn and Sister Miriam. It was their responsibility to visit and care for the sick and to write letters to the families of those who died. They were responsible for much of the pastoral work that was done in the congregation. During the South African War of 1899-1902 the Methodists also ran a convalescent home for soldiers.

Now we look back 120 years and see how Johannesburg has changed from the dusty shanty town of all those years ago to the vast area covered by the Johannesburg Greater Metropolitan area.

Sources:

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Minutes of the District Meeting (synod) of the Transvaal and the Swaziland District. 1892.

Notices of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Report of the Rev. George Weavind, 1900
The S A Methodist, August 10, 1887.

- Joan Millard Jackson

- WMHS -

160TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

Daryl H. Lightfoot and Susan M. Pacey

Since the last Newsletter, an anniversary of significance in the life of the former Methodist Church of Australasia (now incorporated into the Uniting Church in Australia) has passed substantially unnoticed, even in this country. The beginnings in 1847 of Methodism in our north-eastern State of Queensland, the area of which approximates some 15% of the total land mass of our nation, illustrate the pioneering role of the laity, the genius and also some of the difficulties of the Methodist connexional system, the essential catholicity of our heritage, and above all else a sovereign God bringing events and people together to achieve His purposes.

It is interesting to note that no less than four Christian denominations—Wesleyan Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Baptist Churches in that part of then Colony of New South Wales all trace their origins to the same events, thus illustrating the shared heritage and shared hope of these Churches in this “great south-land of the Holy Spirit”. The prime mover in human terms behind these events was the pioneer Presbyterian minister in the Colony, Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang.

Lang had arrived in the Colony from Scotland in 1823, some eight years after the arrival of the first Wesleyan minister, Rev. Samuel Leigh. (The Wesleyans at this time continued to function under the centralized direction of the British Conference, in contrast to the freedom exercised by the highly controversial Lang throughout his life to engage in political and other interests in pursuit of what he saw as his calling.)

Our present State of Queensland began as the Moreton Bay convict settlement in the Colony of New South Wales in 1824. This penal settlement was progressively wound back and eventually broken up in 1839 in preparation for free settlement.

The first land sales took place in 1842, and at the first census, taken in March 1846, the population of the Stanley District of New South Wales (including Brisbane) totaled 1569. Of this population, just 24 professed to be Methodists, some of these being associated with a Mission Hall erected at his own expense by Moreton Bay storekeeper, George Little. One of these pioneer Methodists was Cpl. Fursman of HM 12th Regiment, who conducted the Sunday worship services and was probably the first Methodist to preach in what was to eventually become the State of Queensland.

In response to the appeals of some of this small group of Wesleyans for a minister the Chairman of the New South Wales District, Rev. William Binnington Boyce, sent two young men to survey the situation in 1846. Their report led the 1847 District Meeting in Sydney to create a circuit at Moreton Bay. Despite competing demands to supply established New South Wales Circuits and the Fiji mission, Binnington Boyce was providentially led to send William Moore, who had volunteered for the Fiji mission field, to firstly pioneer Wesleyan work at Moreton Bay.

Mr. and Mrs. Moore arrived at Moreton Bay by sea from Sydney on Sunday, October 17, 1847, and were received by a Moravian lay missionary, Mr. John Leopold Zillman, of Zion’s Hill (now Nundah). During that week, he obtained accommodation and prepared for his work, which began formally in George Little’s Queen Street Mission Hall the following Sunday, October 24,

1847. He also found another door immediately open to him at the German Mission settlement at Zion's Hill.

Thus within a week of his arrival at Moreton Bay, William Moore had two regular preaching places—one at Little's Mission Hall and the other at Zion's Hill, while a third at South Brisbane was already being investigated. Within one month of his arrival, Moore had also commenced services at Ipswich. The first Brisbane Circuit Quarterly Meeting was held on June 30, 1848, when a total of 20 Wesleyan members was reported.

The German Mission at Zion's Hill was thus one highly significant element in the earliest foundations of Wesleyan Methodism in Queensland. An exploration of its origins reveals its significance to other Colonial Churches, more particularly the Presbyterian, insofar as in human terms, the foundations of this mission lay with the pioneer Presbyterian minister, Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang.

Lang believed that the character of a nation is determined by the character of its people, and on this score the beginnings of the Colony of New South Wales as a settlement for British convicts was far from auspicious. Lang saw the corrective in the selection and steady influx of immigrants of education, industry and piety, supported by ministers and missionaries to attend to their spiritual needs. Lang made his first trip to Britain in pursuit of his objectives in 1830 at his own cost, returning in 1831 with a group he had personally recruited on the *Stirling Castle*.

Lang's concern for a mission to the indigenous tribes at Moreton Bay and further north can be traced to the wreck and subsequent murder of the captain and crew of the *Stirling Castle* in that vicinity during the vessel's second voyage to the colony. He also saw the prospects for a mission based on Moreton Bay as better than elsewhere in the colony as there would be "less contamination from the depraved convict population." It is also probable that Lang saw some particular advantages in the recruitment of non-British missionaries to distance the indigenous people to some extent from the atrocities committed by some of the convicts and other early British settlers.

In 1833 and again in 1836/1837 Lang was in Britain and in the course of the latter visit traveled to Germany to appeal to the Churches in Germany for missionaries. Unable to assist directly, the Berlin Missionary Society referred Lang to Pastor Johannes Gossner of the Bethlehem Bohemian Church. Gossner was able to assist and with Lang organized the first missionary party, which traveled to the colony via Scotland to take advantage of financial assistance under the "bounty scheme" then in operation.

Arriving in Sydney in March, 1838, the party traveled to Moreton Bay, settling about seven miles from the government station at Eagle Farm. The missionaries named this site Zion's Hill. Before traveling to Moreton Bay, Rev. Karl Schmidt and Rev. Christopher Eipper had been admitted as ministers of Lang's Presbyterian Synod of New South Wales on March 15, 1838.

The explorer Dr. Ludwig Leichhardt visited the Zion's Hill Mission in January, 1843, at which time there were seven families including 22 children. A second contingent consisting of four lay missionaries was commissioned in August, 1843 and proceeded to join the first group at Zion's Hill in June, 1844. Lack of adequate financial support led to departures over the following two years, the gradual abandoning of the missionary character of the settlement, and the closure of the mission by 1849.

John Dunmore Lang by this time had turned his mind to another long-cherished project. During the 1830s, Lang had identified the Moreton Bay district as appropriate for the establishment of large-scale cotton farming. Most agricultural labour for the new settlers in the north in the mid-1840s came from former convicts, thus creating its own problems, and some form of organized immigration was increasingly imperative. The coincidence of these concerns moved Lang to initiate a direct immigration program from Britain to Moreton Bay in 1848/49.

Among the earliest ships from the United Kingdom to bring immigrants directly to Moreton Bay were the *Fortitude*, *Chaseley*, and *Lima*, all of which were dispatched from Scotland as a direct result of Lang's activities, and arrived during 1849. These ships carried the nucleus of a group of Christians

who with the remnant of the Moravian missionaries at Zion's Hill, would see the beginnings of Wesleyan Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregational work in the Moreton Bay district. Among those actively associated with the Wesleyan cause at Moreton Bay from its inception was Johann Hermann, a member of the second group of missionaries at Zion's Hill.

The first dedicated Wesleyan Chapel in what is now the State of Queensland was opened on March 10, 1849, and services on this day were taken by William Moore and a recently arrived Presbyterian minister, Rev. Thomas Mowbray. A Wesleyan chapel was also erected at Ipswich during 1849. Early preaching plans include the names of a number of former Moravian missionaries from the Zion's Hill Mission, together with some of the Scottish emigrants brought out by John Dunmore Lang.

The pioneering Wesleyan ministry of William Moore and his wife ended abruptly in December 1849 with their appointment as missionaries to Fiji. William Moore was later ordained, and went on to become President of the New South Wales and Queensland Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1883. To William Moore and to Australia's pioneer Presbyterian clergyman Dr. John Dunmore Lang, Methodism in our northern State and the Uniting Church in Australia look back after 160 years with thanks to God.

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DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL?

If we can send the *Historical Bulletin* by email it will eliminate printing and postage costs. It is especially expensive to mail outside the United States.

Membership in the Society will now be free to those who request to be on the email list! There will be no membership dues if receiving the electronic copy instead of hard copy. Membership dues are necessary only if you are requesting to continue to receive a hard copy.

To receive the *Historical Bulletin* by email, please send an email to: rwilliams@gcah.org. No further membership dues will need to be paid.

To continue to receive the *Historical Bulletin* in hard copy by regular mail, pay the membership dues when you are notified for renewal.

It is my intention to reduce the number of issues to two (2) per year and resume a regular schedule again in 2010. Thank you for your patience.

Robert Williams
General Secretary
WMHS

OFFICERS 2006-2011

- PRESIDENT:** Martin Wellings, 26 Upland Road, Oxford, OX2 7RU, UK martin.wellings@oxfordmethodists.org.uk
- VICE PRESIDENTS:**
- AFRICA:** Beauty Maenzenise, Africa University, P. O. Box 1320, Mutare, Zimbabwe maenzaniseb@africau.ac.zw
 Joan A. Millard, P.O. Box 996, Cramerview, Sandton 2060, Republic of South Africa joanmillard@icon.co.za
- AMERICAS:** Paulo Mattos, Rua L'ondrina, 410 Apt. 113, Rudge Ramos, payresmattos@yahoo.com
 09635-100- San Bernardo, SP, Brazil mwhiteley@gto.net
 Marilyn Fardig Whiteley, 226 Exhibition St., Guelph, Ontario N1H 4R5, Canada
- ASIA:** Takeo Kega, 4-25 Shibuya 4-Chome, Shibuya-Ju, Tokyo 150, Japan artos@singnet.com.sg
 Loma Lock-Nah Khoo, 20 Jalan Sahabat, Singapore 1954 metodismo@chievaldese.org
- EUROPE:** Massimo Aquilante, Italy khvoigt@emk-bremen.de
 Karl Heinz Voigt, Toulser Str. 1c, D 28211 Bremen, Germany gmkingston@eircom.net
- GREAT BRITAIN / IRELAND:** Thomas Kingston, Clareen, Shinrone, Birr, Co. Offaly, Ireland jandclenton@blueyonder.co.uk
 John Lenton, 21 Vineyard Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire TF1 1HB U K
- OCEANIA:** Daryl Lightfoot, P. O. Box 574, Toronto 2283 NSW, Australia wmhs.aust@gmail.com
 Richard Waugh, Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand, P.O. Box 82-363, Highland Park, office@wesleyan.org.nz
 Howick, Auckland, New Zealand
- MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:**
- J. William Lamb, 24 Princess Margaret Blvd., Etobicoke, ON M9A 1Z4, Canada william.lamb@rogers.com
 Paul W.Chilcote, 129 Samaritan Avenue, Ashland, OH 44805 USA pchilcote@ashland.edu
 Leif-gote Bjorklund, Finland leif-gote.bjorklund@metodistkyrhan.fi
- GENERAL SECRETARY:** Robert J. Williams, P. O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940, USA rwilliams@gcah.org
- TREASURER:** Daniel Swinson, 223 N. Emerson St., Mt. Prospect, IL 60056-2509 djswinson@wowway.com
- DIRECTOR, WORLD CATALOGUE OF METHODIST MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS:**
 Mary K. Calkin, 701 Oaknoll Drive #433, Iowa City, IA 52246-5168, USA

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WORLD METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY P. O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940, USA