

## WESLEY'S CHAPEL RESTORATION

Wesley's Chapel, London, built in 1778 and Methodism's mother church, was in the midst of the heaviest bombing of London during World War II, but it seemed to have escaped serious damage. Over a year ago, however, the unseen damage began to show up in weakened foundations and timbers. Consequently, this historic church was condemned and closed, to the dismay of many American Methodist tourists.

To further complicate the matter, Parliament declared Wesley's Chapel an historic British monument and ruled that it must be restored.

Unquestionably this is the birthplace of American Methodist denominations, for it was here that Thomas Coke came to discuss Wesley's proposal of ordination in America of Francis Asbury.

Now Methodists around the world are uniting to restore the chapel that John Wesley built and loved. Restoration will be a major undertaking of world-wide Methodism. The total need is for around \$2,000,000, of which a substantial amount has already been raised in Great Britain and elsewhere. In America The United Methodist Church elected to set its goal at \$875,000. Knowing of the need, a number of persons made early contributions, some substantial. The entire membership was given the opportunity to participate on May 26, 1974. The result of that campaign will be known several weeks after this publication has gone to press.

The World Methodist Council named Bishop Fred P. Corson and Dr. Charles C. Parlin, both former presidents of the Council, to serve as co-chairmen of a committee to assist in raising restoration funds. The six member churches of the World Methodist Council in the United States have shown considerable interest in the project.

The appeal to assist in preserving a part of our heritage has been met with generous and heartwarming response:

--An Arkansas church is responding to a challenge from a sister church in England to raise \$250 each on Aldersgate Sunday for Wesley's Chapel;

--A layman has given \$10,000 to cover the cost of the campaign, so that all other gifts can go entirely to the restoration;

--A laywoman sent a check for \$2,000;

--A former E.U.B. church of 675 members took an offering before they knew one was to be asked for, and sent \$500;

--Leaders of a member church sent \$500 and said more was coming;

--Retired ministers have sent gifts from their pensions;

--One overseas missionary writes from his field of service in Japan: "Could you send us information on how we can make contributions toward the restoration of Wesley's City Road Chapel in London?"

--A special kick-off television program was launched over BBC by British Methodists, featuring some of the leading men in England.

Already this worthy cause has caught the imagination of Methodists and others. Each mail brings checks in amounts from one dollar to several thousand. A record of each donor, church, district, conference, and area is kept so that advance gifts can be added to the final reports.

Methodists dare not let time and natural damage destroy the building so central in our great heritage. Your help is needed!

In addition, the second stage of the plan is the reconstruction of the Benson Building, situated on the northern side of the site, to house a new Historical Study Center, the Wesley Library and Methodist Archives--to become a focus for research and information.

Your check should be made to World Methodist Council, marked for Wesley's Chapel Fund, and sent to P. O. Box 518, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina 28745, U.S.A.

--Russell L. Young, Jr.  
Editor  
World Parish