

MINUTES OF THE 2008 ANNUAL MEETING
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
JULY 9, 2008
DAKOTA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
MITCHELL, SOUTH DAKOTA

President Patricia Thompson opened the meeting, welcoming those in attendance. She introduced the other Board members who were present: Jim Morris, Vice-President and Chair of the Program Committee; Mary Bakeman, Secretary; Dan Swinson and Rob Sledge, members of the Program Committee; and Phil Lawton, Membership Secretary. She then announced that this is year the Society will elect new officers. The beginning of the process is to elect a Nominating Committee from the floor of this meeting. We are not limited by those in attendance, but will ask those who are not present if they are willing to serve. Geographical diversity on the Nominating Committee can help ensure that those who appear on the ballot will also be representative of the membership at large. Anyone who has a suggestion for an officer should talk to one of the persons on that Committee. Naming the Committee will be the last item taken up on the agenda.

President Thompson asked how many were first-timers at a Society meeting, and asked for their help in asking for explanations if we started to use jargon or more information was needed about any topic. She then presented the agenda. The first order of business was acceptance of minutes from the 2007 meeting. After two minor corrections, Jim Walker moved and Bill Bakeman seconded a motion to accept the minutes. The motion passed.

President Thompson then presented the Treasurer's report, prepared by Chuck Yrigoyen, who was unable to be present. She commented that most of the expense concerns payment of printing and postage for publications, travel for Board members, and the updating of website which took place over the past year. There were no questions. Charles Finney moved, Bill Bakeman seconded a motion calling for the acceptance of the report. The motion passed. It was suggested that words of deep appreciation for bringing us back on track be conveyed to Dr. Yrigoyen. An update on Michael Peterlin was presented—he continues to meet with the local archives and history commission, and though he is in a wheelchair, seems somewhat better.

President Thompson then presented the budget for the next year, also prepared by Dr. Yrigoyen. It is somewhat higher than that for 2008, basically in travel expense. The Board had voted to pay the expenses of the Ministry of Memory and Saddlebag Selection award winners, and that increase is reflected in the higher amounts. It was also necessary to increase travel expenses for Board members, reflecting reality. She also indicated that the Society has some money in reserves, set aside to support life members and that the increases had the support of the Board. John Mitchell moved, and Bill Bakeman seconded a motion to accept budget as presented. The motion

passed.

Vice-President Jim Morris reported on the Society's upcoming meetings: 2009—Lake Junaluska, center for SE jurisdiction, June 29-July 2, conjointly with SE Jurisdiction Historical Society. Art Swartout is working on the program, and members will receive information in upcoming *Historians' Digests*. This will be the 20th anniversary of the Society. 2010—during the week of July 18-24, not yet firm, at Puget Sound. 2011—no dates firm, but will held be in Oklahoma City, jointly with the GCAH Historical Convocation that's held each quadrennium.

Jim Walker of the Western jurisdiction presented an invitation to Puget Sound area for the 2010 meeting, along with a travel guide. The meeting will include Indian mission work, the celebration of one of the area's first pastors (who also founded the University of Puget Sound), the first teacher, Chloe Clark, and more. Our Ministry of Memory award winner Dick Seiber is on the committee, assuring that the meeting will be excellent! Jim also presented a Puget Sound travel plug, a beautiful place to visit before or after the meeting, and he came close to promising good weather.

Secretary Bakeman reviewed the actions of Board at its meeting earlier this week. Jane Donovan was reappointed as editor of the *Historians' Digest* and Dan Smith was reaffirmed as webmaster for the HSUMC website. Both have done an excellent job this past year. Phil Lawton, Membership Secretary reported that we currently have 264 members, and that 40% live on the eastern seaboard, and that the top three states in number of members are Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Texas. The results of the questionnaire mailed to members this spring were also discussed, and some changes will be coming. The response rate was 18%, which is excellent. Some of the ideas for expanding *Historians' Digest* will be implemented, for example. The Board also gave more specific direction to the Program Committee, to work with the local hosting group and the academic community to provide papers that could help attract academic members to the Society. This group will also ensure that the papers will be published, either on the Society website (thus making them available to those who could not attend the meetings), or through *Methodist History*.

The Ministry of Memory award process calls for the naming of the next year's recipient at the Annual Meeting. This year, the committee selected recipients for the next two years: for 2009, Lois Olson, EUB background and missionary; and for 2010, Milton Loyer, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The other Society award program is the Saddlebag Selection, featuring a contest among books published in the preceding calendar year on some aspect of United Methodist history, theology, biography or polity. The process includes sending out requests to publishers to nominate books, which are then reviewed by a committee. We will continue to expand the process by a broader announcement. This year information was sent to 25-30 publishers, including Abingdon Press. Books should be national in scope, with appeal across the entire denomination. It is possible for members to get involved as well. If an individual wants to nominate a book that meets the criteria, notify

Rob Sledge and he will make contact with the publisher. Rob will send Jane an article for *HD* and list all the books that were nominated this year, as well as one announcing the beginning of the process for the next year.

President Thompson reported that we have embarked on a campaign to recruit members through offering joint memberships with state and/or jurisdictional historical societies. (The effect of joint memberships is obvious in the membership statistics reported early. Each of the top three states has a joint membership program in operation.) If the local society treasurer is willing to collect dues for the HSUMC at the same time as the local dues are collected, the HSUMC membership will have a 10% discount. Since it's also possible to join the HSUMC for two years at a time, further discounting the membership dues, further savings can be achieved. Thelma Boeder commented that the local treasurer must be willing to work with the HSUMC membership secretary to make this program successful, and that both she and Pat Thompson had developed brochures explaining how it worked. President Thompson noted that the Society began in 1989 with 1000+ members, and now there are 264 members. She asked that attendees mention this option when returning home to the local society. She commented that one early result from this program has been an updated list of societies for the GCAH website.

Bob Williams, General Secretary, General Commission on Archives and History, presented his report at one of the plenary sessions of the meeting. They included the following remarks: general reflections on General Conference such as his pleasure that Bill Gates, Sr., President of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in an address about the important work being done to eliminate malaria, quotes John Wesley's maxim about the world accurately, "I look upon all the world as my parish." All the legislation sought by the General Commission on Archives and History was enacted. The current designation of Heritage Sunday to be near Aldersgate Day was referred to the Connectional Table. He opposes the change. GCAH has hired a part-time reference archivist, to perform genealogical research and leave Dale and Mark to work on conservation and processing. The GCAH website has been upgraded, and will be expanded in the future. Bob serves as an international trustee of the Epworth Old Rectory, named to that position by the World Methodist Council. There is ongoing need for additional funding for the Rectory. The African American Methodist Heritage Center received funding of \$100,000 per year from the General Conference and GCAH for this quadrennium. This will permit the hiring of a full-time director. GCAH will be the repository for materials. GCAH will host a training event for conference archivists at the Archives Center. The class filled very quickly! The Evangelical United Brethren History Conference will be held at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, on September 12-13 to remember the 200th anniversary of the death of Albright. This will be followed by the organizational meeting of GCAH.

President Thompson called for other business. Dick Seiber suggested that we go into colleges to get papers done by students, resulting in younger

people into channels of writing Methodist history. Dan Swinson asked that Seiber send a written proposal to the program committee, as he thinks it is a good idea, even extending it to the students of adjunct faculty in non-Methodist institutions. The GCAH holds writing contests on different topics, such as Women's History and Ethnic History. Question asked but unanswered—does Bob send announcement to local conferences? [Later correspondence with Bob Williams indicates that GCAH sends notices to the professors who teach Methodist studies in the Methodist and non-Methodist seminaries, and not to the Conferences.] Rob Sledge mentioned that this is a slow process. In Texas with eight conferences, a contest announcement was sent out with no responses, though a \$200 prize and guarantee of publication were offered to the winner.

President Thompson reviewed the process the Nominating Committee would follow after its five members were elected at this meeting. Over the next five months, they would look for nominations for the four officer positions (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer), trying to find at least two candidates for every office. Each candidate will be queried on willingness to serve in that capacity for the quadrennium, and will be asked for a brief biography. The slate will be published in January issue of *HD* with biographical information. All members will have the opportunity to vote. The votes will be tabulated and announced in the spring issue of *Historian's Digest*. Pat will put a notice in the upcoming issue of *Historian's Digest* article explaining the process for making suggestions for nominations. Attendees were reminded that since the Nominating Committee prepares the slate of candidates, proposing a name doesn't necessarily put that name in nomination.

President Thompson opened the process to nominate the Nominating Committee. The following candidates were offered (those not in attendance will be asked for their willingness to serve): Jim Walker, Western Jurisdiction; Janice Sherick, Northeast Jurisdiction; Jean Traster, South Central Jurisdiction; Linda Schramm, North Central; and Jim Pyatt, Southeast Jurisdiction. Jim Morris moved, Bill Bakeman seconded a motion that nominations cease. The motion passed. The outgoing president will be available for consultation to the Committee. Lyman Ellis proposed that the president also be able to replace any person who is not able to serve. The meeting was adjourned.

MARY BAKEMAN
Secretary

Presentations made at the meeting included: "How the Methodist Church Shaped Our Lives," Senator George McGovern; "Writing the History of the Dakotas Annual Conference, Who Should be Included," Dr. Stephen Perry; "A History of Christmas Traditions," Dr. Bruce Forbes; "Calamity Jane and the Methodists," Dr. James McLaird; "Old Time Gospel Concert," Easter of Westerville; and "Dr. A. B. Smart, Pioneer Preacher," Rev. Scott McKirdy.

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