

METHODIST HISTORY

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RUTH GRISETTE CARTER (CA 1891-1982)



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Cover: Ruth G. Carter was a social worker and powerful lay leader of Methodist women's groups during her long life. See article by Ellen Blue (pp.211-221). Image was cropped from a photo from the Women's Division Records of the General Board of Global Ministries collection located at the General Commission on Archives and History, United Methodist Archives in Madison, New Jersey.

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Alfred T. Day III, Editor

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EDITOR'S NOTE

2018 is the 50th anniversary of the formation of The United Methodist Church. What puts the “united” in the Methodist name is more than a merger of formerly independent denominational bodies—it signifies the joining of two dynamic aspects of Christian life—personal piety and social holiness. One ignites the other. Individual religious piety sparks a response. It is first experienced and then evidenced, relationally and missionally, reaching towards people and communities in need. The July issue of *Methodist History* explores this critical strand of denominational DNA.

Christopher Evans’s essay about Sister Jeanie Banks and her significant role in the deaconess movement in The Wesleyan Methodist Church is an illuminating case in point. Examining the diary of the most prominent deaconess of her day, this “Lady Worker” in a Methodist Mission in East London (1880-1890) embodies the type of servant ministry that characterizes British and North American Methodism. Her daily log uncovers the ministries of Methodist sisterhoods, demonstrating how these women blended personal and social holiness, a dynamic combination which made them an institutional force.

Ellen Blue’s essay about the Ruth Carter Auxiliary supporting the work at Peoples Community Center offers a more American example of Methodism’s no-holiness-but-social-holiness maxim, this one with a southern accent. The Carter Auxiliary in New Orleans’s Central City—and the story of the exemplary Methodist woman for whom it is named—stands among many unsung examples of an activist faith nurtured and stemming from a strong Methodist home, congregation, and organized association of Church and community women.

Mark Draper’s essay about Jacob Albright’s (1759-1808) conversion experience is a special gift in United Methodism’s 50th anniversary year. Albright is the seminal figure in the *Evangelische Gemeinschaft*, later Church that merged with the Church of the United Brethren (1946) and again with the Methodist Church (1968) to form today’s United Methodist Church. Albright’s conversion and ensuing call to ministry follow many of the same patterns of his Methodist contemporaries who were transformed from empty religious rote via personal experience in and of God’s love, responding then with a life of selfless, sacrificial service to others. Draper observes in Albright an evangelical paradigm: inward religious experience as more than an end in itself but motivation to outreaching ministry.

Schubert Ogden’s essay gets at the well-spring of the Methodist motivation and the movement’s historic witness expressed in the words of a hymn, namely, “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.” Hymns are Methodists’

theological tomes. Reflecting on Charles Wesley's 1747 hymn named above, Ogden points to the Wesleyan core belief about the transformational power of God's love grounding humanity in unbounded grace. Experiencing this love breaks the hold on human brokenness, offers unconditional acceptance and opens a new future, one where inward faith works through love towards justice and peace for all of God's creation. Special thanks to good friend Dr. Andrew Scrimgeour for bringing Ogden's work to our attention and adapting it for this publication.

Good reading!

Alfred T. Day III