



B.T. Roberts
(1823-93)

Free Methodist Historical Society

Newsletter

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The Sabbatical Experience

In February/March 2005 the Reverend Nobuo Kawahara of the Pacific Coast Japanese Conference came to the Historical Center to spend some of his sabbatical researching Wesley's use of the class meeting. Pastor Kawahara gave top ratings in every category of the post-experience evaluation and states that he would recommend the program to others. "I was so glad that I could

spend a few days of my sabbatical leave at the Historical Center," he commented.

The program of renewal sabbaticals, mainly for Free Methodist pastors, was established two years ago under a new entity formed by the Committee on Free Methodist History and Archives called the Center for the Study of Wesley



△ Nobuo Kawahara, the first pastor to participate in the Historical Center's Pastoral Renewal Sabbatical Program

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SoulSearch III: Indianapolis, March 13-14, 2006

The third and final "Search for the Free Methodist Soul" symposium has been scheduled for the World Ministries Center in Indianapolis on March 13-14, 2006. As with the previous two symposiums, this intergenerational conversation on Free Methodist mission and identity will meet from midday Monday until noon Tuesday. (See the report on the 2005 symposium on page two.)

What does Free Methodist history tell us about faithful mission today and tomorrow? Speakers and group discussions will focus on this question. The symposium is open to all who wish to participate. Complete program details, including registration information, will be given in the next issue of the *Newsletter* and will be posted on the MMHC website.



The Quotable Roberts

A revival of righteousness is the great need of the times. . . .

Revivals that will shake society to its foundation — that will do away with all distinctions in the House of God, and make all the seats free, and the poor welcome — that will practically acknowledge the equality of our common humanity before God — revivals that will break up conspiracies of the strong against the weak. . . . that will purify our politics, secure honest dealings between man and man, and render justice possible in our courts of justice are greatly needed.

But revivals which aim chiefly at bringing those into the church who can help pay its expenses, and render possible greater and more striking exhibitions of pride are already sufficiently common.

— B. T. Roberts, "Revivals,"
The Earnest Christian (Dec. 1890), 189

Search for the Free Methodist Soul

EIGHTY ATTEND STA

BY GERALD E. BATES

“The manipulation of the gospel for personal success will always lead to slavery to the world and its powers. We need a revival like the Wesleyan, which moves us to a holistic mission that drives us to live and preach the teachings of our Lord. A revival that keeps us



from worrying so much about the salvation of the soul that we forget the physical needs of persons. We need a revival that not only promotes reconciliation between ourselves and God, but also between ourselves and our neighbors. A revival that promotes repentance, not psychological and emotional relief of a bad conscience, but the acceptance of the cross as a death to this world with the purpose of living for God. If Jesus is Lord, then persons must be confronted with his authority over the totality of life.”

— Bishop José Ildo Mello of Brazil

“[Our] founders would never have defined [preaching the gospel to the poor] as charity, but rather as inclusion and engagement on our part towards those whom society has left behind. ... Free Methodists were never meant to stop at charity, but their accessibility and proximity to the poor clearly meant that they were to eliminate all separation and distinction among their churches. It was not charity they were to offer, but fellowship, advocacy and justice.”

— Pastor Mark Van Valin, Spring Arbor, Michigan



Eighty participants came to the second “Search for the Free Methodist Soul” gathering, held March 14–15, 2005 at the West Morris Street Free Methodist Church in Indianapolis. The thrust of this session was to explore some of the international and cross-cultural outworkings of the Free Methodist soul. Toward this end the speakers list included Bishop José Ildo Mello of Brazil, and Pastor Polly Ho, General Secretary of the Asia Pacific Free Methodist Missions Association, based in Hong Kong.

From the U.S. church were Mark Van Valin, pastor of Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church and respondents, Pastors Alma Cordova, Dwight

Gregory and Thaddeus Roller, all with crosscultural experience.

Bishop Ildo addressed the theological narrowness of other traditions which, preoccupied with the end times, give up on the world. He concluded that the outcomes of this approach are “accommodation and escapism.” In contrast the bishop outlined Wesley’s optimism about the sufficiency of the power of grace to transform the world. He told the assembly, “God is doing great things among us in Brazil. . . .

Because we have this tremendous legacy, I have to dream of taking part in a great revival, the greatest of all the history of the church, that impacts this world with the

power of the holy gospel of Jesus.” He concluded with the challenge from Habakkuk 3:2, “O Lord, revive your work in our day!”

Polly Ho explored the task of establishing a church identity using the *Book of Discipline* to show in many contexts, some not friendly, what the Free Methodist Church is, what it believes, what it teaches and what its vision is.

Pastor Mark Van Valin directed attention to the “earliest” mission statement of the people called Free Methodists in the 1866 *Book of Discipline*, “All their churches are required

to be as free as the grace they preach. They believe that their mission is twofold — to maintain the Bible standard of Christianity and to preach the gospel to the poor.” He asserted that these two pillars of the Free Methodist movement — vertical and horizontal, personal holiness and social holiness — are the most neglected of our official “expected outcomes,” while these are exactly the ideals which have the greatest potential for capturing the imagination of an unbelieving world.



Thaddeus Roller recently graduated from Spring Arbor University. He is a Conference Ministerial Candidate in the Southern Michigan Conference and has worked with Comunidad Agua Viva Fellowship, a Spanish-speaking church plant in Jackson, MI, for three years.

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The above are only samples of the topics explored by the participants — in small groups, in question and answer sessions and in feedback times.

Search for the Free Methodist Soul. Did we find it? (One participant commented, perhaps wryly, “If we are searching, will we accept what we find?”) We are surely finding *more* of it. We are discovering that it is biblical, exportable, translatable and socially sensitive. We are finding it eminently worthy of deliberate attention, reflection and definition. So, please join in for the next phase of this journey into the soul of Free Methodism on March 13–14, 2006. (If you wish to be on the list for information contact Cathy Fortner at history@fmcna.org, or call (800) 342-5531, or write to the Marston Memorial Historical Center.)

“In the 1950s [Free Methodist] missionaries came to Hong Kong to share the gospel and also did a lot of charity, especially childcare ministry. At that time Hong Kong was very poor. [Today] we have to follow the example of the missionaries — leave our comfort zone and go to serve the poor and needy people in other countries. Now Free Methodists in Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan sponsor many children in India, Cambodia, and Africa. And they have formed the Asia Pacific Free Methodist Missions Association (APFMMA), partnering with Free Methodist World Missions in missions work.”



— Polly Ho,
General Secretary of APFMMA

News & Notes

▷ ESTHER (Shelhamer) JAMES and G. HERBERT LIVINGSTON are the most recent Free Methodist “veterans” to be interviewed as part of the FM Oral History Project. The Historical Center now has recorded interviews of Rev. David Shigekawa (2003), Rev. Mervin Russell (2004), Rev. John Miyabe (2004), Chaplain Harry Ansted (2004), and Gordon and Lola Bell (2004). In a 1999 interview Lora Jones, Carrie Silva, and John and Ruby Schlosser reminisce about life in China.

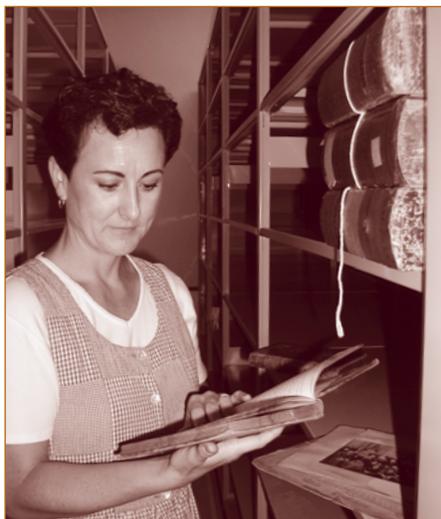
▷ We recently uncovered *The Children’s Friend*, published by the Chicago Industrial Home for Children (later Woodstock Children’s Home). The two bound volumes contain issues from May 1902 through December 1909.

▷ THANK YOU to Dr. Don Joy for the donation of a complete set of the Aldersgate Biblical Series manuals, including leaders’ guides!

▷ EXTRA COPIES of the Newsletter are available free of charge upon request (up to ten copies to one address). If you wish to send current or back issues to friends or family, contact the Historical Center by phone or letter or by email at History@fmcna.org.

LETTERS

▷ I was thrilled beyond measure that a way has been found to preserve the Light and Life Hour music on CDs. It is my thought that the music ought to be made available commercially. This project is very close to my heart, having sung in the Light and Life Hour Quartet for twelve years, and counting Lawrence Schoenhals as one of my dear friends.
— John Baker, Phoenix, Arizona



LONGER SHELF LIFE ▷ Historical Center Director Cathy Fortner (L) and Archivist Kate McGinn (R) enjoy dreaming up new possibilities for the compact shelving system installed in the Marston Memorial Historical Center archives at the end of June. The rolling units create more than double the storage capacity of the former shelving system.

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and Society. Director of the program is retired bishop Gerald E. Bates. Substantial scholarship aid is available according to need.

At the heart of this experience is the conviction that the Wesleyan worldview, including the emphasis on holiness (in both its individual and social dimensions) and the optimistic view of grace has time-

ly meaning for society in our day. For each participant the agenda is crafted to combine his or her personal goals with the values of the Wesleyan legacy and an opportunity for renewal and reflection directed toward enrichment of ministry.

For information contact Cathy Fortner at CathyF@fmcna.org or (800) 342-5531.

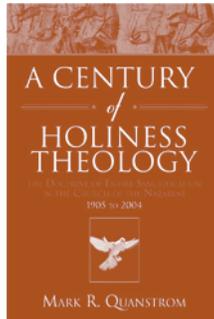
Book Review

A Century of Holiness Theology: The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene 1905 to 2004, by Mark R. Quanstrom (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 2004). 231 pp. ISBN 083-412-1166.

A revision of the author's 2000 doctoral dissertation (Saint Louis University), *A Century of Holiness Theology* signals a new level of self-awareness for the Church of the Nazarene, a denomination that identifies itself with the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Rather than merely surveying doctrinal history, this book recounts one holiness denomination's struggle to come to terms with its nineteenth-century roots. Some scholars say the Holiness Movement is dead or irrelevant, but in publishing this perceptive study the Church of the Nazarene has shown it can critique its own message and identity in an effort to affirm and revitalize its faith.

Quanstrom's analysis begins with the Holiness Movement's zenith in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. He links the movement's vision for the "possibilities of grace" in this life with the optimism of Gilded-Age America. Given these roots, the Church of the Nazarene later struggled to maintain its optimism of grace in a "generation that had rediscovered the deep sinfulness" of humanity. Throughout the twentieth century the denomination faced increased confusion and a widening credibility gap that threatened to render its message irrelevant. Quanstrom's candid study of these challenges reveals the conflicts that marked the transition from idealism to a tempered realism.

A Century of Holiness Theology is a most perceptive study of



Nazarene doctrinal development. Quanstrom highlights the changes in conceptions of sin that impacted the doctrine of holiness and led to less extravagant claims for the Christian life than had been the case earlier. He provides intriguing coverage of the debates that erupted in the wake of Mildred Wynkoop's *A Theology of Love* (1972), examines Nazarene theologians' conflicting positions regarding sin and perfection (especially the baptism of the Holy Spirit), and reveals an increasing plurality of perspectives as the denomination strove to articulate its faith in a turbulent age. This section alone constitutes a major contribution to Wesleyan scholarship.

Today the Holiness Movement faces the most severe identity crisis of its history. *A Century of Holiness Theology* addresses this crisis, but it doesn't go far enough. By the time readers finish Chapter 8, they will see a denomination that has vigorously debated such doctrines as sin and holiness. Yet readers can scarcely miss the sense of unresolved tension. This book raises the most painful issue that faces the Holiness Movement: Do distinct holiness denominations still have reason to exist? And even larger questions: Who indeed truly follows in the steps of John Wesley? Who is a true Methodist in the twenty-first century? And perhaps the most perspicuous question for the church in our age: Who is a "real Christian" today?

A Century of Holiness Theology is not just for Nazarenes. Everyone who identifies with the Wesleyan heritage will find this book a potent stimulant for further discussion on these vital issues.

— Barry W. Hamilton, *Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, New York*

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