



B.T. Roberts  
(1823-93)

Free Methodist Historical Society

# Newsletter

WINTER 2006 — Volume 6 , No. 2

## Search for the Free Methodist Soul

“Justice, Mercy, and Truth” will provide focus for Symposium on Free Methodist Mission and Identity

The final “Search for the Free Methodist Soul” symposium, March 13-14 in Indianapolis, will focus on Wesley’s theme of *justice, mercy, and truth*. The gathering, an ongoing conversation connecting history with today’s challenges, is sponsored by the Marston Historical Center and the Center for the Study of Wesley and Society. It is open to all who can attend and engage in the conversation.

Presenters will include author and poet Milo Kaufmann, Indianapolis pastor John Hay, and Henry Church, Africa area director for FM World Missions, among others.

The symposium will be linked with the forthcoming biography, *Populist Saints: B. T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists*, scheduled for release in August 2006 (Eerdmans). Howard Snyder will begin the symposium summarizing the book and connecting with this year’s theme.

**Why justice, mercy, and truth?** John Wesley defined Christianity as pure love for God and all people. This, he said, is holiness. When he spoke of holy living in the world he often used the phrase *justice, mercy, and truth*. This sums up Christian ethics—holiness lived out in society.

*Justice* – The God of justice justifies sinners through Jesus Christ by his Spirit, creating a community committed to living justly in the world, seeking first God’s kingdom. Is this reflected in FM history, and today?

*Mercy* – “Rich in mercy,” God calls us to be merciful. Jesus said this is the heart of holy living (Luke 6:36). Historically Free Methodists have

often shown mercy and compassion for the poor and suffering.

*Truth* – Jesus Christ—Way, Truth, Life—leads us in truth as we follow him and walk in the Spirit. We are called to live God’s truth in our daily lives, the church, and the world, embodying truth in the face of the world’s idolatries. Where do we see this in our history, and what is the truth-challenge today?

The threefold theme of justice, mercy, and truth illuminates Free Methodist history and provides insights for life- and culture-changing ministry today. Bishop Emeritus Gerald Bates comments, “In this Phase III of the ‘Search’ symposiums we are coming back to the central issues of the FM movement from the beginning and how they are incarnated in our present identity, with whatever implications they give us for the future. These explorations will perhaps make it evident that our mission as a people is much larger in scope than ‘evangelism’ in the narrow sense.”

**Register now.** All who plan to attend are encouraged to pre-register by February 13. Registration is \$30 per person until then and \$35 thereafter and

includes the Monday evening meal and Tuesday breakfast, plus symposium materials. Participants are responsible to arrange overnight lodging, but the Historical Center can provide helpful information. The symposium, to be held at the World Ministries Center, begins at 1:30 p.m. on Monday and ends Tuesday noon.

For more information contact the Historical Center. You may send an email to [history@fmcna.org](mailto:history@fmcna.org).



Top-Bottom:  
Henry Church,  
John Hay,  
Milo Kaufmann

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# VIVIAN A. DAKE

BY KAY AND BRUCE KLINE

Vivian Adelbert Dake, late 1800s Free Methodist preacher and founder of the Pentecost Bands, was a single-purpose man and a radical Christian evangelist (“radical” in the sense of absolute, unqualified, zealous). Dake lived out his brief 38 years seeking the lost and bringing them to Christ.

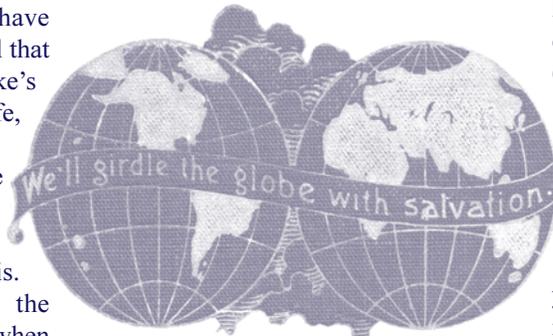
Dake’s descendants, the offspring of Marie Dake Fink and Carrie Dake Kline, have recently established a living memorial at Hope Africa University in Bujumbura, where they have endowed the Dake Memorial Library to serve young African students from five central Africa countries. Fifty-three Dake descendants and eight friends have responded with gifts to the memorial that was initiated early this year by Dake’s grandson, Bruce Kline, and his wife, Kneldrith (Kay).

Vivian A Dake, son of the Reverend Jonathan Woodcock Dake and Althelia Merrill Dake, was born February 9, 1854 in Oregon, Illinois. His father was a preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, but when the Free Methodist Church was organized in 1860 both parents enrolled as charter members.

The Dake children—Vivian and his siblings Mary, Flora, Charles, and Gilbert—grew up in a nurturing, godly home. At the age of nine Vivian was con-

verted at the family altar. Father Dake, at this time an itinerant Free Methodist minister, could provide little hope for anything beyond basic education for his children, but God’s guidance and provision led to much more.

B. T. Roberts, founder of the Free Methodist Church, writes of meeting



young Dake at an Illinois camp meeting while raising money to erect buildings for the new seminary at North Chili, New York (now Roberts Wesleyan College). “One of the first who gave was a bashful boy of twelve or thirteen who had outgrown his clothes,” wrote Roberts. “As, trembling, the boy placed a ten-cent piece in my hand, a thrill went over me like a gentle shock of electricity.”

The boy was Vivian Dake.

Roberts continued, “In 1870 after the school was in successful operation, I mentioned this circumstance at a camp meeting in New York. Mrs. Roberts arose in the meeting and said, ‘This boy is the son of a Free Methodist preacher in poor circumstances. Will not someone here send him to school?’ Mrs. Joseph Mackey of New York responded, ‘Send for him to go to school and I will pay his bills.’”

“When the news reached Vivian he was in the field hoeing corn. To express

Holiness Unto The Lord  
Kindling Watch-Fires, 19-20)

his joy he turned a somersault and stood on his head! He came to our school in North Chili, bright, uncultivated, thirsting for knowledge, ambitious to learn” (Dake,

Ellen and B. T. Roberts took young Dake under their wing, seeing in him the fire and dedication that would later infuse his remarkable ministry. A note in Vivian’s diary offers this insight: “I love the work of the Lord. Oh, I would rather die than exalt myself. I will live humbly. I long for more of the life of Jesus. I am determined to obey God at any cost” (Kindling Watch-Fires, 24).

Wherever Dake ministered men and women found repentance and faith in Christ. He established the Pentecost Bands to give newly converted youth a place in ministry. The Bands were small evangelistic teams of young men or young women and at one time involved more than 200 persons. Their fervent faith and evangelism led to the powerful conversion of many and to the establishing of more than 100 Free Methodist churches throughout the Midwest. Pentecost Band teams also evangelized in Norway, Germany, England, Africa and India. Dake’s concern was for the whole world.

Vivian Dake was a gifted preacher but he was also a teacher, poet and songwriter whose ministry touched thousands. In response to an “inner urging” his last missionary trip was to western Africa. While at Sierra Leone he contracted African fever (probably malaria). He was taken aboard ship in the harbor for treatment and recuperation where he died at the young age of 38. His remains were buried in Sierra Leone, but the gravesite has never been located. His death in 1892, coming just a year before B. T. Roberts himself died, was a blow to Roberts who regarded Vivian as his son in the gospel.

## WHY SO MANY VIVIAN?

Vivian Dake had a great impact on many young Pentecost Band members—a good number of whom eventually married and had children. And many former Band members honored Dake by giving the name Vivian to their sons.

So if you know a Vivian in the Free Methodist Church—a grandfather or great uncle, perhaps—chances are the reason traces back to Dake and the Pentecost Bands. “Vivian” comes from the word for “life,” so it’s not a bad name.

# DER OF THE PENTECOST BANDS

Dake Memorial at Hope Africa University will perpetuate his memory

Dake was a purpose-focused man whose love for God and lost souls motivated his entire being. The first stanza and chorus of a song he and his wife, Ida May, wrote present the major theme of his life. The song is titled "We'll Girdle the Globe with Salvation." The text follows:

Behold the hands stretched out for aid,  
Darkened by sin, and sore dismayed,  
O will you to their rescue go,  
Lost wand'ers down to endless woe?  
Chorus:  
We'll girdle the globe with salvation  
With holiness unto the Lord,

And light will illumine each nation,  
The light from the lamp of his word.

The Vivian A. Dake Memorial Library at Hope Africa University will be dedicated in February 2006 at Bujumbura, Burundi, Africa.

**Bibliographic Note:** Dake's life is recorded in two biographies, *Kindling Watch-Fires: Being a Brief Sketch of the Life of Rev. Vivian A Dake*, by his wife, Ida Dake Parsons (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1915, 353 pp.), which includes a number of Dake's hymns and poems, and *Life and Labors of Rev. Vivian A. Dake, Organizer and Leader of Pentecost Bands*, by Dake's successor, Thomas H. Nelson (Chicago: T. B. Arnold, 1894, 508 pp.). Nelson's volume also includes many Dake poems and some of his brief editorial writings. *Venture! The Frontiers of Free Methodism*, by Byron S. Lamson (Life and Life Press, 1960) has a considerable amount of information on, and a misological assessment of, the Bands.

*The Pentecost Herald*, a monthly newspaper begun by the Bands in 1894, is a rich primary source of information. Microfilmed copies are found at the Asbury Theological Seminary library and some other repositories.

Numerous references to Dake and the Pentecost Bands were published in *The Earnest Christian*, especially during the late 1880s and early 1890s, in the standard Free Methodist histories, and in the writings and papers of E. E. and Julia Shelhamer, who were Pentecost Band members and leaders. Sketches of Dake and the Shelhamers are found in William C. Kostlevy, *Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement* (Scarecrow, 2001). The Marston Memorial Historical Center has manuscript records of some of the early Bands. The most comprehensive study to date is Howard A. Snyder, "Radical Holiness Evangelism: Vivian Dake and the Pentecost Bands." See also T.

Joe Cullumber, "The Pentecost Bands: A Mission Sodality in Early Free Methodism" (D.Min. Research Paper, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1977, 55 pp.).

## News

▷ PASTORS' SABBATICAL PROGRAM applications are now available. Contact the Historical Center for information on scholarships and scheduling.

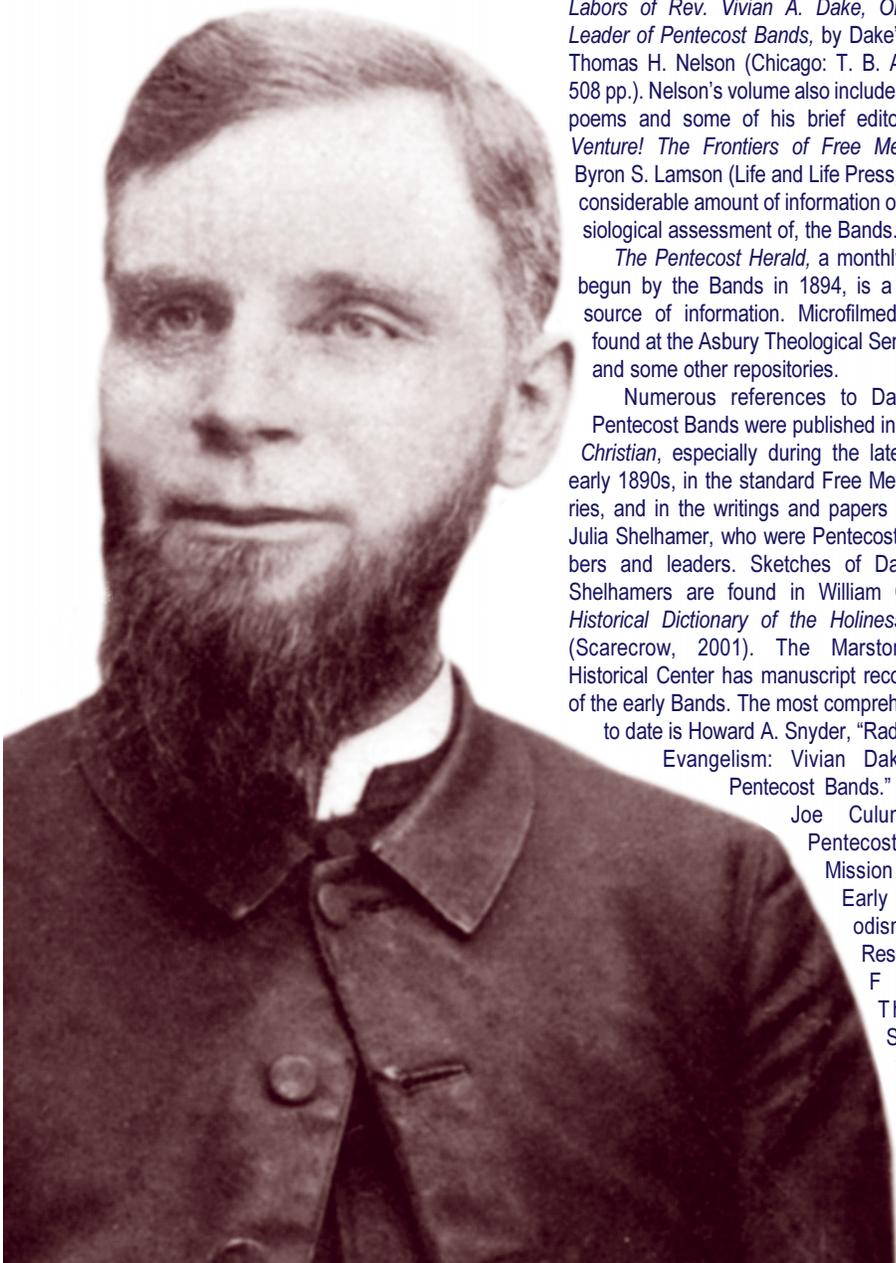
▷ EXTRA COPIES of the Newsletter are available free of charge upon request (up to ten copies to one address). If you wish to send current or back issues to friends or family, contact the Historical Center by phone or letter or by email at [History@fmcna.org](mailto:History@fmcna.org).

## Asbury's Holiness Studies Center will focus on Revitalization Themes

The Wesleyan/Holiness Studies Center at Asbury Theological Seminary has now been reorganized as the Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements. Using the Methodist and holiness movements as primary sources, the center will examine a wide range of renewal and revival movements throughout church history, and globally.

The former *Wesleyan/Holiness Studies Center Bulletin* has been renamed *Revitalization* and will be published twice yearly. The first issue is now available. To receive a copy, contact the Center at Asbury or send an email to: [revitalization@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:revitalization@asburyseminary.edu).

In collaboration with Scarecrow Press, the Center is publishing a series of books in revitalization studies. Two of the first books to be published will be Meesaeng Lee Choi, *The Rise of the Korea Holiness Church in Relation to the American Holiness Movement: Wesley's "Scriptural Holiness" and the "Fourfold Gospel"* and "Live While You Preach": *The Autobiography of Methodist Revivalist and Abolitionist John Wesley Redfield (1810-1863)*, edited and annotated by Howard Snyder and making Redfield's important handwritten autobiography more widely available.



# Book Reviews

*Holy Boldness: Women Preacher's Autobiographies and the Sanctified Self*, by Susie C. Stanley (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002, 2004). 268 pp. ISBN 1-57233-310-3 (paper).

Susie C. Stanley, professor of historical theology at Messiah College, researched the spiritual autobiographies of thirty-four American Wesleyan/Holiness women preachers. These stories deserve inclusion in the canon of women's autobiography, Stanley argues, because they show how women's religious experience of sanctification emboldened them to leave their private sphere of influence and move into public ministries.

Stanley begins by tracing the historical roots of sanctification, the theological basis for affirming women preachers, and feminist and autobiographical theory. She looks at Madame Guyon (1648–1717), French mystic whose writings served as a forerunner for women's spiritual autobiography. From France and Guyon, Stanley moves to England and early Methodists like Mary Bosanquet (Mrs. John) Fletcher and Hester Ann Rogers as further models. Many Wesleyan/Holiness women confessed their reliance on the autobiographies of these women as they formulated their own theology, particularly with regard to sanctification.

From this background, Stanley goes on to analyze the writings of Wesleyan/Holiness women preachers. Her list includes Free Methodists Martha A. Lee, who founded rescue homes for women; Emma Ray, African American revivalist and prison worker; and Julia Shelhamer, pastor and mission founder. Free Methodists will enjoy reading the extensive references to these



women. Stanley does not include the date of Julia Shelhamer's birth, which according to Marston Memorial Historical Center records from her funeral was September 14, 1879. Shelhamer's daughter Esther James is still living and recently video-recorded an interview that includes information about her pastor parents. The DVD of this interview is deposited in our Historical Center as part of its oral history project.

Stanley records a most unique preaching situation involving Julia Shelhamer. Allotted two minutes during an intermission at a boxing match in San Diego, Mrs. Shelhamer stood on the blood stains in the middle of the ring and quickly told the story of the Prodigal Son (p. 157).

Stanley details the challenges these women faced in overcoming traditional gender roles. One scholar wrote, "It is hard to fight an enemy who has outposts in your head" (p. 112)—referring to the internal struggles of women in overcoming long-established expectations of woman's place at home with her family. But each of these women experienced the call of God, and hurried to obey. Many mentioned not only God's call to preach but also to write down their experience.

One of Stanley's goals in using these autobiographies, she writes, is to challenge the very churches that initially enabled women's ministries but now often discourage women from professional ministry. With the exception of the Salvation Army, the percentage of women clergy in Wesleyan/Holiness groups has declined drastically. Perhaps her challenge will succeed in reestablishing the ideal first held by the Free Methodist Church and its sister denominations.

— Kathy Callahan-Howell

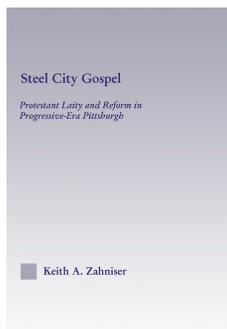
*Steel City Gospel: Protestant Laity and Reform in Progressive-Era Pittsburgh*, by Keith A. Zahniser. Religion in History, Society, and Culture Series (New York: Routledge, 2005). 275 pp. ISBN 0415-97031-8 (hardbound).

This book presents to the public Dr. Zahniser's dissertation at the University of California, Santa Barbara. It is an historical study of Christian leadership in reforming Pittsburgh's political system in the second decade of the 1900s.

Zahniser writes, "Although the trend in Progressive Era studies has most recently been toward establishing the transatlantic or even global contexts of Progressive reform," a focused study on Pittsburgh "allows a deeper penetration into the complexities of one region's reform efforts." It was precisely the "local character, chronology, and concepts" of the Pittsburgh context that "gave a very individual shape" to reform efforts there. Pittsburgh's reformers were, however, aware of reform efforts elsewhere and were "both consciously and unconsciously linked . . . to long historical traditions of morally motivated political reform" (3).

Zahniser shows how "networks that connected reformers to churches, settlement houses, and civic reform organizations . . . fostered the creation of a moral discourse" that "fed a general sense of moral outrage over political and cultural corruption." He stresses "the central role played by Pittsburgh's 'activist laity' as conduits between 'religious' and 'secular' organizations" (3-4).

One figure in this story was Presbyterian minister Charles Reed Zahniser, executive secretary of the Pittsburgh Council of



Churches and of the Christian Social Service Union, a force for civic reform at the time. Free Methodists (who do not directly figure in this story) may be interested to know that Charles Reed Zahniser, something of a leader in the Social Gospel Movement, was a second cousin of the five Zahniser brothers who became

Free Methodist preachers—one of whom (Ralph) was the great-grandfather of Keith Zahniser. Keith is the son of historian Marvin Zahniser and the grandson of Clarence Howard Zahniser, author of *Earnest Christian: Life and Works of Benjamin Titus Roberts* (1957). Charles Reed Zahniser, later professor of Social Science and Applied Christianity at Boston University, wrote several books including *Social Christianity: The Gospel for an Age of Social Strain* (1911) and *The Soul Doctor* (1938).

Keith Zahniser argues that Pittsburgh's experience of reform in the early 1900s shows "the necessity of taking a new look at the role of churches in reform" (211), especially given the problems confronting America today. Referencing Jim Wallis' recent writings, Zahniser concludes: "As we begin a new century, the calls of reformers for a moral and a just government from a century ago echo down to us. They will undoubtedly find a new life in contemporary calls for political reform couched in the cadences of a moral discourse" (217).

This is an excellent and timely study.

— Howard A. Snyder