

B. T. Roberts  
(1823-93)

Free Methodist Historical Society

# Newsletter

WINTER 2008 — Volume 8 , No. 2

## Betty Ellen Cox's Dictionaries Available Online

Increasing demand for the unique Kirundi-English and Kinyarwanda-English dictionaries created by FM missionary Betty Ellen Cox has prompted the Historical Center to publish the dictionaries on the Internet. This makes them broadly available free of charge, in keeping with Miss Cox's wishes.

Over the past year, the Historical Center has provided photocopies of the dictionaries to a number of persons and institutions in the United States who have requested them. These include Yale University, the city of Tucson's Public Library and Unified School District, and various churches, families, and mission agencies. World Relief, high school ESL classes, independent-study students, and host families are among those requesting one or both dictionaries and their accompanying grammar lessons.

Betty Ellen Cox created both dictionaries while serving in Africa in the 1960s. Kirundi-French dictionaries are widely available, but Kirundi-English ones are almost nonexistent.

Historical Center Director Cathy Fortner notes, "Refugees coming to America from Africa often have a language barrier. Persons trying to find a way to communicate with them effectively go to the Internet for help with Kirundi and Kinyarwanda." This has prompted the Center to publish the dictionaries electronically, rather than in printed form.



Betty Ellen Cox, July 2007

The Kirundi-English Dictionary and Kinyarwanda-English Dictionary are both now available through the Marston Memorial Historical Center's website. Go to: [www.freemethodistchurch.org/users/marston/publications.htm](http://www.freemethodistchurch.org/users/marston/publications.htm). The dictionaries may be downloaded and printed as needed.

## Highlights of FM History and Archives

The MMHC has completed a remarkably productive quadrennium of work. Increasingly it is becoming the kind of professional-quality historical operation that Bishop L. R. Marston envisioned.

A few highlights:

- Our Oral History program is now operational. (See accompanying article.)
- Denominational departments now regularly deposit non-current documents with the archives according to our established retention schedule and stated policies.
- A Heritage Tour Guide was created for those participating in the 2007 Bible quiz final tournament at Roberts Wesleyan College.
- The Historical Center is taking steps to make *The Earnest Christian* magazine (1860-1909)

available digitally at the Center and on the Internet.

- Recent acquisitions by the Historical Center include: The original record book of the Otsego and Chenango, New York, FM circuit, 1863-1890, an updated history of the Southern Michigan Conference by Richard Roth, and several boxes of books used by Howard Snyder in researching the biographies of B. T. and Ellen Roberts.

• The Center is working with the Indiana Historical Society to microfilm Free Methodist archival documents. Materials microfilmed so far include Board of Administration and other minutes from the past several decades.

Meanwhile the Center continues to respond on a routine basis to the many incoming requests for research on church histories or family genealogies.

Published by the  
**Marston Memorial  
Historical Center**  
ISSN 1546-4199

Cathy Fortner, Director  
Kate McGinn, Archivist

World Ministries Center  
Box 535002  
770 N High School Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46253-5002  
(800) 342-5531

E-mail: [history@fmcna.org](mailto:history@fmcna.org)

Website:

[www.freemethodistchurch.org](http://www.freemethodistchurch.org)  
(Select "About Us," then click on Marston Historical Center)

### Editorial Committee

Howard Snyder, Editor  
Cathy Fortner  
David Bundy  
Kate McGinn

### Layout & Design

Andrea Anibal

# Reflections on GENERAL CONFERENCE 2007

BY HOWARD A. SNYDER

The Marston Memorial Historical Center was well represented at the July 2007 FM General Conference events in Spring Arbor, Michigan. We had a very creative and strategically placed booth in the exhibit area. Many stopped by and signed the quilt we were making, picked up literature, or asked questions.

Our Oral History Workshop presented by Kate McGinn was well attended, as were our three luncheons. At the E. P. Hart luncheon we had the fun of meeting some of Hart's descendants.

I have been reflecting on the General Conference, getting reactions from other people, and thinking about "My dream for the 2011 General Conference."

By "General Conference" I mean not just the business sessions themselves, important as they were, but the whole experience. The General Conference is the closest thing we have to a (U.S.) denomination-wide camp meeting. It's a great celebration, a time of affirming and asking about our identity as Free Methodists.

The General Conference, including all its related events, was very well organized. Spring Arbor University, working closely with denominational personnel, did a remarkably efficient job of caring for transportation, directions and information needs, meal arrangements, and all the rest. There were few if any glitches (though one of the ubiquitous golf carts did catch fire in the parking lot; nobody injured!).

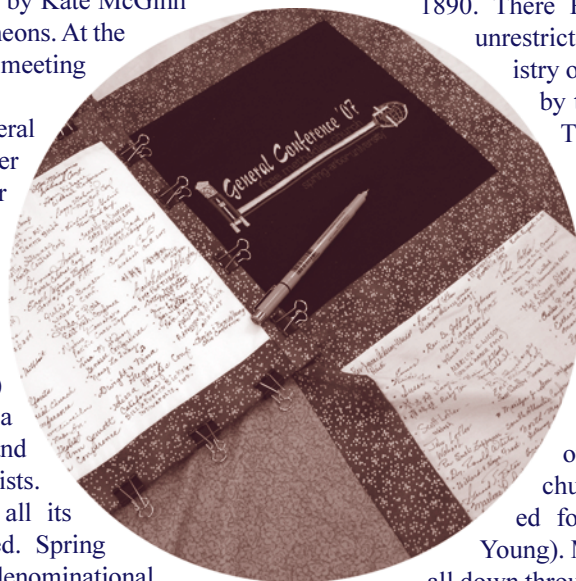
As usual, a considerable amount of business was transacted, and some issues debated at considerable length. Differing views and conflicting proposals regarding the leadership of the denomination resulted in a compromise whereby one "lead bishop" was elected, then two others, reducing the episcopacy from four to three. Some had favored just one bishop—effectively a CEO, which would be a sharp break with our tradition and understanding of the church—while others favored continuing with four bishops with the same role and status, except as they might divide responsibilities among them. Having an undefined "lead bishop" was the compromise.

The General Conference's biggest surprise—following up these leadership decisions—came in the election of the three bishops. With Bishop Richard Snyder retiring and Bishop Roger Haskins returning to the pastorate, Joe James was the remaining bishop with the longest tenure. When the electronic balloting was over, however, David Kendall (having served as bishop for about two years) was elected lead bishop, and two new bishops were elected: David Roller and Matt Thomas.

Bishop Joe James, after two quadrennial terms, was not reelected in the balloting on Tuesday. The next night, however, he preached a remarkable, moving sermon on the gospel for the poor. It was partly personal testimony based on his experiences during his bike tour in India, but mostly it was based on Scripture. I found this to be the most extensive, authentic, and impassioned affirmation of B. T. Roberts' vision that I have ever heard from anyone other than the late Gilbert James.

Reflecting on the episcopal election, historian types might trace a parallel to B. T. Roberts at his last general conference in 1890. There Roberts eloquently defended full and unrestricted ordination for women and the ministry of the Pentecost Bands, but was rebuffed by the conference's action on these issues.

Though Roberts was reelected general superintendent, he was keenly disappointed. The general conference action prompted him to publish *Ordaining Women* a year later, his last and perhaps most significant book. And of course, the better part of a century later, the denomination decided Roberts was right—and thankfully capable women pastors and other leaders are emerging in the U.S. church, including two who were nominated for bishop (Linda Adams and Brenda Young). Many of our greatest missionary leaders all down through history have of course been women.



## What People Thought

I took an informal poll of a dozen or so General Conference participants, most of them delegates. What were their overall impressions of the whole experience, and what did they see as the most important actions taken? Here are a few reactions:

One delegate commented, "The battle we had to defeat the regionalization [proposal] and the endorsing of the three bishops as 'bishops of the church' and not of a region, may produce a more cohesive sense within the U. S. church. Relieving the bishops of the need to preside at the annual conferences is a strengthening move, as is the transferability of ministerial candidates and the practical approval of holding joint plenary conference sessions."

Another delegate remarked, "I felt the resolutions debated and dealt with got thoughtful consideration. The delegates proved to be hard working, intelligent and gentle in all their discussions. The church showed itself strong and spiritual. I did suffer much under the music but otherwise I'd give the Conference an A-"

The music question is an interesting one. With few exceptions, the music at General Conference was what is now called "contemporary." A few songs, largely unknown to the congregation, were repeated frequently, interspersed with occasional traditional hymns—sung how-



ever with a syncopated or rock-type beat that made it difficult for persons who knew the hymns to actually enter into the singing. It occurred to me during one service: We (like many other churches) have now fully adopted a liturgy based on the rock concert. One could hope in the future for more variety. Bill Leslie of Chicago's LaSalle Street Church used to say, "Everyone deserves to hear the gospel in their own sound." Surely for the sake of mission and freedom in worship we can embrace more diversity in worship, doing better at bringing out of our storehouse, like a wise householder, "new treasures as well as old" (Mt. 13:52 TNIV).

One participant had this reaction: "I was more than a bit bothered that we can leap so quickly into emotional fervor and give so little time to pensive reflection on the preached Word. I found myself disconnected on many occasions. My guess is that within the next 40-80 years the church will swing back to a stronger intellectual appeal in its worship style and then 120-160 years from now will be even stronger in its emotional fervor."

## Looking Toward 2011

The Free Methodist Church is approaching its sesquicentennial in 2010 and the 2011 General Conference at Roberts Wesleyan College in New York. What might we hope for as we peer three or four years into the future? My dream for 2011 looks like this:

- **Music would be a blend of styles**, combining old favorites with new songs, classic Wesley hymns, and other great music from the long history of the church. Free Methodism means freedom of the Spirit in worship, and enabling "everyone to hear the gospel in their own sound." Certainly that includes both "contemporary" and "traditional."

- **Celebration of many more ministries among the poor**; many more urban and other churches among the poor. Some of this was done in 2007, and it was great.

- We would **extend our witness materially by showing we care for God's good earth**. One hundred percent of trash would be recycled—no plastics and pop cans in trash baskets; no waste paper for landfills. *This can be done*—many businesses and some cities now do. It is not difficult, especially for people who are good at planning meals, events, transportation, etc.

- We would have **more participation by music groups from all our educational institutions** and perhaps local churches, and more variety in the music they presented.

- We can hope for **a trend back toward discipline** after our half-century-long reaction against legalism. "Legalism" is now a straw man within Free Methodism; it is no longer our problem. It has been replaced by consumerism and me-first individualism. To be authentic Free Methodists, we must recover committed covenant community—as John Wesley well understood in his day. I would hope that by 2011 the pendulum would have swung back from bashing legalism toward responsible discipleship. John Wesley in guiding early Methodism had to battle constantly on two sides—against legalism on the one hand, and against antinomianism (essentially individualistic "moral lawlessness") on the other. We hope for a recovery of a biblical balance that avoids both a rules-based shared legalism and a me-first, anti-covenantal spiritual libertarianism.

- We pray for **a renewed accent on the cleansing, empowering-for-mission work of the Holy Spirit**—that both General Conference and our churches experience such renewal in profound ways. This of course would trump everything else, giving us the energy and vision to fulfill Free Methodism's original charismatic mission, but in fresh and newly-relevant ways.

- We can **use the sesquicentenary as a catalyst to learn more about Free Methodist history** and its meaning and as a source of guidance and inspiration as we move into the denomination's fourth half-century. General Conference participants will be in the vicinity of half a dozen or so key historic FM sites, from Pekin and the nearby Centenary Park, to the Albion FM church building, to the old tavern in North Chili (if it really does get preserved), the North Chili cemetery, and of course the campus of Roberts Wesleyan College. For parents, this will be a great teaching opportunity with the kids.

God's Spirit was present at the 2007 General Conference. May this be even more true in 2011.

**PHOTOS** — Top: Cathy Fortner and Charles Canon III discuss a historical artifact at the MMHC booth. Middle: Retired missionary doctor Al Snyder signs copies of his books before recounting his memoirs at the third MMHC Heritage Luncheon. Bottom: Dr. Jon Kulaga and E.P. Hart's great-grandson, Winston VanWinegarden, met when Kulaga spoke at the first heritage luncheon.



**WE  
HOPE FOR**

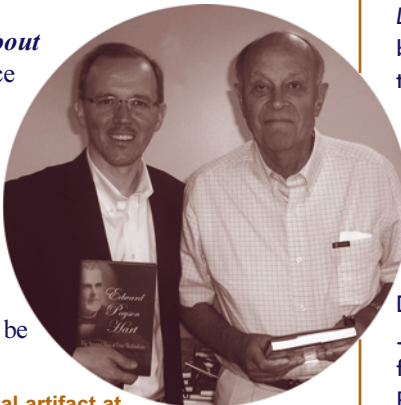
**A RECOVERY OF  
BIBLICAL BALANCE  
THAT AVOIDS BOTH A  
RULES-BASED  
SHARED LEGALISM  
AND A ME-FIRST,  
ANTI-COVENANTAL  
SPIRITUAL  
LIBERTARIANISM.**

# News & Notes

▷ The papers of FM missionaries **BURTON AND DOROTHY McCREADY** have been deposited, through the kindness of their son, John, with the Spring Arbor University Archives for processing.

▷ **PASTORS' SABBATICAL PROGRAM** applications are now available.

▷ The TV program *Day of Discovery* broadcast a three-part series on the life of Free Methodist missionary **JACOB DeSHAZER**. DVDs of the program, entitled "From Vengeance to Forgiveness: Jake DeShazer's Extraordinary Journey," are available from Discovery House Publishers. (Call 800-653-8333 or visit [www.dhp.org](http://www.dhp.org)).



# Book Review

*Spiritual Formation for Christian Leaders: Lessons from the Life and Teaching of E. Stanley Jones*, by Donald Demaray and Reginald Johnson (Nashville, Abingdon, 2007). 122 pp. ISBN 978068749504-7 (paper).

*Introduction to Homiletics*, revised third ed., by Donald E. Demaray (Indianapolis: Light and Life Communications, 2006). 246 pp. ISBN 0-89367282-3 (paper).

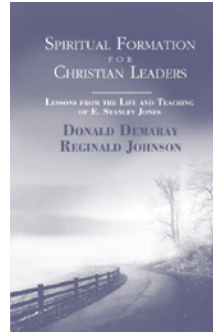


Among Donald Demaray's many books, his *Introduction to Homiletics* has through the years proved to be a key resource for pastors who would preach biblically, clearly, and convincingly—engaging the imagination as well as the mind.

“Good preaching gets right to the point,” Demaray says. “Economy of language brings magic to communication, especially in this information age in which we hear more than we can easily process.” Demaray shows that “simplicity,

clarity, and economy of words work the magic of communication.” But above all preaching must be biblical and God-inspired: “God gives sermons to preachers on their knees.”

The book is divided into three sections: “The Preacher,” “The Sermon,” and “The Preaching,” and includes also a “Personal Growth Program.” Demaray takes note of the new technologies available today, but also warns of “the overuse of visual technology.”



Demaray has collaborated with Asbury Seminary professor Reginald Johnson to produce the very useful little book, *Spiritual Formation for Christian Leaders*. The extensive papers of the famous Methodist missionary E. Stanley Jones now reside at Asbury Seminary, and the authors draw judiciously from this rich resource.

The book is structured around a set of nine questions, such as: Can I really experience transformation? Is Christian community possible? Does God heal us? Can I really become a disciplined Christian? Does God guide us? In very practical ways, this book combines the wisdom of three experienced teachers and mentors: Demaray, Johnson, and Jones himself. It includes quotations and illustrations from Jones, as well as stories and anecdotes from the authors' own pilgrimages. Each chapter ends with questions for reflection or discussion. —Howard A. Snyder

## Historical Committee Organizes for New Quadrennium

With the beginning of a new quadrennium, the Committee on FM History and Archives has reorganized and added four new members.

Newly joining the committee, by approval of the Board of Administration, are Jeremy Thomas, a pastor and currently a doctoral student in the sociology of religion at Purdue University, Prof. Doug Koskela of Seattle Pacific University, Dr. Mindi Cromwell of the Lansing (Mich.) Central FM Church, and Dr. Barry Hamilton, librarian and archivist at Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary. Continuing on the committee are: Gerald Bates, David Bundy, Gerald Coates, Louise Campbell, Charles Canon III, Evelyn Mottweiler, Jon Kulaga, Stan Ingersol, and Howard Snyder, plus MMHC Director Cathy Fortner and Archivist Kate McGinn.

Officers for the new quadrennium are Howard Snyder, chair; Gerry Coates, vice chair; and Cathy Fortner, secretary.

## Oral History Interviews Now Available to Researchers

Twenty-five Oral History interviews are now available for viewing in the Marston Memorial Historical Center. These can be used by researchers or others who wish to learn more about the history of the Free Methodist Church in the twentieth century.

Some are interviews of individual leaders—for example, an extended interview of Bishop Emeritus Robert F. Andrews, conducted by his daughter Vondria. Others are interviews of couples, including retired missionaries Tillman and Gwen Houser and John and Ruby Schlosser. Altogether 34 persons are included in the interviews.

These videos are valuable from many angles. Bishop Andrews recounts fascinating stories of FM women pastors, including his own mother. Esther James tells about her father, E. E. Shelhamer.

To date, the interviews include four bishops (Bastian, Cryderman, Parsons, and Andrews), educators such as David McKenna and Frank and Marilyn Thompson, several retired missionaries, and Free Methodists in other types of service, such as chaplaincy and youth ministry. The goal is to get a broad sampling of Free Methodists who have served in various ways, whether officially leaders or not.

In addition to those mentioned above, the following persons have been video-recorded so far: Chaplain Harry Ansted, Gordon and Lola Bell, Doane and Ruth Bonney, Herbert and Mary Coates, Betty Ellen Cox, Robert and Carolyn Cranston, Norman Edwards, Lester Finger, John and Alene Gilmore, Gertrude Haight, Bruce Kline, G. Herbert Livingston, John Miyabe, Frank and Carol Ogden, Marvin Russell, and David Shigekawa.

More information is available through the Historical Center.



Philippines, 1934: Mrs. Schlosser on boat trek by dug-out canoe. Rev. Abundancio Burdeos, native evangelist, poles boat at rear.