

# Book Reviews

*Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism*, by Phyllis Mack (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). 328 pp. \$99.00. ISBN 10: 0521889189 (hardcover).



Through close analysis of archival sources, Phyllis Mack (Rutgers) challenges scholars of early British Methodism to provide a more authentic rendering of this vibrant movement. While recognizing some truth in E. P. Thompson's characterization of Methodism as emotional and repressive, Mack shows from primary sources how Methodists actually understood themselves. Her approach validates the perspectives of ordinary men and women, placing them alongside their

leader, John Wesley.

Mack thus strategically shifts the focus from "Methodism as the personal history of John Wesley" toward "Methodism as a movement that embraced both modern and pre-modern ideas." She demonstrates how this mixture became the driving force behind the transformation of Methodism in the post-Wesley era from a reform movement within Anglicanism toward an organized church with a global mission.

Mack focuses on the dynamics of gender and emotion—dynamics she says that generated such energy, arising from the tensions between personal agency and self-transcendence. She thus places Methodism within the "seismic shift" that took place from "the religious culture of the seventeenth century" to the "disenchantment of the world" that followed in the wake of the Enlightenment (p. 8).

Mack discovers remarkable strength of agency embedded in the journals and letters of early Methodists. She shows how religious faith made a significant contribution in the transition to modern selfhood. Rejecting the secular thesis that people who embrace religion "have no agency or limited agency," Mack constructs "a more complex definition of agency" (p. 9) that paradoxically includes autonomy and self-transcendence.

Mack argues, "By the late eighteenth century, this tension had begun to generate a new kind of psychic energy, an aggressive spiritual agency that was powered by modern habits of self-analysis, emotional discipline, and the social and spiritual ambition that generated Methodism's world-wide missionary project" (pp. 14-15). Based on the early Methodist experience, Mack affirms the role of religion in the emergence of modern selfhood, where one strives to "do what is right"—both by actively shaping one's self and by passively submitting oneself to God.

Letting early Methodist men and women speak for themselves, Mack brings out gender differences in people's emotional and spiritual selves—men thinking in terms of behaviors, women in terms of relationships. Through deep immersion in relevant archives and an astute knowledge of secondary sources, Mack tracks the broad shift in early Methodism from introspection toward an evangelical activism after Wesley's death. She thus connects primary resources and secondary interpreters of early Methodism with a broader interpretive literature in historical studies, expanding the bibliographic research base for this field. This springs from her decision early in her studies to stand with the ordinary men and women who made early Methodism what it was.

Of special interest is Mack's perceptive study of Adam Clarke and the birth of modern evangelicalism. Wesleyan scholars will find *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment* to be essential reading.

— Barry W. Hamilton, *Northeastern Seminary*

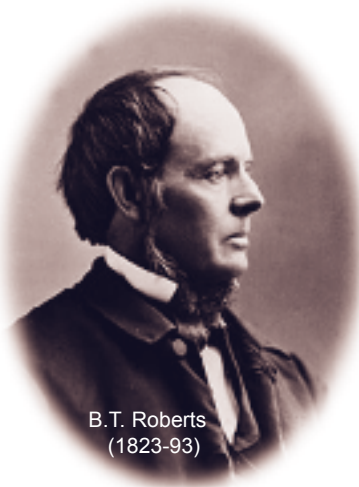
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FREE METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Newsletter

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## **Editorial Committee**

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## A Special Visitor from Japan

In March, Ms. Chikako Ikehata, a part-time teacher at Osaka Christian College in Japan, spent several days at the Historical Center researching the life of Jacob DeShazer. Ms. Ikehata is the most recent person to take advantage of the research program offered by the Center for the Study of Wesley and Society at the MMHC. She found significant material that is helping her complete her master's thesis in Japan.

Following her visit, Ms. Ikehata sent this note of appreciation:

"Welcome to the World Ministries Center, Chikako Ikehata!"

A little signboard at the entrance welcomed me. And I did indeed receive the warmest welcome from everyone at the Center. I had a very fruitful and pleasant time there.

I spent about a week at the archive doing my research on Jacob DeShazer, who became a missionary to Japan after his unusual experiences as a Doolittle raider and a prisoner of war by the Japanese during World War II. I am interested in how he could accommodate himself as a Doolittle bombardier with himself as a missionary to Japan, and also how he



Chikako Ikehata

viewed war in general.

I would like to express my special thanks to Ms. Cathy Fortner and Ms. Kate McGinn for all the help they gave me to make my research possible. I also extend my thanks to Bishop Gerald Bates, Rev. and Mrs. Dan and Becky Riemenschneider, Rev. and Mrs. John and Ann Van Valin, and Rev. Linda Adams for great insights. My research would not have been so blessed without the help of these and other people at the Center who supported me in many ways.

Thank you very much again, and I hope to come back in the near future!

Chikako Ikehata

For more information on research options at the MMHC, please contact the Center. □

# Free Methodist HISTORY DETECTIVES

## Part Two

BY CATHY FORTNER, MMHC DIRECTOR

**S**aving Free Methodist history continues to be a detective story.

During Board of Administration meetings last October, a box appeared on my desk. Another rescue of records had been successfully completed. This time the box contained treasures from the Melrose Park Bethany Free Methodist Church, formerly the Italian Mission Free Methodist Church in the west-Chicago area.

On a trip to Indianapolis, Superintendent Thomas Ramundo of the Southern Michigan Conference stopped to visit with his mother. Mr. and Mrs. Ramundo, Tom's parents, had saved these unique documents when the church closed. Tom was thrilled to reminisce alongside his mother as they read family members' names on various documents, including marriage and baptism records.

The Official Board minutes of the Bethany FM Church begin in 1935. Y.P.M.S., F.M.Y. and Sunday school records reveal family names such as Mannoia, Traina, Casurella and Ramundo. In her 1998 biography, *Maria*, Arleta Richardson recounts not only the story of Maria Mannoia and her passion for Christ but also tells the history of the Italian Mission.

A typescript history of this work records, "The Bethany Free Methodist Church was founded in 1924, being primarily an Italian Mission. Services were first held in the

***Records of the Bethany Church include such family names as Mannoia, Traina, Casurella, and Ramundo.***

basements of some of the persons interested in the newly founded work. Later, in the year 1925, with the assistance of Mrs. Mary Mannoia, the grounds located at 137 North 20th Avenue were purchased. A store building was moved on the premises and remodeled for the purpose of holding services." The history notes that one of the early ministries of the new church was "manual training classes."

*The Free Methodist Church Record*



Anthony Casurella, Rev. & Mrs. Frey in front of the Melrose Park, Bethany FMC.

*Book*, a key part of the collection, is a valuable source for documenting the history of this fruitful ministry. The book records the names of pastors, trustees, stewards, W.M.S. presidents, the Young People's Missionary Society (Y.P.M.S.) and Junior Missionary Society (J.M.S.), and Sunday school superintendents, along with lists of members, baptisms, marriages, and deaths. Ramundo recalls being touched when he saw in print the recorded sacrificial giving of his family at a time when he knew they had little to spare.

The history of this church and the Italian Mission will continue to live and be told through the preservation of these documents. (Is your church keeping records from past to present so its story is kept alive into the future?) ☐

To order either *The Free Methodist Church Record Book* or *Maria* contact the Wesleyan Publishing House at [www.parable.com/wph/](http://www.parable.com/wph/) or call 1-800-493-7539

## TRUE Repentance

This is the religion which Christ and the apostles preached. They required a repentance so deep, and so thorough, that it resulted in a complete regeneration of the moral nature. "Therefore if any [person] be in Christ [he or she] is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

— B. T. Roberts, "Secret Societies,"  
*The Earnest Christian* (June 1890), 168.



# Help Document the Free Methodist Publishing House

Not too long ago I heard a lecture by an arson investigator. He told many strange, sad, and wonderful stories, but what struck me most was an off-hand comment. In answering a question, the man remarked, “The arsonist’s greatest mistake is in not knowing how fire travels.”

His words lit a spark. Since then I have spent some time considering how records (papers, photographs, collections) travel. And how most people have little idea of where such records “end up.”

We archivists are all too familiar with the loss of important records. We hear the stories: “Oh, that sat in the garage so long we finally threw it away.” Or, “They were just taking up room in the church basement, so we pitched them.” Sometimes I feel like a character in an international thriller, chasing records that are hours away from destruction. More often, though, I feel like the confused low-level bureaucrat in a Kafka story.

Take, for instance, the odd case of the records from the Free Methodist Publishing House, later Light and Life Press. That venerable institution that lasted 100 years ought to be well documented by a denomination that so values learning and scholarship. And yet our records are, at their best, sketchy and at their worst, horrendous. We cannot find a record of every book published by the press. We hold maybe a handful of press catalogues, and our copyright records are woefully incomplete.

So I decided to cast my bread upon the waters. The history of what was once a towering institution in the denomination’s landscape has begun to fade. Before newer kinds of technology eclipse it completely, I am asking readers who may have older catalogues, rarer books, or any information pertinent to the Publishing House’s history to share it with the Historical Center. Please feel free to contact me at [katem@fmcna.org](mailto:katem@fmcna.org) or (800) 342-5531.

— Kate McGinn, Archivist



▷ BOOKS AVAILABLE — Copies of the book *Soul-Searching the Church: Free Methodism at 150 Years* are still available for purchase, for individual or group use. The Center also has copies of *Populist Saints: B. T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists*, by Howard Snyder, and the biography of E. P. Hart by Jon Kulaga.

▷ AFRICAN SCHOLARS CONTRIBUTE NEW RESEARCH — The Historical Center has received Esther Lubunga’s Master’s Thesis, “The Doctrine of Social Holiness in the Free Methodist Church, DRC: Implications for HIV and AIDS,” and the doctoral Dissertation of Venance Lubunga (assistant to FM Congo Bishop W’Elongo), “Moses and Leadership Struggles in the Exodus Narrative.” Bishop Emeritus Gerald Bates comments, “Dr. Venance Lubunga was a key participant in the founding of Hope Africa University and for a time its financial officer. This insightful dissertation is an example of the intellectual quality of work by one of our leading internationals, an adjunct lecturer at HAU, and a friend.”

▷ PROF. DON JORDAHL has contributed a report on Halford Chapel, Gateway Conference, including Official Board minutes of the Halford Chapel and Bingham Circuit, 1910-1938, the Bingham Circuit Pastoral Record, 1912-1922, plus related photographs.

▷ OTHER RECENT ACQUISITIONS: Kalamazoo FMC 125th Anniversary Celebration documents; Dwight Gregory’s D. Min. dissertation, “From the New Day to the New Century: Free Methodist Strategies for Metropolitan Church Planting in Light of 1985-2000 Efforts and Results” (Asbury Seminary).

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

News  
Notes