

B.T. Roberts
(1823-93)

FREE METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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Exploring the Future: Options for Preserving Free Methodism's Unique Legacy

B. T. Roberts believed not only that the future was in God's hands, but that it ultimately would be good, for God was accomplishing his work of salvation. He also taught that his people are called to be a part of this great work, responsibly and creatively involved.

In that confidence, the Marston Memorial Historical Center is exploring ways to improve, expand, and extend its service to the church in coming years—both in North America and globally. The Center continues to provide its many important services (as summarized in our last *Newsletter*), serving as the official denominational archives. Now we hope to build significantly on this foundation.

History is not just “a thing of the past”! It is very much a reality of the present and an essential resource for the future.

History Advisory Strategy Group

The Committee on Free Methodist History and Archives has formed a new History Advisory Strategy Group of about twenty-five key resource people to help the Center determine how best to both underwrite and expand the Historical Center's services and mission. The group is comprised of church leaders, educational administrators, business and professional people, and persons with expertise in archival operations. After an initial meeting in Indianapolis on March 22, in conjunction with the spring meeting of



The Free Methodist Publishing House (1909-1935),
1132 Washington Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois

the Historical Committee, the strategy group will work collaboratively over the next three years to explore options, including expanded financial resources. The group will make recommendations to the Historical Committee, which will then decide on next steps.

Toward the end of his life Sam Chesbrough (1826–1909), an exceptional key figure in early Free Methodism who in his later years was Free Methodist Publishing Agent, saw the need to preserve the church's essential records. His vision for conserving Free Methodism's legacy years later came to fruition in the creation of the Marston Memorial Historical Center. Today the Center is seeking God's guidance as to the next phase of its ministry.

Progress on this new venture will be reported from time to time in our *Newsletter*. □

JAPANESE STUDENTS INTERNED DURING WWII HONORED AT AZUSA

BY DONALD E. DEMARAY

World War II saw Americans of Japanese descent sent to internment camps nearly 70 years ago now. Students, during the three encampment years, missed their commencements, so Azusa Pacific University, on December 18, 2010, honored twenty-four such students who had registered at Los Angeles Pacific College and Azusa Bible College, institutions that one day would come together to create Azusa Pacific University.

LAPC, a Free Methodist school, took pride in students such as Paul Nagano, John Miyabe, Arnold Nakajima, and others who received honorary degrees on the Saturday before Christmas, 2010. Of the twenty-four honorees, six former students attended, and family or friends represented eighteen others. Among nearly 300 degree candidates, the Japanese honorees “walked” first to receive doctoral and bachelors diplomas. Jon Wallace, president of the university, commented, “This is possibly the most remarkable group of alumni this school has ever had.”

Evelyn Yee, an associate professor and a university librarian, organized the event. Prior to graduation exercises, the Japanese, along with families, enjoyed a steak lunch complete with New York Cheese cake and coffee. The lunch group included Carl Yoshimine and David Kuba, graduates of Asbury Theological Seminary. David spent thirty-one years as a missionary in Japan. Carl, who represented an honoree, pastored FM Japanese churches in Southern California.

Degree recipient John Miyabe, lifetime minister with the West Coast Japanese Free Methodists, has the distinction of serving the longest of any superintendent in the history of the conference. His son Jim pastors Japanese churches. Dr. Arnold Nakajima, a graduate of Princeton seminary, also gave himself to Christian ministry.

C. Dorr Demaray, while serving as English professor and President of Los Angeles Pacific College, mentored and taught many Japanese students, preached in their churches, and hosted them in his home. Azusa Pacific University invited son Don Demaray to represent his father. He addressed the luncheon with memories from his dad’s dedicated work with Japanese students and their friends.

Free Methodists stand proud of their association with Azusa Pacific University, an institution of eight schools, with over 1,000 faculty, a multimillion-dollar budget, and 2,400 graduates annually. Earl R. Schamehorn, a Free Methodist minister, represents the denomination on the university’s board, and Free Methodist Hank C. Bode, Vice President Emeritus, gave many fruitful years on the administration team at APU. □



Twelfth Annual Session of Pacific Coast Japanese Conference, Gallup, New Mexico, 1943.

(Pictured on next page -- top to bottom):
Luncheon in honor of Japanese Students;
Donald Demaray and Evelyn Yee

visit us at GENERAL CONFERENCE!

The Marston Memorial Historical Center invites all who attend the 2011 Sesquicentennial General Conference at Roberts Wesleyan College to visit the Historical Center’s creative display and participate in events sponsored by the Center. Key events include:

- Luncheon with Chaplain **Dean Cook**, who will share from his book *Chaplaincy: Being God’s Presence in Closed Communities*.
- Luncheon with **Prof. Paul Patton**, who will explain his dramatic work on B. T. and Ellen Roberts.
- Drama on **B. T. and Ellen Roberts** and the birth of Free Methodism, written by Paul Patton.



the QUOTABLE Roberts

FREE IN CHRIST

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, in the provisions which it makes, and in the agencies which it employs for the salvation of mankind, knows no distinction of nationality, condition or sex; therefore, no person who is called of God, and who is duly qualified, should be refused ordination on account of sex, or race or condition.

— 1890 General Conference resolution
introduced by B.T. Roberts

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

▷ CENTENARY PARK — near Pekin, New York, established in 1960 to commemorate the founding of the Free Methodist Church in 1860, is in the process of being sold. The park's plaque and time capsule will find a new home and a founders garden will be inaugurated on the campus of Roberts Wesleyan College in North Chili, New York, during the Sesquicentennial General Conference this July. Meanwhile a New York State Historical Marker will be erected as a permanent memorial at the Pekin site.

▷ "Sacramental Discipleship as a Pathway to Ecclesial Reformation in the Free Methodist Church In Canada" is the title of a Doctor of Ministry thesis recently completed by Cliff Fletcher at Gordon-Conwell Seminary. Fletcher seeks to combine the biblical themes of discipleship and sacrament and apply them practically to FM church life today.

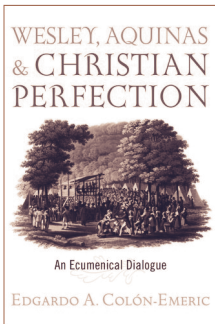
▷ Chaplain Raymond Leach of Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, recently published *Iron Cross Under Crescent Moon: A National Guard Chaplain's Experience of the War in Iraq*. The book is based on Leach's weekly emails sent home during a twenty-two month deployment to the Al Anbar Province of Iraq with the U.S. Army's famous Ironman Battalion. The book provides a unique view of the war as seen through the eyes of an infantry battalion chaplain as his unit provides convoy security over some of Iraq's most dangerous roads at that time. The book is available on Amazon.com.

▷ 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.

News
& Notes

Book Review

Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection: An Ecumenical Dialogue, by Edgardo A. Colon-Emeric (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2009). 330 pp. ISBN 9781602582118 (hardbound). \$50.00.



The Tercentenary of John Wesley's birth in 1703 called forth an extensive array of historical and theological studies of Methodism's principal founder. In this book Colon-Emeric of Duke Divinity School ventures beyond the well-explored boundaries of Methodist studies, presenting an ecumenical conversation.

Rather than merely re-examining Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection, the author brings an unlikely conversation

partner to the table: the preeminent medieval Roman Catholic theologian, Thomas Aquinas. Devoting chapters to a close study of Wesley and Aquinas on perfection, Colon-Emeric clearly recognizes their irreconcilable differences. However, he also makes a strong case for the contribution these leading figures make toward understanding the common goal of the Christian life—Christian perfection.

Like Wesley, Colon-Emeric carefully explains what perfection does *not* mean. He bases his analysis on an extensive study of perfection in Scripture. Here Aquinas and Wesley share common ground. Both understand Christian perfection as “precept,” based on Matthew 5:48. Since God does not command what is impossible, there must be something called Christian perfection that is attainable in the present life.

Using the metaphor of Methodist “house” and for Aquinas, “cathedral,” Colon-Emeric avoids confusing the two differing theological perspectives with each other. Their notions of perfection do not precisely overlap. By examining how Aquinas and Wesley read Scripture, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, however, Colon-Emeric opens a way to constructive dialogue between these two major traditions.

The result is an enriched understanding of Christian perfection that can be instructive across the theological spectrum, emphasizing the possibility of present holiness in the Christian life. The book will be an important addition to theological libraries and will be of interest to those wishing to understand the theological basis of Christian perfection more deeply.

— Barry W. Hamilton, Northeastern Seminary

ANNOUNCING – *B.T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists*

B. T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists, condensed by Daniel V. Runyon from Howard Snyder's larger biography, *Populist Saints*, is being published by Light and Life Communications in cooperation with the Marston Memorial Historical Center.

At 248 pages, the book offers a fast-paced tour through the almost century-long story of B. T. and Ellen Roberts, beginning with their family backgrounds and including the story of the Roberts children after B. T.'s death in 1893 and Ellen's in 1908. Here is a personal, inside look at the story of the birth of Free

Methodism, the cultural context in which it arose, and the work of God's Spirit in and through two dedicated lives.

The book retails for \$11.95. It will be on sale at reduced price at General Conference in July and may be obtained from www.amazon.com.

At the same time, a digital version of the original *Populist Saints* book is being made available for free access over the Internet. For more information contact the Historical Center at history@fmcna.org.

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