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Celebrating 61 Years of Free Methodist Bible Quizzing

Since 1952, the lives of thousands of Free Methodist youth have been positively influenced through the ministry of Bible Quizzing, and in turn our denomination has been blessed. Why has Bible Quizzing had such an impact on generations of Free Methodists? Let me highlight four factors:

- 1) Quizzing focuses on Scripture. This foundation helps youth to live God-honoring lives and to be open to God's call to ministry.
- 2) Quizzing encourages team work. A team spirit develops with youth from the local church as they study together and depend on each other in times of competition.
- 3) Quizzing develops ministry leadership. Teens help motivate each other in weekly practices, and can assist with the running of weekly practices and monthly tournaments. After graduation from high school, many youth continue on to serve as coaches and quizmasters.
- 4) Quizzing builds denominational appreciation. Youth see beyond local church as they travel monthly to other Free Methodist churches and annually to Free Methodist colleges for tournaments. Friendships are built with other Free Methodist youth that can last a lifetime.

In 2006, a list of 136 former Bible Quizzers in current ministry leadership was created which included 37 pastors; Free Methodist World Ministry Center personnel; 18 Free Methodist missionaries; 15 Free Methodist college staff; 8 spouses of pastors; 4 chaplains; 2 bishops; and 2 superintendents.



1958 Winona Lake quizzing team: Dale Martin, Ed Knox, Dale Benson; Quiz Master, Dwight Horton; and Lake Worth Florida team with Diane Constant

Bishop Emeritus Gerald Bates once wrote: "The in-depth exposure to God's Word, the team dynamics, and the broader networking all tend to strengthen the participants in Christian discipleship and build the church. Historically many of our current church leaders were quizzers, a significant endorsement in itself."

Personally, Bible Quizzing has been a tremendous source of blessing in my life. My quizzing years were a time of great spiritual growth, and the scriptures learned then still guide my life today. Quizzing provided me with a wife (whom I met through quizzing) and also provided nurturing discipleship for my three children. Quizzing also provided meaningful friendships and a greater appreciation of our denomination. I was one of thousands of youth profoundly affected by the ministry of Bible Quizzing.

Mike Hopper

Pastor – Fillmore (MN) FMC
Former FM Youth Bible Quiz Director – 15 yrs.

BY VAUGHN ROBART

Reflections

FROM A GLOBE TROTTING COACH

I have been involved in Free Methodist Bible Quizzing since 1997. Sometimes people ask me how it was when I was a quizzier and I say, “I never was a quizzier because it wasn’t offered at my church.” Actually, it was offered once, probably as I was entering my senior year of high school, but it didn’t seem like the time to start something new. However, about a decade later God showed me that it was time to give it a try. Looking back, I can see that my role over the years has been as a promoter of Free Methodist Bible Quizzing wherever I’ve been and whatever my job.

My introduction to Bible Quizzing came as a student at Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. Dean Babcock was running the quizzing program at the time, and asked me to assist him by being a quizmaster. I quickly learned how to quizmaster and helped out by doing that at tournaments.

QUIZZING IN GOWANDA

My involvement as a head coach began when I was a youth pastor in Gowanda, New York. A coach from Allegany, New York, asked if she could bring a team to demonstrate quizzing to our youth group. After the demonstration I asked my teens if anyone was interested in starting a team. I thought to myself, “If even two want to do it, I’ll give it a try.” I had one boy and one girl say “Sure, why not!” And so it began...

That first year we had two quizzers. The next year we had seven. After a disappointing result at a monthly tournament my quizzers said “This is no fun, we’re sick of losing all the time.” I told the teens that I could guarantee a vast improvement if they would begin doing weekly Bible quiz homework, answering practice questions I gave them. I told them it didn’t matter if they won, just that they gave themselves a chance to win. Fun comes from really competing because even if you lose you aren’t seen as a pushover; you make it tough on the other team and they respect that. Within two to three months of more intentional studying we went from “bottom-dwellers” to “serious threats” in competition.

I think we took home a third place trophy at conference finals that year. The number of quizzers increased again to thirteen the following season. That year we started going to Nationals [the annual national quiz meet held at a FM College or University] where our senior teen rookie team took second place. After I left Gowanda, the numbers continued to grow to over 20 then over 30 under the direction by Roy Hendrix and his wife Esther, and they continue to grow under the leadership of Rev. Eric Young who is currently the FMBQ Director.

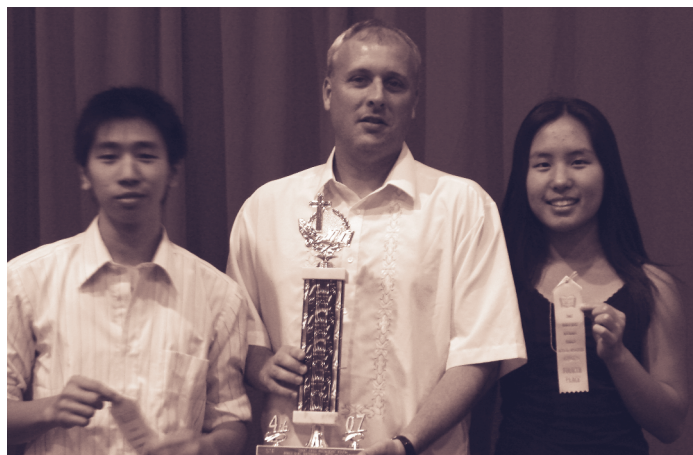
QUIZZING IN DEARBORN

In the middle of my fifth year as youth pastor in Gowanda I moved back to my home state of Michigan where I began five years as youth pastor at Dearborn Free Methodist Church. After a year or so of settling in I decided to try to restart Dearborn’s quiz program. Some in the church remembered doing a different style of quizzing some ten to fifteen years earlier so I introduced

them to the Free Methodist style. We consistently performed well during the season and made Nationals an annual expectation. Rev. Mike Hopper and Dr. Mark Colgan were the Free Methodist Bible Quizzing Directors at that time.

QUIZZING IN TAIWAN

In 2005 my wife Regina and I took positions teaching at Morrison Christian Academy in Taichung, Taiwan. I taught high school Bible classes, one of which was the the book of Acts. Since Acts was book of the Bible the Free Methodist Bible Quizzers were studying that year I got permission to incorporate quizzing into the class. The students loved it and two of them agreed to compete at Nationals that summer. They took fourth place in senior teen rookie competition.



Left to Right: Justin Shieh, Coach Vaughn Robart, and Jessica Chu took 4th place as Senior Teen rookies in the competition at Roberts Wesleyan College in 2007.

The following year we did Bible Quizzing as an extra-curricular program and it continued that way for the remainder of our time in Taiwan. One highlight during our time there was when Rev. Gerry Coates brought his family from Decatur, Illinois and demonstrated Bible quizzing in the junior high chapel. Part of the demonstration was speed-quoting by his sons, which impressed the young teens, including two of my own children who were now old enough to quiz. Our next Nationals trip included a team consisting of Logan and Haven Robart and their Taiwanese friend Josephine Chang.

QUIZZING IN GREENVILLE

After six years in Taiwan my family moved to Greenville, Illinois. I took over the well-established Bible Quizzing program at Greenville Free Methodist Church for Dr. Greg Sanders. Since our youngest, Simeon was now quizzing my wife decided she’d make it a total family affair so she began assisting me with the program. My love of God’s Word and getting young people into it is what sold me on quizzing. As a coach I tell my quizzers that my highest priority is for them to know God’s Word and apply it to their lives. That is the true mark of success. □

FAST FACTS FROM FIRST 30 YEARS OF QUIZZING:

FREE METHODIST BIBLE QUIZZING HALL OF FAME HIGHLIGHTS

2003 INDUCTEE: LYNETTE SITTING SYKORA



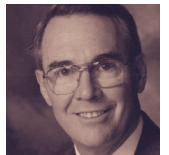
- Quizzed 1987-1993 for Pearce Memorial Free Methodist, North Chili, New York.
- Former coach at Pearce Memorial and Park Ridge FMC.
- Free Methodist missionary since 1998, first in Hungary and now serving in Slovakia with her husband Josef and two boys, Simon and Luke.

2004 INDUCTEE: JULIE ALLMAN DURBIN



- Quizzed 1989-1994 for New Brighton Free Methodist, New Brighton, Pennsylvania.
- Quizmaster.
- Served as Free Methodist missionary to Ukraine 2002-2010, currently finishing a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies at Biola University.

2007 INDUCTEE: BISHOP RICHARD SNYDER



- Quizzed 1956-1957 for the Susquehanna Conference in Elmira, New York.
- Studied the book of John for Bible Quizzing and subsequently took the Gospel of John class in college at Roberts Wesleyan College from Dr. Stanley Magill. He scored the highest grade ever in the course thanks to studying it in Bible Quizzing!
- Served/serves as ordained Free Methodist elder, bishop of the Free Methodist Church, and on the board of trustees for Roberts Wesleyan College.

1953:

First Continental Free Methodist Bible Quiz Finals held in Winona Lake, Indiana.

1953-

1954:

Conferences that competed included Southern California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Southern Michigan, California, Northern Indiana, Oil City, New York, Louisiana, Washington, Wabash, Pittsburgh, Susquehanna, Ohio, East Michigan and Kansas.

Southern California won the first two national Free Methodist Bible Quizzing tournaments.

1960:

The Oakland, Oregon, team of coach Lawrence Gillett, Daniel, Norman and Joyleen Baird won the national tournament in Winona Lake. A fourth teammate Arlene Hayes, was unable to attend the tournament due to a carbine rifle accident the week before leaving for Nationals.

1962:

Free Methodist Bible Quizzing had a Spanish division. In 1962 the Dominican Republic team took first and the Mexican team took second.

1967:

Canada held its own quizzing tournament with West Ontario winning. Art Scott the captain of the West Ontario team, who was blind, was the high scorer of the tournament with 1080 points.

1974:

Quiz Nationals was held in conjuncture with General Conference at Winona Lake.

1975:

Quiz Nationals held in Colorado; first year for young teen competition.

1978:

Free Methodist Bible Quizzing switches from King James Version to New International Version.

1980:

First year for individual Bible Quizzing competition.

1982:

First year Free Methodist Bible Quizzing divided into four divisions of team competition: young teen rookie, young teen veteran, senior teen rookie and senior teen veteran.

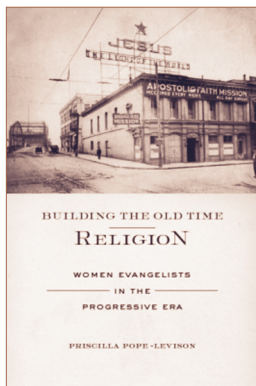


Marston Memorial Historical Center (MMHC) has received a donation of the original altar and one stained glass window from the historic Albion, New York Free Methodist Church. The Albion Church, founded by Rev. Loren Stiles is considered, along with the St. Louis, MO church, to be one of the first Free Methodist Churches in the country. Longtime MMCH member Zonda Haase helped secure this donation through the generosity of the Albion FMC and sent in the following narrative regarding these spectacular artifacts that will be displayed in the MMHC museum. "When the leaders of the society led by Rev. Randy LaBaron, Associate Pastor Kevin Eccles and several laity including Greg Staines began renovations in the pres-

ent sanctuary, Greg remembered my comments through the years, 'If you ever stop using the heritage items in your church building, please consider donating them to the Marston Memorial Historical Center!' The trip to the "new home" ended with an excited Cathy Fortner, Director of the Marston Center, awaiting with a photographer and the keys to the museum where all Free Methodists can enjoy sitting in one of the first free pews and kneeling at an altar where Bishop B.T. Roberts would have worshipped. I once heard this quote: 'The altar is God's work bench where helpless sinners can become victorious Christians'."

Book Review

Building The Old Time Religion: Women Evangelists in the Progressive Era, by Priscilla Pope-Levison (Published in 2013 by New York University Press, available at Amazon.com, BN.com and nyupress.org.)



Priscilla Pope-Levison's (Seattle Pacific University) new book *Building The Old Time Religion: Women Evangelists in the Progressive Era* is the most significant contribution to the collective memory of women evangelists in the United States since Janette Hassey's 1986 *No Time for Silence*. There are so few books that focus on the contributions of women evangelists who were both amazingly gifted preachers and gifted institution builders. Women who not only defied the

social stigma of preaching publicly, but who also used their skills to found institutions like Bible schools and inner-city missions. The women who built these institutions often had little outside help and very few stable sources of income to keep the schools and houses running.

What I love is that Pope-Levison seamlessly weaves together the stories of several prominent female evangelists including:

Emma Ray, a Free Methodist evangelist and inner city missionary; Iva Durham Vennard, who founded Chicago Evangelistic Institute; Mather "Mother" Lee who spent her life devoted to rescue work among prostitutes; and Catholic evangelists Martha Moore Avery and Florence Crawford, whose charismatic ministry resembled Aimee Semple McPherson's but with a Catholic bent. Pope-Levison's achievement is that she is able to create a compelling narrative focused not on a single woman, but on many women's contributions to ministry during this important time in American history. She divides their contributions by their ministries: evangelistic organizations, denominational endeavors, vocational religious training schools and rescue missions and homes.

Building The Old Time Religion is an effortless read; so captivating that it might be easy to overlook the amount of painstaking archival research put into this book project. I finished it so quickly that when I got to the appendix I craved more. However, this book should be viewed not as *the only* book needed about women evangelists in the Progressive Era but a starting point for more research. As a fellow archival scholar, I know how many months, possibly years were poured into this project. It was a massive endeavor. Pope-Levison draws attention to the fact that it wasn't just one woman who was breaking down barriers and opening doors for women to preach; it was countless women, upon whose shoulders we all stand.

— Christy Mesaros-Winckles

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