

The Historical Trail
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CHARLES A. TINDLEY: METHODIST PREACHER

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FOREWORD

Once again I count it a privilege to be able to present for your enjoyment excellent articles containing information about our United Methodist History. As you enjoy these articles, if you have an article that you have written that you would like to present for consideration for another year's booklet or if you have a subject about which you would like to have an article written, please contact me.

One of our important events of the past year happened in London, England. We include two articles on a great church restored. This church is our mother church, Wesley's Chapel. One article is by Dr. Frank B. Stanger, President of Asbury Theological Seminary and a member of our Conference. The other article is by Rev. William Stockton, pastor of our church at Mays Landing, New Jersey. Both men had the privilege of sharing in the reopening ceremonies.

In addition to these fine articles, there is one article about a great preacher of our church, Dr. Charles Albert Tindley. This article was written by Rev. Ernest S. Lyght, pastor of Old Orchard United Methodist Church, Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Rev. Robert B. Steelman, from our historic church at West Long Branch and Archivist for our Conference, has written an article about a great denomination The Methodist Protestants that brought with them an outstanding contribution to the union of the three Methodist Churches in 1939.

There is always a challenge to us as the church of today as we read about what the leaders and the church have done in the past.

DR. J. HILLMAN COFFEE
President - Editor

**THE REOPENING OF JOHN WESLEY'S
CITY ROAD CHAPEL --
A Call For Methodist Renewal**

by Frank Bateman Stanger

Wesley's City Road Chapel in London, England, is to Methodism what Canterbury is to Anglicans and Wittenberg is to Lutherans. It is the place where it all started--the visible roots--the symbolic center for Methodists around the world. In a real sense it may be spoken of as the Cathedral of World Methodism.

The Opening Of The Chapel In 1778

For nearly forty years (1739-1778) the former King's Foundry at the northeast corner of Finsbury Square near Moorfields, London, served as the headquarters of the new Methodist Movement. John Wesley had acquired it for 115 pounds, but it was so dilapidated that 800 pounds had to be spent on repairs before it could be used as a Methodist chapel and headquarters. Out of this vast uncouth heap of ruins, Wesley made a chapel which would accommodate 1,500 people. There was a smaller meeting room for 300 and also a room for selling books. Over these buildings were living quarters for John Wesley, his preachers and domestic staff.

Here at the Foundry preaching services were held at 5 a.m. on working days for the working people. Here in 1746 Wesley opened the first free dispensary in London since the dissolution of the monasteries, engaging an apothecary and a surgeon. Here also he founded a free school with two masters for sixty children, a lending society in 1747 and in 1748 rented an adjoining house to be an almshouse for widows and poor orphans.

After nearly forty years of hard use, almost everything in the Foundry was worn out; and despite repeated repairs the

Reprinted with permission of *Methodist History* as it appeared in their April 1979 issue with photos through the courtesy of Dr. Joe Hale of the World Methodist Council, the article itself earlier appeared in the Winter 1979 issue of *The Asbury Seminarian*.

premises were in ruins. The lease had nearly expired, so there was need to find a permanent home for what had become an influential spiritual movement.

Nearby the Foundery, across from the burial ground of Bunhill Fields, on the other side of a lane now known as City Road, was a large bare field which had been created in the swamps by cartloads of earth from the building work at St. Paul's Cathedral Churchyard. In 1777 John Wesley leased an acre of the field and planned his "new Chapel."

Many financial difficulties had to be overcome in the building of the Chapel, but help came from rich and poor alike. King George the Third gave masts of battleships from the Deptford dockyards for pillars and these supported the gallery for a hundred years. A Mr. Andrews of Hereford gave the pulpit which is still in use.

On April 21, 1777, Wesley personally laid the cornerstone, which had a brass plate on it containing the words: "This was laid by Mr. John Wesley on April 21, 1777. Probably this will be seen no more by any human eye, but it will remain there until the Earth and the works thereof are burnt up."

Upon this stone Wesley stood while he preached from the text in Numbers 23:23--"What hath God wrought." In his sermon he declared: "Methodism is not a new religion, but the old religion of the Bible...of the primitive church...of the Church of England...no other than the love of God to all mankind."

Nearly eighteen months later, on All Saints Day, November 1, 1778, the new Chapel was opened. John Wesley's regard for All Saints Day--"a festival I dearly love"--may have decided the date of the opening of the new Chapel, before it was quite complete.

Mr. Wesley made the following entry in his *Journal* concerning the opening of the new Chapel "in the City Road"

Sunday, Nov. 1, was the day appointed for opening the new chapel in the City Road. It is perfectly neat, but not fine; and contains far more people than the Foundery: I believe, together with the morning chapel, as many as the Tabernacle. Many were afraid that the

multitudes, crowding from all parts, would have occasioned much disturbance. But they were happily disappointed: there was none at all: all was quietness, decency, and order. I preached on part of Solomon's Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple; and both in the morning and afternoon (when I preached on the hundred forty and four thousand standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion) God was eminently present in the midst of the congregation.

No official report of the opening was issued and none of the London preachers, who were surely present (John Pawson, Thomas Coke, John Atlay, and Thomas Olivers) left even a personal record of the day's events. Nothing survives except the bare reminiscence that Olivers, the writer of the hymn "The God of Abraham Praise," was seen standing at one of the doors holding a collection plate. Perhaps that was why he did not have time to make any journalistic notes, although he was Mr. Wesley's "corrector of the press."

One press correspondent was present, however, and his report gives an interesting though inadequate account of the event. The following was his report which though it reads like a caricature today, gives a clear picture of the plain, unadorned character of early Methodism:

The first quarter of an hour of (the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's) sermon was addressed to his numerous female auditory on the absurdity of the enormous dressing of their heads; and his religious labours have so much converted the women who attended at that place of worship that widows, wives and young ladies appeared on Sunday without curls, without flying caps, and without feathers...

The Chapel was not finally completed until 1779. On August 8, 1779, Wesley notes in his *Journal* that he moved into his new home, just in front and to the left of the Chapel. Here Wesley lived for the last twelve years of his life, until his death on March 2, 1791.

Mr. Wesley was pleased with the new stage in his ministry which resulted from the opening of the new Chapel. He wrote to Sarah Crosby: "The work of God prospers well in London. A new Chapel brings almost a new congregation, and hereby the old is greatly stirred up. Let us all work while the day is!"

During John Wesley's extensive travels away from London, his brother Charles was usually minister of the

Chapel. He was assisted by three ordained Anglican ministers. At first no layman--no preacher not especially ordained--was allowed to officiate within the Chapel except on weekdays. Finally, at the insistence of the trustees of the Chapel, this rule was relaxed.



Wesley's Chapel in 1821.

After Wesley's death in 1791, City Road Chapel continued as a preaching place and gradually gained recognition as the center of Methodist tradition, as the Methodist Movement became worldwide.

On December 6, 1879 the Chapel was nearly destroyed by fire. The firemen had difficulty in finding the hydrant because of the thick fog and then had to thaw out the tap with salt because the water was frozen. At last the fire was extinguished but not before considerable damage had been done.

This necessitated an expensive restoration which was completed in time for the centenary of John Wesley's death in 1891. The beautiful Adam ceiling was replaced by a replica. George the Third's ship masts were replaced by pillars of French jasper given by the Methodists of America, Canada, South Africa, Australia, the West Indies and Ireland. Stained glass windows were presented by the Primitive Methodists, the

United Methodist Free Church and the Methodist New Connexion, now all united in the one Methodist Church of Great Britain. A vestibule, choir stalls and an organ were added.

During the 1939-45 war years the Chapel was in the midst of one of the most badly damaged bombed areas of London. Between it and St. Paul's Cathedral very little was left standing, yet both shrines remained intact. On the night of the worst raid of the war, the buildings all around were gutted by fire. Wesley's Chapel was saved only by the heroism of volunteer fire watchers and by the fact that the wind miraculously changed twice in the same night.

The Restoration Of The Chapel 1973-78

Wesley's City Road Chapel was in continuous use from its first restoration in 1891 until 1973. In this latter year the building was condemned by the Borough Council as unsafe for public gatherings.

Mr. Trevor Wilkinson, chief architect of the recent restoration, described the reasons for the condemnation of the Chapel. He said the original building was built on a timber raft, little of which now remained. Dry and wet rot had attacked a number of the structural timbers and dry rot was later found in the apse area. There were ominous bulges in the north and south external walls caused by the walls themselves being too frail for the amount of window openings and the weight they had to carry. The roof required major repairs. The general appearance was that of a building badly in need of restoration.

The issue before the British Methodists was whether or not to attempt such an extensive restoration of the Chapel. For a time it looked as though it would not be attempted, for in 1974 the British Methodist Conference decided to tear the building down.

The battle to save Wesley's Chapel actually began in the British House of Commons. It started with a successful at-

tempt to set afire with enthusiasm for the rescue of this historic Methodist site two of Britain's leading politicians, both Methodists but from different political parties. They were the then Speaker of the House, the Rt. Hon. Selwyn Lloyd, and the then Deputy Speaker, now the Speaker, the Rt. Hon. George Thomas.

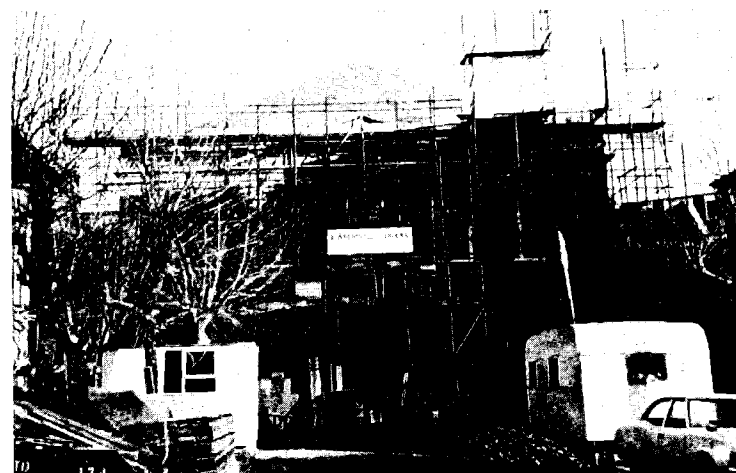
The Rev. N. Allen Birtwhistle, then pastor of Wesley's City Road Chapel, called on the honorable gentlemen and told them of the plight of the Chapel and the dismal prospects for its restoration. George Thomas says he will never forget the way in which the Rev. Mr. Birtwhistle sat down in front of them both and talked and talked. The result was they were "set afire" with the prospect of rescuing the Chapel from destruction and they helped create a plan of campaign. Mr. Thomas recalls that early in the planning was the sense of needing to appeal to American Methodists for substantial help.

Undoubtedly to Bishop James Mathews of the Washington, D.C. Area of the United Methodist Church goes the credit for sparking the initiation of the campaign among American Methodists to save Wesley's City Road Chapel. After he had learned during a visit to England of the dismal prospect of any restoration, he went home and shared his deep concerns with the Council of Bishops. Soon plans emerged which made it possible for American Methodists to play such a significant role in helping to finance the restoration.

Recently in London, Mr. Speaker, the Rt. Hon. George Thomas, paid tribute to Bishop Mathews as "a watershed in saving Wesley's Chapel." He said that the Bishop's indignance at the thought of the demolition of the Chapel had made him ashamed and stirred him to action.

Mr. Charles Parlin, Methodist layman in the U.S.A., contributed more than \$30,000 to publicize the cause of restoration so that every dollar contributed in North America could go directly to the reconstruction of the building. The United Methodist Heritage Foundation under the leadership

of the Rev. Dr. Frank Wanek, by bringing hundreds of American Methodists to London annually, made sure the restoration campaign received word-of-mouth publicity.



Restoration in progress.

The work of restoration began in 1975. The original estimate for the work was approximately one million dollars. No reader aware of the times in which we live will be surprised to learn that the actual cost has nearly doubled, reaching an approximate total of 1.9 million dollars.

The work of restoration encountered serious difficulties. No sooner was it decided to restore the Chapel than an Alliance of Radical Methodists was formed to oppose such a project. These persons wanted to spend the money for a new mission in London's East End, where John Wesley had ministered to the poor.

Several times the work of reconstruction was about to be called to a halt because of lack of funds. Two centuries before similar circumstances had occurred when Mr. Wesley was first building the Chapel. The work would stop until Methodist Societies to whom Mr. Wesley had appealed would send in the necessary funds to resume the work of construction. So, too, during this recent restoration a generous gift or gifts always arrived in time for the work on the Chapel to continue.

Even though the contributions for the restoration of the Chapel came mainly from Methodists in Great Britain and the United States, gifts were also received from Methodists around the world. In the closing months the financial campaign was guaranteed success by a challenge grant of \$150,000 from The Kresge Foundation.

The actual work in restoration included major projects such as stabilizing basement and superstructure walls; stiffening and supporting gallery structure with additional steel work and structural timbers; restoring extension elevations, including taking down and rebuilding parapets and repairs to brickwork facings and stone features; restoring the main chapel roof and smaller roofs; restoring and improving the interior, including repairs to walls, marble, ceiling, gallery, stained glass and other features; redecorating and gilding the walls, ceilings and gallery; dry rot repairs, restoring the Foundry Chapel and refurbishing Radnor Room; cleaning and restoring the John Wesley statue which adorns the courtyard in front of the Chapel.

There are only limited changes in the Chapel as a result of the restoration. The replacement of the heavy late 19th century vestibule screen by a plain glass one allows the worshipper entering the front door to appreciate the proportions of the original building. While retaining the original communion area in the apse behind the pulpit, a new communion space with a new communion table and chairs in front of the pulpit has been designed. The new altar is glass topped, and is etched with the dove and serpent motif symbolic of peace and healing which is used throughout the Chapel. The framing for the table is in the shape of a cradle, a unique reminder that God came to earth as a baby in a manger.

The Reopening Of The Chapel November 1, 1978

The restored Wesley's City Road Chapel was reopened on Wednesday, November 1, 1978, exactly two hundred

years to the day that the Chapel was first opened and consecrated by Mr. Wesley. My wife and son and I were privileged to be present at the first service held in the restored Chapel. It was an unforgettable experience, with memories to be treasured forever.

It was a mild autumn afternoon in London. There were alternate periods of sunshine and clouds. It had rained earlier in the day, but the rain was all over long before the 3 p.m. service, which was the first of the three services scheduled for the day of reopening. We will never forget the sight when we first arrived at the Chapel. With a crowd of people already gathered along both sides of the street and in front of the large iron gates, the security officers were making their final checks in preparation for the visit of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh. Uniformed boys and girls, members of youth brigades, were busily at work trying to keep the leaves picked up which were steadily falling from the many trees in the courtyard, in order that the pavement might be as clean as possible for the royal guests.

Great solemnity was given the 3 p.m. service by the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness, Prince Philip. This was the first time in history that a reigning British Sovereign had attended a Methodist service.

Adding an ecumenical note was the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rev. Dr. Donald Coggan; the Bishop of London, the Rev. Dr. Gerald Ellison; the Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, the Rt. Rev. Christopher Butler; the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, the Rev. Stanley Turl; and the Mayor of Islington, Councillor Mrs. Doris Rogers, in whose borough the Chapel is located.

Gathered for the service were Methodists from Great Britain, the United States, Malaysia, Japan, Kenya, India, Sri Lanka, Germany, Sweden, Korea, Liberia, Ireland, Australia and the Philippines. Two hundred years before John Wesley went from City Road Chapel into the world which he considered his parish; on this day the world beat a path to his door.

Though soldiers once were flogged for attending Methodist services, trumpeters of the Honourable Artillery Company sounded a fanfare as Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh moved into the Chapel at 3 p.m. The Queen was dressed in a fitted turquoise coat and matching hat, with black patent accessories. The processional hymn was the best known of all of Charles Wesley's hymns, 'O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise.' Three other Charles Wesley hymns were used during the service: "Love Divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down"; "O Thou who camest from above the pure celestial fire to impart"; and "Captain of Israel's host, and Guide of all who seek the land above."

Marked more by simplicity than by drama, the service of hymns, prayers, lessons and sermon lasted only 45 minutes. The service was presided over by the Rev. Dr. Donald English, President of the Methodist Church of Great Britain. The reading of the lessons brought to the reader's desk, in succession, an American layman, Dr. Charles Parlin, who read from I Kings 8; a British prince, The Duke of Edinburgh, who read from I Peter 2; and a British laywoman, Mrs. Mary Lenton, Vice President of the British Methodist Conference, who read from Matthew 5.

Prayers of thanksgiving included the ministry of the Wesleys, the house of prayer which was being reopened, the life and witness of all those who have worshipped in the Chapel, and the fact that for 200 years the Gospel has been "preached in this place." God was also thanked for "the skill and craftsmanship of those who have renewed this building and for the generosity of those in many lands who have made this work possible."

The prayers of rededication were focused upon the restored Chapel, a renewed commitment to the Wesleyan theological tradition and the present and future ministries of the Chapel.

During the service intercessions were made for the holy, catholic, apostolic church; the ministry of the church at home and abroad; the Queen and the Duke; the leaders of the

nations of the world; the city of London and its concerns; and "the sick, the lonely and the bereaved; for prisoners of conscience and victims of poverty and oppression, that they may be strengthened and comforted."

The sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Colin Morris, former minister of the Chapel, ex-President of the Methodist Church of Great Britain, and now Deputy Head of Religious Broadcasting of the British Broadcasting Company. He chose the same text which Mr. Wesley had used two hundred years before when the Chapel was first opened. It is found in I Kings 9:3: "...I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."

'Even two centuries later,' said Colin Morris, 'that text has a very churchy ring about it for a preacher who either rejected or was ejected from many of the sacred places of his time, who celebrated the God he saw at work not within hallowed walls but in the market place, down the mine and on slave ships. It is an even more unfashionable text by today's standards when the trendy thing is to declare that God is at work everywhere and anywhere in the world--anywhere except possibly in the Church which, say the critics, is the one place on earth God avoids like the plague'.

But, he added, Wesley knew his Old Testament. He realized that God became our God, not as He is generally present in His creation, but as He specifically accepts hospitality in ours.

'God's name is upon this place,' said Dr. Morris.

'In its two hundred years of history, this building has been known by a number of names--The New Foundery, City Road Chapel, The New Chapel...but the name by which it is best known, Wesley's Chapel, is not one that Wesley himself would have allowed. He knew whose name is upon this place, and it wasn't his.

'Out there God is indeed at work secretly, anonymously, and imperceptibly, and may be known by many names or none, but here in this place and all like it, He is identified, known as God and Saviour...'

The Church, said Colin Morris, must always be the focus of distinctive and recognizable Christian belief:

'What is Christian preaching but the Church declaring roundly that in His name and in none other is salvation to be found?'

It was because the eyes of God are here, said Dr. Morris referring to the text, that the Church often seems to be cross-grained to the life of our time. Christians must try to see through the eyes of God.

'It is not that we Christians are cantankerous by nature and happiest when swimming against the stream... We try to see with the eyes of God through the refractive lens of the Gospel... Through God's eyes the first are already last, and the last, first; the strutting tyrant, swollen with self-importance, shrinks to insignificance and the falling sparrow occupies the centre of the stage.

'The Church marches to a different drummer and her gaze is so preoccupied that she can neither be excited by the promise of Utopia nor cast down by the threat of Armageddon. She sees the invisible, looks through the eyes of God upon an unpromising present and discerns in tiny portents, unnoticed by the generality, already prefigured Christ's Kingdom stretching from shore to shore, Christ's reign consummated, his victory already complete.'

As the text said, God's heart was also in this place, said Colin Morris.

'Because God's heart is cruciform, it is not the object of mystical veneration but a source of moral energy, the power of personal regeneration. Since God's heart is here, the Church is the place of boundless resource. Here there is an endless store of that one commodity the world is not stockpiling but for want of which it is dying--the thing that makes God God, holy love.

'When Wesley set out to build this place, the Corporation of the City of London gave him a fifty-nine year lease. Wesley with cavalier disregard for local authority had carved on the foundation stone-- "This edifice will remain until the earth and all its works are burned up." Wesley well knew it would take much longer than fifty-nine years for the spring of holy love which issues from the heart of God to run dry.

' "This edifice will remain until the earth and its works are burned up." Well, it was a close-run thing this time. This artifact of brick and stone is destined to pass away in due time, but that edifice, the Church of living stones, upon which God has set his name, which is the eyes of God and is gathered to his heart--that Church will stand even when the earth and its works are burned up, until it is transcended in the Kingdom of the glorified Christ.'

(as reported by Byron Breed in
The Methodist Recorder, November 9, 1978.)

The reopening service reached its spiritual climax in a moving prayer for the renewal of Methodist work in our

generation.

Immediately following the benediction and preceding the recessional, the congregation joined in the singing of the national anthem, "God Save Our Gracious Queen."



Wesley's tomb in the courtyard.

As I was present at the service, and as afterwards I wandered around the courtyard and the adjoining cemetery where John Wesley is buried, I thought about some of the similarities between the opening of the Chapel in 1778 and the reopening in 1978 and also tried to imagine some of the contrasts.

There were many similarities. We were worshipping in the same sanctuary. We were singing Charles Wesley's hymns. There was the same warmth of fellowship which is experienced when Methodists gather together. The order of worship had been prepared so carefully that its progression

and dignified format and theological content would have been pleasing to Mr. Wesley who was so enamoured by Anglican worship. The same Gospel of Redemption was being preached from the pulpit. The sermon revealed a high Wesleyan view of the church as a divinely-appointed institution. There was a sensitivity to and concern for the needs of a whole world.

But there were also some drastic contrasts between 1778 and 1978. What a contrast in credibility and respectability. During Wesley's time even British soldiers were flogged for attending Methodist services. However, in 1978 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and her husband the Duke of Edinburgh were present at the reopening service and the Duke read one of the Scripture lessons.

I recall reading that Charles Wesley Jr.'s ambition as a musician was to play the organ in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. But the privilege was denied him because they "wanted no Wesleys here." But today in the main part of Westminster Abbey there appears a beautifully inscribed wall plaque in tribute to the lives and ministries of John and Charles Wesley.

There was also the contrast between an ecclesiastical ostracism in 1778 and a genuine ecumenism in 1978. The pulpits of Anglican churches were closed to John Wesley. The early Methodists were often persecuted by angry religionists. But in 1978 the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the Auxiliary Bishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Westminster were present to help celebrate the reopening of the Chapel.

As the honorable Speaker, Mr. Thomas, commented in reflecting upon the events of the reopening days: "How was Wesley to dream two hundred years ago that two hundred years later the Monarch of the realm, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Roman Catholic Bishop would gather to recognize his work?"

I thought also of the contrast in the striking evidences of urbanization. When Mr. Wesley opened his Chapel it was

located in what might be called the country section of the city. It was built in an open field. City Road was just a lane.

But everything has changed now. Wesley's Chapel and associated buildings are now almost completely surrounded by office buildings and high-rise apartments. It almost seems as if the widening traffic lanes were trying to swallow up the cemetery behind the church. Wesley's house seems almost to lean on the building erected so closely to it. Everywhere are the signs of the busy activities of a teeming city with people and vehicles hurrying to and fro. I recall with what difficulty we finally crossed City Road in order to enter the Church for the reopening service.

I mention a final contrast across the two hundred years. In 1778, even though Methodism in England consisted of a system of organized societies and the Methodist Movement was beginning to spread into the New World, in no true sense could it have been spoken of as an ecclesiastical institution. One man--John Wesley--was still the head of the Church and was able to control it. Church bureaucracy as we know it today--and certainly some of it is necessary because of the magnitude of the churches served--simply did not exist.

But today each of the denominations comprising World Methodism and World Methodism in its totality must be viewed as vast ecclesiastical institutions. The World Methodist Council represents 62 different Methodist or Methodist-related groups at work in 90 countries of the world. The United Methodist Church consists of nearly 10 million members and a constituency of 25 million. The Methodist Church in Great Britain has a membership of 600,000 and a constituency of one and a half million.

Put Methodists of the world together and there are 20 million Methodists. When we consider what appears to be legitimate constituencies the total figure approximates 50 million. What a contrast between Mr. Wesley and his handful of Methodists on the one hand, and the mighty army of professing Methodists in the world today. Unfortunately, in some contemporary circumstances there may appear a

contrast between quantity and quality when we consider the above.

The Call To Renewal

Methodism has moved forward across the years through a series of rebirths. Always a movement of the Spirit, Wesleyanism has been repeatedly re-energized and oftentimes redirected through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In 1938 the late W.E. Sangster, long a leader in both British and World Methodism, published his book entitled *Methodism Can Be Born Again*. He called upon his fellow Methodists to recover Aldersgate; to realize that Methodism is primarily a message, not a machine; to engage anew in personal evangelism; to make possible the recovery of fellowship; to refuse to yield to any attitude of defeatism; and to offer Christ as the only adequate Saviour, able to save to the uttermost, delivering from both the guilt and power of sin.

Was Methodism born again during those critical post-war years in response to Sangster's plea? Was Methodism really born again at any time during the author's life? Could Sangster have written a sequel to his earlier book under the title *Methodism Has Been Born Again*?

In spite of the uncertain answers to such questions, let it be asserted boldly that we are now in a period in the life of Methodism which cries out for spiritual renewal. Look at the need for such renewal in the very land of the Wesleys. Membership in the British Methodist Church has been declining since 1905, which means that the Church has been reduced by almost one-half its membership during this century. It is estimated that now there are more Muslims in the land of John Wesley than Methodists.

Dr. Jeffrey Harris, head of the missions division in the British Methodist Church, cited the following sociological factors which have influenced the Church's decline in membership: philosophical skepticism; the impact of science on religion; the great emphasis on reason, knowledge and

progress; secularization; and the rapid movement of populations.

It is evident in Britain that a declining Church has not had the penetrating influence upon society which a Christian church should have. At the height of his ministry W.E. Sangster called for a revival in England in his widely publicized sermon, "This Britain." In that sermon he pointed out the drastic and widespread effects which a dynamic spiritual renewal would have upon the whole of Britain's life. But actually the revival never occurred.

Again I quote from the Rt. Hon. George Thomas, who is so prominent in British Methodist lay leadership today. Appealing for Methodism to bring its message of "redemption, forgiveness and salvation" to bear upon Britons he said, "Never have we had more broken lives, broken homes, and lovely youth spoiled before 21. Something is wrong with Christians who do not feel they need to be involved."

Methodism in the United States needs renewal. While the episcopal leadership of the Church on the one hand, and the grass roots membership on the other, give evidence of genuine evangelical concerns and commitment, there are many areas in the life of the church, such as the bureaucratic leadership of boards and agencies and the theological emphasis of church-related colleges and seminaries, which manifest what in my opinion is an unwholesome and debilitating theological pluralism.

The United Methodist Church has also been plagued with a declining membership in recent years. Nearly a million members have been lost in the past decade. Evangelically-oriented Methodists are, likewise, greatly concerned about both the reduction of missionary personnel overseas and what appears to be the shift of focus in the primary objective of missionary activities.

On November 16, 1978, the Bishops of The United Methodist Church issued their mid-quadrennial message. The need for renewal is continually sensed in their message:

The spirit of United Methodism has begun to lessen in the U.S. when measured in institutional statistical terms.

Sometimes the church has failed to be an agent of transformation and renewal...has refused to be the Body of Christ...has turned back to ancient heresies, in the guise of new movements...has sought to save its own life in an illusory quest for safety and security.

Too often its witness has been blunted by a comfortable accommodation to its own cultural setting while its preoccupation with internal concerns has thwarted its engagement with the needs of humanity.

The same need for renewal so evident in Britain and the United States is apparent in Methodism elsewhere around the world. Call the roll of our fellow Methodists--in Africa, Asia, Australasia and the Pacific Islands, Continental Europe, Central America and the Caribbean, South America--and there is the same call for renewal and rebirth in and through the Church.

Dr. George G. Hunter III, evangelism executive in The United Methodist Church, states that the Methodist Movement born in evangelism has now plateaued. He declares that it is no longer a powerful, contagious world movement. He points out what he believes to be the towering reason why Methodism lacks spiritual impact and thus is not fulfilling its potential. He writes:

I believe that World Methodism has experienced this "Ephesian Syndrome" in many, many lands. Time and again this basic story is repeated: After some years of exploration, establishing credibility, learning the people's culture, establishing mission stations and Christian institutions, and in general gaining a foothold and a base among the people, we then experience one or two generations of significant movemental Christian growth--discipling new people, planting new congregations, influencing and liberating society.

However in, say, the third generation we plateau. Christians who were children of Christians, who have never known what it is like to cope with existence completely outside of the realm of Christian faith, arise to become the new leaders of the church. Because they have never experienced being newly evangelized, and because they mistake the masks that non-Christians wear for their real faces, they do not believe that evangelizing non-Christian peoples is supremely important.

So, in our contemporary age, Methodism cries out for renewal!

The Reopening Of Wesley's Chapel-- A Call For Renewal

The singing of the first hymn, "O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise," at the reopening service on November 1, 1978, was a reassuring redemptive experience in itself. The people called Methodists could relax in the knowledge that whatever else might change, the "music in the sinner's ears" would continue to bring "life and health and peace."

As previously mentioned, the service of worship at the reopening of the Chapel reached its spiritual climax as the President of the Methodist Church in Great Britain led in the prayer for renewal:

Almighty God, who raised up your servants John and Charles Wesley to proclaim anew the gift of redemption and the life of holiness; be with us their children and revive your work among us....

Methodist leaders are universal in their expression of the hope that the reopening of Wesley's Chapel will be a fresh stimulus to spiritual renewal throughout all the churches of Methodism. Bishop James Mathews, secretary of the United Methodist Council of Bishops and a moving spirit in the restoration effort, said:

Reopening Wesley's Chapel will give fresh stimulus not only to this congregation but to the Methodist Movement throughout the world. It is a tremendous thing for worldwide Methodism to engage in a thrust of this kind. This is not just a shrine but a base for effective mission. No movement can exist without landmarks and this is an important one. Because we chose to invest in reconstruction, this building will make possible a far more effective ministry to human needs.

Dr. Donald English, President of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, is vibrant in his hope of the constructive spiritual effects of the reopening of the Chapel. He declares:

The reconstruction of Wesley's Chapel has affirmed the importance of our history and heritage. We rightly worry about individuals who lose their memories. We should be concerned about institutions which do so, too. A sense of one's origins is vital to a proper assessment of one's prospects....A clearer understanding of our

history should make us more aware of what we have to offer to and what we need from fellow Christians of other denominations. We cherish our corporate history as Methodists because of what God has been pleased to do for and through us. Wesley's Chapel, City Road, stands as a symbol of it all. We can be grateful for all that has been done and be renewed in faith for the future. "The best of all is, God is with us!"

Dr. Alan Walker of Australia, who has recently become the leader of evangelism for World Methodism, sees the Chapel as "a symbol of the gathering spiritual restoration in Methodism." He says further: "Far more than a pile of masonry, it not only celebrates the work of Wesley but will stimulate new work."

Methodist Bishop Lawi Imathiu of Kenya said the Chapel is a reminder that Wesley found it possible to respond in very difficult times and that it is possible for us today, too, to share Christ in spite of great difficulty.

The signs of renewal in World Methodism are encouraging. In Great Britain the decline in Methodist membership is slowing down. The mood of skepticism seems to have worked through. There is a growing awareness of some sickness in British society and there is the thought again that Christianity has some answers. There is a developing pool of interest in religion. University students are asking religious questions. The "house church movement" is growing. Last year reflected an increase in both new members and candidates for the ministry.

The British Methodist Church seems to be moving out of a period of decline and depression into a period of activation and renewal. The Church is once again talking seriously about evangelism after a number of years of silence.

Representative of the new spirit in British Methodism is the projected ministry of the reopened Wesley's Chapel. The Chapel will seek to fulfill three ministries: (1) the cathedral church of World Methodism, (2) the mother church of British Methodism, (3) a parish church in one of the most difficult parts of London.

Wesley's Chapel is committed to fulfilling its role as a

neighborhood church, with both evangelistic and pastoral outreach. Located in the eastern part of the City of London, a world banking center, the area includes both new high-rise luxury apartments and industrial workers' quarters. Also there are two hospitals and a City University nearby.

A new ministry of Wesley's Chapel will be the formation of what is expected to be called the "Wesley Community." It will be comprised of four theological students, two from the U.S., one from England and one from Africa. They will form an intentional community, be housed in one of the buildings in the Wesley's Chapel complex, and serve as part of the chapel staff seeking to extend the outreach and ministry of the Chapel to the neighborhood.

The reopening of the Chapel also will mean resumption of several chaplaincies which were suspended during restoration, including ministries to doctors, nurses and others in two hospitals and to students at the new City University.

There are also hopeful signs of renewal within Methodism within the United States. There are signs that churches are growing in depth of spiritual awareness and commitment. The contemporary age appears as one which is becoming increasingly supportive of faith. There are signs of a resurgence in religious life and a new authentic spirituality beginning to stir in our midst. There is a rising tide of evangelicalism within the Methodist Church and the influence of Evangelical Christianity is becoming increasingly evident.

There is a new insistence upon Biblical preaching and worship forms which make for spirituality. In a very real sense the Holy Spirit is being acknowledged in life and ministry. The evangelistic obligation of the Church has not for decades been so thoroughly acknowledged nor so creatively addressed by so many people in so many ways.

What about World Methodism? I quote again from Dr. George Hunter who is bold to say:

There is encouraging evidence that Methodists across the world do believe in Methodism's intended future among the world's peoples. Potentially the most powerful and redemptive years of the Wesleyan heritage lie in its future, not in its past. We are called upon to seize

the privilege of betting on, planning for, and helping to lead the Methodist Movement's greatest era. The best is yet to be.

Dr. Joe Hale, General Secretary of the World Methodist Council, summarizes it all when he says: "I believe our generation can see the Methodist Church become a movement again."

As in his times, so in our day Charles Wesley would rally the people called Methodists as a mighty army to defeat the powers of sin and darkness and to win the world to Christ:

Soldiers of Christ, arise and put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies thro' His eternal Son.
Strong in the Lord of Hosts, and in His mighty pow'r,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts is more than conqueror.

Stand then in His great might, with all His strength endued;
But take, to arm you for the fight, the panoply of God.
That, having all things done, and all your conflicts passed,
Ye may o'er-come through Christ alone, and stand entire at last.

Stand then again against your foes, in close and firm array;
Legions of wily fiends oppose throughout the evil day.
But meet the sons of night; but mock their vain design,
Armed in the arms of heav'nly light, of righteousness divine.

Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul;
Take ev'ry virtue, ev'ry grace, and fortify the whole.
Indissolubly joined, to battle all proceed;
But arm yourselves with all the mind that was in Christ, your Head.

CHARLES A. TINDLEY: METHODIST PREACHER

by Ernest S. Lyght

Charles Albert Tindley made an indelible imprint along Methodism's historical trail. He was one of Methodism's most eminent preachers, but little has been written about him. Without a doubt, he ranks as one of the most effective preachers ever produced by Methodism in general and Black Methodism in particular.

On July 7, 1856, Charles and Esther Tindley named their newborn son, Charles Albert. The place was Berlin, Worchester County, Maryland. Charles did not get to know his mother because she died when he was a little more than two years old. Reflecting on his father, Charles once said, "My father was poor as it relates to this world's goods, but was rich in the grace of God."¹ Such a tribute indicates that Tindley's father was a loving person, who stood by his son to the best of his ability.

Two events related by Tindley illustrate the senior Tindley's love and understanding concern for his son. Tindley said, "When I was a little boy, a man who was working on my father's farm sent me to bring to him a log which he needed for some work he was doing. I am not sure he knew the weight of the log, or my strength. I tried to obey him and was tussling with the heavy log, one end of which I could only lift at a time. When my father saw it he remarked that, that log is too heavy, and sent my older brother to help me; he remembered my weakness and pitied me."² This event made an indelible impression on young Charles. On another occasion, one can see readily the love between father and son:

I was coming from a mill once, the place called Trappe, Maryland, with a bag of meal on my shoulder. It was too heavy, I had stopped half dozen times, my eyes were filled with tears, night was coming on. I was away behind time. I expected to be scolded, and perhaps more severely punished, but my father coming home from his work and learning where I had gone, remembered my weakness and said, "That meal may be too heavy for him", and started to meet me, not half way home. I was near by an old oak tree in front of Uncle Milby Tingle's house, he saw me wagging with the meal. When I saw him I was frightened, I thought he was going to punish me for staying so long, but when he drew near he said, "I have come to help you," my heart leaped for joy. He put his hands on my head, took the bag off of my shoulders, placed it upon his great shoulders, and took hold of my hand, and we started home, I skipped, hopped, and played by his side.³

Tindley's father had a positive influence on his son's life and was highly regarded.

The senior Tindley was neither able to send his son to school, nor

was he able to keep Charles at home with him. Whenever his father could place him, Charles was "hired out". The overseer generally would not permit him to have a book or to go to church. This of course was an attempt to keep Charles uneducated, but Charles was not to be outdone. Tindley said, "I used to find bits of newspaper on the roadside and put them in my bosom (for I had no pockets), in order to study the A, B, C's from them."⁴ While the adults were asleep, Charles often would light "pine knots", which he had gathered during the day. With this scant light, lying flat on his stomach to prevent being seen, he would use the fire-coals to mark all the words he could make out on the bits of newspapers.

Tindley noted, "I continued in this way, and without any teacher, until I could read the Bible almost without stopping to spell the words".⁵ More than eighteen years of this passed before he learned to read and write.

One Sunday, Charles had an uncontrollable impulse to go to the church which his father attended. He had no coat and shoes to wear, only a pair of tattered pants of tow linen and a shirt of the same material. Prior to entering the church, he washed his bare feet in a ditch and dried them with leaves. Tindley gave this account:

In the church I hid away in the little gallery behind some benches, where I could hear and not be seen. I was content until the speaker, who was a sort of missionary, called for all the boys and girls who could read the Bible to take the front seat. One big lump after another arose in my throat as I thought of what I should do. I was one who could read the Bible. No one in the church knew that but myself. I rolled up a big resolution and started. The people hissed and cleared their throats and did many things to get my attention, but with eyes on the speaker I made right for the front seat When the lesson was read I rose and went back to my hiding place in the gallery, but not to be hid, for all the people were watching and whispering about the boy with bare feet".⁶

This event marked the beginning of Charles's church life; it was all the more significant because it fueled Charles's ambition to be educated. After plowing in the field all day, he would walk and run several miles to the school teacher who was gracious enough to give him lessons at night.

Through personal diligence, Tindley garnered enough "information" to take the examination for the ministry. In 1885 he joined the Delaware Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in session at John Wesley Church, Salisbury, Maryland.⁷

For three years Tindley worked as a hod carrier in Philadelphia, and attended school at night. He said, "I made a rule to learn at least one

new thing - a thing I did not know the day before - each day".⁸ This rule was faithfully pursued throughout the whole of Tindley's life. As a self-taught person, Tindley did not graduate from a recognized college or seminary. He was an avid reader and amassed more than 8,000 volumes in his library. He took correspondence courses at all the schools which he could afford. For example, he learned Greek by correspondence from Boston. He was able to attend the Brandywine Institute and he completed its theological course. He learned Hebrew under Professor Speaker through the Hebrew Synagogue in Philadelphia. Knowledge of science and literature was gained as a private student. Tindley's scholarship and churchmanship were recognized by Bennett College, which awarded him the honorary degree, Doctor of Divinity. For Tindley education was a lifetime process. He wrote these words on the subject:

I have picked my way up the hillside of learning and kept the fires of education burning, and by the gleams of scholarly light, I worked all day and studied at night. I measure not my task by age, nor pick out others to be my gauge, my life has only just begun, my goal is in the sun.⁹

This positive attitude buoyed Tindley to excellence.

From 1880 to 1885 Tindley was a member of Philadelphia's Bainbridge Street Methodist Episcopal Church, where he served as janitor. This congregation granted him license to preach and enabled him to become a member of the Delaware Annual Conference. The congregation remained at its location until 1906 when a church building on Broad Street, near Fitzwater, was purchased. The name was then changed to "East Calvary". In 1902 Tindley was appointed pastor of the church where he had once served as janitor; he remained there until his death 31 years later. Reflecting on his ministry Tindley said, "When I came to this church, I found 130 members thoroughly disheartened and a property valued at \$10,000. Today there are 7,109 full members, 2,666 preparatory members and a property valued at \$400,000. He then added poetically, "My work has only just begun, my goal is ever in the sun."¹⁰

It was due to Tindley's outstanding ability as a preacher that the congregation grew so rapidly, thus finding it necessary to move from Bainbridge Street to Broad Street in 1906. Continued church growth necessitated the construction of a new edifice in 1924. This building, with a 3200 person seating capacity, was named Tindley Temple in honor of its most distinguished pastor. Under Tindley's leadership, the church became known as a city-wide relief center for the poor.

Tindley was married to Miss Daisey Henry of Berlin, Maryland, who died on December 27, 1924, the day that Tindley Temple was to be dedicated. Six children survived from this union:

Charles A., Frederick J., Mary E., Emma J., Elbert T. and Margaret. After living three years as a widower, on June 23, 1927, Tindley married Mrs. Jennie Cotton, widow of W. F. Cotton of the Delaware Conference.¹¹

On Wednesday, July 26, 1933, Charles Albert Tindley died in Philadelphia's Frederick Memorial Hospital. Thousands mourned at his death.

Tindley served with distinction. He was a member of seven delegations to the General Conference consecutively from 1908 to 1932.¹² He served with "rare acceptability" the following charges: South Wilmington, Delaware (1 year); Cape May, New Jersey (1 year); Odessa, Delaware (2 years); Pocomoke Circuit, Pocomoke, Maryland (3 years); Fairmount, Maryland (3 years); Ezion, Wilmington, Delaware (2 years); and Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District, (3 years).¹³ It was at East Calvary, later Tindley Temple, that Tindley came into his own. D. W. Henry wrote in his 1933 Presiding Elder's report: "Alert in mind, fit in body, charming in spirit and full of faith, Dr. Tindley is still the towering prince among his people to whose infinite variety and unselfish leadership they look up (to) with fresh admiration and love."¹⁴ Tindley was a dynamic person who always manifested a spirit of deep humility and compassion. He went out of his way to help people.

Tindley's extant sermons, poetry and songs are a valuable legacy. Perhaps Tindley's sermon, "Heaven's Christmas Tree", is one which will always be remembered. He preached the sermon on Sunday evening, December 26, 1915, in the Olympia Building on Broad Street below Bainbridge in Philadelphia. Although 5,000 people were present, hundreds were turned away. In response to the sermon, 110 persons "gave themselves to God". Tindley also wrote numerous gospel songs, however, the Methodist Church only included one, "When The Storms of Life Are Raging, Stand By Me," in its book of hymns. Some of his popular songs are: "The Storm Is Passing Over", "Nothing Between". "What Are They Doing In Heaven", "We'll Understand It Better By and By", "Leave it There", and "I Believe It". The popular "Civil Rights" song of the sixties titled, "We Shall Overcome", was based on Tindley's song, "I'll Overcome Some Day", copyrighted in 1901. Some of his poems were: "Holiness", "Home of Poverty", "A Timely Warning", and "Shut That Back Door".

Tindley lived the life that he preached about and he preached about the life that his parishioners experienced. As a popular preacher, he was the "people's pastor". Many persons were inspired by this great preacher as they traversed their own historical trail.

NOTES

1. Charles Albert Tindley, *A Book of Sermons*. (Philadelphia)
2. Ibid. p. 127
3. Ibid. pp. 128-129
4. Ibid. p. II
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. p. III
7. William F. McDermott, "A Lincoln in Ebony", *The New Christian Advocate*. (Nov. 1956). pp. 97-102.
8. Tindley, *A Book Of Sermons*. p. III
9. Charles Albert Tindley, *Book Of Sermons*. (Philadelphia, 1932). pp. VI-VIII.
10. *The Official Journal Of The Delaware Conference*, 1934. p. 294.
11. Ibid. pp. 294-296
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid. p. 294
14. *The Official Journal Of The Delaware Conference*, 1933. p. 68.

METHODIST PROTESTANTS

A 150 Year Old Legacy in Southern New Jersey

by Robert B. Steelman

150 years ago, November 12, 1828 in Baltimore, Maryland, "The Associated Methodist Churches" were founded. Two years later in 1830 they adopted the name the Methodist Protestant Church. This Church existed until the merger in 1939 of the three branches of Methodism into The Methodist Church, now The United Methodist Church. At the time of merger the Methodist Protestants within the bounds of the New Jersey Conference numbered 2800 with 36 charges and 27 effective ministerial members. They were part of the Eastern Conference of The Methodist Protestant Church and merged with the New Jersey Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to become the New Jersey Conference of the Methodist Church. The merger date was September 29, 1939.

Who were these Methodist Protestants? What caused the division of Methodism in 1828? What helped to reunite them more than a century later? Were they reformers or radicals or both? What basic principles did they espouse? What role did they play within the bounds of our present Conference? As we seek to answer such questions one thing should be clear, southern New Jersey Methodism is richer because of the contributions of the people called Methodist Protestants.

As early as the O'Kelly schism in 1792 some preachers were opposed to what they called the autocratic powers of the bishops, particularly in the exercise of their appointive powers. Accordingly, as early as the 1812 General Conference Nicholas Snethen introduced a petition calling for presiding elders to be elected. The same petition was introduced in 1816 and again in 1820.

By 1820 it had gathered sufficient support to be adopted by a vote of 65-25. However, Bishop McKendree and bishop-elect Soule raised such objection that the rule was suspended until the next General Conference of 1824. In the meantime it was to be put to a vote of each Annual Conference.

There came to be tied in with this concern an expressed desire by some for more lay rights in the life of the Church, particularly in District, Annual and General Conferences where the laity had no representation at all. This was promoted as a democratic ideal at a time when democratic idealism was sweeping the Country.

Following the 1820 General Conference, William Smith Stockton, a layman from New Jersey began to publish the "Wesleyan Repository." It was published in Trenton, New Jersey as an instrument to promote the so called "Reformers" ideas.

The 1824 General Conference was regarded as significant. The "Reformers" looked for victory, but it was denied them. The majority of Annual Conferences had not ratified an elected presiding eldership and the action of the preceeding Conference was declared void. There was to be no elected presiding eldership although promoters of its cause can still be found a century and a half later.

Though a minority position, the "Reformers" were still strong. The "Wesleyan Repository" was expanded to the "Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the M. E. Church" or "Mutual Rights" for short and its publication moved from New Jersey.

In addition Union Societies were organized in many Churches to promote reformist ideas. One result of all this agitation was the expulsion from the Baltimore Conference of two of its members, two local preachers and twenty-two laymen in trials of doubtful legality for espousing the cause presented in "Mutual Rights." The expelled members appealed to the 1828 General Conference. When their appeal was denied a general convention of "Reformers" was called for Baltimore.

One hundred delegates from eleven states and the District of Columbia met on November 12, 1828. They organized as Associated Methodist Churches. The following month the first Annual Conference met in historic Whitaker's Chapel, near Enfield in North Carolina. Whitaker's Chapel is now a United Methodist Historical Shrine.

By 1830 enough societies were established to form fourteen Annual Conferences. Delegates elected by these Conferences met in St. John's Church, Baltimore in November 1830 and the Methodist Protestant Church was formed. Between 25,000 and 30,000 persons separated from the M. E. Church. This new Church had no bishop or presiding elders. Clergy and laity shared power in annual and general conferences. Annual Conferences, either through a stationing committee or by the Conference President, stationed the ministers, but with the minister having the right of appeal to the Conference if his appointment did not please him. Bishop John B. Warman, a former Methodist Protestant, says that having formed this interesting

experiment in Church government, "the heavens did not fall, neither did the millenium arrive."

Bishop Warman further comments, "the Methodist Protestant Church was infused with the spirit of independency. Each congregation was as independent as it could afford to be. The Annual Conference was a loose alliance of local Churches. Yet it held together like a family."¹

Was this radicalism or reform? Who is to judge now. Certainly in matters affecting the laity the Methodist Protestants were way ahead of the parent Church. It was not until 1872 that laymen were admitted to the Methodist Episcopal General Conference. In fact it was not until union in 1939 that the laity received equal representation across the entire Church.

Further, that separation did come was the fault of both. Lines hardened. Tensions increased. Compromise became almost impossible. The glory is that although it took a long time reunion did come. In that union both sides won. The laity have rights exceeding any envisioned by the "Reformers". Even the Methodist Protestants elected bishops prior to union. Presiding elders, they are still around though by a different name and are still appointed not elected. Ministers have no inherent right of appeal from their appointments by the bishop, but appointments are made in a much more, at least seemingly, democratic manner.

A further judgment by Bishop Warman is significant. "This difficult, rough-textured strand of our heritage (the Strawbridge, O'Kelley, Methodist Protestant, perhaps Good News line of creative discontent that refuses to accept institutional conformity) is not a strand to be rejected and cast out. It is sometimes disruptive, always difficult to live with, but in the challenge and response tremendous energy is created that harnessed, can move the church forward."²

Among the leaders of the new Church were three from New Jersey. The layman editor, William S. Stockton; his preacher son, Thomas H. Stockton and the eloquent Quaker-bred Asa Shinn.

William Stockton was born in Burlington in 1785 and died there in 1860 though he did not always remain a resident of New Jersey. Stockton was an editor who founded the "Wesleyan Repository" in

¹ "Our Methodist Protestant Heritage", in *Methodist History*, Vol. XVII, No. 2, January, 1979, 71.

² *Ibid.*, 72.

1821 and later helped publish the works of John Wesley. His first wife whom he married in 1807 was likewise from Burlington, Elizabeth S. Hewlings.

Their son Thomas Hewlings Stockton was born in Mount Holly, New Jersey, June 4, 1808. In 1826 he became a member of Old St. George's Church in Philadelphia, leaving it in 1829 to become a Methodist Protestant. A year later he entered the ministry. He was an outstanding clergyman. Four times he served as Chaplain of the United States House of Representatives. He compiled the first Methodist Protestant Hymnal in 1837, authored 13 books, received an honorary D. D. from Gettysburg College and gave the Dedicatory Prayer at Gettysburg National Cemetery.³

Asa Shinn was also born in New Jersey in 1781. His exact birthplace is unknown. Most of his ministry was in the Pittsburg-West Virginia areas. A very eloquent speaker he presided over many Conferences and served as president of the Methodist Protestant General Conferences of 1838 and 1842.

An historic event in Methodist Protestant history that occurred in New Jersey certainly deserves mention. The 1893 annual meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was held in the First M.P. Church of Bridgeton, now called Laurel Hill. At the conclusion of the Annual Meeting, the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Protestant Church was organized. Mrs. S. A. Lipscomb was elected the first president.

In 1928 the two woman's missionary societies merged to become "The Women's Work of the Methodist Protestant Church". Thus in the mergers that have subsequently come, a part of that which is now the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries had its organization in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

Mention has already been made of the organization of Union Societies following the 1824 General Conference of the M. E. Church. No doubt some of these were formed in New Jersey. One known to this writer was in English Creek, Atlantic County. Just when the Society was organized is not known, though one authority dates it as early as the 1820's. A Meeting House was erected on the site of an old family burial ground. Again the date is not known, but it was deeded to a Board of Trustees of the Union Methodist Protestant Church in 1856.

³ Elmer T. Clark, "Thomas Hewlings Stockton," *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, Vol. 2, Nolan Harmon, Ed. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974, 2256.

The oldest constituent body to which the Methodist Protestants in New Jersey were affiliated was the New York Conference organized in 1830. Vernon Hampton in an article in the *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, indicates that some may have been connected with the work in Pennsylvania prior to 1838. But he says that "apparently all of Methodist Protestantism in New Jersey considered itself a part of the New York Conference from 1838-1841."⁴

In 1841 the New Jersey Conference was organized as a division of the New York Conference.

The earliest record in the Southern New Jersey Conference Archives of the New Jersey Methodist Protestant Conference is the 1892 Minutes. The session that year was held in South Amboy with the Rev. Charles D. Sinkinson, then pastor of Memorial Church, Camden as Conference President. There were at that time 30 appointments and 3203 members within the bounds of our present Conference.

The Churches were these: Glassboro, Fair Haven, Pennsgrove, Bridgeton First (Laurel Hill), Bridgeton Second, Camden, Millville, Moorestown, Manasquan, Friendship, Union Valley, Glendola, Lake Como, Clementon including Point Ariel and Watsontown, Barnsboro including Arbutus Hill, Egg Harbor (Scullville) including St. John's Pleasantville, Mt. Pleasant (Pleasantville), New Brooklyn including New Freedom and Cedar Brook, Allenwood, Robertsville, South Amboy, Leesburg, Atlantic City, Westville, Bridgeport, Osbornville, Centreville, Hardingville, Cramer Hill and West Berlin. The largest Church was Bridgeton First with 312 members followed by Manasquan with 219.

In 1911 at Pittston, Pennsylvania, the Eastern Conference was formed by a merger of the New York and Pennsylvania Conferences. The next year in October of 1912 at Grace Church, Brooklyn, New York the New Jersey Conference entered the union and became part of the Eastern Conference. This Conference extended from Bridgeton, Millville and Atlantic City, New Jersey to 200 miles north of New York City, west to Daleville, Pittston and Shickshinny, Pennsylvania, and east to include Long Island and southern Connecticut. The Rev. Charles Sinkinson, then pastor of Christ Church, Atlantic City was the last president of the old New Jersey Conference.

The new Conference included 38 appointments within the bounds of our present Conference numbering 4,084 members. Christ and Trinity

⁴ "New Jersey," *Ibid.*, II, 1724.

(later Ventnor) Churches Atlantic City were the largest with 494 and 284 members respectively, followed by Bridgeton First and Manasquan with 235 members each. These churches were divided into four Districts: Atlantic City, George Jones, Chairman; Camden, W. D. Stultz, Chairman; Glassboro, A. C. Struthers, Chairman and Manasquan District, N. E. Webb, Chairman.

The final session of the Eastern Conference convened in Christ Church, Atlantic City September 27, 28, 1939 immediately prior to entering the union of the New Jersey Conference of the new Methodist Church and the other Conferences in which they were geographically located.

The final Eastern Conference session included 60 ministers and 10 supply pastors. Rev. C. S. Kidd of Brooklyn, N. Y. was Conference President and Chester A. Teates of White Plains, N. Y., Secretary. Newly elected Bishop Straughn, a former Methodist Protestant, was also present.

Conference organizations included Trustees, T. H. Slater, president; Council of Christian Education, Henry P. Bowen, President; Church Extension Society, George D. Jones, president; Mutual Emergency Society, Carl E. Oswald, president; Preachers' Aid Society, T. H. Slater, president; Eastern Branch of Women's Work, Mrs. Bland Detwiler, president; Missionary Association, L. F. Moon, president; Ministers' Wives Association, Mrs. C. A. Teates, president. Other Committees were on Official Record, Auditing, Stationing, Itinerancy and Orders, ad-Interim Adjustment, and Distribution of the Pension Fund.

Conference Minutes for that year contained a list of 104 deceased ministers going back to 1837. Richard Brandt was ordained into the ministry.

Conference statistics for 1938-39 showed 74 appointments, 368 new members added, 402 removed making the current membership 5,375. There were 513 professions, 333 baptisms, 7,920 Sunday School scholars plus 1,069 officers and teachers. Also 1,194 members of Christian Endeavor, 1,054 members in local church Missionary Societies and 1,682 members of Ladies Aid Societies. Total Church evaluation was slightly more than \$1 million.

This Conference session was heightened by the presence of a strong minority vehemently opposed to the new merger. The climax of this

opposition came on the second afternoon of Conference when the "Great Walkout" occurred.

A request came from the floor asking if the Conference in session was the Eastern Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church or the Eastern Conference of the Methodist Church. President Kidd ruled it was the Eastern Conference of the Methodist Church.

"As soon as this ruling was made, Rev. N. (Newton) C. Conant (Camden), after stating that he was attending the sessions under the call of attending the Eastern Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, said that he could not continue to sit in a Methodist Conference, and invited all who so desired to withdraw with him, and continue their session at the Scullville Methodist Protestant Church. A group of ten ordained ministers, seven supply ministers, with about 60 other delegates and friends withdrew to Scullville. As they left the Church they sang "Blessed Assurance", "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name" and " 'Tis the Old Time Religion".⁵

The result of this "Great Walkout" was the formation of the Eastern Conference of the Bible Protestant Church. This Church considers itself to be the continuing Eastern Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church and a direct descendent of the original New York Conference organized in 1830.⁶

Nineteen Churches withdrew from the Methodist Church: Bridgeton: Second, Camden: Calvary, Haddonfield: Second, Glassboro, Moorestown, Pennsgrove: Mariners Bethel, Westville, Westville Grove, Scullville: Palestine, Steelmanville: Friendship, Manasquan, Osbornville, Robertsville, Hardingville, Point Erial, Allenwood, Glendola, New Freedom and Cedar Brook.

Those churches entering the new Church from the South Jersey District were: Atlantic City: Christ, Ventnor: Trinity, the largest with 177 members; Barnsboro, Bridgeton: First (Laurel Hill), Friendship, Gibbsboro, Millville: First (Broad Street), Millville: Second (Mt. Pleasant), Millville: Third (Newcombtown), New Brooklyn, Oceanville, Pleasantville: Mt. Pleasant, Pleasantville: St. John's, Somers Point, Vineland (Fourth Street) and Watsontown.

Central District Churches that became part of the New Jersey Conference were Avon, Lake Como which later merged with Spring Lake and South Amboy.

⁵1939 Eastern Conference *Minutes*, 22.

⁶1953 *Minutes*, Eastern Conference of the Bible Protestant Church, 1.

The effective ministers who were welcomed into the New Jersey Conference were George E. Ammerman, Charles E. Anderson, Henry P. Bowen, Richard Brandt, Harry J. Bright, H. W. Bland Detwiler, Samuel J. Dorlon, Acquilla D. Elwell, William C. Howard, John S. Huizer, George H. Jackson, George D. Jones, Elwood F. Keller, H. H. McConnell, George H. Naylor, George B. Ogden, Carl E. Oswald, Donald T. Phillips, Sr., Dennis G. Raynor, Steven F. Sliker and James S. McGowan.

Thus the Methodist Protestant tradition has become part of the larger fellowship of reunited Methodism. Those Churches which came from that background are now a vital part of an enlarged fellowship. Former Methodist Protestants are now serving in the Episcopacy, like Bishop John B. Warman of the Harrisburg Area and in the District Superintendency, like the Rev. Donald T. Phillips, Jr. of our Southwest District.

Likewise, in all the judicatory levels of United Methodism the laity, men and women alike, play a role far greater even than that envisioned by the "reformers". United Methodism is more democratic today than it could ever have become in the days of Stockton and Shinn.

Whether it was worth the years of separation or not, God only knows. That it should have taken as long as it did for reconciliation to take place was without doubt due to human frailty and pride and not God's desire. That it happened at all is surely due to God's grace and everlasting love more than man's achievement.

In the Southern New Jersey Conference of United Methodism the 150 year old legacy of Methodist Protestantism is not to be forgotten. As Bishop Warman indicated, this reforming strand of our Methodist Protestant heritage unleashes an energy that if "harnessed, can move the Church forward." Forward we need to go.

THE REOPENING OF JOHN WESLEY'S CITY ROAD CHAPEL

by William Stockman

It was no doubt John Wesley's high regard for All Saints' Day that determined the opening of the new chapel on City Road in N.E. London. An old foundry not many blocks away from Wesley's Chapel had been used for services and meetings by the society for several years prior to the opening of the Chapel. Wesley saw the growth in membership in the society that was taking place and determined a new house of worship was needed. Even before the building was quite complete the founder of the Methodist Societies led the congregation of people from this part of the city into Wesley's Chapel and preached to them in this first service on November 1, 1778.

From that opening day in 1778 and on through the years which followed to the year 1973, many persons were led to find Christ as their Savior and Lord. The Chapel was threatened by fire several times over the years, and during the "London blitz" in 1940, it was spared, along with St. Paul's Cathedral, although everything in the blocks between the two buildings was virtually leveled. However, time had taken its toll and in 1973 it was discovered that the Chapel was in danger of collapse because of dry rotting timbers in the building. Wesley's Chapel was condemned by the government and closed. The congregation was forced to worship elsewhere, and the Chapel, which had by now become the "Mother Church" of Methodists around the world, must either be repaired at great cost or be demolished.

The battle to save Wesley's Chapel began in the House of Commons. It started with the attempt to "set afire" with enthusiasm two of Britain's leading politicians, both Methodists, the Rt. Honorable Selwyn Lloyd and the Rt. Honorable George Thomas. The pastor of the Chapel at that time, Rev. Allen Birtwhistle, visited these two distinguished gentlemen in the House of Commons and the "fire was set".

Enthusiasm began to spread as the appeal to save the Chapel was sent to Methodists everywhere. The response was truly overwhelming as gifts were sent from churches, large and small, as they rallied to the call. By April 1978, the gifts received amounted to almost three-fourths of the goal, of which \$640,000 came from Methodists in America.

Wesley's Chapel was set to reopen on November 1, 1978, its 200th anniversary. As this momentous day approached, many Methodists from "Wesley's Parish--the World" were making preparations for the pilgrimage to London. Approximately fifty persons from our conference, including five ministers, were among those seven hundred persons who departed from Kennedy Airport in New York on October 26, to attend this historical event, the reopening and dedication services in Wesley's Chapel.

Having arrived five days before the reopening day, we had time to enjoy the many interesting places around the city of London, many of which are a part of our Methodist heritage. This writer had the privilege and blessing of attending Evensong Service on Saturday in St. Paul's Cathedral. On Sunday, some of us attended the morning worship service held on the grounds in front of the entrance to Wesley's Chapel. This was another great blessing as we worshiped together with the members of the Chapel in this hallowed spot. As I talked to an elderly gentleman sitting beside me, I found that he was a member and a communion steward of the Chapel. With tears in his eyes he said to me, "We can never thank you enough, our brothers and sisters in America, for what you have done to help restore the Chapel."

I responded with these words, "We are sharing our Christian love with you, and this Chapel *means so much to us also!*"

On the eve of the opening day, Tuesday, October 31, more than thirteen hundred assembled for a sumptuous banquet at the Cafe Royal in celebration of the occasion. The featured speaker of the evening was the Rt. Honorable George Thomas, speaker of the House of Commons, and a local preacher in British Methodism. That evening was a tremendous experience in preparation for the next day.

Wednesday, November 1, 1978, will go down in Methodist History. Three identical dedication services were held during the day in order to accommodate the people attending. Every person had a ticket assigning the time of the service he would attend and the seat he would occupy. Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, became the first reigning monarch of England to attend a Methodist service of worship. Prince Philip read the Epistle lesson. Other special guests at the services were representatives from the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.

It was a thrill to sing hymns of Charles Wesley, to hear the choir of the Children's Home of the Methodist Church sing the inspiring hymn,

"How Great Thou Art"; and in the 5:30 p.m. service to hear Rt. Honorable George Thomas preach to us from God's Holy Word.

On Friday, November 3, we left London for our trip home to our families and our churches in America. We returned to a glorious climax of this historic experience. On Sunday, November 5, we, as well as other congregations the world over, gathered to observe the "Service of the Open Door", because on that Sunday for the first time in six years, the congregation of Wesley's Chapel returned to its own church.

Methodists everywhere can be proud and give thanks, not because we have preserved a building from the past, but because we have enabled a ministry to continue. To paraphrase the Rev. Ronald Gibbons, the present pastor of Wesley's Chapel, Wesley's Chapel has been restored, not as a historical monument, but rather as a center that will remind those who share in the life of Methodism's roots in "scriptural holiness" and of the gospel's command for continuous mission for Christ in the world.

This is what was initiated on November 1, 1978, when all Methodists around the world, reopened Wesley's Chapel to all the world.

**Historical Society of the
Southern New Jersey Annual Conference of The
United Methodist Church**

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

<i>Chairperson</i>	Dr. J. Hillman Coffee, Sr.
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<i>Librarian</i>	Miss Emily Johnson
<i>Historian - Archivist</i>	Rev. Robert B. Steelman

If any of the above can be of assistance to you, let us know.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

At this writing work is nearly completed on the Union List of some 1700 ministers who have had an official relation to our Conference since 1836. This has been a major research project, but it will provide basic information often needed. Eventually, in shortened form, this will become part of a master file of all United Methodist Ministers in the United Methodist Publishing House at Nashville.

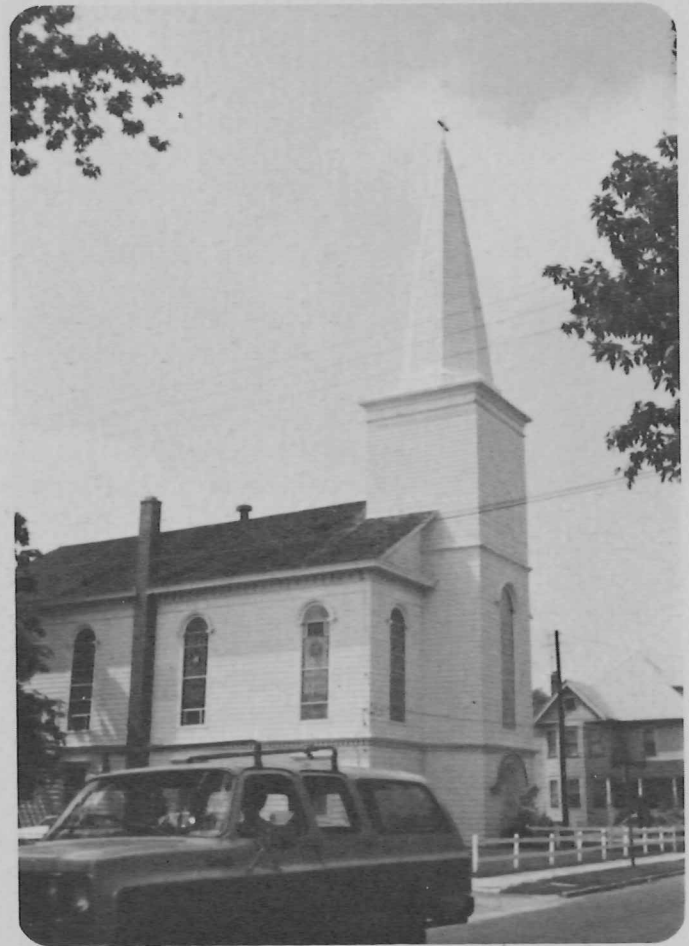
Research is progressing and an Advisory Committee formed to assist in the work of preparing a new Conference history. This is looking forward to the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of our Conference in 1986.

Our Historical Library and Archives at Pennington School is the official depository for the archival records of all our Conference Boards, Committees and Agencies. We wish that each Conference agency, particularly those which have been in existence for some time, would search out their records, and deposit those no longer in current use with us. Our Library and Archives is a major source of information for the history of United Methodism in our Conference and the records we have are there for your use. Churches are urged to send us copies of special programs of historical nature and any church histories you publish.

You may order copies of the 1792 *Journal of the Rev. Richard Swain*, published by our Society in 1977. These are available from our Financial Secretary at \$2 per copy plus 25¢ for postage. Two resources published by the General Commission on Archives and History you may find useful are "Services and Resources for Worship on Historical Occasions" and "Guidelines for Local Church Historians and Records and History Committees". These are available at \$1 each plus 25¢ postage from Rev. Robert B. Steelman, 207 Locust Ave., West Long Branch, N.J. 07764.

You are invited to become a member of our Society. Dues are \$3.00 per person, or \$5.00 a couple. Dues money should be sent to our Financial Secretary, Mrs. Edna Molyneaux, 768 East Garden Road, Vineland, N.J. 08360.

ROBERT B. STEELMAN
Historian - Archivist



First United Methodist Church,
Tuckerton, New Jersey,
110 Year old church building destroyed
by fire May 7, 1979