

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH





Bicentennial Of American Methodism

By Hoyt Givelin

Editorial Research Reports

WASHINGTON — Methodism has been called "the most American of the American churches." It was the first Christian denomination to be organized in this country, an event that occurred 200 years ago in Baltimore.

The largest branch of

present-day Methodism, the United Methodist Church, will honor that event by holding its General Conference in that city May 1-11 and staging a Bicentennial Celebration May 6 at the Civic Center. The conference, the church's governing body, meets every four years. It will be attended by 1,800 voting delegates, lay and

clerical.

American Methodism traces its beginnings to John Wesley's "Methodist" societies in England, which were known for their methodical and disciplined practices. His soul-saving message crossed the Atlantic well before the Revolutionary War, and circuit-riding preachers carried it to the

frontier — adding to Methodism's "most American" distinction.

Wesley, a loyal Englishman, opposed the Revolution. And though a disillusioned Anglican clergyman, he opposed Methodism's formal separation from the Church of England. But after independence was won, Wesley took upon himself to ordain a "superintendent" and two elders and send them to America.

The new superintendent, Thomas Coke, enlisted the help of Francis Asbury, who urged 48 fellow circuit-riders to meet at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore and hear Wesley's plan. They accepted it, founding the Methodist Episcopal Church during their 16-day meeting, which began Christmas Eve 1784. And they unanimously elected Asbury bishop.

The meeting house no longer exists, but the church flourished. Six years later its membership had nearly quadrupled, to 57,831. By 1826 the Methodists had overtaken the Baptists to become the largest American denomination.

Wesley's "working theology" was appealingly diverse. He wrote: "Methodists do not impose in order to their admission any opinion whatever. ... Let them be churchmen or dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents. ... One condition, and only one, is required — a real desire to

save the soul."

The Methodist Episcopal Church gave birth to other denominations. The "Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches" lists 23 Methodist denominations in the United States today.

This splintering started as early as 1787 among Black Methodists who felt unwelcome and accelerated over the question of slavery. In 1939 two breakaway groups reunited with the Methodist Episcopal Church to form what was simply named the Methodist Church. Then in 1968 the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren Churches joined to form the United Methodist Church.

Its 8.4 million members in America — 420,000 others are overseas — are outnumbered among Protestants today only by Southern Baptists. They include 300,000 blacks and nearly 100,000 from other minorities — all represented at Baltimore. So, too, are the church's 1,000 women clergy. For the first time a woman bishop, Marjorie Matthews of Wisconsin, will be present.

If the ordaining of women in the church is no longer an issue, the same cannot be said for homosexuals. Bishop Melvin E. Wheatley Jr. of Denver has been challenged — and defended — in petitions before the convention for his appointment of a homosexual clergyman in 1982.

January 26, 1794



Construction of **COKESBURY COLLEGE** began in 1785 in Abingdon, Maryland with \$5,000 that the Christmas Conference had set aside. There was much enthusiasm over the building of the first Methodist college, but it was beset with problems. Although Bishop Asbury struggled to keep the college financially strong and under the control of the Methodists, the board of trustees voted—without the consent of all the conferences—to incorporate, an action that transferred control to the board. The following year the college burned and was moved to Baltimore, but burned again on December 4, 1796. After this fire, Asbury and Coke made no further effort to continue the college. Today Cokesbury Memorial Chapel and cemetery stand on the site of the first college.



Thomas Coke



Francis Asbury



SUSANNA ANNESLEY WESLEY was the twenty-fifth child of the Reverend Samuel Annesley. At the age of twenty she married Samuel Wesley, a marriage that lasted forty-six years. She was the mother of nineteen children, ten of whom survived infancy.

1669 _____

1738 _____

GEORGE WHITEFIELD, responding to John Wesley's call for missionaries in America, set sail for Georgia to preach the gospel.

February 3,
1830



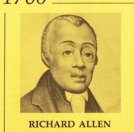
Near Boydton, Va., **RANDOLPH-MACON COLLEGE** began its history as a liberal arts college for men. Today it is a coeducational institution located in Ashland, Va. John Early, one of its founders, was a bishop in the MECS.



February 27,
1893

B. T. ROBERTS died on the day he was to hold a quarterly meeting of the church he organized. Known for his remarkable administrative skills, Bishop Roberts was a missionary at heart and a friend of the underprivileged. His writings were models of direct speech, and he was said to put more in his twenty-minute sermons than most could express in an hour. Like Wesley, he stressed the expression of Christian faith in practical service.

1760

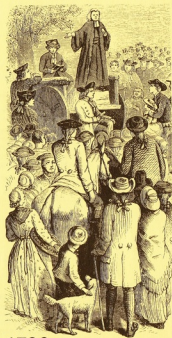


RICHARD ALLEN

1836



NATHAN BANGS, book agent of the **NEW YORK BOOK CONCERN**, wrote after the fire: "Indeed, a leaf of a Bible was found about three miles from the place, on which the following verse was but just legible:—'Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste,' Isa. b. iv, 11 . . ."



1739

GEORGE WHITEFIELD, on the day he preached his first open-air sermon, recorded in his journal, "I believe I never was more acceptable to my Master than when I was standing to teach those hearers in the open fields."

1784 AMERICAN MARCH METHODISM 1984



1791

JOHN WESLEY died at age 88 in London. Surrounded by friends and family and in a very weakened condition, he tried to sing Isaac Watts' hymn, "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath," but the effort was too great. In his last triumphant breath he cried, "The best of all is God is with us."

John Wesley spent his last days preaching. He preached his last open-air sermon under a tree in Winchelsea, England. Although he was quite ill, it was fitting that the topic of his last sermon was "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." John Wesley is buried at City Road Chapel, London, and a monument to the Wesley brothers stands in Westminster Abby.



1816

FRANCIS ASBURY, too weak to walk or stand, preached his last sermon seated on a table and supported by pillows in Richmond, Virginia. He died several days later at the home of a friend.



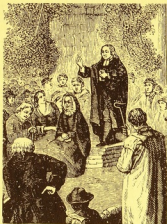
1835

WILLIAM MCKENDREE, the first native-born American Methodist bishop, died in Sumner County, Tennessee, March 5, and is buried on the campus of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.



1788

CHARLES WESLEY was called a "Methodist" several years before his conversion in 1738. While he was a student at Oxford, he and two of his friends met regularly and became known as "The Holy Club" or a "new set of Methodists." *Methodist*, a term from the early history of medicine that applied to a distinctive school of medical opinion, was a nickname that Charles Wesley gladly accepted since it implied "the studious and devotional rule of life which he and his friends followed." The original group grew to fourteen under the leadership of John Wesley. Besides being a partner with his brother in the Methodist revival, Charles was a prolific hymn writer. During his lifetime, he wrote between 6,500 and 7,000 hymns.

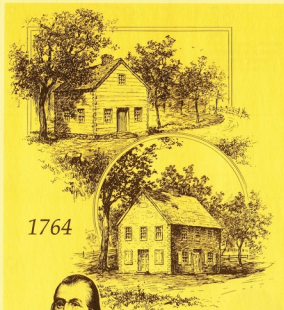


When George Whitefield left England for America, he urged his friend **JOHN WESLEY** to take over his work of field preaching. Wesley reluctantly agreed and preached his first outdoor sermon to a crowd of three thousand. Thus began his life's work.

1739 _____

1785 _____

The newly organized **METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH** held its first conference at the home of the Reverend Green Hill with Bishops Coke and Asbury present.

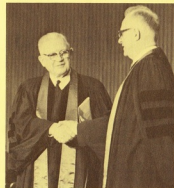


ROBERT STRAWBRIDGE

Built in 1764 on Sam's Creek in Frederick County, Maryland, the **STRAWBRIDGE LOG MEETINGHOUSE** was the first Methodist church in America. In 1780 the log house was replaced by a stone chapel.

RICHARD ALLEN, ordained elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church, brought together sixteen black churches at a conference in Philadelphia in 1816. Under his leadership the African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded, and he was elected its first bishop. He guided the growth of the church until his death fifteen years later.

1816 _____



April 23, 1968

The union of the **EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH** and **THE METHODIST CHURCH** was completed at ceremonies in Dallas with a symbolic hand clasp of Bishop Rueben Mueller (EUBC), left, and Bishop Lloyd Wicke (MC).

Methodism's 200th Anniversary

By HOYT GIMLIN

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The largest branch of present-day Methodism, the United Methodist Church, is honoring that event by holding its General Conference in that city May 1-11 and staging a Bicentennial Celebration May 6 at the Civic Center. The conference, the church's governing body, meets every four years. It will be attended by 1,000 voting delegates, lay and clerical.

American Methodism traces its beginnings to John Wesley's "Methodist" societies in England, which were known for their methodical and disciplined practices. His soul-saving message crossed the Atlantic well before the Revolutionary War, and circuit-riding preachers carried it to the frontier — adding to Methodism's "most American" distinction.

WESLEY, A LOYAL Englishman, opposed the Revolution. And though a disillusioned Anglican clergyman, he opposed Methodism's formal separation from the Church of England. But after independence was won, Wesley took upon himself to ordain a "superintendent" and two elders and send them to America.

The new superintendent, Thomas Coke, enlisted the help of Francis Asbury, who urged 40 fellow circuit-riders to meet at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore and hear Wesley's plan. They accepted it, founding the Methodist Episcopal Church during their 10-day meeting, which began Christmas Eve 1784. And they unanimously elected Asbury bishop.

The meeting house no longer exists, but the church flourished. Six years later its membership had nearly quadrupled, to 57,631. By 1820 the Methodists had overtaken the Baptists to become the largest American denomination.

WESLEY'S "WORKING theology" was appealingly diverse. He wrote: "Methodists do not impose in order to their admission any opinion whatever...Let them be churchmen

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The Methodist Episcopal Church gave birth to other denominations. The "Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches" lists 13 Methodist denominations in the United States today.

This splintering started as early as 1787 among black Methodists, who felt unwelcome, and accelerated over the question of slavery. In 1930 two breakaway groups reunited with the Methodist Episcopal Church to form what was simply named the Methodist Church. Then in 1968 the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren Churches joined to form the United Methodist Church.

ITS 9.4 MILLION members in America — 420,000 others are overseas — are outnumbered among Protestants today only by Southern Baptists. They include 360,000 blacks; and nearly 100,000 from other minorities — all represented at Baltimore. So, too, are the church's 1,600 women clergy. For the first time a woman bishop, Marjorie Matthews of Wisconsin, will be present.

If the ordaining of women in the church is no longer an issue, the same cannot be said for homosexuals. Bishop Melvin E. Wheatley Jr. of Denver has been challenged — and defended — in petitions before the convention for his appointment of a homosexual clergyman in 1981.



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100 years ago

May 21, 1885

Remember the Sabbath

The Rev. Mr. Miller, in his sermon last Sunday night at the Methodist Church said he feared that the protracted drought of last fall and this spring and the consequent gloomy crop prospect was but an evidence of the wrath of God occasioned by the persistent violation on the part of the people of the land in regard to the observance of the Sabbath Day.

He gave some startling instances of its violation which have come under his own notice during the last few years. At the close of his discourse he made an earnest and eloquent appeal to all people and to the officers of the law to use their best endeavors to put a stop to this wholesale evil.

Methodists celebrate heritage

As Methodism celebrates its 200th anniversary in America, the Page United Methodist Church north of Luray marked its 14th anniversary with special services on the past two Sundays.

Homecoming services last Sunday followed special Heritage Day celebrations April 29 when histories of the six original churches which preceded Page United Methodist Church were read.

The ceremonies also included displays of antiques and records of the original churches and the pastor, the Rev. Hugh Crowder, wore a circuit-riding preacher's costume reminiscent of the early days of American Methodism.

After several churches of the old Page Methodist Charge — or Circuit — were combined in one congregation, the first service was held in the new brick building just off U.S. 340 north of Luray on May 10, 1978.

The six churches which either joined the new United Methodist congregation or organized as community churches were: Rileyville, Compton Union, Bethel, Fletcher's Chapel, Oak Hill and Springfield.

According to a history of the old Rileyville church prepared by Mrs. Durwood Comer, that congregation had its beginnings in 1839 when a group met with pastor Nathan S. Buckingham. This congregation apparently met in homes until a log meeting house was built in 1843.

The congregation moved later to a new church building on land donated by Col. Edward W. Wood on March 8, 1850. However, the building wasn't constructed until 1857. In the interim, members met at the Rileyville Union Church shared by Old School Baptists, Lutherans, and New School Baptists.

The first Methodist minister listed on the church's records was Rev. J. H. Rheubush in 1833-44.

The Compton Union Church was organized by the Rev. William Peters, a circuit-riding Brethren preacher, in 1883 after a worship house was built on land belonging to Charles Madison Keyser, according to a history prepared by Mrs. Kenneth Hulse.

Four denominations — Brethren, Lutheran, Baptist and Methodist — held services on alternate Sundays in the church.

The congregation decided not to merge with the Page Methodist Charge in 1968 and in 1975 withdrew from the Methodist Conference, some members joining the Page United Methodist at that time.

The Compton church still holds services under Methodist ministers Robert Hammers and Leo Danbar.

Bethel Church east of Kimball on Rocky Branch road was built in 1837 on land given by John A. Alder, according to a history prepared by Mrs. Joseph V. Foley Jr. Before that, services were held in the one-room Hall School adjacent to the donated land.

The earliest pastor listed on the Bethel records was Thomas J. Miller in 1837. The church closed in 1960 and its 24 members became part of the Springfield congregation. The church and land were sold to Thurman Richards, who built a house on the site with timbers from the old church.

The land for Fletcher's Chapel church was donated by McKendra Watson Strickler in 1884, according to the history prepared by Mrs. Corner Strickler's granddaughter. The first pastor was the Rev. G. W. Ruebush in 1883-84. The congregation withdrew from the Methodist Conference in 1971 and became known as Fletcher's Chapel Community Church. S. Paul Dovel was the first pastor of the community church, which is now served by Pastor Fred Weirs.

The Oak Hill church was built about 1847 on land owned by George William Sedwick, himself a preacher who served a number of churches in the area, according to the history prepared by Mrs. Jeanita Sedwick.

When the churches united to form Page Methodist in 1978, the building was purchased by John Gaurt. It is now owned by Lawrence Getz Jr. and leased for other church services.

The Springfield church located on Va. 638 just east of U.S. 340 was dedicated in 1903, according to the history presented by Mrs. Emmett R. Keyser.

The Rev. H. A. Wilson, who served the Page Circuit from 1903-1906, was the first pastor. Land for the church had been deeded by William F. and Catharine E. Jones in 1856 and other buildings used for services stood on the site before the new church was built.



Shirley Britt

For Methodists, It's Back to the Basics

Spiritual renewal is winning out over social activism as a Protestant giant charts its course for the future.

BALTIMORE

In their 200th-anniversary year, American Methodists are cutting back on politics and returning to the grassroots evangelism that founder John Wesley brought to the U.S.

The more conservative bent by the nation's largest mainline Protestant denomination is being watched closely by Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and others facing the same explosive issues that have divided Methodists for decades.

At the United Methodist's general conference here in mid-May, the church's bishops set the tone by calling for more spirituality and less political action. "We have spent much time dealing with social structures, debating the merits and demerits of various political and economic systems . . . and far too little time evangelizing people," the bishops said in a joint statement. This theme was followed by the clergy and lay members at the conference as they:

- Reiterated their position that homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching."
- Tightened the purse strings of the church's social agencies, holding them to a 2% percent increase over four years, far less than their more liberal leaders had requested.
- Required that candidates for ordination pledge fidelity if married and celibacy if unmarried.
- Favored abortion only in difficult, life-threatening situations.
- Refused to send a delegation to participate in a civil-rights march in Greensboro, N.C., protesting the recent acquittal of Ku Klux Klan members in the 1979 deaths of Communist Worker Party demonstrators.

Yet delegates did support the stand of women's groups in removing many references to God as male, except in such works as the Lord's Prayer. Bishops also called for complete destruction of all nuclear weapons.

Still, conservative views were clearly dominant, and many leaders said they hoped this new direction would give the church broader appeal. Since 1964, the Methodists have lost about 1.5 million members, down to a level of 9.4

million today. Some 43 percent of the members are age 55 and over.

"There is a real commitment to reach people with a more conservative view without antagonizing the rest of the church," said Bishop James Thomas of North Canton, Ohio, council president.

To stem the decline, local churches are not only stressing moral issues but also are aggressively recruiting new members. "The church over all is having a sporadic grassroots revival of spirituality of the kind we had in John Wesley's time," says Methodist theologian Albert Outler of Dallas.

In 1784, when the church first organized on Christmas Eve in Baltimore, circuit-riding preachers carried the Gospel by horseback to parishes scattered throughout the countryside.

In western New York, the Rev. J. F. Cleveland of Jamestown, the district superintendent, says Methodists are working hard to set up ethnic churches. Two Korean congregations, two Hispanic churches and one native American church have been established.

In Oxford, Mich., lay member Shirley Cook says her church asks people what they want to study, rather than pushing programs down their throats. Among the choices: Courses on family life, health, and problems of singles. "When they walk in the door, we don't make them go to a Bible class," she adds.

The church is even more ambitious in Carrollton, Tex., where membership at First United Methodist has increased from 1,500 to 3,500 in 10 years. Says lay leader Scott Smith: "We actually go through the city water-lookup list to get names of prospective members."

While such efforts in this country are generally applauded, one of the deepest divisions among Methodists is over mission policy in foreign lands. Some of the more liberal members favor providing education, health care and other benefits to Third World people, with little emphasis on introducing Western cultural and religious beliefs.

That tack angers conservatives. "We don't see a clear enough commitment in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ around the world," says the Rev. Ed-



To honor circuit-rider clergy who first spread Methodism, the Rev. Ralph Jarboe, left, and the Rev. Sidney Dillinger rode from Kansas to Baltimore.

mund Robb, head of the Institute for Religion and Democracy in Washington, D.C. He argues that many missionaries are more interested in politics than converting souls. Robb and other evangelical Methodists have set up a rival Mission Society for United Methodists.

Similar issues are at the heart of the dispute over Methodist involvement in the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.

Pro and con. Methodists have been both leaders and severe critics of those ecumenical organizations. Methodist Bishop James Armstrong was NCC president until last fall when he resigned for health reasons after undergoing enormous criticism. At the other extreme is Robb, whose institute contributed to reports on CBS-TV's "60 Minutes" and in *Reader's Digest* accusing the WCC of supporting Marxist causes abroad.

Still, bishops insist that the church will remain in the councils. "Actions that are seen as Marxist-Leninist by one group are seen as at the core of the Christian message by others."

Leaders maintain that much of the church's future may well be in foreign lands, such as South Korea and Zaire, where membership is growing rapidly. Someday, the bishops say, such nations may "send missionaries and evangelists to the Western World to save us." □

By MICHAEL LEVIN

1784 AMERICAN JUNE METHODISM 1984



RICHARD ALLEN became the first black American to receive ordination in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

1794

1736

JOHN WESLEY held the first service in the new meetinghouse, Fort Frederica, St. Simon's Island, Georgia.



June 25, 1744

By the 1740's the Methodist movement in England had grown to the point that some form of structure was needed. It was at this time that the conference, the central element in the Methodist organization, appeared. **THE FIRST CONFERENCE** was held at the Foundery in London, June 25-30, with the Wesley brothers, four lay preachers, and four clergy of the Church of England present.

1790



1789

FRANCIS ASBURY and **THOMAS COKE** visited President Washington soon after his inauguration, and presented him with a congratulatory message on behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Begun in 1766 by the Methodist Society in Leesburg, Virginia, the **OLD STONE CHURCH** was the first Methodist church property in America. In 1900 it sold for \$416.05, and two years later was torn down. Today a historical marker stands on the site.



Methodism Founder's 300th Birthday Marked



Associated Press

An undated image of John Wesley, founder of Methodism. As the 300th anniversary of Wesley's birth, on June 17, 2003, is marked, some theologians say Methodism is a "sleeping giant" that could be awakened if a movement continues back to the founder's theology of self-discipline and outreach to the poor.

By JIM PATTERSON
Associated Press Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — "Methodists" was one of the least insulting nicknames leveled at the group of intense college students who began meeting at England's Oxford University in 1729.

Others were "Bible Moths" and "Godly Men," and none of the names were uttered with affection. The students preferred to call themselves "The Holy Club."

The principles that 26-year-old John Wesley began "methodically" hammering out in that small group started by his hymn-writing brother Charles were the beginnings of today's United Methodist Church, now boasting 36 million members in more than 130 countries.

The denomination, which has no formal headquarters but maintains its communications and General Conference offices in Nashville, claims 8.3 million members in the United States, including President Bush, Hillary Clinton and Bob Dole.

It's the No. 2 Protestant denomination in the country, behind the Southern Baptists, but American member-

ship has declined 23 percent since 1970.

As the 300th anniversary of John Wesley's birth on June 17 is marked, some theologians say Methodism is "a sleeping giant" that could be awakened if a movement continues back to the founder's theology of self-discipline and outreach to the poor.

"The United Methodist Church is in the process of being renewed and revitalized, and Wesley is being used as a source for inspiration," said Scott Jones, a theology professor at Southern Methodist University.

Wesley's reputation for decades rested primarily on his undisputed genius as an organizer and evangelist, said Henry Knight III, a Saint Paul School of Theology professor.

"But in the last several decades, he is getting more respect as a theologian who has a lot to contribute to the church," Knight said.

Some of the cornerstones Wesley set down for the sect, which began within the Church of England, were outreach to the poor as proof of God working through Christians, regular self-examination, dedication to a disciplined life and meeting in small groups to shore up efforts to live correctly. He insisted

that God offered redemption to all, not just a certain predestined few, the common belief that came from the followers of John Calvin.

Like many of his ideas, universal redemption didn't originate with Wesley, but he popularized it, sparking interest in Christianity among the emerging working class during the Industrial Revolution. Combined with Wesley's tireless dedication to evangelization, Methodism grew fast in England, and then in America.

Wesley's instruction, "Make all you can, save all you can, and give all you can" influenced followers to be thrifty, propelling many upward in economic and social status.

Wesley was the son of a Church of England rector who was a stickler for religious decorum and ritual. At the time, the Church of England had evolved into a kind of civil service operation, where clergy were more concerned with enforcing rules than inspiring or helping anyone.

"It was a system which disgusted the adult John Wesley ...," writes author Roy Hattersley in the new biography, "The Life of John Wesley: A Brand

See WESLEY, Page 21

Wesley

FROM PAGE 19

from the Burning."

Hattersley says Wesley "came to the conclusion that true virtue, built on belief, required more than the avoidance of sin and the observance of religious ritual."

Wesley cobbled together his theology from a variety of sources, sometimes dramatically changing positions along the way. His turning point

came on Feb. 2, 1739, the day he preached his first outdoor sermon.

"George Whitefield, another great evangelist, invited Wesley to preach to the miners and other working poor around Bristol," said Douglas Meeks, a Wesley expert at Vanderbilt University.

"Wesley, an Oxford-educated High Church Anglican priest, thought it to be a sin to save people outside the four

walls of the church. But, as he said, he made himself more 'vile' and began open air preaching," Meeks said.

Although Wesley wished to revitalize the Church of England, scholars think he realized about the time he started ordaining his own bishops in 1784 that a split was inevitable.

Methodism survived the Revolutionary War in America and hostility from Church of England officials at home.

Wesley's principles worked so well that many poor people improved their stations. That success started to dilute the radical nature of Wesley's viewpoints, Meeks said.

Some of Wesley's teachings "frighten Methodists today, because they question the consumerist and materialist values of our market society," Meeks said.

"John Wesley still has his future ahead of us, as it were."



The Wyandot Mission



1843

CHIEF GREY EYES, a Wyandot Indian, said of the Methodist missionaries, "The providence of God is wonderful in providing [missionaries] by whom we could understand the good word when it came among us. We thank God for what he has done."



July 17, 1980

MARJORIE S. MATTHEWS

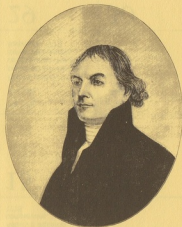


July 10, 1875

MARY McLEOD BETHUNE was a founder of Bethune-Cookman College, an accredited Methodist college in Daytona Beach, Florida. Her motto for the college was, "Enter to learn; depart to serve."

1742

SUSANNA WESLEY died in London with all her family at her bedside. Just before she lapsed into unconsciousness, she said, "Children, as soon as I am released sing a Psalm of praise to God." She is remembered for the determination with which she educated her children. Six hours of instruction a day began and ended with the singing of Psalms. So great was she that Adam Clarke said he had "never seen, heard, or read of her equal."

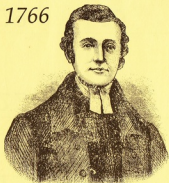


1757

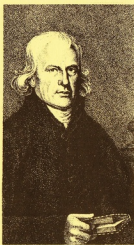
WILLIAM MCKENDREE, a man with little formal education, was asked to preach to the 1808 General Conference. Appearing awkward and embarrassed when he took the pulpit, he faltered through part of his sermon. Suddenly "it was no longer a rude backwoodsman, an awkward, bashful rustic who stood before them but the mighty, eloquent, convincing preacher." Bishop Asbury was heard to remark: "That sermon will make him a bishop!" And it did; at the same General Conference McKendree was elected by the largest majority of any candidate since Asbury.

1784 AMERICAN AUGUST METHODISM 1984

1766



Six years after their arrival in America, **PHILIP EMBURY** and his cousin **BARBARA HECK** organized in New York City the Methodist Society, which later became the **JOHN STREET CHURCH**.



August 20,
1745

FRANCIS ASBURY was born in Handsworth, England.



HOME OF ASBURY'S CHILDHOOD

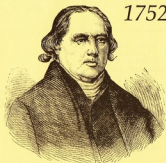
1789



THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN was started at St. George's Church in Philadelphia with the Reverend John Dickins as its first agent or superintendent. Dickins had saved £125 (about \$600), and he offered this to the conference to start the business. He served as book agent until his death in 1798, and throughout his career published 114,000 copies of books and pamphlets.

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH

1752



FREEBORN GARRETTSON was an itinerant preacher and leader of early American Methodism. During the Revolution, he refused to bear arms as required by Maryland law on the grounds that it was "contrary to his mind and grievous to his conscience to participate in war." Garrettson's decision resulted in his imprisonment on one occasion and caused him great suffering. Very much opposed to slavery, Garrettson freed his slaves when he entered the ministry.



CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

PUBLISHED BY W. SANDER AND J. SANDER, FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH—W. SANDER, LUTHER

Vol. 1.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1826.

No. 1

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For the purpose of the Christian Advocate, the name of the Editor is W. Sander, and the name of the Publisher is J. Sander. The name of the Proprietor is W. Sander and J. Sander. The name of the Manager is W. Sander. The name of the Printer is J. Sander. The name of the Stationer is J. Sander. The name of the Distributor is J. Sander. The name of the Agent is J. Sander. The name of the Correspondent is J. Sander. The name of the Contributor is J. Sander. The name of the Subcriber is J. Sander. The name of the Patron is J. Sander. The name of the Friend is J. Sander. The name of the Well-wisher is J. Sander. The name of the Benefactor is J. Sander. The name of the Supporter is J. Sander. The name of the Helper is J. Sander. The name of the Co-worker is J. Sander. The name of the Fellow-laborer is J. Sander. The name of the Associate is J. Sander. The name of the Collaborator is J. Sander. The name of the Partner is J. Sander. The name of the Associate is J. Sander. The name of the Collaborator is J. Sander. The name of the Partner is J. Sander. The name of the Associate is J. Sander. The name of the Collaborator is J. Sander. The name of the Partner is J. Sander.

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MEMORIALS
 MEMORIALS OF THE REV. JESSE LEE, who died while attending a camp meeting revival and is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Baltimore alongside Francis Asbury, Robert Strawbridge, and other great leaders of early Methodism.

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September 9, 1826

First issued in 1826 by the Methodist Book Concern, the Christian Advocate was the first American Methodist church-wide weekly. Its purpose was to "promote the Kingdom of Christ on earth and to increase the sum of human happiness."

CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE

September 1,
1785

PETER CARTWRIGHT



WHATCOAT



VASEY

JESSE LEE died while attending a camp meeting revival and is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Baltimore alongside Francis Asbury, Robert Strawbridge, and other great leaders of early Methodism.

1816



Named for Bishop William McKendree, MCKENDREE CHAPEL is the oldest Methodist church building west of the Mississippi River. Built in 1819 near Cape Girardeau, Missouri, it later became a symbol of the reunion of Northern and Southern Methodists.

1819

After ordaining RICHARD WHATCOAT and THOMAS VASEY in 1784, John Wesley sent them to America with Thomas Coke to organize the Methodists in America.

1784

District Methodists To Mark 200th Year

Harrisonburg District United Methodists will celebrate their heritage Sunday at the James Madison University Convocation Center.

The district celebration of 200 years of Methodism in the United States will include historical displays, sketches, an audio-visual presentation and a talk by the pastor of the largest United Methodist church in the world.

The United Methodists trace their history in the United States to a meeting of 60 circuit-riding preachers in Baltimore on Dec. 28, 1784. Church roots include not only the Methodist Church that arose out of that meeting to consider John Wesley's plan for ordaining preachers, but also the Church of the United Brethren in Christ that was formed by Philip William Otterbein and the Evangelical Church which grew out of the preaching of Jacob Albright about the same time.



CHARLES ALLEN

Each of the approximately 30 churches in the district has been invited to set up a table to display items that relate to the history of the church. That display will be open 5:15 p.m., and youth groups will present historical skits during that same period in the foyer.

At 7 p.m. an audio-visual presentation on the growth and development of the United Methodist Church in the Shenandoah Valley is planned. Dr. Charles Allen of Houston,

Texas, will speak during a 7:30 p.m. service of celebration. An offering will be taken to cover expenses of the district celebration and to support three projects: Project Concern, camp scholarships for retired people and a retreat center.

For 23 years, Allen has been pastor of First United Methodist Church in Houston, which has 12,900 members. His Sunday morning services are broadcast on television and radio.

Allen was born in Georgia and is the son of a minister. He graduated from Young Harris College, Wofford College and the Emory University School of Theology. He received doctor of divinity degrees from Piedmont College and Emory University.

He has written 28 books that have sold more than five million copies.

He was elected this country's "minister of the year" in 1981 by Religious Heritage of America.

7/13/1994

Methodism At 200

The United Methodist Church will be 200 years old on Christmas Eve 1984. From the day of its founding it has been a force in American life. Methodist circuit-riders accompanied the pioneers into new lands across the mountains, baptized the newborn, solemnized marriages, buried the dead and comforted mourners.

Born out of the paralysis that afflicted the Episcopal Church (formerly the Church of England) after the Revolution because there were no bishops to ordain clergy, Methodism from its beginning was an activist movement. It sent missionaries to preach the Gospel in slums and frontier settlements, and it became and remains one of the largest American churches.

Methodism reached the Shenandoah Valley in 1788, when Asbury Church in Harrisonburg was founded; it is

thought to be the oldest congregation in this area. Two years later Bishop Francis Asbury conducted the first Methodist conference west of the Blue Ridge here in Harrisonburg, giving the city a place in Methodist history.

In the Harrisonburg District today there are more than 16,000 United Methodists, who will unite in a celebration of the denomination's 200 years at JMU's Convocation Center Sunday. The congregations of the district will present exhibits illustrating their history between 5 and 7 p.m., and there will be an audiovisual presentation at 7:30 p.m. presided over by Bishop Blackburn of the Virginia Conference.

We salute the United Methodists of the Harrisonburg District on this significant milestone in their history and wish them godspeed as they enter their third century.



JMU CONVOCATION CENTER Sept. 23, 1984

John Wesley's COVENANT SERVICE

for New Year's, Watch Night,
Covenant Sunday, or
Other Special Occasions

ON DECEMBER 24, 1747, John Wesley strongly urged the Methodists to renew their covenant with God. His first Covenant Service was held on August 11, 1755. He issued this as a pamphlet in 1780, and the form was used without alteration for nearly a century. After that, various modifications were made from time to time, to give the people a larger share in the devotion. This service has been a blessing to Methodists ever since 1755.

Let the service of worship begin at the time appointed. Let the people kneel or bow in silent prayer upon entering the sanctuary.

PRELUDE *The people in devout meditation*

HYMN *The people standing*

COLLECT FOR PURITY *Here let the people unite with the minister in prayer*

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON *John 15:1-8 or a selected responsive reading*

HYMN

THE INVITATION *The minister. Let the people remain standing*

Dearly beloved, the Christian life, to which we are called, is a life in Christ, redeemed from sin by him, and through him consecrated to God.

Upon this life we have entered, having been admitted into that new covenant of which our Lord Jesus Christ is mediator, and which he sealed with his own blood, that it might stand forever.

On one side, the covenant is God's promise that he will fulfill it and through us all that he declared in Jesus Christ, who is the author and perfecter of our faith. That his promise still stands we are sure, for we have known his goodness and proved his grace in our lives day by day.

On the other side we stand pledged to live no more unto ourselves, but to him who loved us and gave himself for us and called us to serve him that the purposes of his coming be fulfilled.

From time to time we renew our vows of consecration, especially when we gather at the table of the Lord; but on this day we meet expressly, as generations of our fathers have met, that we may joyfully and solemnly renew the covenant which bound them and binds us to God.

Let us then, remembering the mercies of God and the hope of his calling, examine ourselves by the light of his Spirit, that we may see wherein we have failed or fallen short in faith and practice and, considering all that this covenant means, may give ourselves anew to God.

Let us pray.

THE ACT OF ADORATION *The minister, the people responding. Here let the people kneel or be seated and bow.*

Let us adore the Father, the God of love who created us;
Who every moment preserves and sustains us;

Who has loved us with an everlasting love, and given us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.

Let us glory in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor;

Who went about doing good and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom;

Who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin;

Who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;

Who was dead, and liveth for evermore;

Who opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers;

Who sitteth at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.

Let us rejoice in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, by whom we are born into the family of God, and made members of the Body of Christ;

Whose witness confirms us; Whose wisdom teaches us; Whose power enables us; Who wants to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

All praise to thee, O Holy Spirit. Amen.

ANTHEM: Gloria in Excelsis. (To be read in unison, if not sung.)

Glory be to God on high,

and on earth peace, good will toward men.

We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee,

we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory.

O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty!

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord;

thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,

art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE ACT OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION: The minister, the people responding. Here let the people stand.

O God our Father, the fountain of all goodness, who hast been gracious to us through all the years of our life;

We give thee thanks for thy lovingkindness which hath filled our days and brought us to this time and place.

We praise thy holy name, O Lord.

Thou hast given us life and reason,

and set us in a world which is full of thy glory.

Thou hast comforted us with kindred and friends, and ministered to us through the hands and minds of our fellows.

We praise thy holy name, O Lord.

Thou hast set in our hearts a hunger for thee, and given us thy peace. Thou hast redeemed us and called us to a high calling in Christ Jesus. Thou hast given us a place in the fellowship of thy Spirit and the witness of thy Church.

We praise thy holy name, O Lord.

In darkness thou hast been our light, in adversity and temptation a rock of strength, in our joys the very spirit of joy, in our labors the all-sufficient reward.

We praise thy holy name, O Lord.

Thou hast remembered us when we have forgotten thee, followed us even when we fled from thee, met us with forgiveness when we turned back to thee. For all thy long-suffering and the abundance of thy grace,

We praise thy holy name, O Lord. Amen.

ANTHEM OR HYMN

THE ACT OF CONTRITION: The minister, the people responding

Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and watching our hearts, lest by self-deceit we shut ourselves out from his presence.

Let us pray

Here let all kneel or bow

O God our Father, who hast set forth the way of life for us in thy beloved Son; we confess with shame our slowness to learn of him, our reluctance to follow him.

Thou hast spoken and called, and we have not given heed.

Thy beauty hath shone forth, and we have been blind.

Thou hast stretched out thy hands to us through our fellows, and we have passed by.

We have taken great benefits with little thanks; we have been unworthy of thy changeless love.

Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us, we beseech thee, the poverty of our worship, the formality and selfishness of our prayers, our inconsistency and unbelief, our neglect of fellowship and of the means of grace, our hesitating witness for Christ, our false pretences, and our willful ignorance of thy ways.

Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us wherein we have wasted our time or misused our gifts.

Forgive us wherein we have excused our own wrongdoing or evaded our responsibilities.

Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good, that we have drawn back from the cross.

Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us that so little of thy love hath reached others through us, and that we have borne so lightly wrongs and sufferings that were not our own.

Forgive us wherein we have cherished the things that divide us from others,

and wherein we have made it hard for them to live with us,

and wherein we have been thoughtless in our judgments, hasty in condemnation, judging in forgiveness.

Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

If we have made no ventures in fellowship,

if we have kept in our heart a grievance against another,

if we have not sought reconciliation,

if we have been eager for the punishment of wrongdoers

and slow to seek their redemption,

Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Let each of us in silence make confession to God.

SILENT MEDITATION

Then let the minister and the people unite in saying:

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Amen. *(The people continue kneeling)*

THE WORDS OF ASSURANCE The minister shall rise and say:

This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

COVENANT HYMN Written especially for Methodism's Covenant Service No. 349 in old Methodist Hymnal, 507, in new Hymnal. Tune: St. Martin's; Alternate: ANZON, "O for a Thousand Tongues"

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Come, let us use the grace divine | 3. The covenant we this moment make |
| And all, with one accord, | Be ever kept in mind; |
| In a perpetual covenant join | We will no more our God forsake, |
| Ourselves to Christ the Lord; | Or cast His words behind. |
| 2. Give up ourselves, thine' Jesus' power, | We never will throw off His fear |
| His name to glorify; | Who bears our sinners' now; |
| And promise, in this sacred hour, | And if Thou art well pleased to hear, |
| For God to live and die. | Come down, and meet us now. |

—Charles Wesley

THE COVENANT Let the people remain standing

And now, beloved, let us bind ourselves with willing bonds to our covenant God, and take the yoke of Christ upon us.

This taking of his yoke upon us means we are heartily content that he appoint us our place and work, and that he alone be our reward. Christ has many services to be done.

Some are easy, others are difficult; some bring honor, others bring reproach; some are suitable to our natural inclinations and temporal interests, others are contrary to both.

In some we may please Christ and please ourselves; in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.

Yet the power to do all these things is assuredly given us in Christ, who strengtheneth us.

Therefore, let us make the covenant of God our own. Let us engage our heart to the Lord, and resolve in his strength never to go back.

Being thus prepared, let us now, in sincere dependence on his grace and trusting in his promises, yield ourselves anew to him.

Let us pray.

THE COVENANT PRAYER Here let the people kneel or bow

O Lord God, holy Father, who hast called us through Christ to be partakers in this gracious covenant; we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience, and engage ourselves, for love of thee, to seek and do thy perfect will. We are no longer our own, but thine.

Here let the minister and the people unite in saying:

I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

THE SURESH CORDA AND SACRIFICE Here let the people stand and join in singing or saying the responses

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up unto the Lord.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

It is meet and right so to do.

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high! Amen.

HYMN OF DEDICATION Here may follow the Holy Communion, beginning with the Prayer of Consecration; or here may follow a sermon

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Discipleship Resources
P.O. Box 840
Nashville, Tennessee 37202

M025M

9/19/1984

HYMNS

1. "O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing"

- 1. O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!
- 2. My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread thro' all the earth abroad
The honors of thy name.
- 3. Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease,
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life and health and peace.
- 4. He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.
- 5. He speaks, and listening to his voice,
New life the dead receive;
The mournful broken hearts rejoice;
The humble poor, believe.
- 6. Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Savior come;
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

- 3. Come, Almighty, to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return and never,
Nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.
- 4. Finish, then, thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee:
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise. Amen

283 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

- 1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art
Visit us with thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart.
- 2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit;
Let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

193 "Jesus, United by Thy Grace"

- 1. Jesus, united by thy grace
And each to each endeared,
With confidence we seek thy face,
And know our prayer is heard.
- 2. Help us to help each other, Lord
Each other's cross to bear;
Let each his friendly aid afford,
And feel his brother's care.
- 3. Up unto thee, our living Head,
Let us in all things grow,
Till thou hast made us free indeed
And spotless here below.
- 4. Touched by the lodestone of thy love,
Let all our hearts agree;
And ever toward each other move,
And ever move toward thee.
- 5. To thee, inseparately joined,
Let all our spirits cleave;
O may we all the loving mind
That was in thee receive.
- 6. This is the bond of perfectness,
Thy spotless charity;
O let us, still we pray, possess
The mind that was in thee. Amen.

The hymns being used in our service tonight were all written by Charles Wesley, brother of John Wesley and author of more than 5,000 hymns.

1784 AMERICAN OCTOBER METHODISM 1984



ANNA HOWARD SHAW at age 24 decided to become a minister, a vocation almost unheard of for women, and later a medical doctor. A devoted friend of Susan B. Anthony and an active supporter of the woman's suffrage movement, Dr. Shaw was noted for her powerful orations and keen sense of humor. In a speech she delivered in 1915 she said, "God had to make some women foolish to match the men." In her speeches she stressed the democracy of Christianity and equality of the sexes in church and society.

1880



American Methodism's oldest continuous congregation, **JOHN STREET CHURCH** was organized by **PHILIP EMBURY** and **BARBARA HECK** in New York City.

October 30, 1766



JOHN STEWART, born of French-Black-Indian stock, was converted to Methodism at a rural camp meeting. Believing that he had a call from God, Stewart made the first ongoing effort by Methodists to evangelize the American Indians. He loved to sing spirituals and used music to awaken considerable interest in Christianity among the Wyandot Indians.

1816



FRANCIS ASBURY began his itinerant ministry in America the day after his arrival in Philadelphia. Called "The Prophet of the Long Road," he traveled over 247,000 miles on horseback and preached over 17,000 sermons, mostly in rural America.

1771

1784 AMERICAN NOVEMBER METHODISM 1984



BISHOP ISAAC LANE, founder of Lane College, actively served as bishop of the CMDC for 41 years. He died in 1937 at the age of 103.

1882 _____

1813 _____

PHILIP OTTERBEIN died in Baltimore, November 17.



November 14,
1784



BARRATT'S CHAPEL, near Dover, Delaware, was built in 1780 by a society of Methodists organized by Freeborn Garrettson. Called the "Cradle of Methodism," it was here that Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke met to plan the Christmas Conference. After their meeting they sent Garrettson on horseback to call the conference together for a meeting at Lovely Lane Meeting House in Baltimore on December 24. Today Barratt's Chapel is a museum and national shrine of American Methodism.



Purchased by the Methodists in 1769, **ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH** is the oldest Methodist church building in continuous use in America.

1769 _____

1769 _____



NICHOLAS SNETHEN, known as "Francis Asbury's Silver Trumpet," was instrumental in the formation of what became the Methodist Protestant Church.

1784 AMERICAN DECEMBER METHODISM 1984

1875



HENRY BOEHM, an itinerant preacher of German descent, was 100 years old when he died.

In America, the traditional New Year's Eve watchnight service began at **ST. GEORGE'S** in 1770, with **JOSEPH PILMORE** as pastor.



1770

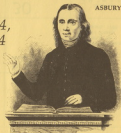


December 24,
1784

The roots of American Methodism can be traced to **LOVELY LANE CHAPEL** in Baltimore. It was here on Christmas Eve in 1784 that Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke along with Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey, and nearly sixty other preachers gathered for the purpose of organizing Methodism in America. The first action taken by the Christmas Conference was to establish the Methodist Episcopal Church. Asbury was ordained superintendent (bishop) and twelve ministers were ordained elders. When the conference adjourned on January 2 or 3, it had organized a church, elected its leadership, ordained a ministry, and accepted a liturgy.



ASBURY



WHATCOAT



COKE

The Bicentennial of American Methodism reflects back two hundred years to the Christmas Conference of 1784. This session of Methodist preachers met in Baltimore, Maryland, in the Lovely Lane Chapel during the Christmas season. By the time the session concluded a week later it had organized a church, including the selection of a name (Methodist Episcopal Church), the establishment of an ordained ministry with an elected episcopacy (bishops), the acceptance of a liturgy, and was fully prepared to be a distinct church in the new nation.

From the heritage of this conference a number of Methodist, or Wesleyan, denominations have sprung. Five of these have joined together in a Pan-Methodist Bicentennial Committee to observe the two-hundredth anniversary of organized Methodism in America with the theme "Proclaiming Grace and Freedom." These churches are the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the Free Methodist Church of North America, and The United Methodist Church. Major joint events will be observed during 1984, making a combined impact on our nation from a collective Methodist witness. In addition, each denomination has a national bicentennial committee to coordinate major emphases with its own constituency.

This calendar has been prepared to provide a look at those events and personalities that have shaped Methodism and that were important in the history of the five participating churches. In spite of each denomination's identification and personality, there is the common past that goes back to the Christmas Conference of 1784 and makes us all a people called Methodist.

Methodism began in America as Wesleyan converts immigrated from Great Britain to the New World during the eighteenth century. John Wesley felt that these persons needed the same

rigid discipline that his followers maintained in England. In 1769 he sent missionaries Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor to America. Two years later Francis Asbury and Richard Wright were commissioned and dispatched to the colonies; Thomas Rankin and George Shadford followed in 1773.

A conference was held in July 1773, the first of its kind in American Methodism. Guidelines were developed to help control the Wesleyan influences that had spread along the eastern seaboard. Annual conferences continued, but by 1777, with the exception of Francis Asbury, all of the British missionaries had returned to England.



During the War for Independence Asbury faced numerous attempts from local preachers to overthrow the Wesleyan influences due to their association with England. He not only prevented this and insured the survival of the unique qualities of the Wesleyan tradition, but he also laid the foundations that greatly facilitated the transition to an independent church.

Assisted by Thomas Coke and James Creighton, who like the Wesley brothers were presbyters of the Church of England, John Wesley ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as deacons on September 1, 1784. The next day these two were duly ordained as

elders, and Wesley also "set apart" Thomas Coke as superintendent for America. With instructions from Wesley, Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey set sail, arriving in New York on November 3.

On Sunday, November 14, Coke met Asbury for the first time at Barratt's Chapel in Delaware. Upon Asbury's insistence they agreed to call a conference of the itinerant preachers. Freeborn Garretson was dispatched to summon the preachers to meet at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore on December 24.

On December 17 Wesley's three emissaries, Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey, met with Asbury near Baltimore at Perry Hall, where they spent a week in planning for the forthcoming conference.

Approximately sixty preachers gathered on Christmas Eve, 1784. At this conference the Methodist Episcopal Church was formally organized. Although there have since been separations from the parent body, some of which have never been healed, each separated Methodist body looks back to this historic conference as an integral part of its own tradition.

Due to the limitations of space many church names have been abbreviated in the calendar. A key to the abbreviations is located in the back, along with acknowledgments. In a calendar of this scope it is impossible to include every significant date in the history of American Methodism. Where data conflicted, the source used was *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism* (The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974).

In addition to identifying events and personalities of historical interest, the calendar also contains the useful inclusion of numerous religious and secular holidays and observances.

John H. Ness

Compiler and Editor



The Emblem

The official emblem for The United Methodist Church combines the cross and a flame symbolizing the Holy Spirit. The emblem for United Methodist Women likewise includes the cross and flame.

The cross and flame are ancient symbols of the church dating back to the days of Christ and Pentecost. Each evokes images of sacrifice, witness and service. They remind us of both the opportunities and obligations of discipleship. Paul's ancient words to Timothy have both and contemporary meaning: ". . . I now remind you to stir into flame the gift of God which is within you." (II Timothy 1:6a-NEB)

As part of the emblem for United Methodist Women these symbols remind us of our PURPOSE, that of helping women to grow in their understanding of and willingness to participate in the mission of the church. These also remind us of our heritage, of women who persevered in the service for the church at home and abroad and in organizing women for mission service and support in many areas of need.

The shape of the emblem is likewise symbolic. It is fluid and free-flowing, suggesting change and mobility. An organized group of women, this has been our heritage. Often at the forefront of movements for change, at times supporting the projects initiated by others, but always aware of the times and striving to move with them rather than be overwhelmed by them.

The cross, the flame, and the individual with her abilities and opportunities all elements of a 20th century movement for United Methodist Women.