Western Jurisdiction and Pacific Northwest CAH's Welcome the HSUMC in Seattle

From the opening greetings to the closing worship of the 2010 HSUMC Annual Meeting the warm hospitality and excitement of David Walker and the Pacific Northwest and Western Jurisdiction CAH’s shone through. After Dr. Douglas Strong, Dean of the School of Theology at Seattle Pacific University, welcomed the group, we were treated to a Reader’s Theater, introducing the Rev. William Roberts (aka Lee Greenawalt), appointed by Jason Lee as Superintendent of the Oregon Mission and the Rev. James H. Wilbur (aka Jim Lewis) and his wife, Lucretia (aka Barbara Essen), who arrived in Washington in 1847 on the barque Whitton. Brother Wilbur became both missionary and agent to the Yakima Indians at Fort Sim-co-e, serving under appointment from Presidents Lincoln, Grant and Garfield. Peg McCormack then gave an enthusiastic introduction to Volume I of The Methodists in America, by Russell Richey, Kenneth Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt (due Sept. 2010). Volume II, which is primarily a sourcebook, was issued in 2000.

This book has been hailed by many as the definitive biography on Asbury. Wigger stated that he began his work on Asbury by asking the question, “What did the early leaders in Methodism, especially, Francis Asbury, look like to cause the movement to explode as it did in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries?” He described four characteristics which Asbury exhibited in answer to that question: 1) his piety, 2) his ability to connect with the common people, 3) his ability to use popular culture, and 4) his genius as an organizer.

Tuesday morning featured excellent presentations by Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison, Professor of Theology and Assistant Director of Women's Studies at SPU and Dr. Douglas Strong. Pope-Levison spoke on “African American Women Evangelists and Interracial Cooperation in the Progressive Era (1870-1920)” in which she focused on two women - the more well known Amanda Berry Smith and the lesser known Emma Ray. These two evangelists, both a part of the “working poor, with little formal education,” challenge the previous suppositions that it was primarily “aspiring” African American women who were involved in interracial cooperation. While Smith became a traveling evangelist who traveled throughout the world, Ray spent most of her years as an evangelist in the Seattle area. The two women actually met in Seattle in 1898.

Dr. Strong focused on Julia Foote, an AMEZ evangelist, who was converted in the 1830's and shortly thereafter felt called to exhort and testify. Despite the opposition she faced from her pastor, the Rev. Jehiel Beman, she continued to follow her call, preaching sanctification and illumination (wisdom). The apex of her career came in the 1890's when she helped to define the emerging holiness movement, which included a loathing of ecclesiastical power and denominational differences along with a belief in blessed harmony with God and each other. In 1894 Foote became the first woman in the AMEZ to be ordained a deacon and the second woman to be ordained an elder in 1900.

Our evening program consisted of two awards presented by the Historical Society. The Ministry of Memory Award was given to Milton Loyer, who has served as archivist for the Central Pennsylvania (Susquehanna as of July 1) Conference for 21 years and edits and writes for the Chronicle, the annual publication of the Conference CAH.

Rob Sledge announced that this year's Saddlebag Selection was American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists, by Dr. John Wigger, Associate Professor of History at the University of Missouri.
Letter from the President

Several folks asked about the Charles Wesley hymn that we used during the recent meeting of the Historical Society at Seattle Pacific University. According to the Duke University web site, it was first published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1749, Vol. 2, although an earlier version appears in the manuscript *Occasional Hymns*. I have heard it set to several tunes, including Habakuk and Coronation. For Seattle, I used Willoughby since that was the tune suggested in the 1856 *Methodist Hymnal*. I believe that Wesley's poem speaks to the contingency to the human condition and the comforts of Christian faith. I especially like the Trinitarian devotional emphasis of verse 7, the idea that God in fullness “conspire our rapture to complete.”

> Come on, my partners in distress,  
> My comrades through the wilderness,  
> Who still your bodies feel;  
> Awhile forget your griefs and fears,  
> And look beyond the vale of tears,  
> To that celestial hill.

> Beyond the bounds of time and space,  
> Look forward to that happy place,  
> The saints' secure abode;  
> On faith's strong eagle pinions rise,  
> And force your passage to the skies,  
> And scale the mount of God.

> See where the Lamb in glory stands,  
> Encircled with His radiant bands,  
> And join the angelic powers.  
> For all that height of glorious bliss,  
> Our everlasting portion is,  
> And all that Heaven is ours.

> Who suffer with our Master here,  
> We shall before His face appear  
> And by His side sit down;  
> To patient faith the prize is sure,  
> And all that to the end endure  
> The cross, shall wear the crown.

> Thrice blessèd, bliss-inspiring hope!  
> It lifts the fainting spirits up,  
> It brings to life the dead;  
> Our conflicts here shall soon be past,  
> And you and I ascend at last,  
> Triumphant with our Head.

> That great mysterious Deity  
> We soon with open face shall see;  
> The beatific sight  
> Shall fill the heavenly courts with praise,  
> And wide diffuse the golden blaze  
> Of everlasting light.

> The Father shining on His throne,  
> The glorious co-eternal Son,  
> The Spirit one and seven,  
> Conspire our rapture to complete;  
> And lo! we fall before His feet,  
> And silence heightens Heaven.

> In hope of that ecstatic pause,  
> Jesus, we now sustain Thy cross,  
> And at Thy footstool fall,  
> 'Till Thou our hidden life reveal,  
> 'Till Thou our ravished spirits fill,  
> And God is all in all.

Some have also asked about the great Hymnal walkout at the 1856 General Conference. I need to review the microfilm of the *Daily Christian Advocate* since there is no secondary source recording of the event to my knowledge. I will try to have the account for the next edition of the *Digest*.

Thank you to all who made the meeting in Seattle such a great experience. Thank you as well to the members of the Society Board of Directors, both those present and those unable to attend, for your support and faithfulness.

Grace and Peace,  
Daniel Swinson, President

P.S., If you happen to be in Borders or Barnes and Nobles, check out *North & South: The Official Magazine of the Civil War Society* (Vol. 12, #3). I wrote an editorial response to an earlier article on religious attitudes toward slavery, telling the Methodist story to counter the rather “preoccupied by Calvinism” view it related. The editor was kind, not only granting me six columns, but throwing in a portrait of John Wesley as well.
Later in the afternoon we traveled to the Seattle waterfront where we boarded the ferry for Blake Island and Tillicum village for a dinner of traditional Northwest Coast salmon, followed by a performance of “Dance on the Winds,” featuring Northwest Coast Native dances. The night was beautiful and warm and the ferry ride gave us beautiful views of Puget Sound and the Seattle skyline with Mt. Ranier visible in the distance.

On Wednesday morning we boarded the buses for a day-long tour of Methodist sites in the area. Opening worship was held at Des Moines UMC, led by retired Bishop Jack Tuell, the Rev. Leslie Ann Knight, a member of the PNWCAH and the Rev. Marian Kline. At age 99 Kline is one of just three women still living, who were the first to be received into conference membership in 1956.

Following lunch at the church, we traveled to Fort Nisqually Living Museum, a replica of the fort which originally was located near the Nisqually Mission where Chloe Clark and William H. Willson first served and were the first American couple to be married on Puget Sound. Then on to the University of Puget Sound, originally established by Dr. David LeSourd and the Rev. John F. DeVore. Here Richard Seiber gave us an overview of the remaining sites and we were introduced to the new book on the life of David LeSourd, *An Itinerant’s Career*, edited by Chuck Luce.

From there we traveled to Steilacoom and a monument containing a bell from the first Methodist Church built on that site and the first Protestant Church built north of the Columbia River by the Rev. John DeVore in 1853. And finally, to the Chloe Clark Elementary School to view the newly dedicated (on July 10) memorial to Chloe Clark Willson – the first American teacher in the Pacific Northwest.

Following dinner Barbara Essengave a moving portrayal of Chloe and her life as she left home and traveled on the Lusanne to make a new life for herself in the Pacific Northwest.

The conference ended on Thursday morning with a presentation by Dale Patterson, GCAH archivist, entitled “Intelligent and Good Looking! – Historical Displays.” Dale's notes can be found at the following link on the web: http://dl.dropbox.com/u/3785705/GCAH-Historical-Displays.pdf. Closing worship was led by HSUMC President, Dan Swinson, and GCAH General Secretary, Robert Williams, with Dan in the dress of a nineteenth century preacher, lining out a hymn as would have been done in those days. (See p. 2).

A summary of the annual meeting of the HSUMC will appear in the winter issue of *Historian's Digest*.

Many, many thanks to Jim Walker, Barb Essen, and the other members of the Pacific Northwest CAH and the members of the Western Jurisdiction CAH for a memorable meeting.

From the editor: When I wrote *Courageous Past, Bold Future The Journey Toward Full Clergy Rights for Women in the United Methodist Church*, I knew it was a “work in progress,” and that incorrect information and new names would continue to surface, such as the story of Della Waghiyi (page 4). If you would like a pdf. file with corrections and additions, including Della Waghiyi, please contact me.
First Native Alaskan Woman to Receive Full Clergy Rights Dies at Age 81*

In 2007, a year after the celebration of the 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women in the Methodist tradition, at age 78, Della Singipagphi Waghiiyi, a Native Yupik, became the first Alaskan Native woman to receive full clergy rights and be ordained elder in the United Methodist church and the first Native person ordained in the Alaska Missionary Conference. Generally clergy serving in the Alaska Conference are members of other conferences. The Book of Discipline, however, extends to missionary conferences, in the case of indigenous candidates, the same avenue of cultural discretion that is given to the central conferences.

Like many women and people of color before her, the decision to ordain Della Waghiyi did not come easily. Many clergy and one layperson opposed the ordination of Native peoples under disciplinary discretion, however, fearing that “it would set a precedent that would lead to accepting unqualified Native clergy in non-Native settings and financially obligate them to guaranteed appointments, minimum salaries and clergy benefits. Native people from across the country had attended the annual conference for Della’s ordination. They would remember the discussions that day as some of the most painful in their lives.”

On the night of her ordination, Della spontaneously translated the liturgy for ordination and Word and Table. It was the first time for many present to hear the words from a Native voice and to receive the Eucharist from Native hands. The Rev. Della Waghiyi died on July 4, 2010, at age 81.

*This story is taken from a UMNS Commentary by Ray Buckley on July 23, 2010; **File Photo by David Valera.