

# The Wesley Heritage Foundation

www.wesleyheritagefoundation.org



Bringing the Thought and Spirituality of the Wesleyan Revival to Latin Americans

PO Box 76 Henrico NC 27842 USA

WINTER 2008-2009

## NEWSLETTER

## President's Report:

Mark W. Wethington, Ph.D.

### “Gracia y Paz”

We enter these days into the most holy season of Advent during which time we prepare to receive the incredible abundance of God's grace. We gather around our Advent wreathes at home and within our respective houses of worship to hear during four Sundays the familiar stories of how God prepares Mary and Joseph, and Elizabeth and Zechariah, to receive the Gift which will change the sinful course of human history. Like all of God's gifts, this greatest Gift can only be received through faith, because trust in God's future is the only means by which we humans can fathom such an incredibly generous act. In the birth of this Gift, Jesus the Christ, the angels proclaim what this terribly fractured earth so desperately needs: “Peace on earth and goodwill to all humans.” God's generosity of grace in the infant Jesus is the unfailing promise of peace, a peace which God alone can give in the fullness of time. Gracia y paz: peace is the justice-fruit of God's gracious Love in Jesus Christ.

These past months have been filled with a flurry of activity in the work of the Wesley Heritage Foundation. Among our various projects in 2008, the upstart of a seminary in Lima, Peru has required the greatest amount of time, energy and resources. As President of the Foundation I have consulted with the Methodist Church of Peru in continuing to move this project toward fruition. I rejoice in saying that other church entities are now partners in this ministry. Both the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church here in the US are now participating as consultants, participating in Peru Theological Education Commission meetings, and offering financial support.

This past summer the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry awarded \$30,000 to the Foundation to assist in this project. Also in recent months, a retired pastor in Germany, Rev. Edzard Rohland, sent us \$20,000 for the seminary (a long-time friend and colleague of one of the Directors on our Foundation Board). To such an individual, Rev. Rohland, who has given so generously, we express our deepest gratitude for sharing our vision. This kind of gift is an expression of confidence and acute awareness of the great need for the further formation and development of programs of theological education in Latin America.

In October, while I was attending a meeting of the Peru Theological Education Commission, the General Board of Global Ministries in New York announced that they had approved a grant of \$104,000 for the seminary project (you may go to the link [http://gbgm-umc.org/global\\_news](http://gbgm-umc.org/global_news) and search: “Peru Seminary” to find the recent GBGM article announcing this news). These monies will be made available immediately and are part of the Frances O'Conner Fund, which was established some years ago in honor of my parents, Elbert and Lois Wethington. Additional monies will be made available from this fund in following years. I

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*South American Methodist Bishops and UMC Board representatives meet in Lima.*

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

#### The Foundation establishes The Mercy Endowment

The Board of Directors of the Wesley Heritage Foundation, at its July 2008 meeting in Durham, NC, unanimously approved the creation of The Mercy Endowment. Since the start of the Wesley Heritage Foundation in 1990 the primary focus has been upon the promotion of Wesleyan theology and spirituality among the Spanish-speaking world. This mission initiative brought about the translation of the Wesley Works into Spanish, *Obras de Wesley*. However, it has been the Foundation's full awareness throughout these years that at the very center of Wesleyan theology and spirituality is the emphasis upon works of compassion and justice. The Board of Directors sees the creation of The Mercy Endowment as a means of balancing the Wesleyan emphases upon mercy and piety. The Mercy Endowment will support initiatives among Latinos of the Wesleyan tradition who are working in such areas as health care, education, and children and youth programs among the poor and marginally oppressed in Latin America. The Foundation Board encourages both modest and major donations to this new endeavor. Future newsletters will keep supporters well informed about specific projects.

### OTHER HAPPENINGS:

#### *Obras de Wesley*

*Obras de Wesley* on CD (in 14 volumes); the translation, publication and distribution of Wesley's Words, in Spanish, continues to be sold and distributed on our website primarily through the use of PayPal. Requests come to us from both within the US as well as from around Latin America. This CD is a very user-friendly resource which allows persons to search Wesley's Works by words or phrases for purposes of study and research.

#### New DVD Released

Dr. Mark Wethington developed and released a new resource for Spanish-speaking persons, a DVD of one-hour in length, in 3 parts, entitled “La Historia del Metodismo y su presencia en America Latina” (The History of Methodism and its Presence in Latin America). This DVD is the most comprehensive resource available in Spanish which relates the history and theology of the



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personally rejoice in this decision by GBGM because these monies represent the grace-filled history of my parents who committed the vast majority of their lives to theological education. They established the Foundation themselves, out of their generosity, and were instrumental in our first major project: the translation, publication and distribution of Wesley's Works in Spanish (Obras de Wesley). They remain even today enthusiastic supporters and participants in the continuing work of the Foundation.

Out of these monies, and more which we prayerfully hope to receive, persons in Latin America are being supported to pursue higher education studies whereby they can become a part of the faculty of the Wesley Theological Seminary in Lima (the name given to this program). In addition, some of these monies are being placed in the Wesley Heritage Scholarship Program. This scholarship fund was established by the Foundation a year ago in order to support students who are preparing for Christian ministry in Latin America (a brochure about this fund is inserted within this newsletter). Other monies are being used to support the renovation of the Miramar Methodist Church in Lima into a dormitory for theological students who come from outside of the Lima area.

Perhaps one of the most exciting new developments in this project is the wider participation of Methodists from the more western sections of South America, and more specifically those who are Andean. At our last Theological Education Commission meeting in Lima (October 22-25, 2008) the Methodist bishops from Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru gathered with us; as well as a representative of the Methodist Church of Chile and representatives from the Methodist seminary in Brazil. Also at the table, as noted above, were representative from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Global Ministries; also, representatives from the Methodist Church of Korea.

This project has indeed become a shared vision and the Foundation asks for your supportive prayers and continued generosity as this vision more and more becomes a reality. Such ministries are surely signs of God's grace and peace among us.

Merry Christmas to all!

Mark

***I wish to help the work of The Wesley Heritage Foundation. Enclosed is my contribution of:***

\$50     \$100     \$500

Other \_\_\_\_\_



The Wesley Heritage Foundation is a non-profit 501c3 organization. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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May we send you updates on current news of the Wesley Heritage Foundation by e-mail?

If so, please give us your e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Wesleyan movement, a 1700's reformation movement out of the Church of England which eventuated in the Methodist Church. This resource is proving to be very popular for use in evangelizing/educating new members, for lay leader education, as well as for basic theological studies. This resource is available on the Foundation website and can be purchased with PayPal, or larger quantities can be ordered directly from the Foundation office.

### **Wesley's Sermons in Quechua**

This project is taking a little longer to complete than anticipated because of an illness of the editor we are using. Twenty-seven sermons of John Wesley have already been translated into Cusco Quechua, but the editing process is not quite complete. Conrad Phelps, a retired missionary with the Wycliffe Bible Translators, who has been directing this project and is serving as editor, hopes to complete his work by the spring 2009. Immediately thereafter the Foundation will publish this eagerly awaited resource. Dr. Mark Wethington will be teaching on the sermons of Wesley at the Cusco Methodist theological seminary extension program in early March 2009. This is the first time that these sermons will be released for public reading and study. We are very grateful to Mr. Phelps for his work on this project.

### **Republication of Obras de Wesley**

A couple years ago the Foundation entered into a five-year copyright agreement with CLIE, a Christian publishing house in Barcelona, Spain, to do a republication of Obras de Wesley. The original 14 volumes are being put into a one volume edition. We ourselves are eager to hear further word as to when this book will be released, but to date we do not know. It is our anticipation that this resource will be available by spring 2009.

### **NEW PROJECTS:**

#### **DVD on the Wesleyan Means of Grace**

An Annual Conference here in the US, in cooperation with the Office of Covenant Discipleship of the General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, has produced a DVD on the Wesleyan Means of Grace (Baptism, Holy Communion, prayer, devotions, fasting, conversation, etc.). The Foundation has already been in discussion with these entities in order to get the rights to reproduce this resource in Spanish. The centrality of the means of grace in our tradition is vital to the church's renewal and growth throughout the world. If you so desire, we welcome your designated contribution to this particular project.

#### **John Wesley as "Physician"**

The Bishop of the Methodist Church of Venezuela, also a physician, has contacted the Foundation and offered to do a translation into Spanish of Wesley's *Primitive Physic* (1747). This writing by John Wesley was both popular and controversial in 18th century medicine. However, it shows how closely Wesley and the early Methodists viewed the relationship between spiritual and physical well being. Wesley was a pragmatic thinker whose concern for spiritual health moved him into researching and offering treatments for physical ailments. Wesley's advice, which by some physicians of his day was considered medical "quackery", is viewed by some medical professionals today as both sound and worthy of consideration and use. We look forward to working on this project in 2009. If this project would be of particular interest to you, we welcome your contribution designated for this purpose.

**NEEDED: Work teams for renovation of a church in Lima into the Peru Seminary dormitory. Contact [jagerb@live.com](mailto:jagerb@live.com)**

Mail contributions to L. Elbert Wethington, Ph.D., Treasurer, 4309 Sunny Court, Durham, NC 27705 USA