

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 2011-2012

NEWSLETTER

A Word from the President:

Mark W. Wethington, Ph.D.

Advent/Christmas 2011 **“Angelic Dreams”**

I'm certain that it's too simple a thing to say that there are two kinds of dreamers: those who like dreaming and those who don't. Dream “experts” say that everyone dreams, it's just that some people are less aware of their dreams or don't remember them.

I'm in the category of those who could do without dreaming (and I'm speaking only about night dreaming at this point, during times when I would rather be sleeping soundly). This is my point, when I dream at night it seems to disrupt my sleep, and sometimes I even wake up tired and or even frustrated by a dream, even when I cannot recall it with much detail.

On the other hand, my wife, Beth, enjoys dreaming. She likes the creativity that dreams conjure up in her mind. For her, dreams do not seem to be a disruption of her sleeping. The same two categories tend to be descriptive of my parents as well: my mother prefers to sleep without dreaming and my father develops quite elaborate scenarios in his night dreams.

However, having said this, I'm a frequent dreamer by day, and especially enjoy doing so in the context of Christian community. I believe that such day dreaming is often a gift of God's vision for his people.

In the story of Jesus' birth in the Gospel of Matthew dreams are central and important. At a critical time, when Joseph is considering separating from Mary because he is confounded by her pregnancy, “an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream” (Mt. 1:20). It is this angelic dream that convinces Joseph to remain engaged to Mary and to move forward with marrying her. In his dream the angel comforts Joseph's fears by informing him that this is a very special pregnancy, one conceived by the Holy Spirit; and that this child will save God's people from their sins. The angelic dream guides Joseph into faithfulness to God.

The birth narrative in Matthew includes other dreams: the wise men who come to worship the new born Jesus and bring him gifts are warned in a dream to avoid going home by way of King Herod, a king who is paranoid because he hears there is a King being born who will compete with his lordship. The wise men's angelic dream guides them into faithfulness to God.

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Matching Gift Opportunity!

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that a very supportive family of WHF has offered a generous opportunity for contributors to match their giving. This family is willing to contribute up to \$50,000 as a match to contributions during the time of December 1, 2011 (Advent) and April 30, 2012 (Eastertide). Any contributions made during this time, and designated as a “match” (see donation box in this newsletter), will be counted toward fulfilling the “challenge”. Thank you for considering a generous donation toward this matching opportunity. Our deep gratitude to our donor family!

("Letter from the President" continued)

Then, Joseph has yet another angelic dream (Mt. 2:13) in which he is told to take Mary and Jesus quickly to Egypt in order to avoid Herod's wrath. This angelic dream likewise guides Joseph into faithfulness to God.

What are your angelic dreams, whether by day or by night? Some twenty-five years ago, my parents, with the participation of myself and others, started dreaming about how we might be involved in promoting the theology and spirituality of the Wesleyan tradition among Spanish speaking Christians. Part of the dreaming was precipitated by my parent's consideration of how they might be engaged in continued ministry and mission during their retirement years.

Guided, without question, by angelic dreams (a way God reveals his will in the world) much has been accomplished in the name of the Jesus who is born to usher in God's Kingdom of love and justice. From the massive labors of translating John and Charles Wesley's works into Spanish (Obras de Wesley), along with its publication and distribution, to in recent years our help in the development of the Seminario Teológico Wesleyano (STW) in Peru, the WHF has continued to be guided by God-inspired dreams.

While we have been involved in other projects along the way, the primary work of WHF continues to be the providing of consultation and support for theological education in Latin America, promoting "Wesleyan thought and spirituality". At this time, much energy is directed toward the new seminary in Peru, knowing that it will provide vast and sound education in the training of pastors throughout Latin America.

Now in its third year, the dreams for STW are becoming reality. Student enrollment is growing, an international faculty is being formed, and the seminary is looking for a building in Lima for permanent location. Work teams from US churches have gone to Peru to assist in dormitory renovations and to relate to students. A computer room/study hall was recently constructed by a North Carolina United Methodist Church work team. A digital library is in the making, a student scholarship fund has been created, and a full-time Dean for the seminary has now been in place for almost a year (a missionary, Dora Canales, appointed by the General Board of Global Ministries in New York). Dora is a member of the Methodist Church of Chile and was formerly on the faculty of the Comunidad Teológica Evangélica de Chile.

The dreams keep happening. And out of these dreams we keep seeking to be faithful to God's guidance.

The Board of Directors of WHF is grateful to all who support the work of the Foundation. With regard to the seminary in Peru, we encourage you to go to the website of STW (www.stw.org.pe) and click on the link to see a 15 minute video (in English). We hope you will enjoy the story.

Thank you for your past support and for continuing to be a part of this mission through your continued generosity. May this holy season bring us great joy in experiencing the generosity of God in the gift of Christ our Lord. Merry Christmas to all of you.

Mark



Welcome to a New Board Member

The Directors of WHF welcome the Reverend David Lowes Watson, Ph.D. to our Board. Dr. Watson is a retired Elder in the Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church. David and his wife, Gayle, also a retired Elder, live in Murfreesboro, TN. Dr. Watson is a native of England. He was educated at Oxford, Eden Theological Seminary, and Duke University (Ph.D.). During his career he has been on the staff of the Board of Discipleship of the UMC, was on the faculty of the Perkins School of Theology and of Wesley Theological Seminary, and has also taught at Vanderbilt Divinity School. Dr. Watson has written extensively in the fields of Methodist history and theology, evangelism, and congregational life and mission. He served on the Board of Directors of the Works of John Wesley. David says, "It is an honor to be asked to join the Board of the Wesley Heritage Foundation. Having seen the growth of this ministry, from the Obras de Wesley to the Seminario Teológico Wesleyano in Lima, Peru, I have been heartened by the missionary spirit of the Wethington family, and their hope for the Methodist witness in Latin America. It will be a privilege to join them as a colleague as well as a friend."

We are grateful for the talents which Dr. Watson will bring to WHF.

STW Video Available

A newly created video/DVD of Seminario Teológico Wesleyano is now available to promote this mission. You can view this video on the website of STW (www.stw.org.pe) by clicking on the video link or the Foundation is most willing to mail you a DVD (gratis) at your request. This DVD can be used by churches in all settings, such as women's and men's groups, Sunday School gatherings, mission meetings, etc. The video gives the history of the beginnings of STW, its ministry in the present time and how persons can support this mission.



Fuquay-Varina UMC team at work.

Guatemala Invitation

Mark and Beth Wethington will be in Guatemala during several weeks in January by invitation of Methodists there. Near Antigua there is a Methodist school (elementary to high school) which is interested in expanding their program to include a seminary. As is usually the case in Latin America, most seminary studies begin right after high school with the first couple years of the program including some basic college level general courses. If WHF becomes further engaged in this project it will be primarily for the purpose of consulting/assisting with a curriculum plan.



Work Teams to Peru

What happens when a declining Methodist church in Peru is offered the opportunity to partner in the re-forming of a Methodist Seminary? The church in Miramar has become the site of dormitory housing for provincial seminary students and consequently been re-energized by their presence, that of their chaplain, and the improvements made in the buildings. Work teams from the United States have participated over the last two years in renovating space into two dormitory rooms, a working kitchen, dining room, laundry and internet study room, all freshly painted and with floors laid in tile. The improvements in appearance and utility of Miramar have stimulated a renewed sense of "ownership", among both the congregants of the church and the resident students. As a result, members and students have engaged in clean-up efforts, and, with the vision of chaplain David Aguero, have re-created a program which invites street children to gather on Saturdays and Sundays for nutritional meals and religious instruction (see picture in this newsletter). Future plans include parent education and continued work within the surrounding community. This situation of ministry gives wonderful expression to the Wesleyan concept of the balancing of works of piety with works of mercy. This also presents an opportunity for work teams to assist in this re-creation. Plans include the development of another room as a lounge/conference room that can be used for study, meetings and community education. Another important issue is the need for increased security, which will involve raising the height of outer walls and installing security measures. Work teams are needed for work to be done here in Miramar as well as in the Seminary building at Primera Iglesia where reconstruction continues on classrooms, library space and offices.

God's work flows out of our limited earthly plans and enables the efforts of material recreation to cause a blossoming in a renewed sense of community and hope. Miramar church, the recipient of your support, both financial and in physical labor, spreads the generosity to the surrounding community.



Seminary student teaching children from the streets of Miramar.

Republication of Obras de Wesley

As many of you know, WHF began about 25 years ago with the translation, publication and distribution of the works of Wesley in Spanish (Obras de Wesley in 14 volumes). Recently WHF met with a Protestant publishing company in Peru to explore the possibility of reissuing Obras de Wesley in a new format (all the books have been distributed, and there is presently only the availability of Obras on CD). For example, we are considering a paperback volume (with a contemporary design) which includes 40 of Wesley's sermons, to be sold as a single book. If this is popular, we would then do a second volume of sermons, followed by a volume on Wesley's Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament and New Testament. We are also formatting Obras to be available as a download for Kindle and Nook and plan to make this available for download purchase by the end of this year.

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

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

Student Scholarship Opportunity

The cost of educating a student in STW seems relatively inexpensive compared to tuition in US universities. But in a country where the salary for an educated professional is less than \$700 a month, the per-semester cost of \$600 presents a challenge. The Wesley Heritage Foundation is offering the opportunity to contribute to the cost of educating a student (please see enclosed brochure). You can participate in the formation of well trained pastors in the Methodist Church of Peru by making a donation to the general seminary fund or by agreeing to "adopt" a student by supporting the annual cost of education. Cost for a year is \$1200, tuition and fees for commuting students who live in the Lima area, and, \$3500 for residential students, a sum which includes tuition, fees and housing. Thank you for considering this investment in the future of young people preparing for ministry in Latin America.



First Methodist Church, Lima, Planned Future Location for STW

Make contributions payable to WHF and mailed to Wesley Heritage Foundation, Treasurer, PO Box 76, Henrico, NC 27842