



President's Report:

Mark W. Wethington, Ph.D.

“Paz en la Tierra”

During this holy season of Advent I wish for all of you the “paz de Cristo.” It is my prayer that this season of the gift of God’s love incarnate in Jesus might bring to each of your lives blessed joy, and offer to the world the promise of peace on earth.

As I write this newsletter on the doorstep of Advent I am preparing to travel to Asia for about two weeks. Are there Latinos/as in Asia? I am sure there are, but I will likely not run into many. I am not going on this trip primarily on behalf of the Wesley Heritage Foundation, however there will be some opportunity to spread a word about the ministry of the Foundation. This trip is a more personal pilgrimage. I will be with my brother, Olin, who has been working for about a year and a half now in Asia, mostly in China. As all of you know, we siblings grew up in Asia where our parents, Elbert and Lois, served as Methodist missionaries to the Philippines. Therefore, we have always had close affinity with Asia. Among the siblings my brother has kept much closer ties with Asia than my sister and I. As many of you know, about twenty years ago I ventured off into Latin America and it is there that many of my “ties bind.” I will be enjoying part of Advent with my brother in China (including Hong Kong) as a pleasant interlude, but included in our trip will be a short sojourn to the Philippines to reminisce about some of our roots. Also, I have been invited to preach at the Central United Methodist Church in Manila on the third Sunday of Advent, December 16 (an opportunity to speak a word about the work of the Foundation).

As I write this article I have just heard late-breaking news of another bomb attack in Manila; this time it took place at the Philippine House of Representatives, killing a congressman and two others. Suspicion is that this act of violence was done by the Abu Sayyaf Muslim extremist group. The title of my sermon in Manila will be “The Advent of the Prince of Peace in a Time of Terror.” Indeed, we live in times of terror.

Terror, however, does not come only in the form of Muslim extremists. It also comes in the form of Christian extremists and Jewish extremists, and extremists of every religious or ideological persuasion. But often we fail to see ourselves as a possible source of terror! The beginnings of Advent call us to see and call us to repentance.

Terror comes through many other forms. It comes through acts of violence or the fear of violence in all kinds of human relationships. It also comes through natural disasters and the fear of natural disasters.

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Children of a mission of the El Tambo Methodist Church, Concepción, Peru

Peru Seminary Project Update

Our Foundation President met with the Theological Commission of the Methodist Church of Peru on this past October 17-18 and much was accomplished. The project proposal was finalized and there is now a three-year budget in place, a budget for 2008-2010. In the months ahead will be the challenging work of developing the financial support for a large project. There is the preliminary promise of some funding from the General Board of Global Ministries and application for this funding will be submitted during the month of December. This particular request to “kick-start” work in early 2008 will be for \$50,000 for administration/programming and \$50,000 for building renovation. Please note the brief article and enclosed brochure regarding one aspect of this project, namely, the scholarship program.

Scholarship Program Established for Peru Seminarians

The Foundation is establishing a scholarship program as part of its endeavors to assist the Methodist Church of Peru in the founding of a seminary project for theological education. Please read the enclosed brochure for a full explanation and understanding of this effort

Obras de Wesley CD

Obras de Wesley (in 14 volumes); the translation, publication and distribution of Wesley’s works into Spanish; and the first major project of the WHF; is now available on CD. It can be purchased on the Foundation web site using PayPal or in quantity and at a reduced price directly through the Foundation office. The Foundation has received a steady request for the CD version. We are in conversation with several church publishing houses about other marketing strategies. Also, the Foundation has sent out many of these CDs to leaders of the Methodist Church in Latin America as gifts.

Journey of Methodism DVD

The one hour DVD which tells in Spanish the story of Methodism’s journey to Latin America is almost

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I returned from a little over two weeks in Peru this past October 24, being there on behalf of the Foundation. My trip was varied, but it included a week of teaching at the San Pablo seminary in Huancayo, high in the Andes. Our small Methodist seminary program in Huancayo partners with San Pablo Andino Seminary to train persons for leadership in the church. I taught on "The Apostle Paul and His Letters." Included among the some 30 students were not only Methodists but also some Lutherans and Pentecostals. Half of the students were from the jungle (Selva) of Peru. We learned from one another and we were mutually blessed.

I then spent several days in Lima where I met with the Theological Commission for the Methodist Church of Peru (Iglesia Metodista del Peru – the IMP) to further our discussion of the partnership which we have formed with the IMP in the development of its program of theological education. We have completed the project proposal and have developed a three year budget. Now ahead is the grand task of raising the monies. Inserted in this newsletter is a new program of the Foundation, namely, a brochure that describes a scholarship program to support seminarians of the theological school in Peru. I hope you will read through this program very carefully and even consider ways that you might personally support this effort and/or encourage church groups to do so (Please note that any general donations to the WHF given through the appeal in this newsletter are for the general work of the Foundation. Support for the scholarship program is a separate endeavor and can be given by using the pledge form which is part of the scholarship brochure).

During the concluding days in Peru I had the opportunity to visit Ica and Chincha, south of Lima, where on this past August 15 a devastating 7.9 earthquake tore this area apart. I was invited to lead three seminars on "The Sovereignty of God in the Midst of Natural Disasters." In addition to hundreds of deaths and the destruction of many buildings, Methodist churches and parsonages in these areas were also heavily damaged or completely destroyed, along with homes of church members. Many people are living in tents donated by the OAS, and others in make-shift thatch/wooden shelters. It will take the Methodist churches in these areas many years to recover. Terror strikes the lives of these people whenever another tremor is felt.

I am reminded once again why our Foundation is engaged in the primary work of theological education in Latin America. Be it the fear of terrorism that grips a world very broken by misunderstanding and hatred, or be it the terror that strikes with natural disasters, or be it the unrecognized terror of self-deception, the church everywhere is still being called by God to proclaim the promise of the Prince of Peace whose advent we await in this time. In places where theological education and spiritual formation are limited, so too is the capacity to witness to God's Word incarnate and the hope and promise it gives to persons caught in the grip of terror. Wesleyan theology and spirituality offers the power of the Gospel that allows persons to understand the presence and work of God in the world and it shapes leaders to "walk out" that understanding with confidence and strength; always by the grace of God and through the gift of God's empowering Spirit. May the Foundation continue to be a source of the Gospel's hope and promise (the picture of the children in this newsletter is my "poster children" for this Christmas – but more so, a sign of that hope and promise).

Merry Christmas to all!
Mark

complete. The DVD is inclusive of the history of John and Charles Wesley and the Wesleyan Revival in England, and then traces the movement to the United States and into Latin America. It contains much theological content along with the historical. It will be very useful for Hispanic congregations and leaders as a teaching and evangelism tool. We are grateful to Jonathan Scott for the hard, time-consuming work he has put into this project. The Rev. Luis Reinoso, a Board member of the Foundation, is the primary narrator. Our gratitude is given to him.

Wesley's Sermons in Quechua

Conrad Phelps, a retired missionary with the Wycliffe Bible Translators and residing in Cuzco, Peru, has been so very gracious in supervising the translation of 27 of Wesley's sermons into Quechua for churches of the highlands of Peru and Bolivia. Conrad participated in the late 1970's in the translation of the New Testament into Quechua. We are extremely grateful for his commitment to this project. The Foundation has received grant monies to cover the cost of translation as well as for publication. We have been told that translation, typing and proofreading will be complete by the end of December 2007. We will hope for publication by February 2008, followed by distribution.

Republication of Obras de Wesley

One is invited to "google" the web site for CLIE to see that it is their hope to have Obras de Wesley in one volume ready for sale in 2008. The Foundation entered into a five-year copyright agreement with CLIE, a Christian publishing house in Spain, to do this republication of Obras de Wesley. We are eager to see this come to reality. It will further make available Wesleyan thought and spirituality for Spanish-speakers.

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

- \$50 \$100 \$500
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The Wesley Heritage Foundation is a non-profit 501c3 organization. All contributions are tax-deductible.

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