

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

History Series: The History of John Wesley and the Methodist Church

Compiled by John H. Evans

Sabbath Nov. 26, 2006

PART 9: WESLEY'S JOURNAL (*CONTINUED, SECTION 3*)

Wed. June 30, 1736 - I hoped a door was opened for going up immediately to the Choctaws, the least polished, that is, the least corrupted of all the Indian nations. But upon my informing Mr. Oglethorpe of our design, he objected, not only the danger of being intercepted or killed by the French there; but much more, the inexpediency of leaving Savannah destitute of a minister. These objections I related to our brethren in the evening, who were all of the opinion, "We ought not to go yet."

Thur. July 1, 1736 - The Indians had an audience; and another on Saturday when Chicali, their head man dined with Mr. Oglethorpe. After dinner I asked the grey-headed old man what he thought he was made for. He said, "He that is above knows what He made us for. We know nothing. We are in the dark. But white men know much. And yet white men build great houses, as if they were to live forever. But white men cannot live forever. In a little time white men will be dust as I." I told him, "If red men will learn the Good Book, they may know as much as white men. But neither we nor you can understand that Book unless we are taught by Him that is above: and He will not teach unless you avoid what you already know is not good." He answered, "I believe that. He will not teach us while our hearts are not white. And our men do what they know is not good: they kill their own children. And our women do what they know is not good: they kill the child before it is born. Therefore He that is above does not send us Good Book." [Note: I think this is a remarkable statement testifying to the universality of a moral code. The laws are written on the hearts of all people. To become a tyrant this must be killed and one's devotion to the self and pride grow to enormous proportions.]

Mon. Aug. 2, 1736 - [Note: This is an excerpt from the description of a trip to Charleston and back and then on to Frederica. While this journal entry is delightful and gives some feeling for the way of travel then, it is too long to include all of it here. I include only the last part of the trip.] I stayed only a day at Savannah; leaving Mr. Ingham and Delamotte there, set out on Tuesday morning for Frederica. In walking to Thunderbolt I was in so heavy a shower that my clothes were as wet as if I had gone through the river. On which occasion I cannot but observe that vulgar error concerning the hurtfulness of rains and dews of America. I have been thoroughly wet with these rains more than once, yet without harm at all. And I have lain many nights in the open air and received all the dews that fell; and so, I believe, might anyone, if his constitution was not impaired by the softness of a genteel education.

Tue. Nov. 23, 1736 - Mr. Oglethorpe sailed for England leaving Mr. Ingham, Mr. Delmotte and me at Savannah, but with less prospect of preaching to the Indians than the first day we set foot in America. Whenever I mentioned it, it was immediately replied, "You cannot leave Savannah without a minister."

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[Note: There follows a debate wherein Oglethorpe's contention is that Wesley was appointed minister to Savannah. Wesley maintains it was without his agreement or desire and he thought he had made it clear that his main purpose was a mission to the Indians. This was a continual source of friction that factored into his leaving Georgia and defending his doing so to the trustees on return to England, as we will note later. He and Ingham and Delmotte did stay in Savannah at the behest of some people and because, in Wesley's words, "the time was not come" to preach to the Indians, as is shown in his entry, below. In this journal entry he also quotes what the Indians say to him.]

The time was not come to preach the gospel of peace to the heathens, all their nation being in ferment; and Paustoobee and Mingo Mattaw having told me, in terms, in my own house, "Now our enemies are all about us, and we can do nothing but fight; but if the beloved ones should ever give us to be at peace, then we would hear the great Word."

Dec. 23, 1736 – [Note: This again is an excerpt to show Wesley's hardiness. Wesley, Delmotte and a guide set out to walk to Cowpen, but they became lost. Even so they decided to press on with this adventure!] In an hour or so we came to a cypress swamp which lay directly across our way; there was not time to walk back to Savannah before night, so we walked through it, the water being about breast high.

By the time we had gone a mile beyond it we were all out of the path; and it being now past sunset, we sat down, intending to make a fire and stay there till morning; but finding our tinder all wet, we were at a stand. I advised to walk on still; but my companions, being faint and weary, were for lying down, which we accordingly did about six o'clock; the ground was as wet as our clothes, which, it being a sharp frost were soon frozen together; however, I slept till six in the morning. [Can you believe it!] There fell a heavy dew that night which covered us over as white as snow. Within an hour after sunrise we came to a plantation and in the evening, without any hurt, to Savannah.