

## CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

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Sabbath Jan. 7, 2007

### PART 13: SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

As was stated previously, Susanna and Samuel Wesley had nineteen children; but only ten survived to adulthood. There were three boys: Samuel the oldest, John, and Charles who was five years younger than John. Seven girls survived. They were Emilia, Susanna, Mary, Mehetabel, Anne, Martha and Kezia. They all had very difficult lives and as a result were not able to be a part of the Methodist movement. Their story is told in the book, *The Story of John Wesley's Sisters, or Seven Sisters in Search of Love* by Frederick E. Maser.

We have arrived at early May of 1738. John especially has been in inner turmoil seeking a deeper more personal faith. His brother Charles has been criticizing him throughout this time urging him to adhere to the standard way. Acting as a mid-wife to Charles' and John's spiritual rebirth is the Moravian Peter Bohler. Soon after arriving in England from Germany on February 7, Bohler and two other Moravians founded a religious society on Fetter Lane in London. John joined with them, preached there and had many discussions and prayer times there. The Fetter Lane Society is famous in Methodist history and is included on a tour of Methodist historic sites. As we will see, Wesley eventually broke with the Moravians but we know he corresponded with Peter Bohler as late as 1775.

Recall that on Monday, May 1 John had returned to London due to his brother's illness. The society met in Fetter Lane and as a result of a conversation with Peter Bohler on Wednesday, May 3, Charles' eyes were opened "so that he saw clearly what was the nature of that one true living faith, whereby alone, through grace, we are saved." On Thursday Peter Bohler departed London to embark for Carolina. Wesley resumed his itinerant preaching. From now on we read the events in Wesley's own words from his Journal.

**Sunday. May 7, 1738** - I preached at St. Lawrence's in the morning, and afterward at St. Katherine Cree's church. I was enabled to speak strong words at both; and was therefore the less surprised at being informed that I was not to preach any more at either of these churches.

**Sunday. May 14** - I preached in the morning at St. Anne's, Aldersgate; and in the afternoon at the Savoy chapel, free salvation by faith in the blood of Christ. I was quickly apprised that at St Ann's I am to preach no more.

**Friday. May 19** - My brother had a second return of his pleurisy. A few of us spent Saturday night in prayer. The next day, being Whitsunday, after hearing Dr. Heylyn preach a truly Christian sermon (on "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost"). "And so", said he, "may all of you be, if it is not your own fault." and assisting him at the Holy Communion (his curate being taken ill in the church), I received the surprising news that my brother had found rest to his soul. His bodily strength returned also from that hour. "Who is so great a God as our God".

I preached at St John's, Wapping at three and at St. Bennett's, Paul's Wharf in the evening. At these churches likewise, I am to preach no more. At St. Antholin's I preached on Thursday following. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday I had continual sorrow and heaviness in my heart.

On Wednesday, May 24 comes the relief. Be here next week for this historic moment!