METHODISM IN
ENGLAND
AMERICA
AND TRINITY EAST

BY
THELMA SCOTT BRYANT
METHODISM IN ENGLAND,
IN AMERICA,
AND AT TRINITY EAST

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I was late starting my writing career because during my early years I was assisting my husband, the late Dr. Iris B. Bryant, with his writing and research. My second narrative, "Our Journey Through Houston and U.S. History" was published in 1996.

During the writing of this manuscript, I benefited from the helpful suggestions and comments of my pastor, Reverend Robert E. Jones Felder and Trinity East secretary, Norma Bryant, and I owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation to Janie Potney for assisting me in typing this manuscript.

Now that I am still alert and aware, I present important historical facts about the Methodist Church. Too few know our history. The sale profits from this book will go to the treasury of the United Methodist Women.

This booklet represents an attempt on the part of the author to acquaint members of Trinity East with a portion of their history.

Please forgive if there are names of persons omitted who should have been included or if certain statements are incorrect. If reported, I will make corrections in the second edition.

Thelma Scott Bryant
Church Historian, 1998
Comments by the Author

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Methodism has a unique history. It had its beginning in England, but since coming to America, it has had a tremendous impact throughout the United States. It was established here in 1784, just eight years after the Thirteen Colonies had won their independence from Great Britain.

The Methodist Church had started in England, when John Wesley broke away from the Anglican Church, and set forth rules and laws of an independent church. The son of an English preacher, John Wesley (1703-1791) was born in Epworth, Lincolnshire and graduated from Oxford University in 1724. He and his older brother, Charles Wesley, joined with friends in college to organize Methodist societies. It was not the aim to establish a new church, but rather, they hoped that Christians of all classes could be united for religious development.

The methods pursued by these students gained them the nickname "Methodists." Outsiders referred to them as "The Holy Club." Later, the term Methodist was applied to the church founded by John Wesley.

Following graduation from college, John Wesley entered the ministry and was ordained as a priest. He began to organize Methodist Societies. The historical statement of the Methodist Discipline expresses, "John Wesley discovered like a second Paul, that it is not by rules and laws, nor by our own effort at self-perfection, but by faith in God's mercy, as it comes to us in Christ that man may enter life and peace. The gospel Wesley found for himself, he proclaimed to others.” Wesley was in a prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street, London when he was overcome by the Holy Spirit and exclaimed how he felt strangely warm.
Methodism Comes to America

Some Methodists were among those early Colonists who made that hazardous voyage from England to the New World. They organized Methodist Societies in Virginia, Maryland, New York and Pennsylvania. To strengthen the work of the Colonies, John Wesley sent to America several preachers, including Francis Asbury, who was the most important figure in early American Methodism. His energetic devotion to the principles of Wesley and theology organization was unmatched by any individual.

The first gathering of lay preachers was in Philadelphia in 1773. They pledged allegiance to Wesley’s leadership. They emphasized strong discipline among the Methodist Societies and preachers. A few years after the Revolution was ended in 1776, the Methodist Societies began growing to such a point that Wesley sent Thomas Coke to America to superintend the work with Asbury. He brought with him a Prayer Book titled “The Sunday Service of the Methodists of North America.” He was accompanied by other ordained preachers who helped to organize the Methodist Societies in America to become an independent church.

According to the Historical Statement of the Methodist Discipline, “in December 1784, the famous Christmas Conference of preachers was held in Baltimore, Maryland at Lovely Lane Chapel to chart the future course of the movement in America. Most of the American preachers attended, probably including two African Americans, Harry Hoosier and Richard Allen. It was at this gathering that the movement became organized as the Methodist Episcopal Church of America.” Methodism spread westward as the United States expanded.
Lay members and preachers were expected to be seriously committed to the faith. Preachers were not only to possess a sound conversion and divine calling, but were also to demonstrate the gifts and skills requisite for an effective ministry. The deep commitment of the general membership was exhibited in their willingness to adhere to the spiritual disciplines and standards of conduct outlined in the General Rules adopted at the Christmas Conference.

**Divisions in the Methodism Body**

At various times, there have been divisions in the Methodist body. The first separation came over Lay Rights in 1830, and this group pulled away and called themselves the Methodist Protestant Church. The second separation came in 1844 when the question of slavery became the issue. This group took the name the Methodist Episcopal Church South. That left the Methodist Episcopal Church (of the North). Most Black Congregations stayed with the latter, as the Methodist Episcopal Church South did not want them. In fact, Methodist Episcopal South helped to organize the CME Church for Blacks in the South. At first, CME stood for Colored Methodist Episcopal, but was later changed to Christian Methodist Episcopal.

**Reunion of the Three Branches of Methodism**

In 1935, these three predominantly white branches of Methodism reunited. The price exacted by the Southern Methodist group, for rejoining the two liberal groups, was the formation of the All-Black Central Jurisdiction. Black leadership strongly opposed this arrangement, but it was created over their objection at a meeting held in St. Louis, Missouri at the Union Memorial Methodist Church when E.W. Kelly was pastor.
The Central Jurisdiction

The Central Jurisdiction was unique because, unlike the other five geographical Jurisdictions that were created for administrative and programmatic purposes, it was the only Jurisdiction defined by race. It could elect its own bishops, make rules and regulations for the Jurisdiction's work, but would only meet with the other five Jurisdictions at the General Conference which meets every four years.

George Daniels has written a book, "Turning Corners" in which he explains the contempt which the Central Jurisdiction leadership demonstrated for its new status, by publicly resolving every effort to eliminate the Central Jurisdiction, and eventually "rejoin the large church as an equal." This author further states, "These efforts included public demonstrations, harsh criticism from the pulpit, sit-ins, heated and bitter debates in scholarly moral and spiritual appeals to conscience. These efforts paid off in 1967, twenty-seven years later, when the Central Jurisdiction held its final Conference in Nashville, Tennessee as a segregated structure within the denomination."

The Central Jurisdiction is Abolished

Most young people know nothing about the Central Jurisdiction. This was a segregated church within a church -- an organization created by the Methodist Episcopal Church to handle the Black problem. The Central Jurisdiction was just another abstract placed unfairly in our path by society -- a detour on our road to achievement. It gives us a sense of pride to know that we did overcome in spite of such roadblocks.
Texas Gulf Conference Merged Into Texas Conference

In 1964, there began an effort to bring about integration in the Methodist Church, just as the entire country was undergoing changes, following the successes of Martin Luther King, Jr. on breaking down segregation barriers. By 1970 integration of the United Methodist Church was perfected. However, some intervening steps had to be taken before 1970. In preparing for the merger, a change of names was necessary to avoid confusion. The Black Texas Conference of the Central Jurisdiction had been called the Texas Conference. The same name was applied to the Texas Conference of the South Central Jurisdiction. It was suggested that, for one year, the Black Texas Conference would be called the Gulf Conference. So in 1969, the historic Uniting Conference was held in Houston, Texas at Trinity East United Methodist Church, when Rev. L.V. Winfield was pastor, Robert E. Hayes, Sr. was District Superintendent and Dr. Kenneth P. Copeland was the presiding Bishop.

The four District Superintendents of the Gulf Conference were:

- Charles K. Hayes -- Beaumont District
- Robert E. Hayes, Sr. -- Houston District
- A.D. Phelps -- Navasota District
- W.B. Randolph -- Marshall District

The transition was made smoothly, after some soul searching and deep consideration. The Gulf Coast Conference had 18,000 members. The Texas Conference had 250,000 members. There were fears expressed as to whether the minority should join with the majority. This was a crucial choice to be made. Finally, they made the choice to unite. Rev. C.K. Hayes led them in expressing their agreement in this historic and significant statement: "We will walk together in the spirit, and..."
God himself will be our leader.” Thus, the Central Jurisdiction was abolished and we in Texas were no longer known as the Texas Gulf Coast Conference, but had become integrated into the Texas Conference of the South Central Jurisdiction.

8. The Methodist Church Becomes United Methodist Church

In 1968 at the General Conference in Dallas, Texas another change had come about. There was a merger of the Methodist Church with a denomination known as the Evangelical United Brethren and thus, the United Methodist Church came into being, replacing the old name Methodist Episcopal Church (M.E. Church).

9. Black Methodists For Church Renewal

The year 1968 is viewed as a turning point for Black Methodists. Grant S. Shockley describes it as a “pivotal year” for Methodism regarding inclusiveness. This was the year the new church was seeking ways to promote inclusiveness and to monitor the church’s process toward inclusiveness.

It was also the year that 250 Black Methodists gathered in Cincinnati, Ohio that were concerned about developing what they called “a life of power and unity in the United Methodist Church.” When they adjourned they had organized “Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR).

Today it is an effective minority caucus which “keeps the church sensitive to the needs of a genuinely inclusive and relevant church.”

To be the “inclusive” and “relevant” church as defined by the Black Methodists “all local churches administrative structures, program agencies and institutions of the United Methodists and of the world have to open their doors wider than they had in the past, in providing leadership
opportunities for Blacks. This action applied not only that Blacks would have greater representation on each Board of Directors that guided and set policy for the agencies and institutions, but also that more Black clergy and lay persons, men and women would be hired on the executive staffs.” Because of these demands, there has been a dramatic increase of Blacks serving as executives.

10. Black Methodists Have Separation

Just as the Methodist Church body had its divisions, so the Black Methodists have had their various separations:

1. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) formed a separation in 1789 when a group, led by Richard Allen, walked out of St. George’s Church in Philadelphia, Pa., where they resented the segregation seating. Their organization was not perfected until 1816.

2. The AME Zion formed another church led by Peter Williams and organized in 1828.

3. The CME Church (Colored Methodist Episcopal) was formed in 1870.

These three groups of Methodists have no connection with the United Methodist Church. There have been attempts to bring all three Black Methodists back together, but only failure has resulted. Hopefully, at the 2000 General Conference the delegates will approve these three denominations becoming a part of the United Methodist Church.

11. The General Conference and Five Jurisdictions

There is a General Conference of all the United Methodist churches held every four years, which has the power to make all the rules and laws to govern the conferences. Each conference sends to the General Conference delegates -- ministers and lay members (equal in number). Bishops are
elected at each Jurisdictional Conference that is held in the summer following the General Conference that is held in the spring. There are five Jurisdictions in the United States (North Central, Northeastern, Western, South Central and Southeastern).

Each Bishop presides over a conference, and each conference is composed of a certain number of districts. A District Superintendent presides over each district.

The Newly Organized Texas Conference

Our Church, Trinity East, is grouped with other churches in the South District of Houston. There are five Districts in Houston: East, North, Northwest, South and Southwest. These five Districts and seven other Districts make up the Texas Conference. Other Districts in the Texas Conference are: Beaumont, Bryan, Longview, Nacogdoches, Palestine, Texarkana and Tyler. This Texas Conference represents only a part of the geographical State of Texas (the Eastern part). The other conferences in Texas are: North Texas Conference, Northwest Texas Conference, Central Texas Conference, Southwest Texas Conference and Rio Grande Conference.

Our Texas Conference is presided over by Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn. There has been an arrangement whereby one of the five Districts of Houston should be presided over by a Black District Superintendent. During the merger, it was agreed that one of the 12 Districts would be presided over by a Black District Superintendent.

The first Black Superintendent appointed was Rev. W.B. Randolph to serve over the Houston Northwest District after integration. When his term expired, Rev. Joseph F. Cox was assigned to preside over the Houston South District. When his term was over Dr. Lewis Jackson presided over the South Houston District. The next minister to serve as the one Black Superintendent is presently
Dr. Robert E. Hayes Jr., and he presides over the Southwest Houston District. Trinity is one of the 38 churches in the Texas Conference in the South Houston District and presently (1998), it is presided over by Rev. Billy T. Williamson.

13.  

**History of Slaves as Methodists**

We will now take a quick overview of Methodism in Texas in the beginning. Texas joined the Union in 1836, after having won independence from Mexico. At that time, there were several religious denominations worshiping in various small communities. However, history records that the first brick church to be built in Texas was First Methodist Church in 1843, on the corner of Texas and Travis (where the Chronicle Building now stands). It later relocated to Main and Clay.

The Methodist slave owners allowed their slaves to sit in the balcony and listen in on certain services. It is recorded that at one time there were 32 slave families in the balcony. As the number increased, they decided to build a small wood structure on the back of their property (facing Milam) in 1851. When the Civil War was over in 1865, this Slave Mission was given to the ex-slaves to be moved on property which they would buy.

14.  

**Trinity -- First Black Church in Houston**

Several lots were acquired on Bell and Travis, and this church was given the name Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church (M.E. Church). Rev. Elias Dibble (often referred to as Father Dibble), who had been preaching at the Slave Mission became the pastor. Thus, Trinity became the first black church in Houston.
Trinity built a larger church in 1889, and it remained until it was destroyed by the 1900 hurricane. Then a new two-story wood frame church was built. It was set afire by arsonists. The decision was then made to sell the downtown property and buy a new site on Holman and Live Oak. Trinity entered the new building in 1951.

When Trinity was still located downtown, it was looked upon as the Mother Church from which several other M.E. Churches sprang like branches from a giant oak: Mt. Vernon, St. James, St. Mark, Mallalieu, Asbury, Boynton and Sloan, all in the 1800's.

Establishment of Trinity East

In 1908, Trinity East was established as a mission of Trinity. First, there was a Sunday School unit that met for about two years in a Lodge Hall on Holman near Hutchins. This group was led by William M. Young, who is considered the founder of our church. The founders in this Sunday School unit were:

- William Young and wife Leonora and children, Vivian, Jessie, Bessie and Ruby (later Mrs. Walls); Mrs. Savannah Townsend and daughter; Willie, and Charles Tilly and wife Celeste; Mrs. Matilda Bynum and daughter, Louise; and Mrs. Malcom Thomas and daughter, Willie Mae (later Mrs. Joe Francisco, Jr.).

These dedicated individuals contacted other Third Ward families, who found it inconvenient to attend the downtown church, and when a sufficient number had agreed to join them, they petitioned for a church to be established. The first church was built on Dowling and McGowen. The Bishop sent Rev. Sidney W. Johnson to lead the congregation.
Progress Under 24 Ministers

When the 1915 hurricane destroyed the Dowling Street Mission, the trustees decided to rebuild on McGowen and St. Charles. In the beginning, this little struggling congregation could not adequately support a pastor, so the first ten years saw many ministers come and go (eight pastors in ten years).

Finally Bishop Robert E. Jones, our first Black Bishop, appointed to the charge in 1919 a dedicated minister, Dr. Julius S. Scott Sr. Fresh out of Gammon Seminary, he was full of enthusiasm and energy. The church experienced such phenomenal growth that a new facility was needed. Money was raised for the first brick structure (now the Fellowship Hall and Sunday School rooms). In 1925 Dr. J.S. Scott, Sr. was elevated to District Superintendent and Rev. G.E.D. Belcher was serving as pastor when the church was completed.

There have been several name changes for our church. When the first church was built, the site was Dowling and McGowan (where Jolivette’s service station now stands (1998). When we moved to McGowen and St. Charles, the name Dowling Street Mission was inappropriate, so it was called Calvary Mission. The name was later changed to Trinity East. This name change was made because of a plan which authorities had in mind to merge these two churches some day, when Trinity would probably give up its downtown location. This plan never worked out, so now we are North of Trinity’s present location instead of East of its original location. Often our Church was referred to as “Little Trinity” while the Mother Church was called “Big Trinity.”
Ministers who have served at Trinity East are as follows:

Reverend Sidney W. Johnson (1908)
Reverend Solomon Frazier (1912)
Reverend Gabriel Felder (1913)
Reverend E.W. Kelly (later a Bishop) (1914)
Reverend L.V. Harrison (1915-1916)
Reverend W.L. Turner (1917)
Reverend A.W. Fortson (1918)
Reverend Lucius Jordan (1918-1919)
Reverend Julius S. Scott, Sr. (1919-1924)
Reverend G.E.D. Belcher (1925-1926)
Reverend Alonzo Harley, Sr. (1926-1928)
Reverend A. Wade Carr (1928-1929)
Reverend L.A. Greenwood (1929-1931)
Reverend J.S. Scott, Sr. (a second time) (1931-1944)
Reverend L.B. Felder, Sr. (build the Sanctuary) (1945-1958)
Reverend F.W. Logan (1958-1963)
Reverend L.V. Winfield (1964-1972)
Reverend W.B. Randolph (built Memorial Annex) (1972-1976)
Reverend Charles K. Hayes (1976-1978)
Reverend C.N. Bonner (1979-1983)
Reverend Donald Mosely (1993-1995)
Reverend Kenneth B. Green (2000-Present)

After we entered our first permanent structure in 1925, the Great Depression came upon us following the economic crash of 1929. In the 1930s we had difficulty meeting our mortgage payments, and Dr. J.S. Scott, Sr. was sent back to Trinity East (1931-1944), and during his pastorate of 15 years, the mortgage was paid off.

The Reverend L.B. Felder was appointed to the charge (1945-1958) and he immediately made plans to add the new Sanctuary, which was entered in 1950.

When Reverend W.B. Randolph was appointed to Trinity East (1971), he began planning to expand the building program by adding the Memorial Annex erected in 1975. This included the
gymnasium, a new kitchen and additional Sunday School rooms. We have later acquired surrounding property for parking and future building.

In 1991, a storm (tornado) came through our area and ripped off the roof of the Sanctuary, and we had to have Sunday services in the gymnasium and at T.S.U. Repair was fully completed and we re-entered the renovated-Sanctuary in 1993.

Reverend Robert E. Jones Felder was assigned in 1996 to Trinity East. Our church is greatly involved in community ministries as the Shalom Zone which provides health care for members and surrounding community.

As we continue our Community Ministries, our program calls for distributing food to the needy and giving assistance with utility bills.

As we continue working with the Third Ward Development, Trinity East has acquired more property for future building of low-cost housing.

We celebrated our 90th anniversary December 10, 1998 with an Awards Banquet at the Power Center when older members were recognized for outstanding past service.

Overview of Women's Work

In the early years, women worked in three chosen interests of service:

1. Women's Home Missionary Society;
2. Foreign Missionary Society; and
3. Ladies Aid Society.
When unification of Methodism came about in 1940, these three branches were grouped into the newly formed Women's Society of Christian Service and Weslayan Service Guild. The officers in the Texas Conference were:

**Women's Society of Christian Service**
- Mrs. J.S. Scott Sr.
- Mrs. A.W. Carr
- Lola Carter
- Mrs. L.J. Callier
- Mrs. L.B. Felder
- M.J. Corde
- H.L. Wooten
- Millie Parsons

**Weslayan Service Guild**
- Mrs. L.C. Thomas
- Mrs. L.E. Williams
- Mrs. C.E. Jeter
- Gladys Simon
- Mrs. L.V. Winfield
- Erie K. Bradford
- Mary Reager
- Stella Collins

At the local level:

**Women's Society of Christian Service**
- Mrs. Margaret Drew
- Mrs. M.J. Davis
- Mrs. Celeste Tilly
- Mrs. Rosa B. Lee
- Mrs. Lenora Perry White
- Mary Manning
- Jessie B. Carper
- Leona Allen
- Bessie King

**Weslayan Service Guild**
- Mary Lane Collins
- Jewel Walls
- Frances Scott
- Velma Dodson
- Gladys Simon
- Annie Harrison
- Anita Howard
- Stella Collins
In 1970, these two groups of Women's Organizations (WSCS and WSG) were brought together to form a new organization, known as the United Methodist Women.

The UMW has been headed by the following presidents: Dolris Henry, Lovie King, Ruth Drake, Essie Felder, Ruby Newton, Lovie King (a second time), Norma Bryant and Henrietta Dickerson.

Trinity East made history when Norma Bryant, our church Secretary became the first Black President of the Texas Conference United Methodist Women. She is still serving as President at the present time (1998).

18.

Gifts to Trinity East

It is appropriate that we give recognition to a few of the Trinity East members who have gone far past the call of duty in their giving to the church.

Mr. Samuel Taylor, an early trustee, gave the largest stained glass window in memory of his mother Ann Taylor (stone below given by P.H. Holden, with name of church inscribed). Sam Taylor also equipped the stage in the Fellowship Hall; gave part of the property where Memorial Annex stands and since his death, his estate sends an annual gift to Sunday School. Sam Taylor had more money to give than the average member at that time, because of finding oil on his estate on Almeda Road. Sam Taylor left most of his money (several hundred thousand dollars) to the Methodist Foundation to be used for seminars, programs, etc.
Stained Glass Windows

When we entered the new Sanctuary in 1950, the following members made contributions for the windows:

Samuel Taylor, in memory of Ann Taylor, his mother

Florence Norman and Lois Bandy Olivier, in memory of their mother, Mary Franklin Bandy

Audrey Powell Hackett, in memory of Parents J.W. and Emma Powell

Daniel Clay in memory of Angie Snow Clay

Louis and Bertha Damon

Pinkie Taylor

Eddie Ward in memory of wife, Ethel Ward

P.H. Holden

Teresa Butler in memory of husband A.E. Butler

Stella Collins in memory of her mother Hallie Phelps

Jessie Lott in memory of husband Carl Lott

Manning Family in memory of O.K. Manning

The following organizations and members contributed to pay for some of the pews when we entered the new Sanctuary in 1950:

Stewardess Board

Cecile Pierson and Laura Crawford

Samuel Taylor

Usher Board

Gleaners
Willing Workers
Young Adult Fellowship
T.P. Polk
Amy Stewart Matrons
Mr. & Mrs. Dave Lowe

Other gifts:

- Flower stands
- Cross
- Baptism Stand & Baptism Bowl
- Advent Stand
- Flower Vases
- Acolyte Robe Cabinet
- Cross
- Marquis (Bulletin Board)
- Piano
- Communion glasses (monthly)
- Communion Table and first Flags
- Communion Set
- Display Cabinet in Lobby
- Replaced altar cushions after storm and new Flags

Audrey Griggs
in memory of Fred Scott
Judson Robinson Family
Verdell Collins
L.G. Wyatt
C. Ray Henderson
Youth
Mrs. M.O. Sledge
Dr. J.R. Willie
Dr. J.R. Willie
Mr. & Mrs. Drew Evans
Mrs. Willa Hope
John Wesley Harris
Gleaners
Library furniture Mrs. Rich in memory of husband, George Rich

Kitchen Stove Mr. & Mrs. L.G. Wyatt

$1,000.00 on organ Mr. A.D. Bell in memory of wife, Annette Bell, a member

$2,000.00 Given by employer of Daisy Holcombe in her memory

Prayer Room furnishings Laura Nell Cooper

Homestead Mrs. Dora Brown

Memorials -- $1,000 each to finish Annex:

J.S. Scott Family

L.B. Felder Family

Patterson-Connor Family

Mrs. KOM Scott

Ray-Gaston Family

Booker T. Hayes

Wyatt Family

Some individuals at Trinity Eat have gone beyond the call of duty in sharing their finances:

The C.N. Bonner Scholarship Fund

Alyce Christian Gift in Memory of mother, Mrs. Hazel Hudson

William Isaacs Youth Fund

Juanita Jackson gift in memory of her mother Mrs. Dorothy Fuller

Jessie Carper Fund to U.M.W. - Texas Conference

The McCoy Family Trust Endowment, in honor of Godfrey S. McCoy, Sr. and Annie L. McCoy
Black Bishops of our Area

Bishop Robert E. Jones  Bishop Robert Brooks
Bishop W.A.C. Hughes  Bishop Willis J. King
Bishop Alexander P. Shaw  Bishop Noah H. Moore

Robert E. Jones, Methodism’s first Black to be elected, was one of the great giants of the Methodist Church and a great leader. Bishop Jones founded the Gulfside Assembly at Waveland, Mississippi, the denominations only Black Retreat Center. Situated on the Gulf of Mexico, it has an Inn (or Hotel) Administration Building, Chapel and other buildings to accommodate groups that periodically meet there.

Since Integration, the United Methodist Women no longer hold School of Missions there, but all go to Lakeview Assembly in Texas (near Palestine).

Some Early Families

Trinity East has always had excellent music directors in the early years: Margaret Blount, Madam Rochon, Claudia Whittaker Hunter.