

The High Calling

a bimonthly publication of The Francis Asbury Society

From the President's Desk

What would be more appropriate in a summer season when all of our evangelists are preaching camp meetings than a *High Calling* devoted to the subject? Admittedly, some of our readers have never attended a camp meeting. However, many others have a certain camp meeting they grew up attending to the extent that their camp is woven into the very fabric of their Christian lives.

This summer, as is customary in the Francis Asbury Society, we will participate in many camp meetings in various states. The vitality of camp meetings today is as varied as the individual histories of each camp. Some are waning and look and feel more like a historic rite to which people religiously cling. Other camps are full of life and teeming with spiritual fervor. We preach at camp meetings that have 100 in average attendance, others that have 5,000 in attendance, and still many others in between.

The first camp meeting of significance on record in American history took place right here in good ole' Kentucky in the years that saw the eighteenth century giving birth to the nineteenth century. Dr. Leigh Eric Schmidt writes about these meetings in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in his book *Holy Fairs*. He suggests the people were most likely observing a ritual with origins in the Scottish Communion festival that poet Robbie Burns satirized. Soon afterwards, Baptists and Methodists established camp meetings. Because Methodism was characterized by its itinerant preachers, the Methodist movement provided the impulses that fueled the type of revivalism that marked the camp meeting tradition.

The camp meeting in the nineteenth century enjoyed two epochal seasons of growth. The first was in the years 1800–1840. Perhaps the best history of these meetings is captured in Dickson Bruce's book, *They All Sang Hal-*

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My Camp Meeting Experience

By Dennis F. Kinlaw, Ph.D.



It was in the depths of the Depression, in 1933, that my father unexpectedly found himself in Georgia in Indian Springs Holiness Camp Meeting. One of the preachers—he was my father's favorite—was Henry Clay Morrison, the president of Asbury College and Asbury Theological Seminary.

My father died before I was able to hear from his own lips what that experience was like, but it evidently influenced him significantly. When he returned to his home and family in North Carolina, he said to my mother, "Sally, we have to take the family."

The next summer he took my mother and my older sister with him and they went to Indian Springs. It was in that session that Christ found my sister and she was converted. I was only twelve, but it was obvious to me that she was changed and, from my perspective, it was

for the better. The next year she went to Asbury College as a student, met the one who was to become her husband, and they spent their life together in ministry in the Methodist Church in Michigan.

A new pattern was established that year in our family. The camp meeting at Indian Springs became the anchor point around which our family arranged its schedule. Our family bank had failed and we never afterwards had the money for a family vacation, but my father found the finances to take us all to camp meeting for the ten days that it met in August.

It was in 1935, when I was thirteen, that I found myself headed, not too happily, to an event that meant five religious sessions for me every day for ten days. My attitude during the trip home was completely different from my attitude on the way down. I was not only in a different mood. I was in a different world. I had met One that actually changed my life. And his name was JESUS!

I had heard about him before, but now I had actually met Him. And the center of my existence had radically changed. Instead of being centered in myself, He was

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Camp Meetings in America

By John N. Oswalt, Ph.D.

The earliest antecedents of the camp meeting movement seem to have been in North Carolina in the 1790s when Presbyterian people there began to get together in the late summer after harvest for so-called “Sacramental Meetings.” While it is not known exactly the format of these meetings, they do seem to have been outdoors and did involve preaching and Communion.

When folks came over the Alleghenies into Kentucky, this practice of meeting together in the late summer seems to have continued here and there, but they were limited both by the difficulty of traveling in the wilderness and by the Indian threat. By 1800 these difficulties were reduced somewhat and the first great camp meetings began.

While the data is limited and sometimes conflicting, it appears that the first “phenomenal” camp meeting occurred in 1800 at the Red River Cumberland Presbyterian meeting house near Adairsville in southwestern Kentucky. There was a great move of the Holy Spirit, and hundreds and perhaps even thousands of people came to the spectacle. The next year a meeting was also held at the Cane Ridge Presbyterian meeting house north of present-day Paris, Kentucky. It is said that as many as 50,000 people—a quarter of the population of Kentucky at that time—were in attendance at Cane Ridge and Red River in 1801. In both places, several preachers would preach simultaneously and people would go from venue to venue under the trees to hear their favorites. If the preaching was marked by great “unction,” it was also productive of great conviction, and many were deeply moved, shouting, crying out and falling to the ground. While there were unquestionably great outbreaks of what was then called “enthusiasm,” it has been shown recently that the reports of these outbreaks were often exaggerated, both by friends and by opponents of the meetings.

Bishop Francis Asbury of the Methodist Episcopal Church visited the meetings and their offshoots as he itinerated through the areas of North Carolina and Kentucky, and he was greatly impressed by them and by their potential for real spiritual growth in the places where they occurred. He was enough impressed that he exhorted all his district superintendents (presiding elders, as

they were known at that time), to start camp meetings in their districts. Many took the exhortation seriously, and the number of meetings increased exponentially through the second and third decades of the nineteenth century.

But by the 1840s the sectionalism and the political furor that was eventually to explode in the Civil War began to take its toll on the camp meetings. The divisions within the Methodist Church leading to the birth of the Wesleyan Church and eventually to the Methodist Episcopal north and south denominations contributed to this decline. Many camp meetings continued on, but the early flourishing was greatly diminished. Then came the War, and that signaled the end for many camps, especially those in the South, where many areas were drastically depopulated, especially of men.



But if the War brought an end to many camps, it also became the stimulus for a burst of new life for the movement. As the nation began to pick its way back after April of 1865, there came a renewed interest in the holy life. In part, this interest may have been the result of seeds sown before the

War: the great revival of 1857–58 coming out of the New York noon prayer meetings and also the 1858 publication of William Boardman’s *The Higher Christian Life*. In any case, in 1867 a meeting was called in Vineland, New Jersey, for all those interested in the promotion of Christian holiness. The meeting was a great success, and out of it came the National Association for the Promotion of Christian Holiness and the decision to hold a camp meeting for that purpose in Vineland the following year. Delegates who had come from other parts of the country were encouraged to return home and start similar events. They did so and between 1870 and 1900, literally thousands of holiness camp meetings sprang up. Again, the Methodists were at the forefront. So the Michigan State Holiness Camp Meeting Association, which sponsors the Eaton Rapids (MI) Camp Meeting, had its beginnings in 1885 as the Lansing District Holiness Camp Meeting Association. Others, like Indian Springs Holiness Camp Meeting (GA), had their beginnings among like-minded Methodist preachers supported by Methodist evangelists. One camp meeting, Hollow Rock, at Yellow Springs,

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lelujah. Bruce won the prize for anthropology from the University of Tennessee for this work. The second period of camp meeting growth began at the close of the Civil War. People who attended Phoebe Palmer's Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness in New York City founded the National Camp Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness. Dr. Melvin Dieter, a religious historian who taught at Asbury Theological Seminary, has written the most significant work explaining this phenomenon, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*. I encourage you to read these works that provide a substantive understanding of the American Methodist tradition and the wider currents of which it is a part.

But the camp meeting movement is not merely a history to be learned. For many, many Christians across the nation, camp meetings are places renowned for dynamic singing and a kind of preaching that calls people to repentance for the forgiveness of sins and cleansing for hearts yearning for the higher life in His Spirit. I have personally prayed with two different governors of varying states and a State Supreme Court Justice—among many others—at altars of prayer as they sought God for His help in their daily Christian walk.

But for me, camp meetings go beyond my experiences as preacher and teacher—and beyond my historical research. For it was at an altar of prayer at Delanco Holiness Camp Meeting I found God's pardon for sin and a heart cleansing that has been an anchor point for my walk with God. While struggling with a particular situation caused by sin in my life, I simply could not get past the defeat precipitated by my transgression. After

all, how does one get past the grip of sin and death? Even though I had begun to live as a Christian, I found myself in the agony of failure and heard only the scornful voice of the adversary of my soul say, "You can never undo what has been done." My soul was empty, my mind was horrified, and my spirit was defeated. The heavens were like brass as my wounded, paltry prayers bounced from a despondent heart. As I kept trying to plead my case for forgiveness, a need wrought by my own stupid choice for sin, I heard the voice of the Spirit say, "Ron Smith, I don't remember what you are talking about. Your sins I have removed as far as the east is from the west, and I remember them no more!" His sacred heart of pardon purchased my freedom.

And at an altar of prayer, He shared His victory over death, hell, and the grave with me. I was 19 years old.

Two years earlier, at Taylor County Camp Meeting in Butler, Georgia, an almost twelve year old little girl responded to the evangelist's call to the altar for people who desired to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Jesus gloriously saved that little girl's soul, and ten years later she became my bride for life. So Dorena and I find it a sacred privilege to be on the camp meeting circuit today. Not only did camp meetings alter the course of American history, they were used by God to shape our very lives. Who knows the rest of the story for that person I will call to an altar of prayer this summer? But one thing is sure, the eternal victory for his or her very life may be found in a sharing Savior who still rides the circuit. Hallelujah to the Lord who is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

Ron



“For me, camp meetings go beyond my experiences as preacher and teacher—and beyond my historical research.”

Evangelists' Schedules—Summer 2013

Tom Atkins

- July 20–27 Rushville Free Methodist Family Camp Meeting, Rushville, IL
- Sept. 22–25 Cheney United Methodist Church, Cheney, KS
- Oct. 11–13 Revival, Lyons Muir Church, Muir, MI
- Nov. 10–12 Mount Zion UMC, Marietta, GA

Ellen Bullock

- July 15–19 Bible Teacher, Wilmore Camp Meeting, KY
- July 27–28 Cherry Run Camp Meeting, Rimersburg, PA

Allan Coppedge

- July 11–21 Indian Springs Camp Meeting, Flovilla, GA

David Harriman

- July 24–Aug. 4 Evangelistic meetings and leadership conference, Peru
- Sept. 6–8 Hispanic evangelistic meetings, St. Paul, MN
- Oct. 18–17 Evangelistic/revival meetings, Nicaragua and El Salvador
- Dec. 11–14 Youth conference and evangelism, Nicaragua

Jim Harriman

- July 7–13 Multnomah Holiness Campmeeting, Portland, OR
- July 15–23 Entiat Camp, WA
- Aug. 4–9 Malaga Camp Meeting, NJ

Stephanie Hogan

- July 5–8 Brown City Camp Meeting, MI

Bert Jones

- July 19–24 Herndon Camp Meeting, PA
- July 2–28 Hollow Rock Camp Meeting, Toronto, OH
- July 30–Aug 4 Rawlinsville Camp Meeting, Holtwood, PA

Stan & Katy Key

- July 19–28 Eaton Rapids Camp Meeting, MI
- Aug. 12–18 Harvey Cedars Camp Meeting, NJ

John Oswalt

- July 3–25 Eaton Rapids Camp Meeting, MI
- July 26–Aug. 4 Camp Sychar, Mt. Vernon, OH
- Aug. 14–24 Conference on Wesleyan Theology, New Zealand

Jason & Erin Owens

- July 14–19 Wilmore Campmeeting, KY
- July 25–Aug. 11 Pennsylvania Camps
- Aug. 18–22 Hemlock Retreats, Bryson City, NC

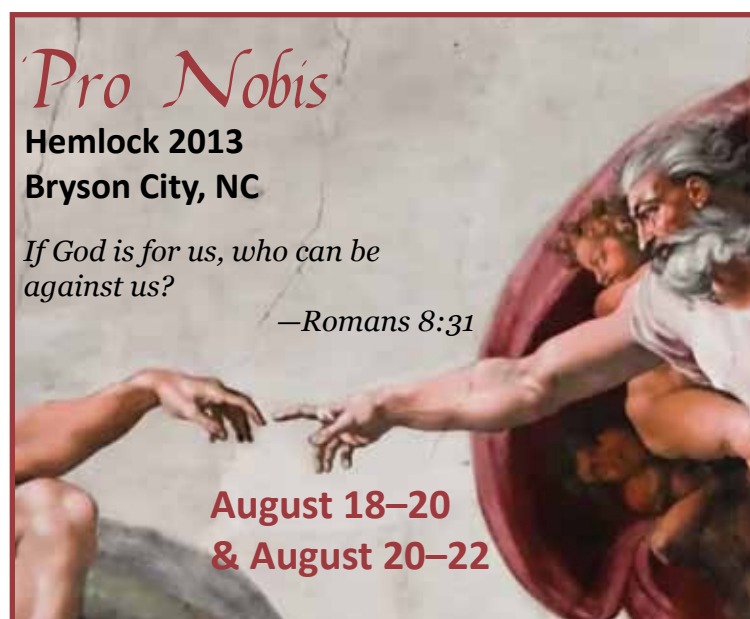
Ron Smith

- July 25–28 Eaton Rapids Camp Meeting, MI
- Aug. 4–9 Malaga Camp Meeting, NJ
- Aug. 18–22 Hemlock Retreats, Bryson City, NC



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If God is for us, who can be against us?
—Romans 8:31

August 18–20
& August 20–22

now not only with me, He had captured the central spot in my inner being. Instead of a deep and rather terrifying existential dread at the thought of ever actually confronting God, I found myself in an intense and joyous love affair with Him and his Father and even the Holy Spirit. And for the first time that I could remember, I felt clean—real clean—inside.

I was in a different world.

One's world is pretty small and fragile when you are only thirteen and you alone, in loneliness, reign in the center of your own little kingdom. What a difference when you find yourself filled with the Presence of that One who is larger than the whole world of which you are a part. At thirteen, you may not know much about the extent of that kingdom, but somehow your borders are gone and you sense something that later you will call infinite and eternal. And, inexplicable as it all is, you know that this is where you belong and you are suddenly willing to give your life and even yourself so that others may find such as their own, too.

It was not that I had never heard about Christ before. The third pew from the front on the left in our Methodist Church was the Kinlaw pew and nobody else ever sat there. Everyone in the church knew that it belonged to the Kinlaw clan.

And I knew as I grew up that after Sunday School in the morning and Epworth League in the evening, I was to be with the rest of my family in that pew. But it was all in the third person. It was about Another whom I had never really met. But now that world had changed, too. I knew not only *what* it was all about,

I knew *who* it was all about. And He was not only real to me now, He was a permanent part of my inner person, the central part, the friend of all friends, the *key* to everything. I wanted to share the glory of it all, so I told my pastor. I was sure he would rejoice with me and tell me how glad he was that I had finally caught on to what it was all about. I was caught off guard when I sensed that he was a bit apprehensive about this thirteen year old. His comment was, "Well, Dennis, you don't think that this has to happen to everybody, do you?"

Years later, in a moment of mutuality, I shared all this with a Jesuit friend. He responded, "Dennis, that is beautiful, but, you know, we don't think that such is for everybody." In both cases, my thoughts took me back to Indian Springs, for it was there that I came to know that God loved His world so much that He gave His one

eternal Son on Calvary so that the emptiness of a thirteen year old's heart could be filled with the very life that His Son sacrificed on that cross outside the city of Jerusalem. Somehow, I knew it had to be for everyone.

During those high school years, it was almost impossible to find anyone who understood what had happened to me in my world. Years later, at Princeton in a course with the philosophy professor, Dr. Emile Cailliet, in which he asked us to tell the story of our spiritual journey, I shared. His response was simply, "Beautiful! Now can you intellectualize this?"

During those next lonely years in high school I certainly would not have been able to intellectualize it. There were some things, though, that I knew. The One who had found me was the One who made the whole world. He loves the whole world. His offer of Himself *has* to be for the whole world. That love precludes any other possibil-



ity. He, being who He is and loving with the love with which He loves, is not in the exclusion business. And now because He was in my heart that same universal love was flowing there. I did not know the promise in Rev. 21:25 about the Holy City, the eternal Bride of Christ, that its gates will never be shut, nor Frederick Weatherly's conclusion that the gates of that city are never shut so "that all who would might enter and no one was denied."

A thirteen year old has a massive amount yet to be experienced and learned, but I suspect a thirteen year old may be as *smart* as he is ever going to be. A decade later, for three years following my seminary education and before I was ordained, I travelled from church to church in evangelistic meetings around the country offering the Good News that I had discovered in Christ to any who would listen. The force that drove me during those years

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It's in My Blood

By Beth Luce Reed

Camp meeting seems to be in my blood. I've been going as long as I can remember. At the tender age of four months, my parents took me, along with my two older brothers, to Indian Springs Holiness Camp Meeting. In my 55 years, I've only missed two or three times. I love camp meeting.

I have a long family history at Indian Springs: my great-grandfather was one of the four founders of the camp in 1890. My grandfather served on the board for many years, my father was president for ten years, and my brother is the current president. I love the multigenerational impact of camp meeting. Many families have shared the tradition this way. When I started teaching in the elementary school age program at Indian Springs, I was teaching the children of my childhood camp friends. What a joy to lead some of them to the Lord and others into an understanding of fully surrendering their lives to His will for them! The daughter of one of my childhood camp friends wrote me a note in her sweet, eight-year-old handwriting:

*Dear Miss Beth,
Until now, I never really understund (sic) all about Jesus. Now I do.*

Camp meeting is like a small town that comes to life for ten days each year. Family cottages are often shared by multiple generations. The quarters can be quite cramped at times, but that doesn't seem to bother folks much. Family togetherness brings grandparents together with grandchildren and even with great-grandchildren, passing on a spiritual heritage in a relaxed atmosphere where time seems to stand still. Rocking chairs abound, inviting us to slow down, reflect, and engage with those around us.

For children, camp is one of the safest places on earth. Where else can children walk alone from home to a meeting place to the cafeteria? In the children's tabernacle, there are Bible stories, lively singing, snacks, crafts, and missionary stories. Missionaries visit and tell stories of their exciting adventures with Jesus in other countries.



They challenge the children to go overseas if the Lord calls them. An offering is usually taken to support a project overseas. Children do chores or sell lemonade to make money to help needy children their

age. Some children also enjoy watermelon seed spitting contests, swinging on porch swings, eating homemade ice cream, catching frogs around the main tabernacle and meeting new friends while spending time



with old friends. The double blessing of all these things is that they happen in the context of putting down deeper spiritual roots and understanding God's word.

One of the greatest impacts of camp is studying and memorizing scripture. As a preteen one year, I memorized Ephesians 6:1-18 on the armor of God. There was friendly competition among my friends to memorize all the verses and win a prize. The real prize is that those verses are locked in my heart and memory because of learning them at a young age. In high school, I studied the entire book of Exodus and the book of Mark in the ten days of camp, taught by seminary professors. How many high school students can say that? Those studies created in me a love for the Word and a hunger to study more on my own.

Another strong emphasis at camp meeting is missionary outreach around the world. Sharing times around a meal and hearing stories of the needs overseas challenges me to get involved through prayer and support. There are fresh stories of how God is currently working in many places that I may never visit personally. My world is expanded as I hear of God's faithfulness to these missionaries. I'm challenged to be a missionary right where God has placed me to serve Him.

Lifetime relationships are formed at camp meeting. I look forward each year to reconnecting with friends who have shared the same depth of Biblical teaching as I have. We connect on that deeper spiritual level and encourage one another in our faith journeys. Continuity of community with a shared history is a rare gift these days in our highly mobile world. Camp meeting gives us a place to return to a simpler life for ten days. In the midst of the incredible busyness of our lives, it gives us time to focus on what is most important in life.

The deep bible teaching and instruction prepares us to serve better in our local churches and small groups. I enjoy conversations that stem from our teaching times and the messages of each speaker. God allows us to put our spiritual roots deeper and deeper at camp. We come

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It's in My Blood *continued from page 6*

away feeling like “a well-watered garden” as Isaiah 58:11 puts it:

The LORD will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.

Camp meeting provides a time for spiritual refreshment. It is a place of restoration, a place to gather strength. It is a place to come when you are thirsty for more of God, more of His will, more of His glory. He calls us to come away, to set ourselves apart in order to be quiet so we can hear His still, small voice. One of my Dad's favorite camp meeting hymns was “Ho! Everyone that is Thirsty” by Lucy J. Meyer (1849–1922):

*Ho! every one that is thirsty in spirit,
Ho! every one that is weary and sad;
Come to the fountain, there's fullness in Jesus,
All that you're longing for: come and be glad!*

*I will pour water on him that is thirsty,
I will pour floods upon the dry ground;*



*Open your hearts for the gifts I am bringing;
While ye are seeking Me, I will be found.*

Camp meeting provides a haven of rich spiritual refreshment when we are weary and thirsty from living in a spiritually dry and barren land. It brings health to our hearts and life to our souls. What a rich heritage! I'm so thankful that camp meeting is in my blood.

“Camp meeting provides a haven of rich spiritual refreshment...”

My Camp Meeting Experience continued from page 5

was the same as that which I found stirring in my heart on that trip home from my first year at Indian Springs.

There was a wisdom in Henry Clay Morrison and those who were leaders in the camp meeting movement that I have understood better and appreciated more with the passing of the years. I had no comprehension of it then. It was never mentioned by them. It seems that they just assumed it as if it were to be taken for granted. They seemed to feel that a certain fullness of grace is as available for a thirteen year old as for a veteran saint. The sermon that was preached by Morrison for the most determinative evening of my life was on what he called entire sanctification, or “the baptism of the Holy



Spirit.” All of the theological terminology was new to me, but that did not keep a profound message from coming through to me. I was a three-day-old Christian. My sense of the forgiveness of my sins, His acceptance of me, and the fact of His presence with me was all very real. But the word that came through to me that night was that He now wanted me to tell Him He could have all that I knew of my heart. But beyond that He also wanted me to give Him the key to my heart so that He could claim for Himself even that which I did not yet know about myself. I was told that if I gave Him that key, He would take me, possess me for Himself, and then fill me to the full with His Spirit. Somehow I knew, unwittingly I think, that it was not so much me giving myself to Him as my permitting Him to take, to possess, me fully for Himself.

It was only later that I realized that this put me in the Wesleyan tradition. It was only later that I would understand that time and human discipline are not necessary additions to the sacrifice on Calvary and for the realization of the promise that is implicit in Pentecost. It is that filling that will enable one to learn much more about Him and His ways and a whole lot more about oneself. Those around may not perceive what is on occasion happening in the thirteen year old in a good camp meeting but, apparently, heaven does and likes it. I do, too.

Ohio, had begun in 1838, and with a possible year or two hiatus during the Civil War, continued on and received new life in the holiness movement.

Although these camp meetings never became quite the “phenomena” that Cane Ridge and Red River had been, they were still remarkably popular. Like the earlier ones, most were held in August, after grain harvests were complete, and folks came to live in very primitive surroundings for as long as two weeks. They came to hear gifted orators proclaim the good news that Christ had died not only to bring us forgiveness for our sins but also to make it possible for Christians to live in victory over sin. Stories are told of as many as 5,000 people gathered in some of the locations and of great movements of the Holy Spirit.

The coming of the motorcar both helped and hindered the movement in that it made it possible for people to come from farther away but also to engage in other activities that had previously not been available. Thus, many would say that the heyday of the holiness camp meetings was in the 1920s. It is truly amazing how many still continue, nearly one hundred years later. Some are struggling, to be sure, and some have transformed themselves into more of a Christian entertainment center, but many remain true to their original mission of being a place to which people can come to re-focus their lives on what matters, a place where God can regain the center of their lives.

A Hymn by Charles Wesley

*O Thou Who camest from above,
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
Upon the mean altar of my heart.*

*There let it for Thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble prayer and fervent praise.*

*Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work and speak and think for Thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me.*

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The Francis Asbury Society

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