



# Editorial

Janet Morley

Just after Pentecost, Wesley House was delighted to launch its new online journal at an event in Cambridge that drew more than eighty people and attracted greetings from a wide range of scholars and well-wishers internationally. We have received many subsequent messages warmly approving the initiative and the standard of the articles and their presentation. Scholars working within the Wesleyan and Holiness traditions are beginning to offer contributions unprompted. The Editor is always keen to encourage both eminent academics and those still establishing a reputation, along with ministry practitioners with reflections on practice or creative devotional material to share.

The second issue focuses on Mission, and the selection of articles and authors reveals important insights: that mission rightly involves ecumenical dialogue, and that there is a complex interaction between different cultures and contexts within the mission of God. Mission cannot be a one-way matter only, as used to be thought. Neither is it only addressed to the human heart, but necessarily involves issues of human dignity in the social and political realm. Space is given to revisiting and reapplying the insights and example of John Wesley, and to considering the implications for Methodist practice and ecclesiology today, if we are to take seriously the call to be shaped by mission.

We are pleased to start the second issue with an article by Stephen Bevans SVD, who from the perspective of a Catholic US scholar offers a courteous but challenging overview of the task of mission in a highly secularised society: 'Mission in Britain: some modest reflections and proposals'. This paper was first delivered to an ecumenical audience, the Cambridge Theological Federation, and it tackles the tendency of the Church to see the missiological endeavour as one which simply requires greater dedication and improved techniques,

rather than addressing the need for truly adaptive change. In terms of ecumenical dialogue, this article is complemented by a more personal reflection from Tim Macquiban, 'Holiness in the Methodist tradition – an ecumenical pilgrimage'. After serving as minister at Wesley Church, Cambridge, Tim is now the Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome. Looking at the Methodist approach to the call to a holy life, he particularly reflects on being a 'consecrated people' in the light of what that means for those living within Catholic religious orders.

In this issue it is noticeable how many authors have roots, formation or significant current engagement in more than one part of the world. David Field is based in Switzerland but is a research associate of the University of South Africa. His article, 'Holiness, social justice and the mission of the Church', argues that the praxis of social justice as an expression of holiness is integral to mission. In particular he shows how Wesley's reiterated phrase, 'justice, mercy and truth', underlies his appeal to Methodists to focus on 'the outcasts of men'; and Field reflects on Europe's current experience of migration issues in the light of this. Valentin Dedji is currently a minister in London, but he is also a visiting lecturer in missiology in Cameroon and Benin. His article, 'Holiness, grace and mission: revisiting John Wesley's missiological mandate', offers a fresh look at the mandate 'You have nothing to do but to save souls', taking this startling simplicity seriously, but without failing to recognise how utterly the world context has changed since Wesley's time.

Oseias da Silva, originally from Brazil, has been a Methodist minister in both rural and urban contexts in the UK, sent as a mission partner by his church to the Western context from which it originally received missionaries. His article 'Reverse mission in the Western context' explores this fascinating phenomenon, which some British congregations find initially perplexing but then deeply enriching, discovering that they too are a legitimate mission field, needing to hear the gospel afresh. Stephen Day's very personal reflection, 'Into Africa: a mission partner reflects', reminds us what is involved for those who are called to become mission partners, as he shares the journey of transition and transformation undertaken by himself and his wife as they prepare to leave their home in Britain for South Africa.

Our column 'What have the sermons of John Wesley ever done for us?' is written by someone who has been shaped by his Welsh upbringing and his early ordained ministry in Haiti, and who now sits at the heart of the British establishment in the House of Lords. In his article, 'Free Grace – theology with

the gloves off', Leslie Griffiths gives us an arresting account of this sermon, and its origin in a passionate, polemical dispute between John Wesley and his associate George Whitefield, about whether Methodist identity should be located within Calvinism or Arminianism. Griffiths hints at where the legacy of this theological battle may have echoes in the modern world.

Joanne Cox-Darling's article, 'Mission-shaped Methodism and Fresh Expressions', effectively focuses on what the kind of adaptive, kenotic change called for by Stephen Bevans might mean for the Church. She takes encouragement from earlier Methodist experience and tradition and argues that the 'fresh expressions' impulse is deeply within Methodist DNA and that Methodists have a good deal to offer the current ecumenical initiative. And Val Reid's intriguing exploration of a particular form of 'fresh expression' in the church at Hinde Street, 'A gathered stillness: meditation as a fresh expression of Church?', begins to suggest how creative we might become in mission if we allow ourselves to be genuinely 'emptied out' of our preconceptions in this area.

Finally, our podcast in the series 'An eye to God in every word – praying the hymns of Charles Wesley', offers a fresh take on the traditional Love Feast hymn, 'Come and let us sweetly join'. It reminds us that the grace of God is 'social', and that blessing comes upon Christian communities, not just individuals. The joining together of diverse perspectives, with a whole variety of 'hands and hearts and voices', is the authentic source of mission to the world.

Janet Morley, Commissioning Editor  
October 2015

