



Editorial

Part of the pleasure and privilege that comes with occupying the role of editor, amongst many higher joys (and some lower administrative vexations), is doubtless the birds eye view of the field of scholarship that comes with it. The ability to cast your eyes forth at a wide expanse of research which moves in so many directions, covers a wide variety of terrain and has within it so many colours. It is in occupying such a lookout that one is so readily able to see that any suggestion of a particular academic field being narrow or limited is in itself narrow and limited. Always, the broad variety of touchstones, topics and themes, interdisciplinary approaches, geographical locations and methodological applications offers so much to connect with and to learn from.

This truth is exemplified in this our first issue of 2024, which spans hymnody and history, education and intersectionality, archival study and biblical theology, and, naturally, Ghana and Bolton.

First, Adam Ployd offers a reading of John Wesley's 'wholeness and holiness' through the work of Ghanaian Methodist theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye. Oduyoye is an inspirational thinker whose words demands careful and considered engagement. The author takes readers through her critiques both of the 'historical failures' of Western missionary activity in Africa and of the 'oppressive elements' within her own culture, offering an intimate projection of the intersectionality experienced by African woman. Ployd then offers this as a lens to consider Wesley alongside the experiences of early Methodist Jane Cooper, asking 'how we might read Cooper's holiness in light of Oduyoye's holism'.

We also have the great honour of publishing in written form the captivating and provocative keynote speech delivered by Bishop Dr. Emmanuel Asante at the Cambridge leg of the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities (IAMSCU) conference hosted by Wesley House. I'm thrilled to be able to share with those who weren't present the powerful calls towards a 'holistic' approach to education within the global Wesleyan community made by Bishop Asante. Equally as exciting, Bishop Asante's article represents *Holiness* history in becoming the first article to be translated and published outside of the English language. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Claude Kiminde and Dr. Priscilla Garcia for their assiduous work in preparing French and Portuguese translations which will connect Bishop Asante's challenges with an even broader audience. It is very much my intention that this represents the first of an increasing amount of non-English content which I hope to share with readers in increasing volume in forthcoming issues.

Clive Field's meticulous engagement with the Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex follows, as the author offers demonstration of the colourful pictures of the lived experiences of Methodist communities in the twentieth century. Field zeroes in here on Bolton, a deeply understudied context not befitting its status as a major centre of Methodism often dubbed the 'Geneva of the North'. The article brings to light a collection of rich data which demonstrates how spiritually vibrant the town was, and encourages others to take a delve into the archives to see what emerges.

Finally, Paul Chilcote brings us an exploration of Charles Wesley's 'lyrical theology', one that manifests as an inextricably 'biblical theology'. Taking a close hermeneutical look at several particularly inspirational passages for the younger Wesley brother, Chilcote establishes the centrality of the 'Peaceable reign of Christ' within this. Through this the author produces a compelling and luxuriously lyrical run through illuminating comparisons and synergies, concluding that whilst Charles 'floods his canvas with the colours of righteousness, joy, peace, justice and compassion' this painting 'remains unfinished until we add the colours of our own life' to it.

We also welcome back reviews to our pages. Michael Wilson takes a look at *The British Jesus, 1850-1970* by Meredith Veldman, Hannah Bucke examines *Women, Preachers, Methodists* edited by John Lenton, Clive Murry and Linda A Ryan, Andrew Stobart offers thoughts on *The Bible, Centres and Margins: Dialogues Between Postcolonial African and British biblical Scholars* edited by Johanna Stiebert and Musa W. Dube, and Adam Ployd reads *Leadership Training in the Hands of the Church: Experiential Learning and Contextual Practices in North Africa and the Middle East* by Joseph Nehemia. We will continue to publish book reviews on an ad hoc basis, and welcome any expressions of interest for these at editor@wesley.cam.ac.uk.

As ever, I dearly hope readers enjoy the wide ranging contents of this issue.

Joseph Powell, Editor