



Editorial

As we reach toward the end of an Olympic and Paralympic year I am, as always, left in awe by those who have graced our screens over the past few months and demonstrated the peaks of human physical prowess - the stunning backdrops of Paris' skylines above and the now (purportedly) sparklingly clean river Seine below serving as fittingly grand scenery for the feats of human endeavour before them.

Particularly, I am left further awestruck by those who either have or continue to crossover between disciplines. Pita Taufatofua of Tonga, competing in the summer Olympics in taekwondo before strapping on a set of ski's for cross country skiing in the winter Olympics. American Cassie Mitchell who at the London 2012 Paralympics competed in all of the 100m, 200m and discus. Team GB's own Kadeena Cox with golds in each of the last three Paralympics in athletics and latterly in cycling. Crossovers such as these require of course extensive skill and immense physicality, but also a curiosity to look beyond what might have been ones world in the immediate and to ask what might lay beyond.

In a (hopefully) less exertive exercise for readers than those described above, Holiness 9.2 represents an issue which has crossover at it's very core. Crossover between congregations and denominations, between the political and theological and in moving from previously held theological positions to new horizons ahead.

First, Fr Dominic White looks to connect his own Roman Catholic spiritual foundation with Methodist social creeds to produce an environmental rallying call in a time it has never been more pertinent. White identifies the question 'What relationship do Christians have with their natural environment?' as both 'spiritual and moral', and subsequently responds 'to the principle of right relation' in recovering 'the neglected tradition of natural contemplation from Christian cosmology and the monastic tradition. What emerges is a captivating conversation between two traditions, as both are set towards a 'shalom' that yearns for a 'harmony in the cosmos'.

Two articles grapple with the notion of advocacy and how we all can best support the lives of the disempowered around us. Daniel Dei's article takes a historical look in assessing how Wesleyan social ethics have contributed to social justice discourses as they have crossed over beyond Wesleyan congregations in three immediately familiar figures, Florence Nightingale, William Wilberforce and Martin Luther King Jr. Dei writes that the Wesleyan tradition has prominently within it a striving towards 'equality, opposing injustice and oppression, and advocating for the marginalized and vulnerable'. The three case studies offered here show how these centralities have moved beyond Methodist circles to influence wider Christian discourse, and offers power still into the present as the Wesleyan tradition is argued to be able to 'adapt to changing social and cultural contexts and continue to offer a valuable framework for contemporary Christian social engagement'.

Joerg Rieger seeks to connect readers simultaneously with that before us as well as those around us. Advocating a notion of 'deep solidarity' he encourages us to look beyond notions of charity, service and, conversely, advocacy, to engage in a form of support for the most oppressed in this world that recognises a failure to do so is to further the peril of all. This, he argues, can be seen in Wesley as it can in the Bible. 'This might be the real miracle of the Burning Bush story', he writes. Not 'a bush that burns and is not consumed', but rather 'both Moses and God enter into deep solidarity with people under pressure', the Hebrew slaves, by 'observing, listening, and thereby experiencing' their cause. In times and under leaders which often seek to polarise further, an all-consuming 'deep' solidarity is as relevant in Moses' time as it is now.

Finally, Scott Shaffer's article looks to apply Wesley's social consciousness to contemporary issues of LGBTQ inclusion in Wesleyan congregations. Reflecting on his own journey on this very present debate, Shaffer writes that he, 'like John Wesley', has 'experienced development on major social issues throughout my life and ministry', as Wesley's evolution on the issue of slavery is utilised as a parallel for how we might allow the Holy Spirit to inform and educate us into the present. On this, a similarly immediate call to action as those articulated above is reached. 'For Wesleyan Christians seeking to grow in holiness, the answer to the question "when?" is always "now!"', as Shaffer enjoins churches and individuals to act and act now.

As always, it is my sincere hope that readers are gainful from the articles in this issue.

Joseph Powell, Editor