

Methodist Studies Seminar

Saturday 10th December 2022

Wakefield Room, Queen's Foundation

Organised by Oxford Brookes University and Queen's Foundation

The Methodist Studies Seminar meets bi-annually and provides an opportunity for established and emerging scholars of Methodist Studies to present the findings of their research. We conceive of Methodist Studies broadly and aim to provide opportunities for students of history, theology, literature, art, material culture and other fields related to Methodism. The seminars are organised by Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University; the Manchester Wesley Research Centre; the Wesley Study Centre, St John's College, Durham University; Wesley House, Cambridge; Cliff College; and the Queen's Foundation, Birmingham.

9.45-10am Arrivals & Welcome

10.00am *Wholeness and Holiness: Reading Wesley through the Lens of Oduyoye'*
Adam Ployd (Wesley House Cambridge)
Chair: Jane Craske

10.40am *Kingsley Barrett and the Anglican-Methodist Conversations*
Pippa Catterall (University of Westminster).
Chair: Bill Gibson

11.20am Tea & Coffee

11.50am *Egyptian Wesleyanism: Historiographical and Theological Perspectives on Radical Wesleyan Traditions in Egypt*
Tharwat Maher Nagib Adly Nagib (Faith Wesleyan Theological Seminary, Cairo, Egypt,
Chair:

12.30pm Lunch

Please bring sandwiches, tea and coffee will be available. The nearest place to buy food is Harborne High Street which is at least 12 minutes walk from Queen's.

1.30pm *'A nest of consecrated cobblers'? Methodist Local Preachers in Victorian Oxford*
Rev Dr Martin Wellings (Superintendent of the Barnet & Queensbury Circuit.)
Chair: Clive Marsh

2.10pm *Reading religious narratives through engravings, alongside poetry: notes on 112 engravings in two works of Samuel Wesley*

Helmut Renders (Department of Religion/School of Theology, Methodist University of São Paulo)
Chair: Peter Forsaith

2.50pm Tea & Coffee

3.10pm *Heart Religion and Sacramental Faith: Infant Baptism in the Thought of John Wesley*
Charles Read (Eastern Region Ministry Course)
Chair: Jane Craske.

3.50pm Closing Announcements

Registration:

There is no cost for attending the seminar; however, please register by 30 November register at the following link: <https://queens.jotform.com/registry/MSS>

Venue:

Wakefield Room
Queen's Foundation,
Somerset Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2QH

Please use the main car-park at Queen's. Use the entrance on Somerset Road and there is plenty of parking behind the Administration Block. From the car park turn left past the Administration block and the Wakefield Room is the through the second door.

Directions: <http://www.queens.ac.uk/contact/how-to-find-us>

Abstracts of Papers

Wholeness and Holiness: Reading Wesley through the Lens of Oduyoye Adam Ployd

Methodist theology is a global affair, and few voices have been as influential of late as that of African feminist Mercy Amba Oduyoye. While a typical historical theology methodology might seek

to place Oduyoye within a linear trajectory from the Wesleys, elucidating her thought as influenced by or an interpretation of the latter, this paper proposes to work backwards. In an effort to contribute to the decolonisation of Wesleyan theology, it asks what it would mean not to read Oduyoye in light of Wesley, but to read Wesley in light of Oduyoye. I focus particularly on her soteriology, especially her understanding of 'wholeness'. This vision of a holistic mode of being as the goal of Christian life, expressly oriented toward African women, overcomes the polarising binaries of the individual and the community, the material and the spiritual, humanity and nature, even heaven and earth. This understanding of salvation as wholeness also poses challenges to other soteriologies that might limit the scope of God's saving grace as well as our responsibility to work in concert with it. It is here that I bring in a Wesleyan understanding of holiness. Focusing on (1) the General Rules of the United Society and (2) John's writings on perfection, I propose a way of re-reading Wesleyan holiness in terms of Oduyoye's understanding of wholeness. In particular, I suggest, we may now, on the one hand, celebrate Wesley's refusal to separate personal piety from social holiness or forensic forgiveness from therapeutic healing, and, on the other hand, interrogate aspects of Wesleyan holiness that neglect features of Oduyoye's wholeness, especially issues of justice that affect groups of people beyond the Wesleys' social, cultural or geographic purview.

Kingsley Barrett and the Anglican-Methodist Conversations. Pippa Catterall

Kingsley Barrett was a leading figure in the world of New Testament Studies, serving with distinction for many years as a faculty member at the University of Durham. He was also a Methodist minister who played a major role in the opposition to the ecumenical talks with the Church of England in the 1950s and 1960s. Despite that, Barrett nonetheless agreed to serve on the Methodist side of the talks during their second phase from 1958 to 1963. He refused to join vocal opposition groups, such as the Voice of Methodism Association. And he always made it clear that he supported church unity, though not the scheme on offer. These apparently contradictory positions were rooted in his reading of the New Testament and his grasp of ecclesiology derived therefrom. This paper will explore the relationship between those ideas and the positions they led him to take, concluding with analysis of Barrett's effect on and contribution to the Anglican-Methodist Conversations.

Egyptian Wesleyanism: Historiographical and Theological Perspectives on Radical Wesleyan Traditions in Egypt Tharwat Maher Nagib

This paper presents historiographical and theological perspectives on Egyptian Wesleyanism. It studies the radical Wesleyan tradition in Egypt, through examining two major Egyptian Wesleyan denominations: The Egyptian Holiness Movement Church (EHMC), and Pentecostal Church of God (COG). The research traces the establishment of Wesleyan communities in Egypt through the work of Western missionaries, who came to Egypt from North America, and highlights how the Wesleyan belief inspired Christians in Egypt. Thus, a new form of Christianity has emerged in the ancient land. The paper also describes the developments within these Wesleyan communities with respect to the broader historical context of Pentecostalism in Egypt and around the world. Furthermore, the research assesses theological nuances and traces significant developments in major beliefs and practices among these Egyptian Wesleyan congregations to help in the understanding of the role that the Wesleyan tradition has played in reshaping the spiritual map in Egypt.

A nest of consecrated cobblers'? Methodist Local Preachers in Victorian Oxford Martin Wellings

This paper will use the records of the Oxford Wesleyan Circuit to explore the backgrounds, origins, families and occupations of Local Preachers between 1830 and 1902. What sort of people explored and pursued a call to preach? How were they nurtured, trained and held accountable to the wider Church? Did they represent a broad swathe of the population, or a narrow segment? And did the profile of Local Preachers change in the course of the nineteenth century?

Reading religious narratives through engravings, alongside poetry: notes on 112 engravings in two works of Samuel Wesley Helmut Renders

Of the 18 works of Samuel Wesley (1662-1735), his *Life of Jesus* (1693, 1697 [1809, 2011]) and his *History of the Old and New Testament* (1701, 1701, 1715, 1716, 1717, [2019]) stand out for their dimensions, the use of 112 engravings by two in those days famous artists: William Faithorne (1616-1701) and John Sturt (1658-1730), and due to the fact that they were reissued several times during his life. The paper presents and interprets engravings from each book and discusses the meaning of the author's effort to present sacred religious themes and texts using iconography alongside with poetic narratives in a baroque style. It is concluded that this combination promotes a biblical reading that favors personal engagement and promotes religious experience, instead of the more rational or formal expressions of religion of his time. That Samuel Wesley's iconic choice dialogues with this important aspect of the religious revival promoted by his sons John (1701-1791) and Charles Wesley (1703-1788), confirms also Thomas Coke's reedition of the *Life of Jesus* in 1809. This research was prepared during a short-term research in 2020 and counted with the generous support of the Nazarene Theological College, in Didsbury, Manchester, offering housing, and the dedicated staff of the special collection of the John Rylands University Library, Manchester.

Heart Religion and Sacramental Faith: Infant Baptism in the Thought of John Wesley Charles Read

John Wesley practised and defended the baptism of infants while at the same time encouraging people to experience the grace of God in a personal way, often described as heart religion. Many of his followers as well as evangelicals in other traditions where infant baptism is practised, for example the Church of England, have struggled to reconcile a commitment to personal, experiential faith with the sacramental practice of infant baptism. This paper attempts to outline the theology which Wesley used to hold these two emphases together, utilising his writing on infant baptism in particular. It will also give some attention to how Wesley's thought has been interpreted and to developments in different traditions within Methodism. It will aim at using Wesley's thought to provide a contribution to ecumenical discussions in this area.