



**Methodist Studies Seminar**

**Saturday 8th December 2018**

**Frances Young House, 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**  *A poor worm, unworthy of all things: reclaiming ‘ordinary’ voices from the Methodist Archives for an ‘ordinary’ audience*

 Owen Roberts (Heritage Officer for the Methodist Church)

 Chair: Jonathan Dean (Queen’s Foundation)

**10.40am** *The Cry of the Beloved: British Methodist Women Ministers 1973-1996.*

 John Lenton (Hon WHS Librarian)

 Chair: Jane Craske (Queen’s Foundation)

**11.20am**  **Tea & Coffee**

**11.50am** *Methodism and Marx: Reflections on Methodism and the Labour Party*

 Pippa Catterall (University of Westminster).

 Chair: William Gibson (Oxford Brookes University**)**

**12.30pm** *1932 And All That*

Peter Forsaith (Oxford Brookes University)

 Chair: Judith Rossall (Queen’s Foundation)

**1.00pm Lunch**

 *Please bring sandwiches, tea and coffee will be available.*

**2.00pm** *Is there such a thing as a “Methodist Systematic Theology” (and if there isn’t, should there be)?*

 Prof Clive Marsh (Queen’s Foundation)

 Chair: Andrew Stobart (Wesley House, Cambridge)

**2.40pm** *The Theology of John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards*

 Caleb Rogers (MPhil student, St Mary’s College – University of St Andrews)

 Chair: Geordan Hammond (Manchester Wesley Research Centre)

**3.20pm Tea & Coffee**

**3.45pm** *The Primitive Methodist Mission to North Wales*

David Young (researcher on Primitive Methodism)

 Chair: Elizabeth Kent (Wesley Study Centre, Durham)

**4.25pm Closing Announcements**

Registration:

There is no cost for attending the seminar; however, please register by 30 November by emailing

Karen Vincent, the Administrator for the Centre for Ministerial Formation at k.vincent@queens.ac.uk

Venue:

Frances Young House,

Queen’s Foundation,

Somerset Road

Edgbaston

Birmingham

B15 2QH

Frances Young House is student accommodation, with a lecture suite attached. There is limited guest parking on site, so please park on the main Queen’s Foundation site. Use the entrance on Somerset Road and there is plenty of parking behind the Administration Block. Frances Young House is also on Somerset Road; from the Somerset Road entrance to Queen’s, turn left and walk past the Hospital. If you need disabled parking, please inform Karen Vincent at the email address above. When you get to Frances Young House, please do not use the front (accommodation) entrance but follow the signs for ‘Lecture Suite’ which will take you to the left of the building and to an entrance at the back.

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

Recording:

We are not able to livestream the seminar on this occasion, but we are planning to record and

make as many of the presentations available as possible on the Queen’s website (<http://www.queens.ac.uk/events/methodist-studies-seminar>)

**Abstracts of Papers**

*A poor worm, unworthy of all things*: *reclaiming ‘ordinary’ voices from the Methodist Archives for an ‘ordinary’ audience*

Owen Roberts, Heritage Officer for the Methodist Church

Within the Connexional Archives is a volume of 155 letters written by members of the first Methodist Societies, ‘ordinary’ people, largely unknown to scholarship, as well as to ‘ordinary’ Methodists today. The letters give direct accounts of personal spiritual experience. This paper will describe a partnership project between the University of Manchester and the Methodist Church to crowd-source transcriptions of the letters from outside the academic community. It will include reflections on heritage as a tool for public engagement with the Church and as a tool for discipleship within the Church. The presentation will also highlight the nature of the letters themselves, identifying common themes of religious agency, testimony and the life experience of otherwise undocumented women and men that are found in the collection.

*The Cry of the Beloved: British Methodist Women Ministers 1973-1996.*

Dr John Lenton, Hon WHS Librarian

When women were first accepted as probationers in the Methodist ministry in 1973, there was still some opposition to women in the ministry. Many women suffered from this over the next period. This study examines what happened to them, looks at the reasons for the report published in 1995 and describes what happened as a result.

*1932 And All That.*

Dr Peter Forsaith, Research Fellow, Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University

The 1930s was a time of unemployment and financial carnage against the backdrop of the rise of Nazism, Stalinist Russia and anti-Semitism. Yet paradoxically it was also a time of prosperity and advance, increasing home and car ownership, air travel, the cinema and radio. It was also a high time for British humour; Punch, amusing advertisements; of Fougasse or ‘1066 And All That’.

Methodists not have been renowned for their sense of humour. The coming together of most of British Methodism in 1932 was the culmination of years of aspiration and negotiation, a time for seriousness and celebration. Yet the Wesley Historical Society library holds a series of some 50, mostly satirical, ‘cartoons’ which poke fun at denominational movers and shakers, what they were doing and what they were not doing. The creator is unknown (as yet), but seems to have been a member of at least the final United Methodist Church conference, and the subsequent four or five Methodist Conferences.

This brief, light-hearted, visual presentation will introduce the cartoons, highlight some of their themes, conclude with a Test Paper and give the seminar attenders something different to talk about over lunch.

*Methodism and Marx: Reflections on Methodism and the Labour Party*

Prof Pippa Catterall, Professor of History and Policy, University of Westminster.

Morgan Phillips’ alliterative aphorism is well-know. What is less well-known is the background to it. There also remains a need for more detailed exploration of Methodism and Marxism as competing systems of thought and doctrine, and of the relationship between Methodism as an institution and the nascent Labour Party. By examining these relationships and the ideas and frameworks that Methodists like Arthur Henderson brought to Labour, this paper attempts to answer whether Labour did indeed owe more to Methodism than Marx and, if so, what?

*Is there such a thing as a “Methodist Systematic Theology” (and if there isn’t, should there be)?*

Prof Clive Marsh, Queen’s Foundation, Vice-President designate of the Methodist Conference.

Methodism is not usually well-known for its systematic theologians. Despite the 19th century contributions of Watson and Pope, the systematic expositions of John Wesley’s theology (Williams, Maddox), and the liturgical theology of Wainwright, arguably only Klaiber and Marquardt have come close in recent years to offering a Methodist systematics. Being a ‘hands on’ movement, Methodism resists too much theorizing and is more likely to produce practical theologians and missiologists (alongside biblical scholars and historians), and may therefore be well-placed to interact with contextual and liberation theologies. This paper will explore the significance of this lacuna and tension. It will argue that any vibrant Christian movement has, and has to have, a living, constantly evolving, explicitly contentious theology. Yet this theology has to be ‘systematic’ in the sense that it must always be clear how its main thrust relates to the key themes of Christian doctrine (what it emphasises more and less, and why that is) lest it become a distortion of Christian belief and practice. It will  thus examine what are the positive and negative dimensions of highlighting ‘Methodist theological emphases’. In particular, this paper will press – on the basis of the author’s recent explorations into a contemporary cultural theology of salvation – why, in its emphasis on sanctification, Methodism will always risk being charged with Pelagianism without (hopefully) actually being so.

*The Theology of John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards*

Caleb Rogers, MPhil student, St Mary’s College, University of St Andrews.

In 1740 John Taylor published his controversial work on the doctrine of Original Sin. This work quickly drew the dissenting attention of a number of notable theologians, including (but certainly not limited to) John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards. In response to Taylor's work, both men wrote lengthy responses, drawing heavily on scripture as well as on similar responses by David Jennings, Isaac Watts, and James Hervey. This paper will carefully examine and compare the responses by Wesley and Edwards, considering the similarities in their positions while also exploring the nuances of a central doctrine that divided the two men: God’s expression of his sovereignty in election.

*The Primitive Methodist Mission to North Wales*

David Young, author of three published books on Primitive Methodism, currently researching for a fourth volume.

The paper will track the two branches of the movement into North Wales, from Cheshire and from Shropshire. It will explore the inner life and character of the movement, both laudable and disheartening aspects, with glimpses at a small number of the main personalities and at its distribution at about the time of Methodist reunion. The paper will conclude with a brief forward look at ongoing research into the survival of Primitive Methodism in North Wales and elsewhere up till the present day.