ARTICLES

Hanoverian Oxford and the Fashioning of John Wesley, c.1720–1745 / 121
NIGEL ASTON

Another Look at the Methodist/Wesleyan Love Feast: Introduction, Reception, Adaptation, and Emerging Possibilities / 145
KAREN B. WESTERFIELD TUCKER

The Old Wesleys and ‘the New Luther’: Rethinking the Relationship between Their Soteriologies / 177
JOHN R. TYSON

Faith Seeking Efficacy: José Míguez Bonino as a Wesleyan Theologian / 199
RYAN R. GLADWIN

BOOK REVIEWS

John Lenton, Clive Murray Norris, and Linda A. Ryan (eds), Women, Preachers, Methodists: Papers from Two Conferences Held in 2019, the 350th Anniversary of Susanna Wesley’s Birth / 215
REVIEWED BY JENNIFER SMITH

Timothy Larsen (ed.), Every Leaf, Line, and Letter: Evangelicals and the Bible from the 1730s to the Present / 216
REVIEWED BY MARTIN WELLINGS

Sarah Heaner Lancaster, Randy L. Maddox, and Kelly Diehl Yates (eds), Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises III (The Works of John Wesley, volume 14) / 218
REVIEWED BY DAVID M. CHAPMAN

Reviewed by Andrew Chandler

Stephen P. West, *Something Happens Here: Reclaiming the Distinctiveness of Wesley’s Communion Spirituality in Times of Divisiveness* / 223

Reviewed by Adam Ployd

David W. Scott, Daryl R. Ireland, Grace Y. May, and Casely B. Essamuah (eds), *Unlikely Friends: How God Uses Boundary-Crossing Friendships to Transform the World* / 225

Reviewed by Andrew Stobart

**SHORT NOTICES**

Gerald Bray, *The History of Christianity in Britain and Ireland: From the First Century to the Twenty-First* / 228

Reviewed by Martin Wellings

Felicity Cain, *Mazes of Time, Sixteen Gregorys: The Story of a Methodist Family* / 229

Reviewed by Gareth J. Powell


Reviewed by Martin Wellings

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Hanoverian Oxford and the Fashioning of John Wesley, c.1720–1745

Nigel Aston

Abstract
This article is an attempt at recovering the Oxford contexts of John Wesley’s young manhood, charting his milieu more exactly in the light of the most recent scholarship, and, in so doing, moving away from the outworn depiction of the virtuous and misunderstood young Wesley in a university setting largely deficient in its Christian practices. It argues that Oxford’s unsuccessful relationship and persistent ambivalence toward the mature John Wesley was due at least as much to him as it was to the university.

Keywords: University of Oxford, Christ Church, Lincoln College, John Wesley, Holy Club

A good deal is known about what John Wesley (1703–91), at different periods of his life, thought about the University of Oxford; much less is known about his place within the wider culture of the university in the 1720s and 1730s, and the individuals who helped in his intellectual and spiritual formation, even if that was only in his reaction against them. This article attempts to sharpen our sense of these crucial early contexts, recovering and charting his milieu more exactly and, in so doing, moving away from the outworn reflex and self-justifying trope of the virtuous and misunderstood Wesley contra mundum, a mundus in which Oxford always looms large. After setting out the essential Oxonian contexts of the early 1720s, it considers five connected categories in his academic fashioning: the nature of the education that he received at the university; theological and ecclesiological influences; political determinants; his social formation
ANOTHER LOOK AT THE METHODIST/WESLEYAN LOVE FEAST:
Introduction, Reception, Adaptation, and Emerging Possibilities
KAREN B. WESTERFIELD TUCKER

ABSTRACT
The article considers the viability of the Methodist/Wesleyan love feast today based on historical, liturgical, and practical investigations of its use in selected ecclesial contexts from the eighteenth century to the present. Six categories derived from Wesley’s description of the practice in his ‘Plain Account’ focus the study, enabling an examination of the love feast as an experiential event marked by prayer, a common ‘meal’, and the sharing of God’s love, and done in imitation of apostolic practice as a prudential means of grace.

Keywords: love feast, Methodist and Wesleyan practices, Methodist, John Wesley, Wesleyan

During Lent 2020, I received an email from a former student, now a United Methodist Church pastor. She was planning the congregation’s upcoming Maundy Thursday service, which, because of COVID-19 restrictions, would occur online. The congregation had a tradition of Holy Communion for Maundy Thursday, but she did not consider this an option under the circumstances—for theological, liturgical, and pastoral reasons. Would a love feast, she asked, be a suitable substitute? She knew that, historically, testimonies were an important part of the love feast. Could she forego that component as well as singing in favour of only prayer, the attendees eating in their respective places, and a simple sharing of joys, sorrows, and frustrations—and still call the practice a ‘love feast’? Could she claim this adjusted practice to be part of the ‘Wesleyan tradition’?
THE OLD WESLEYS AND ‘THE NEW LUTHER’: Rethinking the Relationship Between their Soteriologies

JOHN R. TYSON

ABSTRACT
This article explores John and Charles Wesley’s ambiguous relationship with the soteriology of Martin Luther. Their early admiration for Luther’s theology of justification by faith played a significant role in the conversion experience of both men, but subsequently, John wrote that Luther was ‘ignorant of the doctrine of sanctification’ and ‘confused in his conception of it’. The ‘new’ Finnish reading of Luther’s soteriology, pioneered by Tuomo Mannermaa, opens new avenues for soteriological conversation and consensus between Lutherans and Methodists. A few of the old misunderstandings are untangled and more congenial theological trajectories are suggested by this article.

Keywords: John Wesley, Martin Luther, justification, righteousness, faith

Wesleyan scholars have long been interested in the intersection between the theology of Martin Luther and that of the Wesley brothers. Mark Olson’s recent article, ‘Martin Luther’s Contribution to John Wesley’s Doctrine of Justification’, which appeared in Wesley and Methodist Studies, evidences this continued interest. The historical and theological connections between the co-founders of Methodism and the Saxon reformer began with the dramatic events of May 1738, when both Wesley brothers identified the work of Martin Luther as a

This article is a distillation of a paper presented to the Wesleyan Studies section of the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, 2018.

1. Mark K. Olson, ‘Martin Luther’s Contribution to John Wesley’s Doctrine of Justification’, Wesley and Methodist Studies, 13/2 (2021), 130–53.
FAITH SEEKING EFFICACY: JOSÉ MÍGUEZ BONINO AS A WESLEYAN THEOLOGIAN

RYAN R. GLADWIN

ABSTRACT
This article argues that the late Argentine liberation theologian José Míguez Bonino was a Wesleyan theologian, although he is usually noted for having other theological influences. First, the article documents how Míguez emerged as a constructive theologian with numerous theological influences and concerns for ecumenism and liberation. Second, the article confronts the difficulties of using Wesleyanism as a hermeneutical lens for interpreting Míguez’s theology. Third, the article proposes that Míguez is an implicit Wesleyan theologian and that this is most clearly seen in his overarching desire to form a theology committed to social efficacy.

Keywords: José Míguez Bonino, liberation theology, Latin American theology, Argentina, social efficacy

The late José Míguez Bonino (1924–2012) wrote the following in the preface to his 1995 book, Faces of Latin American Protestantism:

I have been variously tagged as a conservative, a revolutionary, a Barthian, a liberal, a catholic, a ‘moderate’, and a liberationist. Probably there is truth in all of these. It is not for me to decide. However, when I do attempt to define myself in my innermost being, what ‘comes from within’ is that I am evangélico . . . At least an evangélico is what I have always wanted to be.'

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The MWRC supports the research of scholars studying the Methodist, Wesleyan, Evangelical, Holiness, and Pentecostal traditions, particularly from MWRC partner institutions. Each year visiting research fellows are welcomed for short periods of intensive research in Manchester. The MWRC helps facilitate access to the world-renowned Methodist Archives and Research Centre at The John Rylands Research Institute and Library in Manchester. It also has its own specialist library with research space for visiting researchers and PhD students studying at MWRC partner institutions. The Centre regularly hosts lectures and conferences, normally available simultaneously in person and online. It is also involved in the publication of the book series Studies in the Holiness and Pentecostal Movements. For more information about the Centre and upcoming events, go to: www.mwrc.ac.uk or contact the Centre's Director, Dr Geordan Hammond: ghammond@nazarene.ac.uk.

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The Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History is a research centre of Oxford Brookes University, which embodies the relationship between the university and the trustees of the former Westminster College, Oxford. The Centre is home to important resources, including the Wesley Historical Society Library and a number of archive and art collections. The Routledge Methodist Studies Series of monograph research publications is also edited from the Centre. The Centre offers a small number of visiting research fellowships each year to enable scholars to come to Oxford to use its resources. The Centre also has a number of research students working in the broad field of religious history and culture. It also sponsors lectures, conferences, and other research activity. For more information, go to: https://www.brookes.ac.uk/hpc/research/oxford-centre-for-methodism-and-church-history/ or contact the Centre's Director, Professor William Gibson: wgibson@brookes.ac.uk.
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The Methodist Studies Seminars were established in 2012 by the Manchester Wesley Research Centre and Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University as a biannual seminar series. This collaboration has extended to include the Wesley Study Centre, St John's College, Durham University; Wesley House, Cambridge; Cliff College; and The Queen's Foundation, Birmingham. The seminars provide 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. For further information, visit: www.mwrc.ac.uk/methodist-studies-seminars/.