

## THE ECUMENICAL WESLEYS.

Throughout the year 2003, Methodists around the world celebrated the tercentenary of the birth of John Wesley. As a close friend and valued ecumenical colleague recently pointed out to me, the celebration, at least on her side of the Atlantic, seemed to be very much a Methodist family affair, with relatively little ecumenical participation and even less attention to any lessons that we might draw from the heritage of the Wesley brothers for the Ecumenical Movement today.

That there are such lessons soon becomes clear to any serious student of the Wesleys, particularly since the richness of their heritage has been increasingly demonstrated by a series of distinguished American scholars beginning with the redoubtable Albert Outler. Before Methodists begin to commend the Wesley heritage to others, they must first ask themselves how far they have re-received it themselves. Has, for example, the richness of the eucharistic practice of the Wesleys and the teaching of the hymns of Charles on the Lord's Supper really been re-received in general amongst the Methodist people? There is, however, no doubt, that there are also valuable resources for the wider oikoumene within the practice and teaching of the Wesleys.

To some, it might appear outrageous to claim Wesley as in any sense contributing to the Ecumenical Movement. Was he not bitterly, at times, almost obsessively anti-Roman Catholic, writing many pamphlets in denunciation of Roman practice and theology<sup>1</sup>? Did he not oppose the Catholic Relief Act of 1778 that lifted some of the ancient restrictions on British Catholics? Was he not frequently over hasty and autocratic, far from the irenicism and sweet good will that should characterise the ecumenist? There is certainly truth in all of these charges, though it is important to remember that, on other occasions, Wesley could indeed be irenic. He never, for example, ceased to admire the holiness of so many in the Roman traditions; he even acknowledged that, on account of this and of the essential faith held in common, he could cope with 'their holding wrong opinions, yea and even superstitious ones'<sup>2</sup>.

To understand Wesley aright, we must remember that his incessant missionary activity, from 1738 through till only months before his death at the ripe age of 88, did not give him the leisure for systematic thinking, clear and incisive though his writing usually was. He did change his mind on some matters, for example on the absolute necessity of the historic episcopal succession for true ministerial and churchly status, though the changes often amounted more to an accommodation of new and complementary insights rather than totally radical breaks<sup>3</sup>. Wesley was in many ways an exemplar of that attitude of mind for which many ecumenists have since called, a mindset that is prepared constantly to re-read the Apostolic Tradition, to be prepared to receive truths previously ignored and to re-receive truths previously neglected. Despite his constant travelling and preaching, he read voraciously and was indebted to an extraordinary variety of sources, eastern and Western, Puritan and high church Anglican, continental Protestant, pietist and counter-reformation<sup>4</sup>. In all this, he anticipated the modern era in which we take such practice for granted.

It may be felt, perhaps particularly by some who are much better Wesley scholars than I am ever likely to be, that, in what follows, I have over-selectively interpreted Wesley and wrenched him unreasonably out of his context in order to serve a very different age and set of issues. To an extent I plead guilty to this charge, but with two caveats, firstly, that I believe that what I am doing is in accordance with his own practice and respect for the Christian past

and, secondly, that I am writing in the true spirit of Tradition, the gift of the Holy Spirit to His Church, within which we seek wisdom from past precisely in order to guide us in the present. I do not pretend for one moment to see Wesley as a modern ecumenist; what I do argue is that in the work and thought of the Wesley brothers one can discern, as it were, proto-ecumenical insights and impulses that can legitimately serve us today and it is a few of these I propose to share here.

The first principle of ecumenical usefulness that I discern in John Wesley's practice was his way of combining tradition and innovation. Wesley's veneration for the early Church had a spin on it that subtly differentiated it from that of the Caroline high churchmen of the previous century. They had admired the doctrinal achievement of the fathers. Wesley rather admired the purity of the primitive Church and its dedication to prayer, charity and the cheerful bearing of apostolic suffering<sup>5</sup>.

Wesley's immediate concern was with the evangelisation of England, a country where, as a result of the failure to reform the ancient parochial system in accordance with changing population patterns, a high proportion of the population had become effectively unchurched. Wesley was, however, not just concerned for conversions. He was concerned for real growth in grace, something that he acknowledged could only happen effectively within a genuinely ecclesial context. His concern being 'to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land', how, in view both of the prevailing parochial pattern and the nature of contemporary Anglicanism, which was not well adjusted to deal with converts from an unchurched situation, could he cope? From this need, not merely to convert but to nurture converts in the life of grace, stemmed a whole series of pastoral innovations, such as the class meetings, the lay preaching the circuit system and so on<sup>6</sup>.

In writing, in 1748, his classical *Plain Account of the People called Methodists*, Wesley commented on what he saw as the providential nature of the innovations made by himself and the first Methodists.

'But I must premise, that as they had not the least expectation, at first, of anything like what has since followed, so they had nor previous design or pattern at all; but everything arose just as the occasion offered. They saw or felt some impending or pressing evil, or some good end necessary to be pursued. And many times they fell unawares on the very thing that secure the good, and removed the evil. At other times, they consulted on the most probable means, following only common sense and Scripture: Though generally, they found, in looking back, something in Christian antiquity likewise very parallel thereto'<sup>7</sup>.

Within this statement we find at least an implicit encapsulation of the famous Wesleyan Quadrilateral, applied not in this situation to teaching but to practical innovations in Christian nurture. Wesley claimed constantly to be *homo unius libri*, but, as John Newton observes, he was too wise to read that one book, primary as it is for all Christians, unaided by the use of reason and the witness of Christian tradition and present experience. Wesley was frequently to find parallels for his innovation, eg the sending out of twelve travelling evangelists in Queen Elizabeth's time as a precursor of the work of his itinerant preachers. The Wesleys re-read the Apostolic Tradition as an holistic continuum of faith, life and practice. They did not privilege ministerial continuity as the key focus of apostolicity nor yet doctrine as had the classical Protestants; they rather, in a very real sense, in their practice rather than in any developed theological statement per se, anticipated the BEM/Porvoo definition of apostolicity as a 'bundle of characteristics'<sup>8</sup>. Their innovations represented a particularly rich mixture of

boldness, under the leading and prompting of the Spirit and of concern that the real apostolicity of the Church be replicated in the common life of those who accepted their discipline. John Wesley combined a daring experimentalism with a desire to refer back to Scripture and Tradition alike in order to verify that his innovations were, indeed, in true continuity with the Christian past. Charles' hymns encapsulated the lived experience of the Methodist people, allowing them to identify present experience with that of the apostolic Church. For example.

Come and let us sweetly join  
Christ to praise in hymns divine:  
Give we all with one accord,  
Glory to our common Lord.

Hearts and hands and voices raise:  
Sing as in the ancient days:  
Antedate the joys above,  
Celebrate the feast of love.

Strive we in affection strive:  
Let the purer flame revive,  
Such as in the martyrs glowed,  
Dying champions for their God.

We, like them, may live and love;  
Called we are their joys to prove,  
Saved with them from future wrath,  
Partners of like precious faith<sup>9</sup>.

Wesley's understanding of apostolicity and his emphasis upon practical Christian living must not lead us to think, as some have, that he underestimated the importance of either of due order or of true doctrine. He was prepared to break Anglican rules and canons for the sake of mission alone, as with both his resort to open air preaching in 1739 and his later ordinations from 1784 onwards, but he had no illusions as to the need to obey all legitimate rules in matters indifferent. Though he quarrelled with some traditional definitions of the phenomenon of schism, he had no doubt that schism always had evil effects, even when it was unfortunately necessary and that resort to it always disappointed expectations<sup>10</sup>. On one famous occasion, Wesley averred that orthodoxy was only a tiny part of true religion, a statement that was not, as some have take it, that he was some sort of proto Liberal Protestant, but was rather intended to make the entirely catholic and orthodox point that belief without the energetic pursuit of holiness was of no avail. Geoffrey Wainwright has well documented the centrality of trinitarian theology for both the Wesley brothers. He has referred to Wesley's generous orthodoxy' by which he means Wesley's willingness to accept that many of the secondary points over which theologians had differed were matters of opinion over which Christians of differing confessions could disagree without forfeiting the name of Christian or ultimate salvation<sup>11</sup>.

Though, as we have already said, Wesley was no systematic theologian in the classical sense, he added an important practical dimension to theological thinking, emphasising the importance of the analysis and practical experiential application of the Scripture Way of Salvation, encompassing the doctrines of justification, sanctification and assurance<sup>12</sup>. He has

sometimes been called a folk theologian because he aimed to help the Methodist people understand the work of the Holy Trinity, and especially that of the Spirit within their lives. This action of the Wesleys and their followers, alongside their ecclesial innovations helped to establish Methodism as a genuine typos of the Christian faith, rooted in the same trinitarian faith, but with an added emphasis upon present experience, understood, however, not as the claim to an extraordinary revelation of the Spirit (which Bishop Butler thought it to be) but a re-reception of the fullness of the ordinary experience of the Christian believer. In this, we see fruit born to the close association of Scripture, Tradition and experience in Wesley's thinking, Scripture always being primary, but its meaning clarified by Tradition and its witness being verified in living experience<sup>13</sup>. In his re-reception of the experiential dimension of Christian faith, Wesley helped to recover a true element of the Apostolic Tradition, clearly evidenced in Scripture, but to a great extent buried beneath the aridity of much contemporary church life in England and beyond<sup>14</sup>.

Wesley's holistic understanding of Scripture, Tradition, reason and experience is accompanied by an holistic understanding of the means of grace that speaks powerfully to present debates both within and between confessional traditions. In his thinking, Wesley drew a distinction between the 'covenanted' means of grace and the 'prudential' means. The former were those explicitly mandated in Scripture, such as the two gospel sacraments, preaching, reading of the Word, the latter were means of grace developed later in the history of the Church, lacking specific biblical mandate as such, but certainly compatible with biblical faith. These would include the means developed within Methodism, such as renewal of the Covenant and meeting in class<sup>15</sup>. They would also include other means developed in other traditions, amongst which we might include the saying of the Rosary (it is known that John Wesley owned a rosary, but nothing is known about the use to which he may have put it).

Wesley's definition of the means of grace was broad and amongst them he included what Catholics traditionally have called the 'corporal works of mercy' since many of these, such as visitation of the sick and the bereaved are biblically commanded. Charles underlined this in the first verse of his hymn on Scripture, showing that obedience to Scriptural commands was, in itself, productive of an increase of grace. The initial lines are worth quoting,

Come, divine Interpreter,  
Bring us eyes Thy Book to read,  
Ears the mystic words to hear.  
Words which did from Thee proceed,  
Words that endless bliss impart  
Kept in an obedient heart.

All who read, or hear are blessed,  
If Thy plain commands we do.<sup>16</sup>

Wesley was insistent that the Methodists used all the means of grace. He preached a famous sermon on 'the duty of constant communion' believing that everyone should avail him or herself of every opportunity of eucharistic communion. In an era when some Anglican churches only had a monthly eucharist and many more only three or four celebrations a year, Wesley's recovery of the centrality of the eucharist was remarkable: it is estimated that he celebrated on average twice a week, often to large congregations. One of Charles' hymns actually prays for the 'restoration of the daily sacrifice'<sup>17</sup>. He was insistent that, as far as

possible, the Methodists attend both the services of the established church and of their own societies, that they prayed and fasted regularly and gave themselves to all good works. In his practice, one can see an anticipated coalescence of what one might denominate the three main schools of traditional Christian piety, the eucharistically centred piety of the 'catholic' tradition, the word centred piety of the classical Reformation, but also the free church and radical reformation emphasis upon small group fellowship and the importance of practical Christian living<sup>18</sup>.

Today, Methodists can be at one with Catholics, classical Protestants and free churchmen, Mennonites and Quakers in their respective emphases, whilst witnessing that each emphasis is incomplete without the other. All the means of grace are to be used as frequently and as seriously as possible. Those who prefer certain means to the exclusion of using others are to search their consciences as to whether they are receiving as fully as possible from the total richness with which the Holy Spirit has endowed the Church. But Methodists have also to put their own house in order. In far too few Methodist churches is the eucharist yet central to weekly Sunday worship. Some modern Methodist preaching comes close to being entertainment or moralising rather than real solid biblical and doctrinal preaching. Methodists are still often well engaged in works of mercy, though perhaps not as much beyond the confines of their congregations as might be the case.

At the heart of Wesley's strategy for Christian nurture was the concept of accountable fellowship<sup>19</sup>. His constant emphasis was that the New Testament knew nothing of the solitary Christian and that all needed to be watched over in faith and love, the ministers as well as the people. Wesley provided for the most rigorous system of episcopate yet developed within the Church, one that almost uncannily anticipated the modern emphasis upon individual, collegial and communal. At the apex was his own very individual episcopate of the whole movement, one that at times was perhaps over purely individual; at the Conference of 1771, one member recorded that, 'Mr Wesley seemed to do all the business'. At all levels, however, the theory was that there be co-ordinate episcopate, that of individuals, such as Mr Wesley, and in the circuits his travelling preachers and; very locally, that of the class leaders, but at every level also in co-ordination with others, the travelling preachers with the class leaders, in the classes, the leaders with the other members, since each member was to give account of his or her struggles and trials to the whole class and not just to the leader<sup>20</sup>.

Wesley's understanding that we are accountable to each other and in the sight of God for our growth in grace, our stewardship of our gifts, talents and possessions, has a message for us today. We are all interdependently accountable for our growth in grace and our contribution to the total mission and work of the Church. Within the Methodist movement, this understanding of interdependent mutual accountability found form in the *connexional principle* according to which all the resources of the Church are to be shared in the overall interests and priorities of the mission. No local congregation can be totally independent precisely because all Christians and all local churches are interdependent in the one Christ, who is 'never without His people seen'<sup>21</sup>.

Long before modern ecumenical theologians recovered the centrality of the ecclesiology of koinonia, the early Methodists of Wesley's time were practising it and singing it in Charles Wesley's hymn. The Methodists were singing

The gift that He on one bestows,  
We all delight to prove:

The grace through every vessel flows  
In purest streams of love<sup>22</sup>.

The ideal of the Wesleys' heirs, the great Wesleyan theologians of the nineteenth century, was a system with the finest circulation of love, a koinonia in which ministries were exercised within the Church (rather than above it as in pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism, or below it, as sometimes, in the independent tradition). Within the Connexional Principle, we can perhaps find the solution to the vexed question of the nature of unity in reconciled diversity, a concept so frequently adumbrated yet also so often too variously and incongruously understood. Unity in reconciled diversity, if it is to be truly unity and truly legitimately diverse must involve structures of mutual accountability such that reconciled churches take no step imperilling unity of belief, but also ensuring that they meet the real needs in mission and nurture of others. Methodists must also now face the challenge, which of course, Wesley never faced, as to whether a truly global connexionalism implies a necessary reception of the Petrine ministry, received however, in a form compatible with the Methodist practice of koinonia and episcopate outlined above<sup>23</sup>.

Finally, in terms of general lessons, we should look at Wesley's breadth of reference and recognition. Wesley never ceased to consider himself a loyal Anglican. He regarded the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer as the most scriptural, rational and pious in Christendom, but that did not prevent him from recognising the good in others. Reference as already been made to the breadth of his reading, a breadth that he wished the Methodist people to benefit from. He collected writings from the best spiritual authors, ancient and modern, into his Christian Library, which he published as a resource for his travelling preachers. He understood that error in certain directions did not prevent strength and goodness in others, and, despite his strictures on Rome, he commended such men as Fenelon, 'that excellent man the Bishop of Cambrai' and the general teaching of Rome on sanctification. He was indignant with those who failed to recognise the work of the Spirit where it manifestly existed; thus, he said that it was a 'manifest absurdity' to deny the existence of real churches amongst the non-episcopal communities.

Though the Wesleys never dealt in detail with the question of unity, Charles' hymn revealed a direction in which he was instinctively moving as a result of their experience of the living koinonia of the Church

Love, like death, hath all destroyed,  
Rendered all distinctions void:  
Names and sects and parties fall:  
Thou, O Christ, art all in all<sup>24</sup>.

It can be argued that, latent within the entire Wesleyan theological vision, there is an optimism of grace, a lyricism or praise, a natural eschatological ardour that naturally inclines towards the unity of all believers in the Church, and, indeed, of all creation. It can be seen in so many of the hymns of joy and thanksgiving, of love and communion, and, above all, in the hymns for the Church and fellowship. Thus we read such lines as

Touched by the lodestone of Thy love,  
Let all our hearts agree,  
And ever towards each other move,  
And ever move towards Thee<sup>25</sup>.

Or

Finish then Thy new creation,  
Pure and spotless let us be:  
Let us see Thy great creation,  
Perfectly restored in Thee<sup>26</sup>.

There is the whole Wesleyan sense of the work of the Spirit in His Church. Listen to Wesley commenting on the 'having of all things in common' referred to in Acts 2 and 4.

'How came they so to act, seeing that we know of no positive command to do this. I answer, there needed no outwards command: the command was written on their hearts. It naturally and necessarily resulted from the degree of love which they enjoyed. Observe! "They were of one heart and of one soul"<sup>27</sup>.

Perhaps it is natural that, two centuries later, the Methodist theologian, Rex Kissack, made a deduction that Wesley never actually made himself, but which can, nevertheless, be seen as a valid one, that a belief in the unity of the Church within time is a necessary ecclesiological consequence of the doctrine of entire sanctification<sup>28</sup>. Again, as in the other matters we have been discussing, the Wesleyan trajectory is a naturally holistic and catholic one.

In conclusion, we must say a little about the tragic split between Methodism and the Anglican Church, a split still not fully healed despite the English and Irish Covenants, the achievement of unity in the Indian sub-continent and other happy developments<sup>29</sup>. The original intention of the Wesleys was to reinvigorate and revive the Church of England. Wesley did not see himself as setting up a new church. he remained quite clear to the end that his travelling preachers were 'extraordinary ministers, designed to provoke the ordinary ministers of the Church to jealousy', by which Wesley meant emulation. Sadly, the effect in most cases was to provoke precisely to the wrong sort of jealousy. The Wesleys intended that the alternative and complementary forms of ecclesial and devotional life that they inspired should complement, not replace those of the Church of England. Some Methodists, even after the formalised split in England, remained loyal to this ideal and continued to attend services, especially sacramental ones, in the parish church way into the nineteenth century. Others, however, found their ecclesial life solely within the societies, in some cases because of persecution by Anglican clergy who repelled them from the Lord's Table, in others because of a simple preference for the purely Methodist diet of worship and a non-enthusiasm for the liturgy of the Church of England. Their action, however motivated, nevertheless necessarily destroyed the creative balance that Wesley had intended to prevail in which Methodists would avail themselves both of the old and the new.

As Richard P. Heitzenrater and others have shown, Methodism was more than just the creation of the Wesleys, central as their role was<sup>30</sup>. It acquired a life of its own and it would have acquired greater grace than at the time existed on either side for the majority of Anglicans and Methodists to realise this. Two hundred years later, an English ecumenical forum was to declare that 'unity comes alive as we learn to live together in one another's' traditions. In 2002, the joint committee commending the proposed Anglican-Methodist Covenant was to talk of the need to 'harvest our traditions together', but such sentiments could only be the fruit of the sustained development of the modern Ecumenical Movement, however much in certain respects, the spirituality of the Wesleys may have anticipated it.

John Wesley deplored the possibility of a split; Charles went even further in denouncing his brothers ordinations as unacceptable breaches with the discipline of the Church.

Some of the irenicism of the Wesleys and their breath of vision was always to be retained in Methodism, particularly by William Shrewsbury, of whom I have written previously in this journal. The penalty of schism was not merely the loss of charity but also isolation and distortion of the tradition on both sides of the divide. Methodism, on both sides of the Atlantic, retained the missionary vigour of the Wesleys but descended long into a narrow pietism from which it needed to be rescued by wider currents at the end of the nineteenth century. Above all, the rich eucharistic tradition of the Wesleys was severely attenuated. The Church of England lost a distinctive teaching about Christian experience and holiness that could have helped to build bridges between its deeply divided nineteenth century parties and save the tractarian movement from the emotional dryness and legalism that affected so many of its protagonists. The Methodist scholar, Munsey Turner, has pointed to the tragedy of the fact that neither Wesleyans nor Anglo-Catholics ever fully understood that they shared an identical passion for holiness<sup>31</sup>. As Johannes Adam Mohler has taught us, contrasting, but complementary theological positions can be held in creative tension within the communion of the Church; deprived of that communion, they tend to harden into rigid oppositions<sup>32</sup>. A key task of the Ecumenical Movement is to reverse that process and allow true unity in diversity to flourish.

I hope I have shown, if only extremely briefly, that the Methodism of the Wesleys is a true *typos* or consistent style of Christian living, with its distinctive understanding and practice of Church as interconnected *koinonia*, of episcopate and of breadth of understanding and use of the means of grace. There is a very real sense in which the Wesleys intended it to act as a sort of 'order' within the contemporary Church of England. There are those who would covet form it such a status within the Universal Church of the future. Whatever the outcome of the ecumenical quest, whether Methodism does indeed become such an order or whether it survives in a more formally ecclesial form, but in reconciled communion with others, the contribution of the Wesleys will and should remain a permanent endowment for the *oikoumene*, for Methodists to share with all other Christians while they, simultaneously, enrich Methodism with their gifts.

David Carter.

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<sup>1</sup> The standard work on Wesley and his relationship with Roman Catholic is Butler, D, *Methodists and Papists* (London, 1995) which gives a full account of his writings, both the more rebarbative ones and his more irenic ones, such as the famous Letter to a Roman Catholic, of 1749.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon 74 'On the Church' in Wesley, J. Works, (Baker, F, ed), Abingdon edition, Nashville, 1986, vol 3, p.52.

<sup>3</sup> The complex story of Wesley's views on the nature and structure of Christian ministry can be found in Lawson, A.B. *John Wesley and the Christian Ministry*, London, 1963. The evolution was much more complex than used to be allowed by traditional Methodist apologists.

<sup>4</sup> The range of these sources is brilliantly surveyed by the French scholar, Jean Orcibal in his essay 'The Theological Originality of John Wesley' in vol 1 of Davies, R.E. and Rupp, G. (eds) *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, London, 1965, pp. 81-112.

<sup>5</sup> The standard work on this is Campbell, Ted, *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, Nashville, 1991.

<sup>6</sup> The standard work on Wesley's life and overall mission is Rack, H. *Reasonable Enthusiast*, (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) London, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in *History of the Methodist Church in G.B.*, op cit, vol 4, p. 92.



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- <sup>8</sup> Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry, para 34. The great Wesleyan ecclesologist, James Rigg, claimed that the Methodist revival was at least as much a revival of primitive church life as of apostolic doctrine. Rigg, J.H. *Principles of Church Organisation*, London, 1887, p.207. W.F. Slater, writing in 1885, made a similar point.
- <sup>9</sup> Hymn 519 in the classic 1780 collection. *Hymns and Psalms, a Methodist and Ecumenical Hymn Book* (London, 1983), the current official British Methodist hymnal, gives it as hymn no. 756.
- <sup>10</sup> See sermon 75, 'On Schism' in Wesley, J. *Works*, op cit, vol. 3. Pp. 59-69, and 'Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England' in *ibid*, vol. 9, pp. 334-339.
- <sup>11</sup> For Wainwright's essay on 'generous orthodoxy', see his *Methodists in Dialog*, Nashville, 1995, pp. 231-6, see also his essay 'Why Wesley was a trinitarian', *ibid*, pp. 261-276.
- <sup>12</sup> See his sermon 43, 'The Scripture Way of Salvation', in *Works*, op cit, vol 2, pp. 158 ff, also the standard work by Kenneth Collins. *The Scripture Way of Salvation-the Heart of John Wesley's Theology*, Nashville, 1997.
- <sup>13</sup> For an exposition of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and the relationships between the four elements of Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience, see Gunter, W. Stephen (ed), *Wesley and the Quadrilateral*, Nashville, 1997. See also the very useful discussion of orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthopathy in Runyon, T. *The New Creation*, Nashville, 1997, pp. 146-167.
- <sup>14</sup> Wesley helped to recover the understanding of grace as a relationship rather than the 'thing' that it had tended to become in much theological thinking. On the whole question of grace as relationship see the classic work of the English Presbyterian, *Grace and Personality*, Cambridge, 1917.
- <sup>15</sup> See the sermon 16, 'On the Means of Grace' in *Works*, op cit, vol 1, pp. 158 ff.
- <sup>16</sup> *Hymns and Psalms*, op cit, no. 468.
- <sup>17</sup> Sermon, 'The Duty of Constant Communion'. The key work on the eucharistic practice of the Wesleys is Bowmer, J.C. *The Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, London, 1951.
- <sup>18</sup> In a rather similar way, Colin Williams in *John Wesley's Theology Today*, London, 1960, pp. 141-166, relates elements of Wesley's ecclesiology to each of three traditions, catholic, classical protestant and free church.
- <sup>19</sup> A key modern interpretation is Watson, D. L. *The Early Methodist Class meeting*, Nashville, 1985.
- <sup>20</sup> For some account of this, see my recent essay in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, vol 2, no. 2 (2002), pp. 47-66. 'Episkope and Episcopacy in British and American Methodism, Past Present and Future'.
- <sup>21</sup> For some account of the Connexional Principle, see the article by Bruce Robbins and myself, 'Connexionalism and Koinonia' in *One in Christ*, 34, (1998), pp. 320-336.
- <sup>22</sup> *Hymns and Psalms*, op cit, no. 753.
- <sup>23</sup> and has begun to face it. See 'Towards A Statement on the Church', (Statement of fourth quinquennium of international Roman Catholic-Methodist dialogue) para 58, cited in Gros, J, Meyer, H and Rusch, W. (eds) *Growth in Agreement*, vol 2. p.593.
- <sup>24</sup> *Hymns and Psalms Agreement*, vol 2. p.593.
- <sup>24</sup> *Hymns and Psalms*, op cit, no 764.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, no. 773.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, no. 267.
- <sup>27</sup> Cited in Jennings, T. *Good news for the Poor*, Nashville, p. 112.
- <sup>28</sup> Kissack, R. *Church or No Church*, London, 1963, p. 145.
- <sup>29</sup> For the text of the Covenant, solemnly approved by the British Methodist Conference and the general Synod of the Church of England in July 2003, see *An Anglican-Methodist Covenant*, London, 2001, pp. 60-61.
- <sup>30</sup> Heitzenrater, R. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, Nashville, 1995.
- <sup>31</sup> Turner, J.M. *Conflict and Reconciliation. Studies in Methodism and Ecumenicalism*, London, 1985, pp. 152-3.
- <sup>32</sup> For a useful and brief summary of Mohler on this point, see citation in Congar, Y. *Diversity and Communion* (ET), London, 1984, pp. 149-152.

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