

# OXFORD **notes**

NEWSLETTER OF THE OXFORD INSTITUTE OF METHODIST THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Volume I

Summer 1987

Number 6

## articles

searched so many hearts" but "no single figure influenced so many more Wesley's intellectual influence was more extensive than generally has been supposed, beyond often on questions of eschatology and morality, as exemplified in Wesley's correspondence with Mary Grew and Frederick in reference to Luther's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Peccatorum, Status et Liberae* of *Method* (understanding, he considered but had been available to the masses through his Aristotle lectures and of the Christian Library series. The result was generations of holy laughter.

### **THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT ADOPTED BY WMC, NAIROBI, July 23, 1986.**

#### *An Invitation*

for Christians in the Methodist tradition to claim and reaffirm the essential Apostolic and universal teachings of the historic Christian Faith.

#### **I**

1. Since Methodists form a Christian community, scattered in mission throughout the world, they are compelled to give an account of who they are by declaring what they believe and hope. The good they do appears to some as more obvious than the faith they profess, and yet they proclaim that the good they do proceeds out of the faith they profess. Many are confused. Methodism appears to them as a collection of various opinions where a person is free to believe almost anything that person chooses. What is needed is a clear, fresh and vital vision of the saving truth, which is Jesus Christ, who transforms human life and gives meaning and hope to human existence.

2. How can we describe the vision we see so that we enable others to see it with us? How do we express what we believe so that we pass it on to others as the truth we have also received? It will not be enough to reproduce the words of others. Somehow, our answer must point clearly to the vision of Jesus Christ for human life and all creation in the Kingdom of God. It must be deeply grounded in the Scriptures that attest to that vision.

Our vision must not contradict what Christians of all ages have experienced and known. To carry conviction our answer must arise from a genuine experience of that vision. That vision can happen anywhere, anytime, and is capable of making sense of the full range of human experience. We should give our answer in a way that helps not only the 'wise men' but also the 'lowly shepherds' to see that

vision and commit themselves unreservedly to it, and yet our answer must not be so complete as to prevent our growth in understanding the Christian Faith.

3. The authority upon which all Christians base their understanding and their doctrinal formulations is, first and foremost, the Holy Bible. Taken as a whole, it is sufficient for our knowledge of God and of his self-disclosure in Jesus Christ.

4. We therefore invite Methodists throughout the world to seek to discover and reaffirm the essentials of the Christian Faith. This would include an appreciation of our Methodist tradition as well as a deeper understanding and love for the catholic heritage that lies behind it. They will then be able and ready to "give an account of the hope that is in them."

Coming to understand the Faith will make sense

(continued on page 4)

## comments

It is well known that in general the appearance of the world is often the result of a process of the mind, and the mind is often the result of a process of the body. In the same way, the mind is often the result of a process of the body, and the body is often the result of a process of the mind. In the same way, the mind is often the result of a process of the body, and the body is often the result of a process of the mind. In the same way, the mind is often the result of a process of the body, and the body is often the result of a process of the mind.

We have tried in this issue to put together the latest information available from each of the working groups in order to provide the members of the Eighth Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies with some specific idea of what the various groups are planning to do. In most cases, the material has been condensed from correspondence sent out to the members of each working group. As is often the case, last minute changes are necessary, and many of those changes will not be reflected in this series of outlines. We do hope, however, that this material will provide a useful overview of the work of your fellow members at the Institute.

Two important documents adopted by the World Methodist Conference in Nairobi, July 1986, are included in this issue: the "World Methodist Social Affirmation" and the Theological Statement, "An Invitation...". These will be discussed by some of the working groups and will be of interest to all.

## working groups

### Working Group 1—BIBLICAL STUDIES

Conveners: Phyllis Bird  
Peder Borgen

Our group has been charged with "saying something about how biblical studies can contribute to the development of Methodist/Wesleyan teaching." We will begin by exploring the nature of the relationship between biblical studies and Methodist/Wesleyan teaching in various historical and cultural contexts, focusing broadly on questions of authority and hermeneutics. We will then explore specific doctrines, issues, and texts of significance in and for Methodist/Wesleyan teaching, concluding with a discussion of various new hermeneutics, with attention to their challenge and promise for renewal of the church in the Wesleyan tradition. In our attempt to produce a final statement on the contribution of biblical studies to Methodist/Wesleyan teaching, we will also give attention to a number of case studies that examine the way in which the Bible is being used and taught today within the Methodist/Wesleyan connection (e.g., in the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter and in the curriculum of our theological schools).

Agenda of proposed themes to be examined:

1. Biblical studies and Methodist/Wesleyan teaching: the nature of the relationship.
2. Wesleyan/Methodist doctrine, Wesley's exegesis, and contemporary NT studies.
3. The use and authority of the OT in Methodist/Wesleyan teaching.
4. New hermeneutics, Wesleyan tradition, and the church's mission and teaching.
5. The use of the Bible in current Methodist/Wesleyan teaching: case studies and conclusions.

The call for papers included the request that topics arise from or draw upon the current work or interests of members and reflect issues seen to be critical for Methodist theology and teaching in the various parts of our world Methodist family, as well as contribute significantly to the general theme and discussion of the Institute. This was further distinguished into two types of papers: (1) dealing with key passages in or for Wesleyan/Methodist theology, viewed from the perspective of Wesley's exegesis and modern critical interpretation; and (2) dealing with broader themes or issues, in particular questions of hermeneutics and the authority of scripture (such as assessment of the contributions of

liberation and feminist hermeneutics; whether there is a distinctive Methodist exegesis/hermeneutic; the understanding and use of the Bible as evidenced in Methodist preaching, teaching, and theological education; the status of the Old Testament as scripture; appeals to scripture in Methodist pronouncements and study documents on social and ethical issues).

Papers to be presented include the following:

"Biblical Theology: Issues in Authority and Hermeneutics," by Bruce Birch.

"Is There a Methodist Exegesis?" by Walter Klaiber.

"The Authority of Scripture in Relation to Reason and Experience," by Peder Borgen.

"Wesley's Understanding of Perfection," by Leonard Hulley.

"Charisma in the New Testament," by Lars Svanberg.

"Liberation and Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics and the Renewal of the Church in the Wesleyan Tradition," by David Lull.

"Toward a Social Hermeneutic in Light of an Assessment of the Contribution of Black Theology," by Thomas Hoyt.

"Reading from Context to Context: Contributions of a Feminist Hermeneutic," by Sharon Ringe.

"Doing Theology in a Popular Context (Mark 4:1-34)," by Dagoberto Ramirez.

Discussion by C. P. Minnock of biblical arguments in and about the document, "In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace."

"Teaching the Bible in Methodist/Wesleyan Seminars," case study by Phyllis Bird.

## working groups

### Working Group 2—WESLEY STUDIES

Conveners: Richard Heitzenrater  
Thomas Langford

Our primary concern as a group will be to examine the nature and role of Wesleyan teaching in the eighteenth century. Part of our task will be to try to understand how Wesley functioned as a theologian, to look at his own teachings in the light of how he developed his ideas. We will be dealing with both the content and the method of Wesley's thought. We will also be examining the ways in which his ideas functioned within Methodism in his own day and within the subsequent Wesleyan traditions. While looking closely at the historical

developments, we will of course be concerned with the ways in which our study can help us confront the questions of doctrinal controversy, clarification, and consensus in our own day.

Agenda of proposed topics on the general theme, "what to teach? how to teach?":

1. Theological method: how to know what to teach—Wesley and the *via media*.
2. Doctrinal content: what to teach—Wesley and the *via salutis*.
3. Doctrinal authority: what to teach—Wesley and the *via veritatis*.
4. Doctrinal polemics/propagation: how to teach—Wesley and the world of his "parish".

The call for papers suggested topics examining the role of scripture, tradition, reason, and experience in Wesleyan and Methodist theological endeavors; the sources of Wesleyan doctrinal views; the relationship of doctrine to discipline (discipleship); the question of Wesley's distinctive and/or essential doctrines; the nature and role of doctrinal standards; the character of education, evangelism, and mission in the Wesleyan tradition; the relationship of "orthodoxy" and the "catholic spirit"; the challenge of teaching and preaching within a hostile environment.

Papers to be presented include the following:

- "Wesley's Use of Scripture," by Scott Jameson Jones; Howard Snyder, Respondent
- "Principles of Scriptural Interpretation," by John G. McElhenney; Emerito Nacpil, Respondent.
- "Tradition as Religious Authority," by Ted Campbell; Bengt Haglund, Respondent.
- "The Practical Theology of John Wesley's *Ortho-affectus*," by Gregory Clapper; Rex D. Matthews and Juan Osorio Ponce, Respondents.
- "Wesley and Edwards' *Religious Affections*," by Richard E. Brantley; W. Stephen Gunter, Respondent.
- "Wesley's Essential Doctrines," by John R. Tyson; Patrick P. Streiff, Respondent.
- "Wesley and Luther on the Sermon on the Mount," by Tore Meistad; Michel Weyer, Respondent.
- "Wesley and Luther on the Christian Life," by Gordon S. Dicker; Joe Hale, Respondent.
- "Wesley's Understanding of Perfection," by Leonard D. Hulley; Jacob Paul, Respondent.
- "Sermons as Doctrinal Standards," by Richard P. Heitzenrater; Ole Borgen, Respondent.
- "NT Notes as Doctrinal Authority," by James T. MacCormack; Thomas A. Langford, Respondent.
- "Wesley and Education," by Duane A. Ewers; James E. Kirby, Respondent.
- "Preaching and the Small Group Ministry," by Isaac Lim; Ruy de Souza Josgrilberg and Elizabeth J. Bellamy, Respondents.

## working groups

### Working Group 3—NINETEENTH CENTURY

Conveners: Donald W. Dayton  
W. Reginald Ward

Our group was created to deal in part with the often-acknowledged difficulties of moving directly from the eighteenth century (represented by group 2) to the present. Many of the issues we struggle with today have their roots in the nineteenth century, the period of Methodism's greatest worldwide impact and a time of major development and change. This complex period will be the focus of our discussions.

The agenda of the group will include the following:

1. Exploring the roots of doctrinal "dissensus" as a precondition to understanding and articulating any possible "consensus" (as reflected in present discussions in the UMC, WMC, and WCC).
2. Looking for the distinctive contribution that the Methodist tradition might bring to wider discussions, including the place of such topics as the status of ethics in articulating a "consensus," the role of the "quadrilateral," and the mission of the church to the poor.
3. Examining the full range of the fragmented Methodist/Wesleyan experience and tradition, paying special attention to class, theological, and geographical diversities, including the range of traditions that are at least partially gathered in the World Methodist Council.
4. Working in an inter-disciplinary fashion, involving historical, sociological, theological, and constructive dimensions. How are the various factors to be interrelated and what does an understanding of these dynamics say to the articulation of a Methodist "doctrinal consensus" today that might bridge these gaps and contribute to the contemporary revitalization of the mission of Methodism.
5. Looking toward the future evolution of Oxford Institute discussions on such themes as the church's work with the poor, or other themes that might represent Methodism's distinctive contribution.

The newness of the group will give the process a certain open-endedness as we engage in a some general exploration of the terrain, agenda-setting, and clarification of basic questions. The call for papers suggested dealing with specific questions related to the concerns listed above.

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of, at least, three things: our experience, how we think, and the responsibilities that we have in life. This understanding will give wholeness, strength and courage to our lives. It will enable us to claim our identity as part of the Christian family. It will give us things to say and do in our mission in the world. It will provide us critical norms for evaluating and transforming the values and ways of life that shape people. It will sensitize us to the evil structures of our world, such as racism, injustice, oppression, violence and terrorism, and inspire us with courage to overcome them and work for peace. It will give us freedom to participate with all those who work for making a better home for humankind. It will motivate us to be more faithful servants of the Lord who, by the power of the Holy Spirit working through people, continues to make the Kingdom come.

This is no light option. For it to succeed, commitment, effort and resources must be given to the task.

## II

5. What we are inviting Methodists to discover and do began in Jerusalem. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came with power upon the apostles, and the other disciples, and made them realize that God had been at work in Jesus to bring salvation to the world. Suddenly, as a result, they found words to tell others of what they had seen and heard! This that happened in Jerusalem began to happen in "Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth."

God brought peoples in all ages and from various cultures and civilizations into the same experience and formed them into a fellowship across the world. They came to belong to the same family. This process has been happening ever since and we are a part of it.

6. Similarly something very special and remarkable happened to John Wesley. His life was transformed by the grace of God, who used him to light a flame that spread throughout the world. He offered to all who would listen the Good News that they could receive salvation through Jesus Christ. Doing so he gave them a vision of the 'new creatures' they could become. The churches that have arisen from this movement throughout the world are not identical, but there is a strong family likeness among them. The Methodists are still one people.

7. Central to Wesley's work was the proclamation of salvation and out of this emerged what is distinctive in Methodism:

a. Grace is behind the whole of God's works. God's grace is active in creation and providence. By grace we possess conscience which enables us to discern good and evil. Human beings reject the will of God, are estranged from the divine life and themselves, and are entangled in the evil which corrupts the world around them. Thus human beings

are in need of salvation, and God's grace gives them the capacity to respond to salvation offered us through Jesus Christ.

b. The grace of God is, in its essence, God's saving love, rooted in the atoning death of Jesus Christ. God forgives our sin, removes estrangement and fear and conquers evil in an around us, as an anticipation of the full victory to be realized in the eternal world to come.

c. The benefits of Christ's atonement must be appropriated by each and every person. Though God's saving grace is intended for everyone, it is not irresistible. God created human beings with freedom of choice. He will not violate their nature, even to save them.

d. Salvation is neither inevitable or self-achieved. People cannot save themselves, but neither can they be saved without themselves. God alone is the giver of salvation, but a person may refuse to accept the gift when it is offered.

e. God not only works for us in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for our redemption, but also works in us by transforming our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

f. Sanctification. As we live with God, the divine life is shaped within us. The goal is perfect love which is attainable in this life. The Christian life is one of growing maturity in grace.

g. Holiness is social as well as personal. It involves the transformation not only of the individual, but transformation of the world of which he or she is a part. It envisages a society of saints. All people are called to be saints. The expression of holiness in its social context entails the physical and material well-being of all people.

h. The feature of Methodist thought which brings joy, comfort and strength to people is the assurance that God has done and continues to work in them. "His Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:16) The believer knows that the abode of the Holy Spirit is human hearts and communities.

8. Since proclamation of the Gospel of salvation is central to Methodism, its theology is best expressed through preaching that contains the offer of salvation and calls for a response to it. Its theology is enshrined in hymns that are both a vehicle for teaching and an expression of the joy and praise of salvation. It is not insignificant that Methodists have often been dubbed 'a singing people.' The beauty of this theology is that it finds concrete expression in the holiness of the lives of the people shaped by it; and in the renewing of the world in righteousness, justice and peace according to the vision of the Kingdom. Theology in the Methodist tradition joins 'knowledge and vital piety'; it is inclusive in its scope and seeks to speak 'plain truth for plain people.' These distinctive features of Methodism are meaningless unless they are set within the whole Christian tradition.

## III

9. Methodists along with all other major Christian bodies accept the Apostles Creed and the first four ecumenical councils of the Church, the teachings of which are set out in the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian formula. These embody the doctrine of the Trinity; the Person of Christ, the divine Word made flesh, fully God and fully human; and the doctrine of redemption. We share with all Christians belief that:

- a. Salvation is the work of the Triune God.
- b. Scriptures reveal God's plan of salvation.
- c. All people need salvation since all are sinners and cannot save themselves.
- d. Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is the Saviour of the world.
- e. The Holy Spirit is God present and active in the world for its salvation.
- f. The Church is the body of Christ; the community that bears the message of salvation and incorporates those who are in the way of salvation into its own body.
- g. The Church is the community of those who are being saved by grace through faith in Christ, living under God's rule, and are sent out as instruments of God's eternal purpose.
- h. The Church is a fellowship of worship and praise in which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are celebrated.

1. Christ came preaching the kingly rule of God for all life. Salvation, under God's rule, is available now but looks forward to its consummation when every form of evil will be destroyed and the last enemy, which is death, will be no more. The victory of God's love will gloriously triumph in the 'resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

10. Methodists gladly affirm their commitment to the ecumenical movement, and are invited to commit themselves afresh to work and pray for the visible unity of the one Church.

11. This invitation summons the family of Methodists around the globe to prayer, that what happened in Jerusalem and at Aldersgate through the moving power of the Holy Spirit will happen again in us.

Methodists are asked to reflect on what they already believe, but perhaps do not find easy to express, and to open themselves to the Bible and the insights of other Christians across the centuries. Thus, they may enter into a deeper and more meaningful experience of faith itself and receive a greater motivation to share the Good News with others.

Then, our vision, our hopes, and our dreams of a new awakening may be fulfilled.

## articles

marked as many hours," but "the single figure influenced so many minds that his own had influence was more extensive than generally his book. Moreover the influence was of a more philosophical kind than expected, beyond what an opinion of cosmology and morals, as expounded in Wesley's correspondence with Henry Cavendish Professor, is referred to in Wesley's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding and Predestination, Liberty and Limits of Human Understanding*. The statement is made more available in the volume through his American biography and of the Christian Library series. The result was generations of holy families

### WORLD METHODIST SOCIAL AFFIRMATION ADOPTED BY WMC, NAIROBI, July 28, 1986

The text voted by the Council as amended, follows:

#### *World Methodist Social Affirmation*

We believe in God, Creator of the world and of all people; and in Jesus Christ, incarnate among us, who died and rose again; and in the Holy Spirit, present with us to guide, strengthen and comfort.

**WE BELIEVE: GOD, HELP OUR UNBELIEF\***

We rejoice in every sign of God's Kingdom:

- in the unholding of human dignity and community
- in every expression of love, justice and reconciliation;
- in each act of self-giving on behalf of others;
- in the abundance of God's gifts entrusted to us that all may have enough;
- in all responsible use of the earth's resources.

**GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH: AND ON EARTH,  
PEACE.\***

We confess our sin, individual and collective, by silence or action:

- through the violation of human dignity based on race, class, age, sex, nation or faith;
- through the exploitation of people through greed and indifference;
- through the misuse of power in personal, communal, national and international life;
- through the search for security by military and economic forces that threaten human existence;
- through the abuse of technology which endangers the earth and all life upon it.

**LORD HAVE MERCY: CHRIST HAVE MERCY:  
LORD HAVE MERCY.\***

We commit ourselves individually and as a community to the way of Christ:

- to take up the cross;
- to seek abundant life for all humanity;
- to struggle for peace with justice and freedom;
- to risk ourselves in faith, hope and love, praying that God's Kingdom may come.

**THY KINGDOM COME ON EARTH AS IT IS IN  
HEAVEN.\* AMEN**

\*These responses may be used in a worship setting.

## working groups

### Working Group 4—ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TEACHINGS & LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Conveners: J. Philip Wogaman  
José Miguez Bonino

The call for the Institute raised several pertinent questions relative to this working group, based on the assumption that "If the cutting edge of Methodist doctrine is perforce economic for the world of the next century, we should accept that the question *What to do?* is doctrinal *per se*." Questions raised included the following: If the poor have a special place in the biblical witness and the Methodist experience, ought Methodist teaching today give more attention to this theme as normative doctrine for Methodist churches? May this theme be correlated with certain theological emphases of the Methodist traditions? Does it provide clues for the reconstruction of Methodist theology today?

In addition to discussing the "World Methodist Social Affirmation" (printed in this issue of *OXFORD-notes*), the group will receive the following papers:

"The Challenge of Liberation Theology to the World Methodist Community," by Nora Boots; Emmanuel Jacob, Respondent.

"A Methodological Analysis of Liberation Theology," by Delwin Brown; Jose Miguez Bonino, Respondent.

"A Biblical Understanding of the 'Preferential Option for the Poor'," by Thomas Roder; John Vincent, Respondent.

"Justification by Faith and the Work of Social Transformation," by Roy Sano; Joseph Weir, Respondent.

"A Wesleyan Doctrine of Creation and Competing Economic Ideologies," by Philip Wogaman; Roxana Panizo, Respondent.

"The Tradition of Wesleyan Economic Witness and the Contemporary Economic Crisis," by Theodore Jennings; Horacio Rios, Respondent.

"The Challenge of the International Economic Order," by Pablo Ayres Mattos; Louis-Charles Harvey, Respondent.

"Social Reform and Social Revolution: A Methodist Reappraisal in the Light of Liberation Theology," by Jean Nicholson; Alan Woodley, Respondent.

"A Methodist Assessment of the Kairos Document," by Howard Summers; Kenrick Khan, Respondent.

"Sin and Perfection in Methodist Understanding:

Limits and Possibilities for a New Social and Economic Order," by Douglas Meeks; Pamela Couture Dunlap, Respondent.

"Methodist Peace Witness and Revolutionary Violence," by Itumeleng Mosala; Wm. James Stuart, Respondent.

"Confessional Witness and Base Communities: The Local and the Universal in the Church's Social Witness," by Jose Carlos de Souza; Ray Sells, Respondent.

"Contributions of Liberation Theology to the Social Witness of the World Methodist Council," by Brian Duckworth.

## working groups

### Working Group 5—EVANGELISM & DOCTRINE

Conveners: Lawi Imathiu  
David Watson

Building on the deliberations of the Seventh Oxford Institute, the task of our present Working Group is to review the evangelistic traditions of Methodism with regard to content, method, and context; and then to consider how Methodist teaching and practice can help to keep the evangelism of today faithful to the gospel in global contexts of personal uncertainty, social change, and political conflict. To adopt the wording of the overall theme of the Institute, we shall consider what we proclaim as the gospel, how we communicate it in our respective global contexts, and what we must do as Methodists to implement the evangelistic commission of the church.

Areas of discussion will include:

1. **Doctrine.** What are the essential teachings of the Christian message to be presented to the world as good news? Are there guidelines to be found in Wesley, Fletcher, Asbury, Bunting, Watson, and others in the Methodist traditions, which can help us to hone this gospel for evangelistic communication?
2. **Theology.** To what extent does the theological method of scripture, tradition, reason, and experience provide the evangelist with appropriate form and power for the role of messenger of the good news within and beyond the Christian community?
3. **History and Context.** History is often the key to a contemporary understanding of evangelistic context. In assessing the effect of Methodist evangelism in the United Kingdom, the Halévy

thesis remains fertile; and in the United States the role of Methodism in revivalism and social reform has important implications if, for example, we view abolitionism and contemporary civil rights evangelistically. The most important contributions to these discussions are likely to come from studies of Methodist history in the context of the Two-Thirds World.

4. **Strategy.** How do we correlate and integrate strategies which are ecclesially centrifugal on the one hand and centripetal on the other? How should evangelism relate to the the founding of new congregations and church membership recruitment in general? What are the implications of a connectional polity for the effective shaping and motivation of evangelistic outreach?

Papers submitted for discussion include:

- "The Gospel and Eschatology," William J. Abraham.  
 "Orthodoxy, Paradox, and Experimental Divinity," Robert E. Cushman.  
 "Motives of Mission in Methodism in Singapore & Malaysia from 1885 to 1985," Theodore R. Doraisamy.  
 "Consensus and Reception," G. R. Evans.  
 "Faith Sharing is God's Idea," H. Eddie Fox.  
 "John Wesley as Church Growth Strategist," George G. Hunter.  
 "The Missionary Heritage of the Cuban Churches," Dow Kirkpatrick.  
 "Methodist Evangelism in Jamaica: A Historical Exposure, Experiential Description and Doctrinal Exposition," Althea D. Spencer-Miller.  
 "Law and Grace in Wesley's Evangelism," Robert G. Tuttle.  
 "Wesley and Bunting on Justification: Methodist Traditioning and Methodist Evangelism," David Lowes Watson.

Case studies include, "Cursillo and Emmaus: An Evaluation," by Ronald King Crandall, and "Youth Evangelism in Village Methodism," by Terence Spencer.

Draft documents to be discussed are, "The Mission of the United Methodist Church: A Report to General Conference 1988" (prepared by the Commission on the Mission of the United Methodist Church), and "Laos: The Relationship of the Ministries of the People of God" (prepared by the Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England Board of Mission and Unity).

## working groups

### Working Group 6—CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY & DOCTRINAL CONSENSUS

Conveners: Norman Young  
 Theodore Runyon

The call for the Institute suggested that the focus of the group would be on "the substantive discussion of doctrine and confessions of faith in contemporary Methodism. What are the terms in which we could speak of a common faith that both links us with the *ecumene* and yet expresses our distinctiveness?"

The agenda of the group is two-pronged:

1. To attempt to clarify what constitutes the core of Methodist doctrine and its relevance today.
2. To determine the potential contribution of a Wesleyan perspective to a common ecumenical confession, responding specifically to the World Council of Churches' call to a common confession of apostolic faith.

The discussion will focus on a variety of papers, including:

"The Significance of Methodist Thought and Practice for Confessing the Apostolic Faith," by Norman Young.

"Is the Creed Orthodox?" by Ted Runyon (printed in the last issue of *OXFORDnotes*).

"An Invitation," the Jerusalem Affirmation (printed in this issue).

Latest draft statement from the Committee on "Our Theological Task."

"Was Methodism a Liberation Movement?" by José Miguez Bonino.

The South African Kairos Document's "theological rationale and a call to prayer."

"The Sense of Tradition in the Ante-Nicene Church," by Albert C. Outler.

"Tradition: Yet Another Look," by Raymond George.

"The Meeting of Oriental Orthodoxy and United Methodism," by Roberta Bondi.

"Contemporary Methodist Theology and Doctrinal Consensus," by Jeffrey Gros.

"Consensus and Integrity," by Olive Gibbons.

"A Wesleyan Perspective on 'Confessing the Apostolic Faith'," by Randy Maddox.

"Sanctification: A Latin-American Rereading," by José Miguez Bonino.

"An Account of the Methodist Witness in Czechoslovakia," by Pavel Prochazka.

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