



Methodist Studies Seminar – Methodism and Race
Friday 14 May 2021 Programme

For full details of papers and presenters please see below.

10.00 Welcome	
10.10 The Fernley Hartley Annual Lecture Racism and the Methodist Church: Going Beyond A Theology of Good Intentions Professor Anthony G. Reddie	
11.15 Break	
Early Methodist Studies	Contemporary Methodist Studies
11.30 Paper 1	
Imaging the Other: John Wesley and Peoples beyond Europe	The Denial of the Gospel: An Appraisal of Biblical and Wesleyan Teaching on Racism
Dr David N. Field	Dr Daniel Mwailu
12.10 Lunch	
13.00 Paper 2	
John Wesley and the East India Company: A Case of ‘My Enemy’s Enemy Is My Friend’?	‘It Doesn’t Make Any Difference to Me!’ How and Why People Continue to Act and Live as Though There Is No Ethnic Diversity within Their Congregations
Dr Clive Murray Norris	Dr Jill Marsh
13.40 Break	
13.45 Paper 3	
Was Eighteenth-Century Arminian Anti-Slavery Actually Anti-Racist?	Are the British Methodist Churches Hong Kong Ready? Towards a Contextual Theology of Hospitality in Time of Crisis
Dr Natalya A. Cherry	Oscar Siu
14.25 Break	
14.50 Paper 4	
Samuel Barber (1783-1828): Mixed-Race Primitive Methodist Lay Preacher	Embracing the Stranger: Wesley and Genuine Christianity
Dr Colin Haydon	Dan Sheffield

15.35 break

15.40 paper 5

Methodists and Peoples of Colour in the
1830 and 1840s

Race, Religion, and Reason: The Tilting
Windmills of American System of Values

Dr Tim Macquiban

Dr Brandon Davis

16.25 Closing thoughts

16.30 finish

Full Programme Details

10.10 The Fernley Hartley Annual Lecture – Racism and the Methodist Church: Going Beyond A Theology of Good Intentions **Professor Anthony G. Reddie**

This lecture will explore the subterranean theological constructs of Whiteness, which allied to notions of 'Generic Universalism' and the practice of patronage, have assisted in framing White entitlement as a religio-cultural norm in the life of the Methodist Church (and other historic churches) over the past three centuries. This lecture seeks to shed light on an all too often under explored phenomenon.

Professor Anthony G. Reddie is the Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture, In Regent's Park College, The University of Oxford. He is also a Professor Extraordinarius with the University of South Africa. He is a 2020 recipient of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lanfranc Award given for exceptional and sustained contribution to Black Theology in Britain and internationally.

Early Methodist Studies – Short Papers

11.30

Imaging the Other: John Wesley and Peoples beyond Europe **Dr David N. Field**

In various writings Wesley describes the indigenous peoples of the lands beyond Europe. Wesley imaged these people in both positive and negative ways. In most cases Wesley's images are not merely descriptive but form part of an argument with a particular goal. Wesley was thus imaging an 'other' with particular rhetorical purposes. This paper examines these images of the 'other' in a selection of Wesley's writings; locates them in the dynamics of creation, sin, prevenient grace, and regenerating grace; and then analyses their rhetorical function. The final section provides a critical evaluation of Wesley's imaging from a postcolonial perspective.

Dr David N. Field is the Academic Coordinator, Methodist e-Academy, Basel Switzerland

13.00

John Wesley and the East India Company: A Case of 'My Enemy's Enemy is My Friend'? **Dr Clive Murray Norris**

From the mid-1760s the East India Company was engulfed by public criticism, following its conquest of Bengal. Immense riches were repatriated by company officials, who bought country estates and parliamentary seats, and there was widespread concern that a private enterprise now governed millions of Indians. Controversy was intensified by reports of the company's ineffective response to the Bengal famine of 1770. John Wesley, however, long remained silent. This paper explores his relationship with the Company and suggests that he finally attacked it in public only after working unsuccessfully behind the scenes to influence its senior management.

Dr Clive Murray Norris is the Visiting Research Fellow, Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University

13.45

Was Eighteenth-Century Arminian Anti-Slavery Actually Anti-Racist?

Revd Dr Natalya A. Cherry

While Arminian theological anthropology may be evident in Wesley's anti-slavery stance toward the American colonies described in his *Thoughts Upon Slavery*, it does not follow of necessity that his stance and that of the itinerant preachers, whom he sent to America from 1769 on, was anti-racist. Uncritical contemporary championing of John Wesley today as a proto-activist for civil rights and full racial equity misses the limitations that lenses such as those of empire and racialization place on theological vision, even vision of the broad availability of grace.

Dr Natalya A. Cherry is Assistant Professor in Methodist Studies and Theology, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX

14.50

Samuel Barber (1783-1828): Mixed-Race Primitive Methodist Lay Preacher

Dr Colin Haydon

Samuel Barber (1783-1828) was the son of Francis Barber, the Black, formerly enslaved servant of Samuel Johnson. He became a notable Primitive Methodist lay preacher in Staffordshire in the early nineteenth century. This paper examines Barber's early life, education, and employment (in Staffordshire's pottery industry). It charts his conversion from Anglicanism to Methodism. Thereafter, it examines Barber's work for the new Primitive Methodist Connexion in Staffordshire: his preaching, his theology, his evangelizing journeys, and his opening of local societies. Of particular interest, perhaps, is his thought about his Black ancestry in the context of his religious outlook. The paper also addresses various source problems.

Dr Colin Haydon is Sometime Reader in Early Modern History, University of Winchester

15.40

Methodists and Peoples of Colour in the 1830 and 1840s

Revd Dr Tim Macquiban

I will examine the attitudes and activities of Methodists in the 1830, 1840s, and 1850s, focusing on the work of Thomas Jackson, Primitive Methodist minister, and Zilpha Elaw, an African American woman of colour, an itinerant preacher who came to Britain in 1840s. The Methodist press' coverage of their and other activities and involvement with local groups in support of abolition will be examined from printed sources. To what extent were these isolated instances or indicative of wider support for radical and more inclusive views on race? And how do they square with the burgeoning missionary movements of the Wesleyan Methodist's and Primitive Methodist's in this period in the wake of expanding colonial views?

Dr Tim Macquiban is Research Officer, Englesea Brook Museum of Primitive Methodism

Contemporary Methodist Studies – Short Papers

11:30

The Denial of the Gospel: An Appraisal of Biblical and Wesleyan Teaching on Racism

Dr Daniel Mwilu

The Black Lives Matter Movement's implications unleashed in 2020 by the death of George Floyd and the international condemnation that ensued brought the issue of racism into a sharper international focus. This paper appraises racism in biblical and Wesleyan perspectives. It evaluates various definitions of racism in light of biblical teaching and Wesleyan understanding and teaching on racism. It proffers positive suggestions on how individual Christians and the church could tackle racism, moving from lip service pronouncements and proverbial tokenism into positive engagement.

Daniel Mwilu PhD is Adjunct Professor in Theology and Biblical Studies, Africa Nazarene University, Nairobi, Kenya. Methodist Supernumerary Minister Derbyshire North East Circuit,

Author: To Be Like Jesus: An Appraisal of Biblical Theology in Practice of Personal and Ministerial Spiritual Formation, Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2019. Managing editor, Transform: A Journal of Biblical, Theological and Practical Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition.

13.00

'It Doesn't Make Any Difference to Me!' How and Why People Continue to Act and Live as Though There Is No Ethnic Diversity within Their Congregations

Revd Dr Jill Marsh

In this paper, I will examine the intercultural dynamics of a cosmopolitan congregation and conclude that the norming of Whiteness causes racism and is, therefore, an obstacle to White Christians living out the commandment of Jesus to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. I will draw on the work of James Perkinson (2004), Beaudoin and Turpin (2014), and Willie Jennings (2018) in understanding how the social construct of Whiteness causes racism within congregational life and wider church structures. Using my research findings, I will make some recommendations for White Christians, including White Theologians, as the Methodist Church seeks to become anti-racist.

Dr Jill Marsh is Inclusive Church Implementation Officer for the Methodist Church in Britain

13.45

Are the British Methodist Churches Hong Kong Ready? Towards a Contextual Theology of Hospitality in Time of Crisis

Oscar Siu

The British churches are about to welcome hundreds of thousands of people from Hong Kong. Due to the severe political and pandemic crisis, it is estimated that between 258,000 and 322,000 Hong Kong people will come to the UK before 2026. This paper starts from the sociological analysis of the political and pandemic situation in Hong Kong and how it has affected the Hong Kong migrants. Based on the biblical teaching and Christian tradition on hospitality, the author seeks to build a contextual theology of hospitality for those immigrants looking for a new church community where they belong.

Oscar Siu is a Research Student affiliated to University of Aberdeen / Wesley House, Cambridge

14:50

Embracing the Stranger: Wesley and Genuine Christianity

Revd Dan Sheffield

Wesley suggested that all human beings were within the scope of God's gaze – 'embracing neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies'. Given the increasing diversity of our globalizing social contexts, how does a Wesleyan lens inform our ministry engagement? What does Wesleyan theology and praxis look like in a multi-ethnic context? *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity* serves as a background for discussion, helping discern a Wesleyan response to 'the stranger'. Several practices are identified as particularly Wesleyan ways of framing the interaction with cultural difference – and serve as an apologetic for the gospel in our contexts.

Dan Sheffield is Lead Pastor, Grapeview Free Methodist Church, St. Catharines, ON, Canada; Adjunct Lecturer (Missional Leadership), Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, Canada. Author: The Multicultural Leader: Developing a Catholic Personality (2015).

15.40

Race, Religion, and Reason: The Tilting Windmills of American System of Values

Dr Brandon Davis

Dr Robin Williams, author of *American Society: A Sociological Interpretation*, created a list of core American values to prove what appeared to be 'de facto' the very things Americans hold dear. Later in 1975, he added religiosity as an American cultural value. America's premise founded on religious principles; therefore, the system of values should reflect character and behaviour. This paper will address the social issues and concerns of people of colour, the influence of religion as normative practice for racism, and the basic foundation as understood in the everyday practices of American society as the defining and historical issues that called for the birthing of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Brandon A. A. J. Davis, (BA., M.Div., D.Min), is an ordained Itinerate Elder in the AME Church and serves as the Senior Associate Minister at Allen Temple AME Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is a published writer, of which he writes for several newspapers, online blogs, and scholarly journals. Later in 2021, his first book: Pastoring with a Pen: The Thought of a Preacher in a Global Pandemic will be released. It is an anthology work that includes essays, position papers, and sermons, all written during the COVID-19 pandemic.