

INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL ISSUE

The Fifth Historical Convocation of The United Methodist Church was held August 14-17, 2003 on the campus of Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, and at nearby Xavier Center, Convent Station, New Jersey. The theme was "John Wesley: His Life and Legacy." The Convocation was one of many events held around the world to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Wesley's birth. In commemorating the anniversary, those gathered considered the vast contribution of Wesley to the life and ministry of the church. With worship, plenary addresses, workshops, and drama we sought to explore the depths of his commitment to Christian faith and life.

This issue of *Methodist History* includes four of the five plenary addresses presented at the Convocation. Those familiar with Wesley and Methodist scholarship will immediately recognize the names of the writers. Each of the essays represents an important facet of Wesley's life and theology.

In addition to the General Commission on Archives and History, other sponsors of the event included the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church, the Theological School of Drew University, the Drew University Library (through its Bell Scholarship Fund), the Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History, The North American Section of the World Methodist Historical Society, the Charles Wesley Society, and the World Methodist Council.

We believe that readers will find these essays illuminating and useful. Each sheds more light on Wesley's life and legacy.

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Editor