

Call for Papers
The Wesleyan Theological Society
Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting
Indiana Wesleyan University

March 2-3, 2001

Program Theme: The Dynamics of Power in the Service of Reconciliation

We in the Wesleyan tradition share historical impetus and theological concern for reconciliation and unity. Our preaching and teaching, our literature, our participation in various arenas of dialogue, academia, ministry and mission reflect a memory and an ideal loyal to the Jesus prayer "that they may be one." We are all aware of the many practical challenges to unity and collaboration, from intrapersonal and interpersonal to corporate, structural and systemic levels. Wesley's appeal to those who differed with him, "love me, not as you would love an enemy, but as you would love as a brother" is a sentiment that offers a springboard for next years program. What do Wesleyans have to contribute to the life of the church at large? What can we do to strengthen the "bonds of unity" and to respond to the divine impulse of reconciliation in our own community? How can we respond positively to the theological imperative of reconciliation?

This is a call for papers exploring and collaborating on the dynamic between power and the ideal of reconciliation and unity (ecumenical, congregational, racial, academic disciplines, gender, etc). What is power? What are the Biblical pictures and paradigms by which power is defined? What voices address issues of power (consensual or institutional authority, for example). What is the basis of appeals for unity and reconciliation in the testimonies of Scripture? What is Jesus' relationship to power in the memory of the various expressions of the early church? What historical and social challenges have affected the understandings of power throughout the history of the church (geography, generation, gender, genealogy, etc.)? What philosophical perspectives contribute to understandings of power and the task of unity and reconciliation? What are the philosophical assumptions of various models of power in the church and its institutions? In what mediums has power been expressed and contained? In what ways are the complexities of the practical life of the local church are related to particular constructs of power? How do different paradigms of power affect programs of reconciliation from the level of congregational division to institutional polarities and academic debate? How do historical particularities, cultural sensibilities and psychological paradigms affect and inform the definition and expression of power? What does power mean in mission? What understandings of power are effective for reconciliation in a post-modern context? What do Wesley studies offer to the ideal and the practice of reconciliation? Specific questions might be asked as well: Is it possible to embrace both market trends and spiritual formation in new models of theological education? What understandings of power grant solutions for institutional impasses and political morasses in the church?

The deadline for paper PROPOSALS is AUGUST 15, 2000. Completed papers must be submitted no later than JANUARY 15, 2001 to be included in the program for the year. Grants are available for graduate students to attend Society meetings, with priority given to those participating in the program. Proposals should be sent to: Sharon Clark Pearson, Ph.D., Anderson University, School of Theology, Anderson, IN 46012-3495. Telephone: (765) 641-4522 [office], (765) 778-0312 [home]. Fax: (765) 641-3005. Email: pearsos@anderson.edu