EDITOR’S INTRODUCTION

The Asbury Journal

The Asbury Journal has a long history. For sixty-one years Asbury Theological Seminary has published a journal of biblical and theological reflection. It has gone by other names: The Asbury Seminarian, The Asbury Theological Journal. And now, The Asbury Journal. But in all of these literary manifestations, the purpose has remained the same: To glorify God by ruminating on the interaction of God’s revelation with the human condition from a Wesleyan perspective.

This interaction is not just a historical matter, although it is indeed that. Our roots are in Scripture and the unfolding life of God’s people. Much of today’s theological action, however, takes place on the front pages of our newspapers, the six o’clock images on television, the digested data of the Internet, and the flotsam and jetsam of everyday life. In the parlance of the day, theology is a 24/7 reality.

Neither is this interaction simply a local matter. It is an interaction as wide as the world and as deep as our best human thinking allows. The Christian church is active in every country of the world. Christians live for their faith in cities, villages, and farms. Sometimes they die for their faith. All are part of our global community.

And, of course, God’s revelation is not restricted to the church and its members. Someone has said, with only slight exaggeration, that the church is the only human institution that exists primarily for the benefit of its non-members. Our churches exist for the poor. For the dispossessed. For the lost and the befuddled. When we talk about theology as if it is restricted to “what we believe,” we miss one of its most dynamic features, its capacity to transform the world.

The essays in The Asbury Journal will most often take the form of what some church divine thinks about an important issue. In form they will be putting those issues in the context of biblical truth and contemporary human experience. But an essay that stops with the thinking of its author is incomplete. Theology goes beyond thinking to tell us that because God speaks, we listen and act.
Next year is the 300th anniversary of Charles Wesley’s birth. Our first section of essays in this issue celebrate that occasion. Paul Chilcote, visiting professor of evangelism at Duke University Divinity School, writes of Charles Wesley’s conflation of worship and evangelism, making the case that they go hand in hand in the life of the Christian. John Tyson, professor of theology at Houghton College, explores Charles’ language of evangelical experience, focusing on the words feel, prove, know, and taste, suggesting that it is through this affective language that his theology emerges. Jason Vickers, assistant professor of theology and ethics at Hood Theological Seminary, argues that a fuller explication of the way Charles Wesley talked about the Holy Spirit would energize Wesleyan-Methodist theology today.

John Tyson also provides us with some useful information about the life and times of Charles Wesley in a timeline and a short annotated list of works by and about him. On page 69 we give a list of events we have heard about that will celebrate this tercentenary, and will gladly publish more in our fall issue of The Asbury Journal as we are made aware of them.

The Asbury Journal is pleased to announce conferences and happenings in the Wesleyan-Methodist world. Please send them to us and we will publish in our next issue. We received the following from Howard Snyder at Asbury:

_Revitalization_ is the new twice-yearly bulletin of the Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements at Asbury Seminary. The first issue was published in the fall of 2005 and focused on theories of revival and revitalization, the Pentecost theme in renewal, and new publications related to revival and renewal.

The Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements continues the work of the Wesleyan/Holiness Studies Center established at Asbury in 1991, and _Revitalization_ replaces the earlier _Wesleyan Holiness Studies Center Bulletin_. The mission of the CSWCRM is to contribute to the vitality of Christian mission and local congregations through the interdisciplinary study of past and present revitalization movements worldwide. For more information or to receive _Revitalization_, send an email to revitalization@asburyseminary.edu.