

Health and Healing in the Ministry of John Wesley

SUMMARY

John Wesley and the Methodist movement which he founded became widely known primarily for their evangelical zeal and mission. Less well known, though possibly equally important, was their influence and effect on health care in the Eighteenth Century. This paper examines Wesley's interest and involvement in the health care provision of his day and seeks to draw out lessons for today's Church in this particular area of ministry and mission. It draws on *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*¹ as the prime source of reference – and in so doing seeks to achieve the additional outcome of affirming the value of the *Works* as a source of inspiration and encouragement for the Church in its ministry and mission for the Twenty-first Century.

BACKGROUND

Wesley's interest in health care was rooted in his academic studies,² however his inspiration for action grew out of his concern for the plight of the poor,

*Wesley was one of the first not only to see the poor as recipients of alms and objects of charitable care, but also to set forth the genuinely Christian duty to eliminate their wretchedness Wesley undertook various measures to relieve the poor – some independently, some in concert with other groups such as the religious societies, and some of his own design.*³

Aware that, in his day (long before the establishment of a national Health Service provided free at the point of delivery) the poor could not afford to be ill, Wesley had a compassionate concern to address and eradicate the ills of society which bred poverty, unemployment and ill health.⁴ The magnitude of his corrective influence in such issues is attested to by Robert Wearmouth,

*John Wesley had a great influence in the land, greater than most men, and his words and declarations, both written and spoken, could not have fallen on stony ground. The facts are that a number of people were spurred to activity to do something for the welfare of the poor and helpless, and to endeavour to amend the conditions of the labouring classes.*⁵

The urge to provide for the relief and health care of the poor was motivated by Wesley's awareness of the inadequate number of medical practitioners in his day; a concern about the generally low standard of medical practice which was available; and a realisation that

¹ References in this paper are to *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, Fifth Edition 15 vols. (London 1861), hereafter identified by the abbreviation, *Works*. Reference is also made from time to time to the edition of Wesley's Works published by Abingdon Press and Oxford University Press. These latter references are distinguished by being given in full detail.

² John Wesley went to Christchurch, Oxford, aged 17, to read anatomy and physics. He was to retain a keen practical interest in these topics for the rest of his life, something not uncommon among eighteenth century clerics. See further L. Tyerman, *Life and Times of John Wesley*, 3 vols., vol. 1, (Hodder and Stoughton, London 1880), p. 564. Also, the first part of Wesley's *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists* (*Works*, vol. VIII pp.248-268) where he writes of his long time study of anatomy and physic.

³ M. Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics*, (English translation – Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee 1992) p27.

⁴ L. Tyerman, vol. 3, pp. 130-134.

⁵ R. F. Wearmouth, *The Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Twentieth Century*, (Epworth Press, London 1957), p. 189.

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much of the disease which required urgent attention occurred as a consequence of people's ignorance about health matters and was exaggerated by the dirt and squalor amid which many lived.⁶

Wesley became a driving force for the improvement of social conditions in Eighteenth Century England, worthy of being ranked alongside such people as William Wilberforce.^{7,8} Like Wilberforce, Wesley was marked out by the way in which challenging words were matched with encouragement to action. Methodists were urged to do what they could to improve the conditions and therefore the health of others. Corporate ventures to relieve the poor were initiated, such as the practice described by Stuart Andrews,

Collections for poor relief were taken up in Methodist classes, and in London in 1740 a small group of poor people were employed for about four months on carding and spinning cotton. Six years later a loan fund was established from which deserving persons could borrow up to 20 shillings, and this was later enlarged until in 1772 the borrowing limit was set at £5. In 1741 a group of volunteers in London had joined with Wesley in regular visitation of the sick, and the minutes of the 1748 Conference directed class leaders to report every sick person weekly to the preacher and also to notify the regular visitor.⁹

IN THE BEGINNING

It was this concern for the needs of the poor which led to the many practical outcomes of Wesley's interest in medicine and physic. While the collection and distribution of monies for the relief of the poor were part of Methodism from the earliest days of the movement, what soon became apparent was the impossibility of responding satisfactorily to the needs encountered. Sick visitors were appointed to extend this work¹⁰, but this simply led to yet more needs emerging. Wesley enquired what help and support was available from the local hospitals and when his researches found little was on offer,

At length I thought of a kind of desperate expedient. "I will prepare and give them physic myself"I took into my assistance an apothecary and an experienced surgeon; resolving, at the same time, not to go out of my depth, but to leave all difficult and complicated cases to such Physicians as the patients should choose. I gave notice of this to the society; telling them that all who were ill with chronic distempers (for I did not care to venture upon acute) might, if they pleased, come to me at such time, and I would give them the best advice I could, and the best medicines I had.¹¹

While many influential people were moved to give generously to charitable causes associated with the needs of the poor, what helped mark out Wesley was his commitment to discovering people's real needs through personal contact,

⁶ A. Wesley Hill, John Wesley among the physicians - a Study of 18th Century Medicine, (Epworth Press, London 1958), pp. 2-4.

⁷ H. A. L. Fisher, A History of Europe, (Fontana, London 1935) p. 1314.

⁸ P. Garlick, Man's Search for Health, (City? Publisher? Year?) p. 204^f.

⁹ S. Andrews, Methodism and Society, (Publisher? London, 1970) p. 50.

¹⁰ Works vol. VIII p.263 - *A Plain Account*.

¹¹ Works vol. VIII p.264 - *A Plain Account*.

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*Wesley wanted to see with his own eyes what they needed and he demanded that those active in the social work of his fellowship must deliver help to the poor, not merely send it.*¹²

So, based on known need, in 1746 he founded a dispensary for the poor of London,

*I mentioned to the society my design of giving physic to the poor. About thirty came the next day, and in three weeks about three hundred. This we continued for several years, till, the number of patients still increasing, the expense was greater than we could bear: meantime, through the blessing of God, many who had been ill for months or years, were restored to perfect health.*¹³

This has been claimed to be the first free medical dispensary in England.¹⁴ Its continuing impact was to be significant in terms both of numbers treated and the apparent success rate,

I appointed to speak with those who had applied to us on a physical account. I found there had been about six hundred in about six months. More than three hundred of these came twice or thrice, and we saw no more of them. About twenty of those who had constantly attended did not seem to be either better or worse. Above two hundred were sensibly better; and fifty-one thoroughly cured. The entire expense, from the beginning to this time, was about thirty pounds.^{15,16}

WESLEY AND THE WORLD OF 18TH CENTURY MEDICINE

In terms of the practical help and medical support offered, Wesley was wise enough to accept there were limits to what could be effectively delivered through the dispensary work, and by him and his fellow workers and so they treated only chronic cases referring acute ones to licensed physicians.^{17, 18} This practice of referral is illustrated, for example, by the occasion when he conferred with Dr Whitehead concerning the condition of his niece Sally¹⁹; in his affirming the work of Dr Andrew Wilson who effectively treats ‘a young woman in such terrible fits as I scarce ever saw before’²⁰; and when Wesley called

¹² Marquardt p30.

¹³ *Works*, vol. II p39 – Journal 4th December 1746. for Wesley, ‘perfect health’ equated to being physically sound see, e.g. *Works*, vol. I p346 – Journal 5th November 1741 and vol. II p93 – Journal 15th April 1748.

¹⁴ See, e.g., P. Garlick, p. 205; also, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. W. R. Ward and R. P. Heitzenrater, vol 20 (Abingdon 1991) p151.

¹⁵ *Works*, vol. II p59 – Journal 6th June 1747.

¹⁶ Wesley offers the following example of successful treatment using a tried and tested remedy, *Many came: (And so every Friday since:) Among the rest was one William Kirkman, a weaver, near Old Nichol-street. I asked him, “What complaint have you?” “O Sir,” said he, “a cough, a very sore cough. I can get no rest day nor night.” I asked, “How long have you had it?” He replied, “About threescore years: It began when I was eleven years old.” I was nothing glad that this man should come first, fearing our not curing him might discourage others. However, I looked up to God, and said, “Take this three or four times a day. If it does you no good, it will do you no harm.” He took it two or three days. His cough was cured, and has not returned to this day. (*Works*, vol. VIII p364- A Plain Account).*

¹⁷ C. E. Vulliamy, *John Wesley* (Epworth Press, London 1954) p. 184.

¹⁸ J. Wesley, *The Letters of the Revd John Wesley, MA.*, edited by John Telford, 8 vols., (Epworth Press, London 1931) vol. VIII pp. 43; 45; 171; 213; 214; 261 (hereafter abb. ‘*Letters*’); and *Works* VIII pp263-265.

¹⁹ *Letters*, vol. VIII p213.

²⁰ *Works*, vol. IV p143 – Journal 24th January 1779.

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in Dr Whitehead for his own medical needs. The latter's efforts led to the following commendation from Wesley,

*Of such a one I would boldly say, with the son of Sirach, "Honour the Physician, for God hath appointed him."*²¹

He enjoyed a wide circle of medical contacts who included Dr John Jones,²² and the Scottish triumvirate of Drs James Hamilton, James Gregory and Alexander Munro whom he consulted among other things concerning his own health.²³

While the eighteenth century might be called 'The Golden Age of Quacks',²⁴ it was possible to distinguish three principal types of serious medical practitioners: those physicians who had earned medical degrees at university medical schools (and of whom there were far too few to meet the needs of an ever growing population), apothecaries, who were less experienced, learning by apprenticeship to the physicians²⁵; and those, among whom Wesley may be classified, eminent and educated people (in practice, predominantly gentry and clergy) whose commitment was primarily to tried and tested remedies.²⁶ It was Wesley's keen interest in traditional and contemporary cures for ailments, allied to his anxieties about the availability of medical treatment for the poor, which led him, in 1747, to publish Primitive Physic, or an Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases.²⁷ The book was essentially a manual of self help for those who could not afford a physician. Its prescription of some 800²⁸ remedies (or 'receipts' as Wesley termed them) for the treatment of various ailments brought past and current approaches to curative care together. Some of the remedies seem ridiculous to a twenty-first century mind, e.g. the use of forge water to improve eyesight, but as Marty writes,

*While we may chuckle at some of the Wesleyan nostrums and bizarre medical theories, they were not far off the mark of the best scientific efforts of his time.*²⁹

Indeed many of Wesley's suggestions derived from respected physicians, apothecaries, and standard medical books of his day.³⁰ A. W. Hill points out that among the known remedies of the day rarely could better options be found to compete with those offered in *Primitive Physic*.³¹ What tended to work against Wesley was his own open-mindedness and willingness to consider any remedy that proved to be efficacious. So, e.g., he allowed himself to be influenced by traditional herbal medicine as a consequence of his time in

²¹ *Works*, vol. IV p351– Journal 3rd October 1786.

²² One of Wesley's closest associates for some 20 years from 1746, whose many and varied responsibilities within the Methodist movement included serving as the first headmaster of Kingswood School. See further, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed W. R. Ward and R. P. Heitzenrater, vol 20 (Abingdon 1991) p150.

²³ J W Hill pp44-46 and *Works*, vol. III p463 – Journal 18th May 1772.

²⁴ The title of a chapter in N. Duin and J. Sutcliffe, A History of Medicine, (Simon and Schuster, 1992) pp.42-44.

²⁵ In 1748 an Apothecaries Act was passed to regulate their activities.

²⁶ See J. G. Gadsby, Rev John Wesley MA: Holistic Healing, Electrotherapy and Complementary Medicine (Teamprint, Leicester 1996) pp13-17 for a discussion on Wesley's place in 18th Century medical practice.

²⁷ All quotations in this paper are taken from the 24th Edition (??????). Hereafter abbreviated to *Primitive Physic*.

²⁸ The first edition of *Primitive Physic* included 725 remedies for 243 ailments. The corresponding figures for the final 32nd edition were 900+ and 288.

²⁹ E. Brooks Holifield, Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition (Crossroad, New York 1986) p.xi.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 34.

³¹ A. Wesley Hill, pp. 121-122.

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North America.³² For this in particular, he was pilloried by Dr William Hawes, physician to the London Dispensary. However, Hawes' attack was exceptional and did not come until 1776, 29 years after *Primitive Physic* was first published. Tyerman suggests the publication of Hawes' pamphlet '*An Examination of Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Primitive Physick*' was more influenced by the former's membership of the Humane Society than any medical scruples he might have had. Despite Hawes, the impact and popularity of *Primitive Physic* spoke for itself: it ran to thirty-two editions, being regularly updated and revised, some remedies being removed, others added.³³

Wesley did not allow himself to be intimidated by the medical world of his day. He was more than ready to challenge the practices of his contemporaries in the field of medicine. He was passionately concerned about the willingness of many eighteenth century physicians to devote themselves to following new and fashionable theories about illness rather than using tried and tested remedies. Such concern was one of the chief inspirations behind the publishing of *Primitive Physic*³⁴ and is evidenced both by his choice of sub-title for that publication - '*an Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases,*' - and in one of his Journal entries when on a visit to Ireland,

*All the time I could spare was taken up by poor patients. I generally asked, 'What remedies have you used?' and was not a little surprised. What has fashion to do with physic? Why (in Ireland at least), almost as much as with head-dress. Blisters for anything or nothing, were all the fashion when I was in Ireland last. Now the grand fashionable medicine for twenty diseases (who would imagine it) is mercury sublimate! Why is not a halter or a pistol? They would cure a little more speedily.*³⁵

On another occasion he can be found criticising the published work of the Irish physician and chemist Dr David MacBride,

*I went down to Bristol again, and read in the way Dr M'Bride's "Practice of Physic." Undoubtedly it is an ingenious book; yet it did not answer my expectation. Several things I could contradict from my own experience; e.g., he says, "All fevers are attended with thirst and vigilia." Nay, in two violent fevers I had no thirst at all, and slept rather more than when I was in health.*³⁶

His keen interest in contemporary medicine and its development meant he sought to keep abreast of current thinking and writing, so, e.g.,

In this journey I read a volume of the "Medical Essays," lately published at London. I have read a thousand strange things, but none stranger than the account which is here given of three persons who were entirely cured of an confirmed dropsy; one, by drinking six quarts a day of cold water; the second, by drinking two or three gallons of new cider; the third, by drinking a gallon or two of small beer, and the same quantity of buttermilk.

³² *Works*, vol. XIV p309 - *Primitive Physic*.

³³ *Works* vol. XIV p316-317. See Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society vol. XLV (1985-86) p7, for a listing of the various editions of *Primitive Physic*.

³⁴ *Primitive Physic*, ppiii-x.

³⁵ *Works*, vol. III p499 – Journal 14th June 1773.

³⁶ *Works*, vol. IV p108 – Journal 18th August 1777.

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*Why, then, what are we doing, in keeping dropsical persons from small drink? The same as in keeping persons in the small-pox from air*³⁷.

DEVELOPING INOVATIVE IDEAS

Wesley enthusiastically promoted new ideas which could be shown to produce successful medical outcomes. This is well illustrated by his fascination with the use of electricity for medical purposes. He put together a compendium of what was already known on the subject and in 1760 published, The Desideratum: or, electricity made plain and useful. He explaining how he had collected together ‘*the sum of all that has hitherto been published on this curious and important subject*’, having been impressed by the results of some one thousand experiments³⁸ with the effecting of cures for a variety of disorders.³⁹

PREVENTIVE CARE

Preventive care was recognised by Wesley as being a key to better general health. This led to him holding and sharing some very down to earth views on such matters as the need for regular bowel movement⁴⁰ and the amount of sleep one should or should not have. Too much sleep, he insisted,

*soddens and parboils the flesh and sows the seeds of numerous diseases ... it weakens the understanding ... [and] the memory.*⁴¹

So, too he was concerned that, ‘*Everyone that would preserve health should be as clean and sweet as possible in their houses, clothes and furniture.*’ To sound diet, plentiful exercise and regular hours of sleep, ‘*Tender persons,*’ he added, ‘*ought constantly to go to bed about 9 and rise at four or five.*’ He promoted the need for ‘*cold bathing*’ which was recognised as ‘*of great advantage to health*’.⁴²

While Wesley was adamant that the ultimate state of an individual’s health lay with God, he also believed that one carried a personal responsibility for doing all that was possible to promote one’s own health. On his 71st birthday, he reflected on his own regime,

*How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? That my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves firmer, than they were then? That I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand cause is, the good pleasure of God, who doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him. The chief means are, 1. My constantly rising at four, for about fifty years. 2. My generally preaching at five in the morning; one of the most healthy exercises in the world. 3. My never travelling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles in a year.*⁴³

³⁷ *Works*, vol. III p476 – Journal 23rd July 1772. See further, (i) *Works*, vol. III p474 – Journal 26th June 1772, where Wesley discusses current views as to the treatment of hydrocele; (ii) *Primitive Physic*, pviix where he affirms his support for the work of Drs. Sydenham, Dover and Cheyne; and (iii) *Works*, vol. IV p21 – Journal 24th June 1774 where he writes of reading ‘*Dr Wilson’s tract on the circulation of the blood*’.

³⁸ L. Tyerman, vol. 2, p.389.

³⁹ *Works*, vol. II p388-389 - Journal 9th November 1756.

⁴⁰ *Letters*, vol. VI, p. 185.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, vol. VII, p. 75.

⁴² *Primitive Physic*, p.xii.

⁴³ *Works*, vol. IV p21 – Journal 28th June 1774.

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WHOLE-PERSON HEALTH-CARE

A keen appreciation is evidenced in Wesley's writings of the ways by which mental or spiritual dis-ease can potentially affect the body, something very much in accord with the present-day understanding of psychosomatic illnesses. In his introduction to *Primitive Physic*, Wesley writes,

1. *The passions have a greater influence on health than most people are aware of*
2. *All violent and sudden passions dispose to, or actually throw people into, acute diseases.*
3. *The slow and lasting passions, such as grief and hopeless love, bring on chronic diseases.*
4. *Till the passion which caused the disease is calmed, medicine is applied in vain.*⁴⁴

His approach was radical in his own time,

*Wesley's view of health and disease was essentially theological. The most enlightened physicians of his time placed the vis medicatrix naturae centrally in their therapy, and used such methods as they thought would assist and not hinder her healing power. Wesley was not content to think in terms of nature's healing, but looked beyond to the Author of nature, deeming him to be wholly desirous for the good of his creatures.*⁴⁵

For him, religion and health went hand in hand: his concern for the physical well being of the underprivileged was part of his wider concern for their mental and spiritual welfare. Such thinking arose out of his belief that the individual must be treated as a whole person, based on the idea that the inter-action of the body and the soul was extremely relevant. He was very much ahead of his age in this respect.⁴⁶ His 'Visitors' were instructed when visiting the sick to inquire about the needs of both body and spirit.⁴⁷ And, he firmly believed that '*God has more than one way of healing either the body or the soul.*'⁴⁸

On one occasion he deals with a woman with stomach pains whose real trouble was an unresolved fretting over the death of her son.⁴⁹

Wesley was all too aware that the conditions under which people lived had a significant effect on their physical well-being. For the poor this was often detrimentally so. Wesley's concern led him to enquire if those who were ill were warm enough, well-fed, and clean.⁵⁰ In London, to satisfy the needs of those who lacked such benefits, he established a poor-house.⁵¹ When on a visit to Arbroath he observed the rapid expansion of that town, and was pleased to note that it was built,

... with so much common sense ... Two entire new streets and part of a third have been built within these two years. They run parallel with each other

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pxiv.

⁴⁵ A. Wesley Hill, p.132.

⁴⁶ A. Wesley Hill, p. 22.

⁴⁷ *Works*, vol. VIII p263 *A Plain Account*.

⁴⁸ *Works*, vol. III p463 – Journal 18th May 1772.

⁴⁹ E. Brooks Holifield, pp. 20-21.

⁵⁰ *Works*, vol. VII p117-127 – Sermon XCVIII 'On visiting the sick'.

⁵¹ *Works*, vol. VIII p265 *A Plain Account*.

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*and have a row of gardens between them. So that every house has a garden and thus both health and convenience are consulted.*⁵²

HEALING GIFTS and PRAYER

On the matter of prayer and spiritual healing Wesley held very firm views. In his sermon, *The Nature of Enthusiasm*,⁵³ he spoke out against those who claimed to possess healing gifts but misused them to the detriment of those who received their ministry. However, he also acknowledged some did possess healing gifts. While he did not consider this to be so for himself, he prayed for the good health of others and himself, even if the source of the illness or ailment appeared to be natural or organic; he recognised the possibility of supernatural cures; and he affirmed his belief that healing could be either natural or supernatural, deriving potentially from both medication and prayer.⁵⁴ In correspondence with the Revd. Dr Conyers Middleton, who insisted no miracles had been wrought either by Christ or the apostles of the Early Church, Wesley argued the contrary case.⁵⁵ However, he also insisted that God was the source of all healing activity.⁵⁶ The Middleton correspondence offers a detailed view of Wesley's understanding of healing activity in the Early Church.⁵⁷

Wesley believed in and practised the use of prayers for healing, on behalf of others and for himself,

*I was obliged to lie down for most of the day, being easy only in that posture. At the Love feast which followed (the service) beside the pain in my back and head, the fever still continued upon me. Just as I began to pray, I was seized with such a cough that I could hardly speak. At the same time came strongly to my mind, "These signs shall follow them that believe" (a reference to healing power found in Mark xvi). I called on Jesus aloud to "Increase my faith" and "to confirm the word of his Grace". While I was speaking the pain vanished away, the fever left me, my bodily strength returned and for many weeks I felt neither weakness nor pain*⁵⁸

While Wesley never sets prayer over and against medicine, where the latter was seen to have failed he was not afraid to invoke God's support in prayer. Two illustrations follow. Firstly from 1741,

*I went out in a coach as far as the school in Kingwood; where one of the mistresses lay (as was believed) near death, having found no help from all the medicines she had taken. We determined to try one remedy more; so we poured out our souls in prayer to God. From that hour she began to recover strength, and in a few days was out of danger.*⁵⁹

And then in the following summer,

⁵² *Works*, vol. III p397– Journal 8th May 1770.

⁵³ *Works*, vol. V pp467-468 - Sermon XXXVII 'The Nature of Enthusiasm'.

⁵⁴ F. Brooks Holifield, pp. 28, 36-37.

⁵⁵ *Works*, vol. X p.40.

⁵⁶ *Works*, vol. VIII p.264 A Plain Account [paraXII.5].

⁵⁷ *Works*, vol. X p.1^f.

⁵⁸ *Works*, vol. I p310 – Journal 8th May 1741.

⁵⁹ *Works*, vol. I p347 – Journal 20th November 1741.

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The same blessing from God we found in the evening, while I was showing how he justifies the ungodly. Among the hearers was one, who, some time before, had been deeply convinced of her ungodliness; in so much that she cried out, day and night, "Lord, save, or I perish!" All the neighbours agreeing that she was stark mad, her husband put her into a Physician's hands, who blooded her largely, gave her a strong vomit, and laid on several blisters. But all this proving without success, she was, in a short time, judged to be incurable. He thought however, he would speak to one person more, who had done much good in the neighbourhood. When Mrs. Johnson came, she soon saw the nature of the disease, having herself gone through the same. She ordered all the medicines to be thrown away, and exhorted the patient to look unto Jesus; which this evening she was enabled to do by faith; and he healed the broken in heart.⁶⁰

This second reference serves to illustrate Wesley's attitude to mental health issues. Evidently the prescribed medicines were not effective. Without any attempt at the dramatic, prayer is invoked.⁶¹

WESLEY'S OWN EXPERIENCE OF HEALING

Wesley pursued his intensely comprehensive and practical healing ministry despite, certainly in his middle years, suffering continued ill-health.⁶² It was only in his later years that he was more robust in himself.⁶³ One may speculate that few others, then or now, would pursue such a work which brings no direct benefit to themselves.

CONCLUSION

Such is the nature of John Wesley. He pursued a practical ministry, the nature of which was both dynamic and in advance of the thinking of his day. A number of themes emerge from this study which offer topics for contemporary reflection, as to how the Christian Church of today may deliver a ministry of health and healing. Wesley's approach has been shown to involve and knowing the importance of:

- Getting alongside people and identifying their real needs
- Listening
- Working in partnership with, rather than in opposition to, other health-care practitioners
- Knowing the limits of one's own talents and abilities, and the point at which one should hand over patient responsibility to someone else
- Appreciating the role of prayer
- Putting prayerful concern into action
- Attempting to understand the medical world of the day
- Striving for as wide an access to medical services and resources as is possible

⁶⁰ *Works*, vol. I pp380-381 – Journal 17th June 1742. This incident also offers a good example of the focus of 18th Century Medicine on expelling toxic substances (by blood letting, inducing vomiting, etc) from the body as the key to therapeutic success. For further examples, see *Works*, vol. I p406– Journal 25 December 1742 and vol. IV p496 – Journal 7th October 1790.

⁶¹ See also, *Works*, vol. I p273 – Journal 23rd May 1740.

⁶² *Works*, vol. II p307 – Journal 22nd and 26th October 1753.

⁶³ *Works*, vol. IV p282 –Journal 28th June 1784 and vol. IV p336 – Journal 28th June 1786.

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- ❑ Being open to traditional and complimentary medicinal treatments
- ❑ Offering a prophetic voice in the face of perceived deficiencies in the provision of medication and the delivery of medical care
- ❑ Recognising the importance of preventive health-care and encouraging its promotion
- ❑ Challenging people to accept a measure of responsibility for their own health-care
- ❑ A recognition of psychosomatic influences in some incidents of physical illness
- ❑ A perception of the importance of 'whole-person' health-care.

The Methodist Church is privileged indeed to have such a founding father and spiritual mentor as John Wesley. He offers a compelling example of what it is to engage with people at their point of need, both in the name of Christ and as our Lord's hands and feet, lips and eyes for today. No avenue is to be unexplored, no stone unturned in this quest. And, incidentally, we have had affirmed for us the critical value of the Works for the Church in the twenty-first century.

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