

# Editorial

The four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the King James Bible has been surprisingly successful in focusing attention on the role of Scripture in Church and society. Various programmes on both TV and radio have drawn attention to the language and poetry of the King James translation, whilst a significant number of Churches and congregations have chosen to focus on the Bible itself through projects such as the handwritten Bible, Bible-Fresh and the Lenten BigRead project. This celebratory edition of *Epworth Review* offers a brief glimpse of how the Bible was and is being used in the Methodist Church today.

Randy Maddox sets the context in a fulsome and comprehensive exploration of John Wesley's use of Scripture. He explores possible answers to three fundamental questions:

1. *What* Bible did Wesley read?
2. *How* did he read and interpret the Bible?
3. *Why* did he read the Bible, and encourage others to do so?

His research shows how, despite being a man of his time, Wesley nonetheless developed and defended a view of Scripture that both enlightened and inspired subsequent generations of Methodists to respond to God's calling to spread Scriptural Holiness throughout the land.

Neil Richardson contests that unless the Church returns to a more 'biblical' form of preaching, it will never fulfil its calling and experience the renewal for which it longs. In his paper he calls for a style of preaching that uses the Bible more deliberately and imitatively. Whilst not immediately apparent to those who have attended Applegarth performances at Greenbelt or at the White Hart pub in London, Dr Richardson's thesis has much in common with the aims and objectives of Applegarth as is made evident in the paper by Peter Moreton. Telling and retelling the stories of Scripture so that the truths which they contain can be heard requires an astonishing attention to the text and the context of the text. Being true to what Scripture actually says, rather than what it is popular to think that it says, demands rigorous research and exegesis.

Such research must, however, also be set in context; thus in his paper, Pete Philips details the work of CODEC in evaluating the impact of digital media on Biblical literacy, preaching and theology. We cannot always

assume that the story-telling methods and interpretations of the past will communicate the same truths today. The necessity for contemporary research is thus supported by Mike Seaton in his paper discussing the role of the Bible in the lives of young people. He argues that there is a need for a greater familiarity with both biblical culture and youth culture if the transmission of the text is to be more than superficial. The same cry for deeper cultural awareness lies at the root of most fresh expressions of church. The final paper in this edition therefore explores how the Bible is used by pioneers and others choosing to explore fresh ways of being church. Graham Horsely draws on his experience of both inherited and fresh ways of being church, and of mission and evangelism, to illustrate how, in many ways, the Church has almost come full circle in its positioning and use of Scripture as people seek to be more authentically disciples of Christ.