

Out from His Brother's Shadow

Leonard Bernstein, the late music director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra was asked, "What is the most difficult instrument to play in the orchestra?" He replied, "Second fiddle." Methodists have had Charles Wesley playing second fiddle to his more quoted brother John for almost three hundred years. We are familiar with some of Charles's hymns, but he has dwelled mostly in John's shadow. 2007 may change all that. The 300th anniversary of the birth of Charles will be celebrated next year.

The Sixth Historical Convocation sponsored by the General Commission on Archives and History, the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church, the Charles Wesley Society, and the World Methodist Historical Society will be July 20–22, 2007. (See page 28.)

The essays gathered here will remind us of the importance of Charles Wesley's hymns in *The United Methodist Hymnal*, the theological language resulting from caring for prisoners, and the importance of Charles

across the pan-Methodist denominations as we get a glimpse into an annual conference in the African Methodist Episcopal tradition. Theology, spiritual disciplines, evangelism, worship, and preaching all are impacted by Charles. Our ministries today are enriched by the many contributions of Charles Wesley. The General Commission on Archives and History is charged with the "ministry of memory," and in remembering Charles Wesley we are informed, inspired, and invigorated "to serve this present age" and to "use the grace divine" in the days to come. I invite you and your congregation to pray the following prayer adapted by Karen Westerfield Tucker (page 22).

Lord God, you inspired your servant Charles Wesley with burning zeal for the sanctification of souls, and endowed him with eloquence in speech and song: kindle in your church today such fervor, that those whose faith has cooled may be warmed, and those who have not known Christ may turn to him and be saved; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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Robert Williams, Guest Editor

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