

# THE METHODIST LAW CENTRE

## MEMORANDUM



### Corporate Headquarters

Episcopal Legal Services District, Inc.  
Tampa, Florida  
(813) 223-1200  
(813) 223-4226 facsimile  
www.methodistlawcentre.com

### Mailing Address:

The Methodist Law Centre  
5745 S.W. 75th Street  
Box # 149  
Gainesville, Florida 32608  
(352) 559-5544  
(800) 791-2241 facsimile  
www.methodistlawcentre.com

### Officers & Directors

Rev. Roderick O. Ford, Esq., SPHR  
Rev. Dr. Kenneth Sharpton Glasgow  
Rev. David Mazon  
Min. Joan Lewis  
Min. Victor Wilcox  
Min. William Tetteh (International)

TO: Rev. Jason L. Bradfield, M.A.  
Administrative Assistant to the President  
Whitefield Theological Seminary  
Email: [jason@reformed.info](mailto:jason@reformed.info)

Dr. D. Randall Talbot  
Whitefield Theological Seminary  
Email: [drrandtalbt@gmail.com](mailto:drrandtalbt@gmail.com)

Rev. Enroe Andre  
Christ Presbyterian Church  
Email: [enroeandre@me.com](mailto:enroeandre@me.com)

Rev. Jean Pierre Eugene  
Christ Presbyterian Church  
Email: [jppeugene@yahoo.com](mailto:jppeugene@yahoo.com)

FROM: Rev. Roderick O. Ford, Esq.  
Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow at  
Whitefield Theological Seminary

RE: "Questions of Unity and Uniformity" in  
The Methodist Movement

DATE: September 10, 2022

Dear Brothers In Christ!

On Sunday, September 11, 2022, while serving as an emissary from the "Methodist Law Centre," I shall visit two Presbyterian churches here in Gainesville, Florida. It shall be my objective to work with all Calvinistic Presbyterians and Wesleyan Methodists. To that end, I am reminded of the efforts of both George Whitefield and John Wesley to set aside their differences and to work together within the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Methodist movement:

The desire to unite the work of the societies, 'both in things spiritual and temporal,' which had given rise to the Quarterly Circuit Meetings, also had wider implications. Wesley continued to envision a union of the various branches of the revival. In 1747, he had attended a conference of the Welsh Association, led by Howell Harris [Calvinistic Methodists]. Harris not only supported 'several rules toward an union' but also attended Wesleyan Conferences during the next three years. The Wesleys also hoped to work closely with George

Whitefield, whom Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, had appointed as one of her chaplains in 1748.

The Wesleys, Harris,<sup>1</sup> and Whitefield held a special conference in August 1749, at which the main question was ‘How far can we unite with each other?’ They made only small steps toward union, though their intentions were noble. At the least, they agreed not to speak ill of one another. In addition, they reached some mutual understanding on the issues of justification, predestination, and perfection, and agreed that they would not ‘preach controversially’ either for or against absolute election, irresistible grace, final perseverance, and perfection. They would use scriptural language as much as possible, avoid terms such as ‘sinless,’ and even make use of one another’s expressions to some extent. They laid their suspicions squarely on the table: Harris feared closer union lest Wesley should consider himself the ‘head’ of it all; Whitefield objected to Wesley’s ‘monopolizing the name of Methodist to himself only’ (Beyon, 230). In the end, it seems, the tensions strained the attempted spirit of unity—Charles Wesley felt that the conference ‘came to nought,’ and John’s copy of the minutes is endorsed ‘Vain agreement’ (Minutes, 226-30). Nevertheless, Whitefield was given full rein to roam through the Wesleyan societies, and **Charles was able two months later to refer to himself, his brother, and Whitefield as ‘a threefold cord which shall no more be broken.’**<sup>2</sup>

Remember, the Calvinistic Methodists were established in Wales. “Charismatic and pioneering, [Howell] Harris was the father of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist denomination that finally seceded from the Church of England in 1811, long after his death. The structures Harris had put in place in the early 1740s were the foundation of a denomination that in the 19th century became the largest in Wales. There were a number of national revivals, 1859 and 1904–05 being the best known. Indeed, there were few years in 19th-century Wales where some community somewhere did not experience a religious awakening. The Calvinistic Methodist church, shaped in Harris’s image, was the chief beneficiary.”<sup>3</sup> Hence, in 2019-20, when I launched **The Methodist Law Centre**, I adopted by-laws that were extracted from the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647, out of an acknowledge of this history.

---

<sup>1</sup> Howell Harris was leader of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists or the Welsh Methodist Revival.

<sup>2</sup> Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013), pp.191-192.

<sup>3</sup>David Ceri Jones, “Howell Harris and the Evangelical Revival in Wales,” <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/howell-harris-and-the-evangelical-revival-in-wales/>.

Also, I think that you will be pleased to know that Dr. Kenneth Talbot and I frequently discussed these issues.

In closing, I wish that each you enjoy a very Blessed Lord's Day on tomorrow.

Yours Faithfully,

*Roderick O. Ford*

Rev. RODERICK O FORD ESQ.  
The Methodist Law Centre