each other. On the contrary, agreements signed by the Church of England prove the opposite. The Anglican-Lutheran agreements that exist, such as Meissen and Porvoo, are different. Interestingly enough, in this volume it is actually Meissen that receives more attention as an example of Anglican-Lutheran ecumenism than Porvoo. One could expect the opposite, since Porvoo succeeds in creating a communion, including interchangeability of ministries, whereas Meissen lacks it, evidently due to the differences in episcopal ministry in the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches on one hand and in the German Protestant Church (EKD) on the other hand. As Paul Avis correctly notes in ‘Rethinking Ecumenical Theology’, some churches in the Lutheran tradition find it difficult to acknowledge the role of visible structures of oversight in connection with unity. Notwithstanding, one could add that the Church of England has entered a far-reaching communion with certain other Lutheran churches with at least some structures of common oversight.

In the concluding chapter, Christopher Hill asks whether bishops ‘exhibit or obscure’ our seeing the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Hill quotes the Augsburg Confession, according to which ‘the Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered’ (art. 7). This classical definition has influenced also the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England. At first sight, the article counts neither ministry nor structures of oversight among the constitutive factors of the Church. Notwithstanding that, it is evident that the means of grace that it mentions do not exist without a visible structure. As a matter of fact, the Confession assumes the continuation of valid ordinations to priesthood, and is aimed at maintaining the episcopal order in the Church (articles 14, 28). A renewed and ecumenical episcopacy, called for by Hill, can thus be seen by both Anglicans and Lutherans as part of a network of catholicity to exhibit the communion of the una sancta.

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The purpose of this collection of essays about Methodist theology is to address the issue of whether the type of Methodism that has developed in Britain since Methodist re-union in 1932 possesses a distinctive theological identity. The editors ask in their Introduction: ‘…what is the particular theology of Methodism? Does it have a theology, or a set of theological emphases, any different from other mainstream Christian movements or denominations? Does it matter
whether it does or not?’ As the editors go on to explain, the collection adopts a specific approach to looking at the issue of Methodist theology:

Rather than look simply at official statements, or ask one or two leading theologians to undertake the task, this collection makes a start by opening up the question of the many ways in which theology is actually ‘carried’ in British Methodism. It begins to look at what the content of Methodist theology actually is, by looking at how British Methodists do their God-talk, in a great variety of ways. The book starts from an assumption: that Methodists, for whatever reason, have perhaps been prone to play down any distinctive elements, or to undervalue the theological aspects of their particular experience and insights. By its very existence, then, this book is claiming that it would be a good thing for British Christianity if Methodists were to spell out a little more the theology or theologies by which Methodism has been operating in recent times (p. xi).

This quotation makes clear that the collection takes a primarily phenomenological approach to Methodist theology. That is to say, it does not give either a systematic account of the nature of Methodist theology, or an apologetic account explaining how Methodist theology can be justified on the basis of Scripture, tradition or experience. Rather it seeks to explore how Methodists undertake their theology and what kind of explicit or implicit theology has underlain recent Methodist practice.

The collection is divided into three parts. Part I contains eight essays which give an historical overview of the various different ways in which theology has been ‘carried’ (that is to say, developed, reflected and transmitted) within British Methodism since 1932. For example, in her essay ‘Theology Sung and Celebrated’, Judith Maizel-Long looks at the theology expressed in Methodist worship, taking her evidence from three hymn books (the 1904 Methodist Hymn-book, the 1933 Methodist Hymn Book and the 1983 Hymns and Psalms) and from three worship books (the 1936 Book of Offices, the 1975 Methodist Service Book and the 1999 Methodist Worship Book).

Her conclusion from the hymn books is that there has been a greater emphasis on the Holy Spirit and on God the Father, a decline in the importance of the themes of death, judgement and the future state and a focus on the question of what it means to be the people of God at the expense of older emphases on individual salvation and evangelism (pp. 50–51). Her conclusion from the worship books is that, as these books have moved away from the influence of the Book of Common Prayer, they have recovered a number of the key theological emphases of John and Charles Wesley:

One of the paradoxes of letting go of the influence of the BCP is that Methodism has rediscovered the importance of Trinitarian theology, and the Arminian emphases such as prevenient grace, assurance, sanctification and Christ as the universal Saviour. These doctrines which are central to the theology of the Wesleys are generally more prominent in the MWB than in either the BoO or MSB.

Maizel-Long continues: