

# ***Wesleyan Theological Journal***

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of the  
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Barry L. Callen, 1993 to present

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WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
(Organized 1965)

The Society's mission is to encourage exchange of ideas among Wesleyan-Holiness theologians; to develop a source of papers for CHA (Christian Holiness Association) seminars; to stimulate scholarship among younger theologians and pastors; and to publish a scholarly journal.

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

This issue features the theme of relationships, in fact a wide range of relationships between the Wesleyan/Holiness theological tradition and various subjects of current concern. Ted Campbell reviews the recent search for the right relationship of this tradition to its ancient roots, while Michael Lodahl seeks to clarify how John Wesley's "gradualism" relates to cosmology and William Shontz reviews the Anglican connection of Wesley's soteriology.

In his Presidential Address to the Wesleyan Theological Society (1996), Kenneth Collins addresses John Wesley's view of the proper relationship between the new birth and sanctification. If the liberty of regeneration is not comprehended, he argues, neither will be the gracious freedom of perfect love. Beyond the new birth, the Christian faces responsibility in several arenas. Explored here are the divinely intended relationships between the life of faith and: spiritual formation (Dean Blevins); social responsibility (Irv Brendlinger); higher education (Merle Strege); ecumenical initiative (Gilbert Stafford); and the life of the mind and its cultural context (David Bundy, Harold Knight, and William Kostlevy). The latter concern was raised especially by the 1994 publication of Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*.

Honor should be given where honor is due. Accordingly, the Wesleyan Theological Society recently chose to relate in sincere appreciation to one of its own. The Society named Melvin Easterday Dieter as the recipient of its 1996 Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding service to the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. His friend Paul Bassett introduced him to the Society at its annual meeting in November, 1996, and paid tribute with an insightful and appreciative essay.

Found also in this issue are select book reviews, advertising, and basic information about the Wesleyan Theological Society itself, including its constitution and bylaws, current officers, and endowment fund.

The hope is that those who would be faithful to the Christ will seek thoughtfully and prayerfully to be related in proper ways to God's truth, grace, creation, commission, and future intentions, and to function gratefully as one with those who labor so well by their sides.

Barry L. Callen  
Editor, *WTJ*

# **BACK TO THE FUTURE: WESLEYAN QUEST FOR ANCIENT ROOTS: THE 1980s**

by

**Ted A. Campbell**

When *Roots* was televised in the spring of 1977, I was engaged in genealogical research in a Houston library staffed by Texas women who prided themselves on membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the Texas Republic, and the Daughters of the Confederacy. Imagine their discomfort when the grandsons and granddaughters of former slaves, inspired by the televised version of Alex Haley's book, came into the library to engage in the quest for their own histories. Perhaps they were an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual change then happening not only in North America, but throughout global culture. From the 1970s, a particular history began increasingly to shape history.

"Roots" might be taken as an apt byword for the passionate quest to connect oneself to one's past as a way to understand present identity, a quest expressed not only in such literature as Alex Haley's *Roots* or Irving Howe's *World of Our Fathers* (1976), but a quest that appeared more broadly in such forms as the move to "Postmodern" architecture, the revitalization of nationalistic, ethnic, and regional traditions and politics, a revival of regional literature in the United States, and even the revival of Celtic musical traditions in the British Isles and in North America.

Religious traditions also reflected the quest for deeper roots in this period. The resurgence of religious fundamentalisms—Islamic, Christian,

and Hindu—was just one sign of the religious quest to connect one's community to its deeper roots. But there were “kinder and gentler” movements to recover religious traditions and identities in the late 1970s and 1980s, movements that appeared in the most progressive of “modern” religious traditions, such as Reform Judaism and oldline Protestant denominations in Europe and North America.

### **The Albert C. Outler Connection**

This backtoroots trend is illustrated by a diverse group of scholars throughout the world who, throughout the decade of the 1980s, were engaged in study, teaching, and writing on the topic of John Wesley's relationship to ancient Eastern Christian traditions, with particular intention focused on finding deeper rootage for their own Wesleyan religious traditions. Their scholarly output may be compared to a single dissertation and a single (but influential) paragraph on the topic in the decades preceding. Having been not only an eyewitness of these events (dear Theophilus) but also a participant in them, I am drawn now to consider how they reflect the shifting of a religious ethos in the last decade.

Almost everyone who engaged in this Wesleyan quest in the 1980s had some connection with the work of Professor Albert C. Outler (1908-1988) of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Outler, originally trained at Yale as a scholar of ancient Christianity, had become deeply involved in the ecumenical movement on behalf of his own Methodist tradition. This led him to the critical study of John Wesley. It was Outler who suggested in a provocative 1964 paragraph and a lengthy footnote attached to it that John Wesley's doctrine of sanctification might have roots in the work of Gregory of Nyssa and the Cappadocian writers of the fourth century (by way of the so-called “Macarian” homilies).<sup>1</sup>

Outler's comment was followed up in the late 1960s by Robert Sheffield Brightman, then a doctoral student at Boston University, who wrote an ecumenically-inspired imaginary dialogue between Wesley and Gregory of Nyssa. Brightman himself was convinced that Outler's argument about direct influence of the Cappadocians via the Macarian litera-

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Cook Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), paragraph on pp. 9-10, and especially the lengthy footnote on p. 9.



ture was mistaken.<sup>2</sup> For a decade, Brightman's response seemed to have ended what at that point appeared to be an academic controversy with only distant ecumenical overtones.

In the 1980s, however, this seemingly academic quest for ancient Christianity through John Wesley became something of a passion throughout the Wesleyan world. One of the first to engage this topic was Professor Roberta Bondi, who had been a student of Outler's at Perkins School of Theology (SMU) from 1963 through 1965, and who had served as Outler's proofreader in preparing his *John Wesley* volume. Bondi, then, saw the famous "Macarius" paragraph and footnote in typescript before its publication. But it took a while for Bondi's interest in this topic to mature. Looking back, she considers herself not to have been a Christian believer while in Dallas. She left SMU to enter a doctoral program at Oxford University. As she describes her own experience, it was while sitting in the Oriental Reading Room of the New Bodleian Library in Oxford, reading a treatise by Philoxenus of Mabbug, that her religious conversion began. She notes that her conversion to Christian faith was simultaneously a conversion to feminism, for she found in the ascetic writers of the ancient church the freedom to be both a Christian and a feminist.<sup>3</sup> Her journey took her from Oxford to the University of Notre Dame, where she taught primarily in the area of Syriac language studies.

Roberta Bondi was invited to join the faculty of Candler School of Theology at Emory University in 1978. This, too, was an important transition point in her sense of vocation, for she perceived the call to Emory to be a call to engage ancient Christian studies, not only as an academic discipline, but also as a source of renewal in the contemporary life of the church. She perceived a vocation to teach ancient Christianity, as she puts it, "in such a way that it might change someone." Bondi's move to Emory was also a call to a historically Methodist school, where she could pursue ecumenical interests in the context of a Wesleyan theological tradition. It was natural, in this new context, that in the early 1980s she began offering a course at Candler on "John Wesley and the Church Fathers." By this

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Sheffield Brightman, "Gregory of Nyssa and John Wesley in Theological Dialogue on the Christian Life" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1969), pp. 45-58 and especially the appendix on pp. 359-367.

<sup>3</sup>Roberta C. Bondi, *Memories of God: Theological Reflections on a Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 69-76.

time she had begun to follow up on Outler's earlier comments. Even if Outler's thesis about Wesley's contact with Gregory of Nyssa was not valid, she argued, his interest in the Eastern ascetic tradition was clear, and Wesley's understanding of sanctification, in particular, reflected the sense of progressive sanctification or *theosis* that provided a consistent motif in ancient Eastern Christian devotional writings. Professor Bondi has continued to be active in Methodist-Orthodox relations, publishing two articles reflecting this particular interest.<sup>4</sup>

A very different context influenced Kelley Steve McCormick to take up research on John Wesley's use of ancient Christian sources. McCormick is an elder of the Church of the Nazarene and now Chair of the Division of Religion and Philosophy at Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy, Massachusetts. During his student days at Southern Nazarene University (then Bethany Nazarene College), McCormick became concerned about the discrepancies he perceived between his tradition's understanding of sanctification (inherited from nineteenth century Holiness revivalism) and that of John Wesley. As he pursued his theological education, he discovered both the writers of ancient Christianity and Wesley's interest in them, and he became intuitively convinced that the ancient Christian traditions of *theosis* ("divinization") had lain behind Wesley's understanding of Christian holiness.

McCormick pursued this intuition in his 1983 doctoral dissertation at Drew University on "John Wesley's Use of John Chrysostom on the Christian Life."<sup>5</sup> In this and subsequent articles, McCormick has argued for an understanding of sanctification that takes seriously the Christian's progressive growth in holiness. While not denying the inherited Holiness Movement's stress on a "crisis moment" of entire sanctification (often

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<sup>4</sup>Roberta Bondi, "The Meeting of Oriental Orthodoxy and United Methodism" (in Paul Fries and Tiran Nersoyan, eds., *Christ in East and West* [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987], 171-184) and "The Role of the Holy Spirit from a United Methodist Perspective" (*Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31:3-4 [1986]: 351-360). Information on Bondi is based on personal conversations with her, and especially a telephone conversation on 4 October, 1993.

<sup>5</sup>Kelley Steve McCormick, "John Wesley's Use of John Chrysostom on the Christian Life" (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1983). Further information on McCormick comes from a letter from him dated 3 February, 1994, and personal conversations. Also, see the article (note 19 below) given in the context of the 1991 Wesleyan Theological Society conference on Methodism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

understood on the analogy of a revivalistic conversion experience), McCormick found new depths of spiritual richness in the ancient Eastern conception of the Christian's growth into godliness. In this respect, McCormick continues to find Wesley's connection with Chrysostom and other Eastern aescetical writers helpful in serving as a corrective and a source of renewal for his own tradition. But McCormick's concern is not only directed toward the Holiness tradition, because he sees the rediscovery of tradition (ancient and Wesleyan) as an important corrective to the shallowness and time-contingent nature of much modern (and postmodern) theology. The connection between Wesley and ancient Christianity thus serves to broaden his own tradition by linking it to the narrative of the ancient church, and at the same time challenges the theological implications of modernity.

I was myself part of this recent Wesleyan quest for ancient roots, but I came to it from a still different perspective. Whereas Bondi can be described as a Christian feminist in an old-line Protestant tradition who discovered the liberating power of tradition, and McCormick can be described as a progressive within a traditionally Holiness denomination, I would describe myself as an Evangelical within an oldline Protestant denomination (United Methodist). I had an evangelical conversion experience in 1970, decided to pursue a vocation in ordained ministry, and in 1974 heard Albert Outler speak on "Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit." This inspired within me the desire to pursue early Methodist history as a way of linking Methodists to the Christian tradition more broadly, and as a means of renewal for the contemporary church. After two years of theological study in Oxford, I returned to Dallas in 1979 to begin doctoral study.

The dissertation I completed in 1984 at Southern Methodist University focused on Wesley's vision of ancient Christianity. Outler himself served as an *amicus curiae* (his own term) to the dissertation committee. But, although I had begun with an interest in demonstrating the similarities between Wesley's view of sanctification and that of ancient Eastern Christian asceticism (an issue on which Outler seriously challenged me during the oral examination), I had become convinced of the methodological difficulty of demonstrating such a connection. Certainly the use of ancient Eastern sources existed, but because there were so many other sources for Wesley's doctrine of sanctification, it would be impossible, I argued, to say that the ancient sources were somehow "primary."

The dissertation concentrated, instead, on Wesley's *vision* of ancient Christianity as a source of renewal for Christianity in his day.<sup>6</sup> In it I resisted the temptation to see Wesley's interests in ancient Christianity as evidence of his "High Church" leanings; instead, I suggested that these interests reflected a broader cultural theme in Augustan Britain, namely, the notion of "classical revival" which had specifically Christian expressions in a wide range of traditions. But if my conclusions about the ancient "influences" on Wesley and about his "High Churchism" were negative, I was (I recognize now) clearly involved in the attempt to "place" or "locate" Wesley within the range of Christian history and experience, and I saw this quest for historical rootage as relevant to the contemporary renewal both of Methodism and of the Evangelical tradition more broadly.<sup>7</sup>

### Interest From Other Contexts

It might be tempting to say that the quest for ancient roots was a distinctly American phenomenon, but it affected Wesleyan Christians throughout the world. At about the same time as I had begun my doctorate, a Swedish Methodist, Bengt Haglund, began work on a dissertation in the same area, i.e., Wesley's relationship to ancient Christian sources. Haglund was a licensed Methodist pastor who had studied in Toronto between 1961 and 1962, and at some point during the 1960s became aware of Outler's arguments about Wesley's connection to the ancient church. Back in Sweden, Haglund involved himself in ecumenical ventures with the Covenant Church in the village of Växjö where he served as pastor from 1962. Even at this time, however, he began to have some serious questions about the church's life, and also felt constricted as a village pastor. Although he remained as lay pastor of the Växjö congregation after 1966, he ceased pursuing ordination as a Methodist elder and became a clinical therapist.

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<sup>6</sup>Ted A. Campbell, "John Wesley's Conceptions and Uses of Christian Antiquity" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Methodist University, 1984); subsequently revised and published as *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity: Religious Vision and Cultural Change* (Nashville: Abingdon Press/Kingswood Books, 1991).

<sup>7</sup>On this latter point, the relevance of Wesley and his appropriation of tradition to the Evangelical tradition after him, see my article "Christian Tradition, John Wesley, and Evangelicalism" (*Anglican Theological Review* [Winter 1992]: 54-67).

Towards the end of the 1970s, Haglund took up an interest in the work of Swedish psychohistorian Thorvald Källstad of the Methodist seminary in Gothenburg, Sweden, who had written on John Wesley's use of the Bible.<sup>8</sup> Haglund was accepted into the doctoral program at the University of Lund and entered into correspondence with Outler in 1980 or 1981, expressing his interest in the questions about Wesley's appropriation of ancient Eastern Christian texts. He attended the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies in 1982 where he discussed with Outler, Bondi, myself, and others the possibilities for a dissertation in this area. It is clear that he was interested both in the psychological investigation of Wesley's use of ancient Christianity as an "authority" for breaking ecclesiastical precedents and with the vista Wesley seemed to offer for connecting Methodism to the ecumenical history of the church. We later were looking forward to hearing a paper from Bengt Haglund summarizing his research, to be given at the 1987 Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, but early in 1987 it was discovered that he had a rapidly advancing brain tumor. Unable to attend the Conference, he died in December of that year.<sup>9</sup>

Haglund's interest in this question shows that it was not only North American scholars who were intrigued by it. Nor was the quest for ancient roots distinctive of only one generation of Wesleyan scholars. Arthur Christian Meyers's work on "John Wesley and the Church Fathers" (presented in 1985 at St. Louis University) suggests that the fever to find a deeper rootage for Methodism affected older as well as younger scholars in the 1980s.<sup>10</sup> Meyers (b. 1914) was Professor of Economics at St. Louis University and a life-long Methodist, but a late-career vocation to ordained ministry (in the early 1970s) and his exposure to Roman Catholic Christianity at St. Louis University prompted him to investigate his own tradition's catholic roots.

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<sup>8</sup>Thorvald Källstad, *John Wesley and the Bible: A Psychological Study* (Uppsala: University of Uppsala Press, 1974).

<sup>9</sup>My information on Bengt Haglund is based on my meeting with him at the Oxford Institute in 1982 and on conversations with his brother-in-law, Dr. Tord Ireblad (Dean of the Methodist Seminary in Gothenburg, Sweden) in Washington, D. C. on 4 October, 1993.

<sup>10</sup>Arthur Christian Meyers, Jr., "John Wesley and the Church Fathers" (Ph.D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1985; reprint edition by University Microfilms International).

Meyers was known in the field of economics as a statistician, and his dissertation offers an extensive tabulation of Wesley's ancient Christian interests. Meyers was interested in the question of ancient "influences" on John Wesley, arguing that Wesley's exposure to a wide range of Western as well as Eastern patristic literature changed his theological perspective at a number of specific points. He does not render a judgment as to which of these influences was primary, but rather lays out the breadth of Wesley's familiarity with ancient Christian traditions.<sup>11</sup> As in the case of Bengt Haglund, we would have looked forward to hearing more from Arthur Meyers, but he was diagnosed as having Alzheimer's disease. Confined to a nursing home throughout the last years of the 1980s, he died on 25 October 1993.<sup>12</sup>

From a still different perspective came the work of Korean Methodist scholar, Dr. HooJung Lee (now Assistant Professor of Church History at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul). Throughout the late 1980s Professor Lee was engaged in research on his Emory University dissertation on "The Doctrine of New Creation in the Theology of John Wesley" (completed in 1991). Although the dissertation was primarily concerned with eschatology, it included a very significant chapter, written under Roberta Bondi's oversight, on Wesley's appropriation of ancient Eastern Christian literature, especially the so-called Macarian homilies.<sup>13</sup>

Hoo-Jung Lee was particularly drawn to the relationship between Wesley and the ancient Eastern Christian literature because of the connection he perceived here with his own quest for a distinctively Asian Christian spirituality. As Dr. Lee has expressed it:

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<sup>11</sup>Meyers' dissertation tends to give lengthy excerpts of ancient Christian texts or secondary literature about the ancient writers without drawing particular conclusions about their influence.

<sup>12</sup>I am indebted to Professor Meyers' widow, Mrs. Olive Meyers, for further information concerning his life and work.

<sup>13</sup>Hoo-Jung Lee, "The Doctrine of New Creation in the Theology of John Wesley" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1991), especially chapter five, 154-245, which focuses especially on Wesley's knowledge and use of the so-called "Macarian" homilies. Lee has also written an article on "John Wesley and Early Eastern Spirituality" (in *Religious Pluralism and Korean Theology: Festschrift for Dr. Sun Hwan Pyun*; Seoul: Korean Institute of Theology Press, 1992).

Our oriental religious heritage has been deeply rooted in monastic spirituality. Therefore, it is much easier for us to introduce Christianity dressed in ascetic, or monastic terms. Now, we will be greatly nourished by our Wesleyan heritage, if we bring the interesting connections between Wesley and Macarius into a workable synthesis. Then, Wesley will be interpreted in a different way beyond the mere confines of traditional theological agenda.<sup>14</sup>

That is to say, for Hoo-Jung Lee, Wesley's connection offers not only a way to connect Methodist history with its deeper roots, but it also offers Korean Methodists a way to connect their Christian tradition with distinctly Asian forms of spirituality. In Lee's case, then, the Wesleyan tradition functions in a double role, linking contemporary Christians with their past and opening up new possibilities for linkage with cultural traditions in which Christianity as a whole has often seemed alien because of the encumbrance of Western culture attached to it.

### The Maturing Quest: The 1980s

At the beginning of the 1980s, several of us were pursuing research interests in the connections between John Wesley and his ancient roots, largely unaware of each other. But, since almost all of us had some contact with Albert Outler, we eventually became aware of the varied research under way. In 1982 Outler served as Co-Convener of the Wesley Studies Working Group of the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies. The group met at Keble College, Oxford, in late July and early August, 1982, and included Outler, myself (acting as Outler's *aide-de-camp*), Roberta Bondi, and Bengt Haglund. A paper by Professor Bondi offered the opportunity for a focused discussion of the topic of Wesley's connection to ancient Christianity. Our discussion resulted in the Working Group's recommendation that studies of Wesley's ancient roots should be pursued more explicitly and more intensively.<sup>15</sup>

By the end of the 1980s the interest in this subject had grown to such an extent, in particular among Wesleyans of more conservative traditions, that it became the principal subject of the 1991 annual meeting of the

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<sup>14</sup>A letter from Professor Hoo-Jung Lee, dated 17 January, 1994.

<sup>15</sup>Report of the Wesley Studies Working Group, in M. Douglas Meeks, ed., *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 62.

Wesleyan Theological Society.<sup>16</sup> The Society took up at this meeting the topic of “Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy.” Grounded in a programmatic essay on the topic by theologian Randy Maddox,<sup>17</sup> the conference heard a keynote address by Anglican A. M. Allchin on “The Epworth/Canterbury-Constantinople Axis.”<sup>18</sup> Reports were offered detailing new research on Wesley and John Chrysostom, Wesley and the ancient Alexandrian theological tradition, Wesley and the Christology of the Cappadocians, and the Eastern-Christian orientation of Wesley’s scriptural exegesis.<sup>19</sup>

If one considers that the Wesleyan Theological Society is the theological commission of the Christian Holiness Association, the ecumenical nature of this conference should appear all the more significant, and marks an important stage in the Methodist concern for ancient roots that we have seen running through (and beyond) the 1980s. In some circles it could be taken as a given by then that the inheritance of ancient Christianity was a significant factor in Wesley’s theological development and in his own re-visioning of the Christian life and the renewal of the church in his day.

### **What Remains Relevant?**

Not all scholars are presently convinced about the importance of the ancient Christian motif in Wesley’s own life, or about its relevance to contemporary Wesleyan churches. Henry Rack’s recent biography of John

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<sup>16</sup>The Wesleyan Theological Society met at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, 2-3 November, 1991.

<sup>17</sup>Maddox’s paper was published prior to the conference: Randy Maddox, “John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy: Influences, Convergences, and Differences” (*Asbury Theological Journal* 45:2 [Fall 1990]: 29-53).

<sup>18</sup>Allchin’s address was subsequently published in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 26:1 (Spring 1991): 23-37.

<sup>19</sup>These papers were subsequently published in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 26:1 (Spring 1991, *sic*): K. Steve McCormick, “Theiosis in Chrysostom and Wesley: An Eastern Paradigm on Faith and Love” (38-103); David Bundy, “Christian Virtue: John Wesley and the Alexandrian Tradition” (139-163); Troy W. Martin, “John Wesley’s Exegetical Orientation: East or West” (104-138). In addition, the conference heard a paper by Craig Galloway on Wesley and Cappadocian christologies. We should note the pre-conference publication of an essay by Howard Snyder on “John Wesley and Macarius the Egyptian” (*Asbury Theological Journal* 45:2 [Fall 1990]: 55-60). Also see the more recent Michael J. Christensen, “Theosis and Sanctification: John Wesley’s Reformulation of a Patristic Doctrine,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31:2 (Fall, 1996), 71-94.



Wesley decries what he perceives as skewed interpretations of Wesley that look primarily to the books he read or the cultural influences on him:

A word of caution is also necessary here, as elsewhere, about laying too much stress on the books Wesley read and their original religious pedigree and meaning. Too many analyses of Wesley's experience and theology have proceeded in this bookish way.<sup>20</sup>

Elsewhere, Rack specifically discounts Outler's concern with Wesley's Eastern Christian heritage.<sup>21</sup> It is at this point, I would say, that historians simply lack instruments by which to measure the relative strength of influences on a man's or woman's life. Better to proceed historically by trying to discern what Wesley himself believed about Christian antiquity rather than trying to discern the degree to which Christian antiquity may have molded Wesley. Others would say that Wesley's interests in ancient Christianity remain merely academic curiosities.

There is obviously more than "history" involved here. The critical issue perceived by all of the questers noted above, myself included, is *tradition*, and tradition implies historical selectivity, historical choice. As true as it is (here I genuflect to Edward Gibbon) that we cannot by our selection change what happened in the past, it is equally true that we cannot *but* choose what of the past we find relevant to our present and our future. Tradition might be defined as those acts by which women and men selectively connect their past to their present and future. What I discovered about Wesley's use of Christian antiquity (it should have come as no surprise) was the selectivity *he* employed in choosing (and editing) historical materials as he saw their relevance to the eighteenth-century Revival. There is no escape (as I see it) from the act of selectivity when historical study is employed in the formation of communal identity. This is as true of John Wesley (and Alex Haley) as it is of myself and my fellow Wesleyan questers after ancient roots.

So it was that the scholars noted above discovered and selected in Wesley what they perceived to be relevant to the church in their own contexts and even to their own identities as contemporary Wesleyan Christians. In one case the discovery of ancient roots through Wesley was

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<sup>20</sup>Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast* (London: Epworth Press and Trinity Press International, 1989), 97.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 102.

found relevant to the assertion of a contemporary feminist appropriation of the faith. In another case, it was related to the struggles of a North American Evangelical to revise the inherited and identity-forming doctrine of sanctification in a Holiness denomination. In yet another case this discovery was found relevant to the attempt to assert a distinctly Asian spirituality on the part of Korean Methodists. This process, I say, is not only an attempt to discover something about the eighteenth century—it was not “mere history” in that sense—but marks an attempt to define contemporary identity by a selective use of the past. It is a kind of *anamnesis* to confront the identity-less amnesia that seems to characterize so much of modern life.

I have been tempted to say that there is something “American” about this quest, despite the interest of Swedish and Korean and other non-American Christians in the topic. I say “American” because the feeling that we are cut off from our roots is a consistent theme in American culture (both North America and South America). But, then, feeling cut off from one’s roots is the harvest of modernity, not only in America but globally, wherever modern forms of economic and cultural life have displaced traditional cultures. One might say that in the last half century the American experience of uprootedness has become a global experience as a result of the onslaught of modernity.

I have become convinced that it is mistaken to think that modernity simply destroys traditional cultures and replaces them with the culture of the destroyer. The Wesleyan quest for ancient roots in the 1980s, of which I have been a part, suggests that it is not only “native” cultures, cultures outside of the “First World,” that are being destroyed: it suggests that we too are the victims of our own destructive modernity. We do not have to look far to see modernity’s destructive effects, but we must now dig deeply indeed to find identity in the wake of modernity’s vastly destructive cultural power.

# THE COSMOLOGICAL BASIS FOR WESLEY'S "GRADUALISM"

by

Michael E. Lodahl

"Press the *instantaneous* blessing. Then I shall have more time  
for my peculiar calling, enforcing the *gradual* work."

—John Wesley to brother Charles,  
June 27, 1766

Why did John Wesley consider it his "peculiar calling" to emphasize God's "gradual work" of redeeming and restoring human lives to the divine image? What is the significance in Wesley of the image/concept of *gradualness*? What relationship does it bear to *instantaneousness*?

There are many routes one might take in attempting to answer such questions, certainly including Wesley's attentiveness to lived experience. In what follows, however, I intend to take a path rarely noticed and less often trod. I want to interpret the notion of "gradualness" by exploring the general *cosmological* themes found in some of Wesley's sermons. This will be done with the suspicion that these themes may have provided the broad foundation for his "peculiar calling." My working assumption is that God's "gradual work," as Wesley termed it, is rooted in his understanding of the *continuity of divine presence* throughout the creation: God the "Creative Spirit" creating, sustaining, nurturing, cherishing, and laboring to redeem all creatures.

Cosmology has not received an abundance of attention in Wesleyan circles historically. This inattention is due largely, one would suspect, to the characteristically Wesleyan emphasis on soteriology. This emphasis

has fostered certain idiosyncracies in Wesleyan thought, described well by J. Kenneth Grider as experiential, existential, and interested in human freedom and the moral dimension (28). True and proper as all this might be, such anthropologically-oriented characteristics have often tended to create brittle distinctions between us human beings and the fabric of the created order in which we live, move, and have our being by God. They have fostered an unhealthy and unbiblical anthropocentrism, and surely have encouraged a sense of alienation between humans and the world that does not lend itself, for instance, to ecological sensitivity or commitment.

What has surprised me recently in my reading of Wesley, given this tendency in subsequent Wesleyan tradition, are his own explicit and oft-repeated cosmological ruminations that help to place his optimism of grace in a larger, more cosmic context. I intend to argue that, at least partly because of what he assumed to be the case about God's rich relations to the universe, Wesley was able to preach and teach with optimism concerning God's "gradual work" of sanctifying human beings and all of creation. While Wesley had little patience for natural theology *per se*, he developed, particularly in some of his later sermons, a strong and explicit theology of nature. He also aggressively explored the implications of this theology, particularly in regard to the doctrines of omnipresence and omniscience.

### **God the Omnipresent Creator**

Late in his life (1788) Wesley wrote "On the Omnipresence of God," one of his most philosophical sermons. He utilized the biblical query, "'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' saith the Lord" (Jer. 23:24) as his text. The operative theme of this sermon was simply, "God is in this, and every place" (1987, IV:41).

God acts everywhere, and therefore is everywhere; for it is an utter impossibility that any being, created or uncreated, should work where it is not. God acts in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, throughout the whole compass of his creation. . . .  
(1987, IV:42)

Put simply, God is no Creator from a distance. "There is no place empty of God," wrote Wesley in "The Imperfection of Human Knowledge," and "every point of infinite space is full of God . . ." (1985, II:569). Wesley's theologic implies that there cannot possibly be any

place, indeed any submicroscopic point anywhere at any time, where God is not fully and actively present. Wesley's doctrine of creation dictates that where God is not—if such a scenario were possible—certainly no thing can possibly be. And of course, it is not sufficient simply to think of omnipresence as meaning that God occupies the invisible “empty space” between perceivable objects; rather, every point, no matter how infinitesimal, is absolutely full of divine presence—and, presumably, *must be* so, in order to be at all.

In Wesley's day, Newtonian physics still tended to assume that a gaseous quasi-material called “ether” filled the space in which discrete objects moved and interacted. While 18th-century disciples of Newton found the ether hypothesis increasingly unnecessary as they developed the idea that objects exercised gravitational force at a distance, Wesley in his sermon on omnipresence reflected a still common opinion. He wrote: “And it is now generally supposed that all space is full” (1987, IV:44). He realized that this hypothesis was not unanimously accepted by his contemporaries, but he was prepared to insist nonetheless on the proposition's veracity on theological grounds alone. “Perhaps it cannot be proved that all space is filled with matter. But the heathen [Virgil] himself will bear us witness . . . ‘All things are full of God.’ Yea, and whatever space exists beyond the bounds of creation . . . even that space cannot exclude him who fills the heaven and earth” (1987, IV:44).

Certainly today when we meditate on the utterly incomprehensible immensity of our space-time continuum, this idea that God dwells fully in every place, and indeed beyond every place, virtually shatters the mind. It is not an idea that receives much attention presently, but in classical theology this is the doctrine of *divine immensity*. While omnipresence, literally interpreted, means that God occupies all places, divine immensity means, in H. Orton Wiley's words, that “God as Spirit is above all spatial limitations, and it is because of this that [spatial] relations have validity” (339). Hence, while every place has its place in relationship to other places in the universe (I live in Nampa, which is in Idaho, which is in North America, which is on earth, etc.), the only viable answer to the largest question of locale—“Where is the *universe*?”—is “God.” Simply stated, our universe (and all other possible universes, of course) is *in God* and actually can be nowhere else. “In a word,” Wesley wrote, “there is no point of space, whether within or without the bounds of creation, where God is not” (1987, IV:42).

The doctrines of omnipresence and immensity become all the more infathomable when one attempts to reflect on them in the context of the new physics. In Wesley's era, the notion of atoms as miniscule, rather granular "building blocks" of the universe was fairly common. Today, however, the very notion of "building blocks" has been decimated by the seemingly endless discovery of "subnuclear debris": from atoms to nuclei and electrons, from nuclei to protons and neutrons; from protons and neutrons to pions, muons, leptons, those quirky quarks, and so on—possibly *ad infinitum*. Couple all of this with the physicists' analogy that if a single atom were the size of a football stadium, those sub-atomic particles (if we can yet call them particles!), waltzing together in their dance of uncertainty, would be the size of grains of sand.

What is left for us to imagine, then, according to British physicist Paul Davies, is a universe that is essentially "empty space," no longer understood to be "a collection of separate but coupled *things*," but rather "a network of *relations*" (112). Davies continues: "We cannot pin down a particle and say that it is such-and-such an entity. Instead we must regard every particle as somehow made up of every other particle in an endless Strange Loop. No particle is more elementary than any other" (163). Such a strange universe this is turning out to be, where empty space overwhelmingly predominates and what is fundamental appears to be wispy, virtually *spiritual* relations! Further, all of this is occurring in God, for presumably God fully indwells the "empty space" of sub-atomic chaotic order just as surely as God embraces the whole of the universe within God's own self.

Sallie McFague argues that the metaphor of the world as God's body is one helpful theological model, among others, for encouraging Christians to take seriously the issues of bodily existence within our bodily universe.<sup>1</sup> However, my point here may actually be more bold while, at the same time, ironically, more conservative regarding traditional theological categories. My point is that when Christian theologians, including Wesley, have considered carefully the meaning of divine omnipresence, it has been (and is) difficult for them to avoid the conclusion that God truly is

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<sup>1</sup>Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), especially chapters 1-2.

the "place" where the universe is happening, and thus also that the universe is *in some sense* the embodying of God. Such a conclusion would stand not as a useful model only (as in McFague's case), but as the implication of what it means for God to be God and the world to be God's creation.

However, since *all* theological language is necessarily imprecise (whether analogical or metaphorical), we are reminded that there is no simple formula for describing the mystery of God's omnipresence. Like Wesley, we can affirm "the fact" while remaining largely ignorant of "the manner." As he stated it in "The Imperfection of Human Knowledge," "How astonishingly little do we know of God! . . . What conception can we form of his omnipresence? Who is able to comprehend how God is in this and every place? How he fills the immensity of space? . . . [T]he fact being admitted, what is omnipresence or ubiquity?" (1985, II:569).

### God the Intimate Sustainer

As suggested in the previous section, for Wesley the doctrine of God's creative and sustaining activity, or omnipotence, is linked very directly to God's omnipresence. In his words, also from "On the Omnipresence of God": "Nay, and we cannot believe the omnipotence of God unless we believe his omnipresence. For seeing . . . [that] nothing can act where it is not, if there were any space where God was not present he would not be able to do anything there" (1987, IV:44). Again, here Wesley assumes that God creates, sustains, and redeems not "from a distance," but always immediately and immanently; "God acts everywhere, and therefore is everywhere" (1987, IV:42). God acts by ever renewing the Genesis call to *let there be*,

by sustaining all things, without which everything would in an instant sink into its primitive nothing, by governing all, every moment superintending everything that he has made; strongly and sweetly influencing all, and yet without destroying the liberty of his rational creatures. (1987, IV:42f)

While Wesleyan theologians, particularly H. Ray Dunning in his *Grace, Faith & Holiness*, have spoken much of prevenient grace as God's loving, sustaining presence in *human* lives, here in Wesley we discover a broader, more cosmically comprehensive category for speaking of the

Spirit—one we might call *creative grace*.<sup>2</sup> Humans do indeed live, move and have their being in God, but humans so live, move, and exist within the fabric of an entire universe that exists in God. All of creation depends in “every moment” on the One who calls it into being and sustains it in being, and without Whom “everything would in an instant sink into its primitive nothing.”

To be sure, Wesley’s emphasis on God’s immediate, sustaining presence in creation should be understood within the context of his ongoing battle with deism. Wesley refused to brook any notion of a distant God, or of autonomous human beings (or anything else) that could exist distanced from God. While a child of the Enlightenment, Wesley refused to be lured by the Enlightenment ideal of autonomous, analytical reason that celebrated the independent individual. His doctrine of God was much too rich in its appreciation of the classical categories of omnipresence and omniscience. Further, his doctrine of humanity was too deeply immersed in the early Greek Fathers’ fascination with human participation in God to permit any capitulation to deism. Hence, in his “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount” (third discourse), Wesley comments on Jesus’ injunction, “Swear not at all”:

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<sup>2</sup>Dunning is reticent to speak much of the Spirit in a cosmological, creational context in *Grace, Faith and Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1988). However, in *An Introduction to Wesleyan Theology* (Beacon Hill Press, 1989), Dunning and co-author William Greathouse cite a Charles Wesley hymn on page 47 that complements brother John’s cosmological vision beautifully:

*Author of every work divine,  
Who dost through both creations shine.  
The God of nature and of grace.  
Thou art the Universal Soul,  
The plastic power that fills the whole,  
And governs earth, air, sea, and sky;  
The creatures all Thy breath receive,  
And who by Thy inspiring live,  
Without Thy inspiration die.*

*Spirit immense, eternal Mind,  
Thou on the souls of lost mankind  
Dost Thy benignest influence move,  
Pleased to restore the ruined race,  
And recreate the world of grace  
In all the image of Thy love.*



. . . and [God] is as intimately present in earth as heaven. . . . God is in all things, and . . . we are to see the Creator in the glass of every creature; . . . [and] should use and look upon nothing as separate from God, which indeed is a kind of practical atheism; but with a true magnificence of thought survey heaven and earth and all that is therein as contained by God in the hollow of his hand, who by his intimate presence holds them all in being, who pervades and actuates the whole created frame, and is in a true sense the soul of the universe. (1984, I:516f)

Wesley, then, could be so bold as to call God the *anima mundi*. But contemporary Western evangelicalism, including the Wesleyan-Holiness movement, has not followed Wesley's example. One could argue that the evangelical faith has, instead, allowed its theism to drift toward the deism that results inevitably from an underappreciation for the doctrines of creation and divine immanence.

Obvious evidence for this argument is found in the all-too-typical suspicion of the theme of God's immanently sustaining presence in creation, or even of Christian ecological awareness. Such suspicion has become a kneejerk reaction in many evangelical circles spawned by the understandable concern not to be identified as "new age." Yet one might proceed to ask why this so-called "new age movement" has become so widespread in its appeal. Certainly its popularity represents, at least in part, a reaction against the very ideal of "enlightened" analytic reason that Wesley himself fought in the form of deism. This flat, secular, and finally unimaginative notion of reason, for all its technological success, is too barren to sustain human hope. One could argue that our society's renewed interest in mysticism, angels, near-death experiences, and human relatedness to nature are indicative of such a reaction to deistic (not to mention atheistic) reason. A renewed appreciation for the theology of creation in Wesley might serve well both Wesleyanism and Western societies.

Another obvious indication of our need to revisit the doctrines of creation and divine immanence is the tired old creationist-evolutionist debate. Sadly, "creationism" as a movement tends to restrict its doctrine of creation to a concern with how long ago God created the earth. Creation is then understood essentially as a past, completed event, with little attention or appreciation given to God's continuing creativity in terms of sustaining, directing, and offering new possibilities to the created order.

While the creationist movement on the whole, of course, is not deistic, its preoccupation—God’s act of creation—tends to be colored in rather deistic hues.

Wesley, however, was far more interested in rejoicing in God’s continuing labor of creation. While deists, wrote Wesley, believed that God “gave things their beginning, And set this whirligig a-spinning,” he went further himself:

. . . we have the fullest evidence that the eternal, omnipresent, almighty, all-wise Spirit, as he created all things, so he continually superintends whatever he has created. He governs all, not only to the bounds of creation, but through the utmost extent of space; . . . from everlasting to everlasting. (1987, IV:69)

When Wesley said “from everlasting to everlasting,” he meant it. It is as though God has embarked upon a covenantal commitment in calling creation to be, and sustaining it in being. While Wesley recognized the dynamism of the world and the changeability of matter, he doubted that God would ever undo creation—which, after all, would be to act contrary to his own loving, creative nature. “It is very possible,” Wesley speculated in his 1786 sermon “On Eternity,”

[that] any portion of matter may be resolved into the atoms of which it was originally composed. But what reason have we to believe that one of these atoms ever was or ever will be annihilated? It never can, unless by the uncontrollable power of its almighty Creator. And is it probable that ever he will exert this power in unmaking any of the things that he hath made? In this also God is “not a son of man that he should repent.” (1985, II:362)

### **God the Lover of All Creatures**

It is most fascinating that Wesley would quote pagan religious sources with a measure of approval in order to make his cosmological point. He did this in his sermon on omnipresence, preferring the *anima mundi* of Virgil’s *Aeneid*—“the all-informing soul, that fills, pervades and actuates the whole”—to the distant, attenuated God of deism. However, Wesley states, the heathens “had no conception of [God’s] having a regard to the least things as well as the greatest; of his presiding over all that he has made, and governing atoms as well as worlds” (1987, IV:43). While

deists affirmed that God is creator of the universe, they deemed God to be creator at a distance. Pagan philosophers, on the other hand, tended to think of God as the immediately present and sustaining World-Soul. Neither cosmology, however, could recognize or appreciate the *loving* and *personal* attentiveness of Jesus' God and Father to every moment and event, to every nook and cranny of the vast created order.

We have already seen that Wesley believed in divine omnipotence as a corollary of omnipresence. It must now be said that omniscience, too, was for Wesley a corollary (or even a consequence) of omnipresence. As he wrote in his 1786 sermon "On Divine Providence":

. . . as this all-wise, all-gracious Being created all things, so he sustains all things. . . . Now it must be that he knows everything he has made, and everything he preserves from moment to moment. Otherwise he could not preserve it: he could not continue to it the being which he has given it. And it is nothing strange that he who is omnipresent, who "fillethe heaven and earth," who is in every place, should see what is in every place, where he is intimately present. . . . how shall not the eye of God see everything through the whole extent of creation? Especially considering that nothing is distant from him, in whom we all "live and move and have our being." (1985, II:538)

As has been pointed out, Wesley's understanding of God's knowing and sustaining of creation is that God does so by immediate presence, as "the omnipresent Spirit," and not as a distant, objectifiable person *per se*. If indeed we meditate on what we mean by omnipresence (God being fully and "intimately present . . . in every place") and by omniscience (God knowing thoroughly and intimately all things and events), we shall again be led to *something like* the universe-as-God's-body model promulgated by McFague.

God does not know "at a distance," but from within, and indeed through the experiences (conscious or not) of all creatures (sentient or not). If God truly *knows all things* in the Hebraic participatory sense of the word-concept "to know," then God's knowing will indeed include a sharing in every creature's experience—including, again, the strange and mysterious world of sub-atomic processes—"from the inside." The universe of events, things, and relationships can occur nowhere but *in God*, and thus God's knowing must be intimate, experiential, utterly thorough and, in some analogical sense, *bodily*.

The fact that such suggestions may sound strange or even heretical to many of us today reflects contemporary Western Christianity's drift toward the deism of a distant deity and autonomous, utterly distinct individuals. Listen again, however, to Wesley's attempt to describe a far richer, more immanent cosmology:

The manner of [God's] presence no man can explain, nor probably any angel in heaven. Perhaps what the ancient philosopher speaks of the soul in regard to its residence in the body, that it is *tota in toto, et tota in qualibet parte*, might in some sense be spoken of the omnipresent Spirit in regard to the universe—that he is not only “all in the whole, but all in every part.” Be this as it may, it cannot be doubted but he sees every atom of his creation, and that a thousand times more clearly than we see the things that are close to us: even of these we see only the surface, while he sees the inmost essence of everything.

The omnipresent God sees and knows all the properties of all the beings that he hath made. He knows all the connections, dependencies, and relations, and all the ways wherein one of them can affect another. In particular he sees all the inanimate parts of the creation, whether in heaven above or in the earth beneath. (1985, II:538f)

The omnipresent Spirit, fully present not only in the whole but in every part—indeed, in every atom in all its “connections, dependencies, and relations”<sup>3</sup>—knows by immediate, full, and participatory awareness.

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<sup>3</sup>Wesley's fascinating suggestion that God intimately knows all things in their “connections, dependencies, and relations” resonates well with the convictions of the process theological tradition. One begins to wonder if this cosmological dimension of the Wesleyan understanding of God, though often only implicit, has not played a part in predisposing so many Methodist theologians toward process modes of thought. Marjorie Hewett Suchocki, for one, certainly thinks so, and has argued the point in her stimulating article “Coming Home: Wesley, Whitehead, and Women” (*The Drew Gateway*, No. 57, Fall 1987). She writes, for example:

No experience is isolated; every experience exists through its interconnectedness with yet other experiences. In a relational world, every individual experience is one which is “trailing clouds of glory” in that it implies much about further modes of experience. The world is one of mutual implication, of fuzzy edges, of “if's . . . then's.” In short, to name experience as a norm for theology, even when that

It is particularly fascinating, even curious, that Wesley would suggest that *in particular* God "sees all the inanimate parts of the creation," though it is possible that this was yet another parry at the deistic tendency to understand the world as a grand impersonal machine, well-oiled by God at the beginning, but now whirling, turning, clicking, and churning by its own "natural laws" and on its own momentum.

If this suggested interpretation holds weight, then Wesley was instead arguing that God is the deeply personal Knower whose sustaining presence pervades even the deepest, darkest, and deadest reaches of cold space. This "old creation" is an eminently *good* creation, precisely because the One "who alone is good" creates, sustains, and nurtures all things. God the Creator "is love" (1 Jn. 4:8, 16)! Hence, Wesley in "On Divine Providence" affirmed that

[God] knows all the hearts of the sons of men, and understands all their thoughts. He sees what any angel, any devil, any man, either thinks, or speaks, or does; *yea, and all they feel*. He sees all their sufferings, with every circumstance of them.

And is the Creator and Preserver of the world unconcerned for what he sees therein? Does he look upon these things either with a malignant or heedless eye? Is he an Epicurean god? Does he sit at ease in heaven, without regarding the poor inhabitants of earth? It cannot be. . . . We are his children. And can a mother forget the children of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will not God forget us. (1985, II:539; italics added)

While in the above passage Wesley refers only to the thoughts and feelings of rational creatures ("any angel, any devil, any man"), the doctrines of omnipresence and omniscience logically embrace *all* experiences of *all* creatures of *any* kind. Indeed, Wesley says as much in his 1781 sermon on "the groaning creation" of Romans 8, entitled "The General

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experience is specifically narrowed to religious experience, is to lay the basis for a Christian natural theology. Is it any wonder, then, that a tradition which allows non-perceptual experience into the normative material for theology should generate a mode of theology which is based upon a fundamentally non-perceptual analysis of experience? I remind you again: most process theologians are United Methodists. (36)

Deliverance”: “While ‘the whole creation groaneth together’ (whether men attend or not) their groans are not dispersed in idle air, but enter into the ears of him that made them. While his creatures ‘travail together in pain’, *he knoweth all their pain*, and is bringing them nearer and nearer to the birth which shall be accomplished in its season” (1985, II:445; italics added).

To be sure, Wesley’s conviction that God’s love embraces all of creation is not rooted primarily in the doctrine of omnipresence but in the Christian confession that “we know love by this, that Jesus Christ laid down his life for us” (1 Jn. 3:16). The compelling beauty of a Christian cosmology, though, is precisely this confidence that the “pure, unbounded love” revealed in Christ’s cross is in fact the omnipotent Creator Spirit who creates and sustains the universe, who in “all his wisdom is continually employed in managing all the affairs of his creation for the good of all his creatures” (1985, II:540).

Wesley admits that, given the harsh realities of misery and pain in the created order, “it is hard indeed to comprehend this; nay, it is hard to believe it” (1985, II:540). Yet, lest we make God a liar—we are assured, after all, that not one sparrow is forgotten before God, and “even the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Lk. 12:6-7)—Wesley insists that we must understand God as the compassionate Maker and Provider of every creature. But with so much suffering in our world, we are left to stand in awe before the mystery of Providence in creation, with no simplistic theodicy firmly in hand.

Not surprisingly, the only step Wesley is willing to take toward a solution of the problem of evil is to offer the freewill defense. This of course is quite consistent with the conviction that God is love and acts in love: in order that love might flourish in creation, responsible agency must be offered to, and nurtured in, creatures of intelligence. God’s creative power “continually co-operates with” God’s wisdom and goodness, and thus labors in a fashion expressive of a love that bestows and encourages relationship rooted in human freedom. According to Wesley:

Only he that can do all things else cannot deny himself; he cannot counteract himself, or oppose his own work. Were it not for this he would destroy all sin, with its attendant pain, in a moment. He would abolish wickedness out of his whole creation, and suffer no trace of it to remain. But in so doing he would counteract himself, he would altogether overthrow his

own work, and undo all that he has been doing since he created man upon the earth. . . . If therefore God were thus to exert his power there would certainly be no more vice; but it is equally certain, neither could there be any virtue in the world. Were human liberty taken away men would be as incapable of virtue as stones. . . . God . . . [wills] to assist man in attaining the end of his being, in working out his own salvation—so far as it can be done without compulsion, without overruling his liberty, . . . without turning man into a machine. . . . (1985, II:540f)

Hence, God's loving purpose in creating us is that human liberty might be persuaded toward virtue and away from vice, toward salvation and away from wickedness and destruction. We thereby arrive at the central paradox of the doctrine of creation: that God is the omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient Creator Spirit who immediately, intimately, and continuously sustains all things as *other than himself*. God "lets there be" that which is not God, but which depends immediately upon God for its continued being—and that not "from a distance" but indeed "from within"! How wonderful is love like this!

### The Proper Human Response

There is, then, no one who can escape from God's Spirit, none who can flee from God's presence (Ps. 139:7; cf. Heb. 4:13). In fact, to be without God's Spirit is to be not at all, but to return to dust (Ps. 104:29). By the same token, "Thou dost send forth Thy Spirit, [and all creatures] are created; and Thou dost renew the face of the ground" (Ps. 104:30).

The fact that Wesley quotes copiously from Psalm 104 in his sermon on "The General Deliverance" of all creation is evidence that he appreciated the powerful and dynamic Spirit-cosmology found therein. All creatures wait for God to give them food and sustenance; all creatures are satisfied with good from God's own open hand and indeed live by the very breath of God (vv. 27-29). This "good old creation" is ever made new by the life-giving Spirit who continually recreates and sustains all things ("renews the face of the ground"), and who continually calls for a response from the human creatures, who are made to attain virtue through liberty.

It is precisely at this point of evoking the human response, of course, that what I am calling *creative grace* becomes the more familiar *preve-*

*nient grace*. To be sure, we are not talking about different sorts of grace, but rather about the continuity of divine presence within, throughout and embracing all of creation as God the Spirit interacts with responsible human beings. Even as a person begins to respond ever so slightly to the intimations of grace, the possibility and reality of redemption is begun. Through the preaching of the gospel of Christ—the One uniquely anointed by the Spirit—the character, mercy and will of the Infinite Spirit become more clearly revealed, thus creating the possibility of a more clearly informed and nuanced response to God in terms of Christian faith, repentance, and obedience. At the point of such a response, *prevenient grace* becomes *saving grace*. The continuity, throughout and within creation, of the presence of God who is Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, and Sanctifier insures that “gradualness” of growth in grace—grace as creative/prevenient/saving/sanctifying—shall be a quite inevitable dimension of our “renewal in love,” or our restoration to the image of God.

There is, then, the possibility of new creation, or renewal, of our world. It does not come by coercion, for that would “altogether overthrow [God’s] own work, and undo all that he has been doing” in the act of creation. It comes, rather, by human liberty as God sustains us, convicts us, gently persuades us and lovingly liberates us to offer ourselves to his mercy and his will. In this way the good “old” creation can become “new creation,” and is indeed renewable in every moment.

It is noteworthy in this connection that, in his comments on Jesus’ beatitude “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” Wesley interprets the implicit eschatology of the beatific vision by means of the cosmology of “good old creation” as explored in this paper. “The pure of heart,” Wesley writes, not only shall, but *already do* “see God” because they “see all things full of God.” But their *seeing* all things in this way is not simply a matter of *seeing-as*, not simply their saintly perspective being superimposed on their sense experience. Rather, the “pure in heart” see “all things full of God” because all things *are* full of God, and the pure have been graciously restored to seeing creation for the “good old” creation that it is, ever renewed by, and in, the infinite Creator Spirit. Wrote Wesley:

[The pure in heart] see him in the firmament of heaven, in the moon walking in brightness, in the sun when he rejoiceth as a giant to run his course. They see him “making the clouds his chariots, and walking upon the wings of the wind.” They see



him "preparing rain for the earth," "and blessing the increase of it"; "giving grass for the cattle, and green herb for the use of man." They see the Creator of all wisely governing all, and "upholding all things by the word of his power." (1984, I:513f)

Here there is a sense of gradualness, of continuity, in the relationship between God and humanity, and indeed all creation; it is, after all, the one God revealed decisively to us in Jesus Christ who is always and continually Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. This is not at all to deny the moments of crisis, of drama, of timeful and timely decision which are distinctive markers on the path to purity of heart. But those crisis moments arise primarily out of the variable human factors of awareness of and response to the Creator Spirit's prevenient presence and activity.

Hence, for example, while Psalm 139 opens with a ringing affirmation of God's intimate, probing knowledge of the psalmist, it nonetheless concludes, strangely enough, with the psalmist's invitation for God to "search me . . . and know my heart" (v. 23). To make that prayer our own is to move closer to the Heart of "good old creation," to perceive and to experience creation as being ever renewed, ever sustained, ever loved, and ever known in ways infinitely more profound than Adam ever knew Eve!

"In order to attain these glorious ends," Wesley has counseled us, "spare no pains to preserve always a deep, a continual, a lively, and a joyful sense of his gracious presence" (1987, IV:47). Search us, O God!

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# ANGLICAN INFLUENCE ON JOHN WESLEY'S SOTERIOLOGY

by

William H. Shontz

Throughout the *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, John Wesley insists that the doctrines of the Methodists are the doctrines of the Church of England. "From the whole Tenor then of her Liturgy, Articles and Homilies, the Doctrine of the Church of England appears to be this. . . . That both Inward and Outward Holiness are consequent on this [justifying] faith, and are the Ordinary, Stated Condition of Final Justification" (12, 13). In *A Farther Appeal* (p. 26), he writes in response to a fellow Anglican's critique of Methodist teaching. Wesley asks, "What do you mean by *their own* Schemes? *Their own* notions? *Their* doctrines? Are they not *yours* too?" He also summarized:

By salvation I mean, not barely, according to the vulgar Notion, deliverance from Hell, or going to Heaven: But a Present Deliverance from Sin, a Restoration of the Soul to its Primitive health, its Original Purity; a Recovery of the Divine Nature; the Renewal of our Souls after the Image of GOD, in Righteousness and True Holiness, in Justice, Mercy, and Truth. This implies all Holy and Heavenly Tempers, and by Consequence all Holiness of Conversation (2, 3).

## The Historical Background

The "Calvinist Controversy" in which John Wesley found himself embroiled had precedent within the history of his own church. The two most influential parties in the seventeenth-century Church of England

were the Calvinist English Puritans and the Laudian High Churchmen. The latter were named after the (in)famous Archbishop William Laud (1573-1645) whose sweeping reforms in Anglican worship earned him the disdain of the Puritans. They charged that the worship of their freshly reformed church was returning to “popery.”<sup>1</sup> The issues, even for Laud, were not merely liturgical. Laud was himself part of a growing movement within the Anglican Church, rooted in the English Reformation, which attempted to define its theology without leaning on the progress of the Continental Reformers. The Puritans were keenly aware of the new threat and learned from their Dutch compatriots its label, Arminianism.

The real “dividing line” between the English Puritans and the High Churchmen of the seventeenth century was not drawn primarily over episcopacy or the use of set forms of liturgy, as is often assumed. It was fashioned in the paradigmatic shift by the High Churchmen from continental Reformation emphases of Western, forensic, and juridical soteriology to a more Eastern, imparted, and therapeutic soteriology grounded in patristic interpretations of the faith.<sup>2</sup> Theological method (Antiquity) and its results (Arminianism) created and sustained the breach between the two camps.

Both sides claimed fidelity to Scripture. The Reformation debate over the function of unwritten tradition had been settled in England. Both Puritans and “Arminians” held the conviction that the true interpretation of Scripture was not recovered by their particular group in their own time. They stood, as it were, on the shoulders of giants. For the Puritans, those giants came out of the Swiss Reformation. Some of the Puritan leaders had earlier corresponded with Calvin, seeking his advice.<sup>3</sup> John Knox, who helped establish Presbyterianism in Scotland and served as chaplain to the English Crown, described Calvin’s Geneva as “the most perfect

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, Adam and Charles Black, London: 1963. 230. The Puritans had already been suspicious of *The Book of Common Prayer*, which would be cherished by the Laudians. In the “Millenary Petition,” drafted by the Puritans in 1603 and presented to King James on his way to London from Scotland included among the needed changes in the church service “that there be uniformity of doctrine prescribed; no popish opinion to be any more taught or defended . . . .” Reprinted in *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, Henry Gee and William John Hardy, eds. Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London: 1896, 509.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. H. R. McAdoo, *The Spirit of Anglicanism*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York: 1965. v. Also, G. W. O. Addleshaw, *The High Church Tradition*, Faber and Faber Ltd. London: 1941, 22-23.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, Penn State Press, University Park, PA: 1989, 345.

school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the apostles.”<sup>4</sup> By conviction, the English Puritans were more than willing to duplicate the Genevan Experiment on British soil.

The High-Church party also had its guiding giants, and they were not Swiss. While agreeing with the Puritans that theological and practical corruptions had crept into the Church, corruptions needing to be expunged, the High Churchmen believed that the primitive church remained loyal to the apostolic faith for a longer period of time than credited by the Puritans. Directly appealing to the Vincentian principle, Herbert Thorndike (1598-1672) declared “that whatsoever hath been unanimously taught in the Church by writing, that is, always, by all, everywhere, to that no contradiction is ever to be admitted in the Church” (II.123).<sup>5</sup>

“For the Religion of the Church of England,” taught Simon Patrick (1626-1707), “is the true Primitive Christianity;<sup>6</sup> in nothing new, unless it be in rejecting all that novelty which hath been brought into the Church. But they [the Roman Catholics] are the cause of that. . . . And who dare say that this is a new religion, which is as old as Christ and His Apostles? With whom whosoever agree, they are truly ancient Churches, though of no longer standing than yesterday; as they that disagree with them are new, though they can run up their pedigree to the very Apostles” (VII.67, 68).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Cited in Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers*, Broadman Press, Nashville: 1988, 167.

<sup>5</sup>This hermeneutic of Vincent of Lerins, “the consensus of antiquity,” was adopted by Mr. Wesley as well. On January 24, 1738, he wrote: “But it was not long before Providence brought me to those who showed me a sure rule for interpreting Scripture, viz., consensus veterum—‘quod ab omnibus, quod ubique, quod semper creditum’” (Works, 18.212).

<sup>6</sup>“Primitive Christianity,” being a designation for the patristic period, was a nick-name given to Wesley himself (Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, Epworth Press, London: 1992, 78). One should consider as well his letter to the newly formed Methodist Episcopal Church in America, where he acknowledges that the new church is “now at full liberty, simply to follow the scriptures and the primitive church” (*The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*, London: 1784, p. iii).

<sup>7</sup>The major doctrines which Bishop Jeremy Taylor considered “neither Apostolical nor Primitive” included: Indulgences, Purgatory, Veneration of Images, Transubstantiation, Papal Authority, Invocation of Saints, and the Insufficiency of Scriptures without Traditions (II.761ff). The High Churchmen’s convictions were that the errors of Rome crept into the church well after the patristic period, as seen in Taylor’s *Dissuasive from Popery* (II.765ff), and Bishop John Cosin’s 1676 work, *The History of Popish Transubstantiation*, Robson, Levey, and Franklyn, London: 1840.

To the Puritans, however, tradition, antiquity, the decrees of Councils, and the writings of the Fathers meant little or nothing.<sup>8</sup> By adopting a patristic model, the line was clearly drawn by the Anglicans, who believed that the early church had a better grasp on the apostolic faith than did the theologizing of John Calvin. Peter Heylyn (1600-1662), whose exegesis was influential in Mr. Wesley's Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament (Preface, ¶8), argued "that Calvinism was not the native and original Doctrine of the Church of England, though in short time it overspread a great part thereof, as Arrianism did the Eastern Churches in the elder times . . . when the world groaned and trembled under the calamity of that dangerous heresie" (504).

### Sanctification and Perfection in Anglican Theology

Wesley followed the example of the High Church tradition,<sup>9</sup> with which he consciously identified himself,<sup>10</sup> appealing to Scripture, Tradition, and Reason to justify his theology.<sup>11</sup> Early in the year 1738, reacting to the extreme *solifidianism* of Lutheran and Calvinist authors, Wesley wrote: "The English writers, such as Bishop Beveridge, Bishop Taylor, and Mr. Nelson, a little relieved me from these well-meaning, wrong-headed Germans. Their accounts of Christianity I could easily see to be, in the main, consistent both with reason and Scripture" (*Works*, 18.212).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Cf. John R. H. Moorman, *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition*, 111.

<sup>9</sup>"Moderates" in the Church of England are to be included as well. Cf. John Cammel English, "John Wesley and the Anglican Moderates of the Seventeenth Century," *Anglican Theological Review*, 51:203ff., 1969. Moderates such as William Beveridge held to episcopacy and the value of set forms of prayer, but was not as insistent about their use as the Laudian High Churchmen tended to be.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley*, Oxford University Press, New York: 1964, 5ff.

<sup>11</sup>See the compendium of seventeenth-century high-church writings in *Anglicanism*, Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross, S.P.C.K., London: 1951. The most recent treatment of Wesley's theological method is *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, Scott J. Jones, Kingswood Books, Nashville, 1995. See also *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity*, Thomas Oden, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994, 55ff.

<sup>12</sup>Note, however, that Mr. Wesley was no uncritical receiver of his tradition. The quote continues: "Only when they interpreted Scripture in different ways I was often much at a loss. And again there was one thing much insisted on in Scripture—the unity of the Church—which none of them I thought clearly explained, or strongly inculcated." In spite of this, Wesley clearly registers his basic agreement with their "accounts of Christianity," i.e., the Christian life.

As with Wesley a century later, soteriology for the Anglicans focused mainly on transformation, being "partakers of the divine nature." "Neither did the death of my Saviour reach only to the condemning, but likewise to the commanding power of sin," wrote Bishop Beveridge (1637-1708). He continued:

It did not only pluck out its sting, but likewise deprive it of its strength, so that He did not only merit by His death that I should never die for sin, but likewise that I should die to it. Neither did He only merit by His life that I should be accounted righteous in Him before God, but likewise that I should be made righteous in myself by God. (VIII.174)

One finds in the writings of the Anglicans<sup>13</sup> a correlation between the biblical notions of perfection, sanctification, and love. According to Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), "perfection cannot be less than an entire piety, a holiness perfect in its parts, wanting nothing material, allowing no vicious habit, permitting no vile action, but contending towards the greatest excellency, a charitable heart . . . to be pure and pleasing to God in Jesus Christ . . ." (II.437). Bishop Wilson (1663-1755) prayed, "Perfect, O God, what Thou hast begun in me; inspire me with such a lively sense and clear knowledge of Thy love, that I may be able to convince others of the blessedness and the necessity of holiness, and the way to attain it, through Jesus Christ. Amen" (Wilson, II. 435).<sup>14</sup>

Far from being an innovator within Protestantism with his teaching of Christian perfection, John Wesley was the heir of a theological tradition firmly established in the Church of England.

The cry of Mr. Wesley's heart, "O grant that nothing in my soul may dwell, but Thy pure love alone!" (*A Plain Account*, 14) was shared by the representative Anglican theologians of a century earlier. In his *Pattern of Catechetical Doctrine*, Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) declared: "And so this we must labour to attain unto, to love Him with all our heart and all our soul" (VI.110). "O Holy Spirit of Grace," wrote Bishop Wilson,

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<sup>13</sup>Throughout this paper, the designation "Anglican(s)" refers to the Anglican "Arminian," moderate, and High Church theologians.

<sup>14</sup>Wilson also writes, "Christian perfection" does not "consist in doing extraordinary things, but in doing common things after a [Christian] manner. God commands unlimited Holiness (Thou shalt Love wth all thy, &c.) . . ." (Wilson, V. 384).

“sanctify my heart, that no base or impure thoughts, no mean and covetous affections, may lodge there” (V.143).

For the Anglicans, the perfection which they espoused was not absolute, but qualified. Just as Wesley presented his teaching in such a way that the attainment of perfection did not exclude further growth in grace (*A Plain Account*, 62), the Anglican theologians attempted to express a doctrine of perfection that was not static but dynamic; one that was complete while still in process.<sup>15</sup> So Bishop Andrewes pronounced: “Why, is there any perfection in this life? There is. . . . Which is the perfection of travellers, of wayfaring men; the farther onward on their journey, the nearer their journey’s end, the more perfect; which is the perfection of this life, for this life is a journey” (II. 95). In a similar vein, Mr. Wesley would write later in his sermon on “Christian Perfection”: “Yet we may, lastly, observe that neither in this respect is there any absolute perfection on earth . . . none which does not admit of a continual increase” (*Works*, II. 104). In spite of the obstacles the word “perfection” would create, Mr. Wesley was determined to pursue a *biblical* perfection, in keeping with his theological forebears. In his *Sacra Privata*, Bishop Wilson, under the heading “Christian Perfection,” wrote: “May thy Almighty and Powerful Grace make me as Perfect as Thou hast commanded me to be” (V. 371).<sup>16</sup>

### **Theosis and the Redeemed Humanity**

The Anglicans, steeped in patristic thought, found a special affinity with the Eastern branch of Christianity,<sup>17</sup> which magnified a theology of the Incarnation, with Christ as the Head of a redeemed humanity. “We [are] made the sons of God, as He the Son of Man; we [are] made partakers of his divine, as He of our human nature” (Andrewes, I.59.). What is called in the tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy *theosis*<sup>18</sup> was in fact central

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<sup>15</sup>As Charles Wesley would write, “Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place. . . .”

<sup>16</sup>Elsewhere he writes: “It is not required that Christians should be perfect at once, or all equally perfect; but it is absolutely necessary that all Christians should sincerely endeavour to please God to the best of their power, and then they are perfect as God would have them to be” (Wilson, II. 442).

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Addleshaw, 25, 26. Also Michael Ramsey, *Constantinople and Canterbury*, S.P.C.K., London: 1962, 5.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, Fordham University Press, New York: 1974, 163, 164.



to the theology of people such as Richard Hooker (1554?-1600) and Lancelot Andrewes.<sup>19</sup> It then became central to Caroline Divinity<sup>20</sup> in the seventeenth-century.<sup>21</sup> To the Anglicans, Christ in us was the logical conclusion of Christ for us, so that "the great end wherefore Christ gave Himself for us [was so] that He might make us pure and holy . . ." (Beveridge, V. 394). William Beveridge, in his sermon "Of the Justification of Man," is careful to distinguish between justification and sanctification. Both are acts of God, but while justification is imputed, sanctification is imparted. Justification is in God only, while sanctification is in ourselves only. "By our sanctification we are made righteous in ourselves, but not accounted righteous by God; by our justification we are accounted righteous by God, but not made righteous in ourselves" (VII.289).

By Christ becoming human, human nature itself became sanctified, acceptable in God's sight, worthy to become a vessel of God's Spirit once again. Richard Hooker taught:

But may it rightly be said concerning the incarnation of Jesus Christ, that as our nature hath in no respect changed his, so from his to ours as little alteration hath ensued? The very cause of his taking upon him our nature was to change it, to better the quality, and to advance the condition thereof, although in no sort to abolish the substance which he took, nor to infuse into it the natural forces and properties of his Deity. . . . For albeit the natural properties of Deity be not communicable to man's nature, the supernatural gifts, graces, and effects thereof are (I.V.50.3).

Because of the Incarnation, vile human beings are placed in the situation where they are capable of being redeemed by a holy God. "[God] cannot, we may be sure, account evil of that nature, that is now become the nature of His own Son—His now no less than our own" (Andrewes, I.41). Because humanity has been sanctified, individuals can and should obviously be conformed to Christ's likeness. Thomas Jackson (1579-

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<sup>19</sup>Cf. A. M. Allchin, *Participation in God: A Forgotten Strand in Anglican Tradition*, Morehouse-Barlow Co. Inc. Wilton, CT: 1988, 13.

<sup>20</sup>Anglican theology which flourished during the reign and with the blessing of King Charles I, as well as after his execution at the hands of Oliver Cromwell's Puritans.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. A.M. Allchin, *The Kingdom of Love and Knowledge: The Encounter Between Orthodoxy and the West*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London: 1979, 100.

1640) states that regeneration consists in “reviving God’s image in us, and in the expunction and wiping out the stain of sin, (which is no other than the image of Satan) . . .” (X. 410).

The Holy Spirit, “infused into us by God,” creates within us “passions and desires of things beyond and contrary to our natural appetites, enabling us not only to sobriety, which is the duty of the body, not only to justice, which is the rectitude of the soul, but to such a sanctity as makes us like to God: for so saith the Spirit of God, ‘Be ye holy, as I am: be pure, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is pure, as he is perfect . . .’” (Taylor, I. 767). According to Bishop Beveridge, “By holiness you are like God, *Matt. v. 48*” (X. 113).

While the sanctification of humanity is what Christ wrought for us by his Incarnation, the sanctification of persons is what Christ wrought in us by his Spirit, “that we fashion ourselves like Him” (Andrewes, II.199, 200).<sup>22</sup> For Bishop Wilson, “The only way to perfection is to Live in [the] Presence of God” (V. 571). Thus by the infusion of Deity into the human soul, the human soul is so permeated with the Divine influences that it takes on the characteristics of Deity. “For the nature of God being purity itself, they who are pure in heart are so far like to God; and ‘partakers of the Divine Nature,’ as St. Peter speaks: and, therefore, if they do but look into their own hearts, so much as they see of purity, so much they see of God Himself there, Whose image and likeness it is” (Beveridge, V. 400).<sup>23</sup>

John Donne (1571?-1631) very poetically interpreted Psalm 51:7, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter

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<sup>22</sup>In his Christmas sermon on 1 Timothy 3:16, “Great is the mystery of godliness. . .,” he asks, “And what should the ‘mystery of godliness’ beget in us but godliness? What [is] the ‘mystery of godliness’ in this chapter, but the exercise of godliness in the next?” (I.42)

<sup>23</sup>Beveridge writes: “And the reason is, because that by the ministry of His Word, God is pleased to convey into us His pure and Holy Spirit, Which, by degrees, makes our spirits, according to their capacities, like Itself, holy and pure, enlightening our minds, informing our judgments, rectifying our wills, regulating our affections, directing our consciences, and so reducing all the powers and faculties of our souls into their proper frame and temper again” (V. 394). Elsewhere he states: “. . . for their hearts being pure, and so like to God, every glance of Him goes to the very bottom of them, and overspreads them with such a sense of His glory and goodness, as moves and inclines all the powers and faculties of their souls towards Him” (V. 401).

than snow." He taught that originally human nature was made white, that is, pure. "Redness" comes from Adam, being a man of clay. Coming into the world bearing the image of Adam, Christian baptism does much to remove the red stain, but is incomplete by itself. "The purging with Hyssope . . . delivers us from that rednesse. . . . The more that rednesse is washed off, the more we return to our first whitenesse; and this which is petitioned here, is a washing of such perfection, as cleanses us *Ab omni in quinamento*, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit" (Donne, V. 313). Preaching on Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," William Beveridge declared that "only they whose hearts are purged and freed from that filth and corruption that hinders their sight of Him, and are restored to their primitive holiness and purity" will see God (V. 398).<sup>24</sup>

Christian perfection requires and effects Christlikeness in the human soul and character. "Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," means to "Be ye holy like him, or in imitation of him" (Taylor, II.436). It is taken as a call to "Imitate the divine perfections in the inward holiness and sanctification of your nature, of your soul and mind" (Wilson, VI. 388). Thomas Jackson writes: "holiness doth properly and formally consist in the right temperature or disposition of the soul, specially towards God: the idea or exemplar of which temperature is conformity unto Christ our Head" (Jackson, XII.25). For William Beveridge, "Holiness consists in the inclination of the soul to God; the soul's conformity to

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<sup>24</sup>Beveridge succinctly declared his theology of *theosis* thus: "And this certainly is the only way whereby it is possible for our hearts ever to be made pure; for though our human nature in general was purified by being united to the Divine Person, our human persons in particular can never be purified but by partaking of the Divine Nature; which we can never do any other way, but only by believing and trusting in that Divine Person to Which our nature is united, even Jesus Christ. But if we do that as we ought, He will make us "partakers of the Divine Nature," by giving us that Divine Spirit Which proceeds from Him, and is of the same Divine Nature with Himself, and therefore is able to make us so too. Neither is He less willing than able to do it; for being sent by Christ, He presently exerts His Divine Power and Grace upon our hearts, making them as sincerely pure and holy, as the hearts of lapsed creatures can be made. And what is still wanting in them to make them perfectly pure, Christ Himself supplies by His Own all-sufficient merits. So that, by this means, we may all become such as our Saviour here calls "pure in heart," and, by consequence, so blessed as to see God" (V. 395).

God's nature and word; the soul's performing all duties upon holy motives; the soul's dedicating itself to God; its aiming chiefly at holy ends" (X. 111).

### **The Doctrine of Sin in Anglican Theology**

How one understands sin, of course, plays a major role in how one understands holiness. According to Bishop Andrewes, sin may be understood as "some outward soil in the soul" and as "some inward pestilent humour in the soul and conscience" (I.113). Commenting on Ephesians 5:25-27, Jackson says: "Though we be washed with the water of baptism, and with the wine of the eucharist in this life, yet cannot we be so washed or cleansed as to be left without spot, wrinkle, or blemish, until we have put off this earthly tabernacle, either by death, or by that change whereunto all are subject that shall not die" (XII. 26). This seems to echo the opinion of Andrewes, who wrote:

To "cease from sin" I say, understanding by sin, not from sin altogether—that is a higher perfection than this life will bear, but as the Apostle expoundeth himself . . . from the "dominion of sin" to cease. For till we be free from death itself, which in this life we are not, we shall not be free from sin altogether; only we may come thus far, that sin "reign not," wear not a crown, sit not in a throne, hold no parliaments within us, give us no laws. . . . To die to the dominion of sin—that by the grace of God we may, and that we must account for (Andrewes, II. 200).

What Andrewes is saying is that there is yet a perfection awaiting the children of God after this life, when all lack of conformity to the absolute standard will be removed. While it may appear that theologians

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<sup>25</sup>The theology of Lancelot Andrewes seems to differ from that of Wesley only in that, for Andrewes, the Holy Spirit does "sanctify them throughout" (I. 41) in baptism, in which one is washed from the stain of original guilt. Through the Eucharist, one is purged from sinful tempers and manifestations. This is different from justification. Andrewes is not here concerned with pardon of offenses but of the cleansing of a spiritual illness (I. 112, 113). "The sum of all is this; there be two defiling sins, and two ways He purgeth them. Clean we are from the first, as washed from the original uncleanness of our nature, and that 'by the laver of regeneration.' And whole we are, as purged within from the actual sins of our persons. . . . He purgeth us from both" (I.113). What is significant for Andrewes, as well as Hooker (cf. V.50.3) is that the sacraments are God's gift to the Church to use in this life to effect salvation from sin, to restore one in the image of God.

such as Andrewes<sup>25</sup> and Jackson ultimately *do not* represent a theology of *entire* sanctification as John Wesley would later, such need not be the conclusion, for Wesley himself distinguished between “sins properly so called” and “sins improperly so called” so that “*sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself” (*A Plain Account*, 54). Andrewes himself, immediately after declaring his conviction that one cannot “cease from sin altogether” describes the life which a child of God should experience while still in this life.

. . . to live to God with St. Paul here [Rom. 6], is to live . . . “according to God in the Spirit,” with St. Peter [1 Pt. 4:6]. And then live we according to Him, when His will is our law, His word our rule, His Son’s life our example, His Spirit rather than our own soul the guide of our actions. Thus shall we be grafted into the similitude of His resurrection (II. 201).

Even before Wesley, however, Anglicans were expressing distinction between “sins properly so called” and “sins improperly so called.” Commenting on 1 John 1:8, “If we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us,” Bishop Wilson is careful to demonstrate that the Apostle never taught that all Christians are plagued by sin, as Wesley would say, “properly so called,” throughout the remainder of this life. “One whose conversion is not perfect, may fall into some sins; and there are some sins into which the most perfect men may fall” (VI. 688). And into what kind of sins might the “most perfect” people fall? “Sins of ignorance, surprise, and infirmity, the best of men may fall into” (VI. 688). Jeremy Taylor makes a further distinction between “sins” and “infirmities”: “For though God through Jesus Christ is pleased to abate for our unavoidable infirmities, that is, for our nature—yet he will not abate or give allowance to our superinduced evil customs . . . ” (II.437).

Who then, according to the Anglicans, is being described by Paul in chapter seven of Romans? Employing the question asked by the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8, Jeremy Taylor admits, that because “We have a corrupted nature” and “our reason dwells in the dark,” therefore “It is hoped that he speaks it of himself” (II. 11). To declare that Romans 7 is the typical description of a Christian is seen as an excuse for sin, and hinders the motivation to pursue holiness. According to Jackson, Romans 7 describes

not the ideal Christian, but instead a person “*inter regenerandum*, during the immediate acts or conflicts betwixt the beginning and consummation of his regeneration” (IX. 52).<sup>26</sup>

In his sermon on Romans 7:19, called “The Christian’s Conquest over the Body of Sin,” Taylor proclaimed:

“He that saith he hath not sinned, is a liar”: But what then? Because a man hath sinned, it does not follow he must do so always. . . . “All men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” But is there no remedy for this? Must it always be so? . . . When Christ reigns in our hearts by his Spirit, Dagon and the ark cannot stand together; we cannot serve Christ and Belial. And as in the state of nature no good thing dwells within us, so when Christ rules in us, no evil thing can abide. . . . But how shall this come to pass, since we all find ourselves so infinitely weak and foolish? . . . What we cannot do for ourselves, God can do for us, and with us. What nature cannot do, the grace of God can. So that the thing may be done; not indeed by ourselves, but *gratia Dei mecum*, saith St. Paul; God and man together can do it. . . . For it is impossible men should pray for deliverance, and not be heard; that they should labor and not be prosperous; unless they pray amiss, and labor falsely (II. 13, 14).

Lancelot Andrewes laments the condition of those who in their Christian pilgrimage find themselves in a persistent pattern of dying to sin, then falling back into sin, repenting, and dying to sin, falling, repent-

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<sup>26</sup>The word “regeneration” is often used synonymously with “sanctification” in the Anglican divines. In his sermon on “Christian Perfection,” Mr. Wesley admits that regeneration is “an expression taken also in divers senses” and he refers to “those who are justified, who are born again in the lowest sense” (*Works*, II. 105, 106). But see “The New Birth” where he explicitly states: “the new birth is not the same with sanctification. This is indeed taken for granted by many . . .” (*Works*, 2.198). John Fletcher openly taught a doctrine of progressive regeneration. Justification is the first part of regeneration, and perfect love “is the highest point of the sanctification of a believer, and consequently his regeneration is complete” (“A Discourse on the New Birth,” IV. 113, 114, *Works of John Fletcher*, Schmull Publishers, Salem OH: 1974). In “The Test of a New Creature” he writes: “Whatever is the state of one wholly renewed, must be, in a less degree, the state of all ‘who are born from above.’ . . . Regeneration differs only in degrees of strength and soundness. In our early justification the Divine life is comparatively small, and mixed with sin; but when perfectly renewed, we are strong and every part pure” (IV.267).

ing, that he preaches from Romans 6 the need to die to sin once for all:

O that once we might come to this! no more deaths, no more resurrections, but one! that we might once make an end of our daily continual recidivations to which we are so subject, and once get past these pangs and qualms of godliness, this righteousness like the morning cloud, which is all we perform; that we might grow habituate in grace. . . . But as out of Christ, or without Christ, we can do nothing toward this account; not accomplish or bring to perfection but not do—not any great or notable sum of it, but nothing at all. . . . So, in Him and with Him enabling us to it, we can think good thoughts, speak good words, and do good works, and die to sin and live to God, and all. . . . And enable us He will and can . . . (II. 202, 203).

Beveridge adds: “If the ‘old man’ be crucified with Him, they must become ‘new men,’ or nothing at all, ‘in Him.’ If the body of sin be destroyed, the body of grace must be formed in them” (I. 355).

When the Psalmist prayed “wash me,” in Psalm 51:7, “This is more than a sprinkling. A total, and intire washing” (Donne, V. 312). We are to be more than ordinary partakers of the outward means of grace, such as hearers of the Word and receivers of the Sacrament; there should be more than a temporary feeling of the benefit thereof in a present sense, for it is a building up of religious habits “visible to others” and a “holy and firme confidence created in us by the Spirit of God, that we shall keepe that building in reparation. . . .” A washing like Naaman’s in Jordan,

to be iterated seaven times, seaventy seaven times, daily, hourly, all our life. . . . Not such a washing, as the Washes have, which are those sands that are overflowed with the Sea at every Tide, and then lie dry, but such a washing as the bot-tome of the Sea hath, that is always equally wet. It is not a *stil-lididum*, a spout, a showre, a bucket powred out upon us, when we come to Church, a Sabbath-sanctification, and no more, but a water that enters into every office of our house, and washes every action proceeding from every faculty of the soule. And this is the washing, A continuall succession of Grace, working effectually to present Habits of religious acts, and constituting a holy purpose of persevering in them, that induces the Whitenesse, the Candor, the Dealbation that *David* begs here . . . (Donne, V. 312, 313).

So Christ came “to save soul and body from bodily and ghostly enemies; from sin the root, and misery the branches; for a time and for ever” (Andrewes, I.79). Salvation from sin is to be realized in this life. Archbishop William Wake (1657-1737), arguing against purgatory, invokes early Fathers (Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom) who denied the possibility that any further purging from sin takes place beyond the grave, for purging from sin is to occur in this life (III.531). Bishop Wilson, who so strongly believed in the attainability and necessity of salvation from sin in this life, wrote: “ ‘Every man, therefore, that has this hope’ (of seeing God in peace), ‘must purify himself even as He is pure’ [1 Jn 3:3]. If death overtakes any of us, before this is done, we are ruined forever” (II. 447). When Jesus taught his disciples to pray “deliver us from evil” (Matt. 6:13), he meant deliverance from both the guilt and power of evil (Wilson, V. 369).

A pure heart, which is requisite for “seeing God” (Matt. 5:8), “is always single, and all of one piece, wholly and entirely inclined to God and goodness” (Beveridge, V. 393). In order for hearts to be made pure, it is necessary that “they be purged and cleansed from all the guilt and filth they have contracted by sinning against God; for till that be done, the spirits of fallen men are as impure and unclean in the sight of God as the fallen Angels themselves” (Beveridge, V. 392). Beveridge admonishes that “as ever we desire ‘to be meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light’ [Col. 1:12], we must be sure to depart out of this life with clean hands, and a pure heart . . . ” (Beveridge, V. 404).

### **“Faith” as the Means of Sanctification**

In his sermon on Acts 15:9, “. . . purified their hearts by faith,” Beveridge writes:

By this we may see what is here meant by purifying the heart, for the heart may then be properly said to be purified, when it is freed from these noisome diseases and distempers, where-with it is thus defiled; when it can clearly apprehend and discern between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, good and evil; when it can think aright of God, and of all things necessary to our eternal happiness . . . in short, the heart is then purified, when it is reduced in some measure to its first disposition, and set again to keep God’s Commandments, and to do all such good works as He hath prepared for men to walk in (IV. 26).



A pure heart, however, reaches to the whole of the person. As with Mr. Wesley a century later, the Anglicans were constantly on guard against any form of antinomianism. "We are not sanctified wholly, nor preserved in safety, unless, besides our souls and bodies, our spirit also be kept blameless" (Taylor, I. 767). "Perfecting holiness" is "To be universally holy." It involves "the whole man, 1 Thess. v. 23" (Beveridge, X. 111).

Commenting himself on 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "The God of peace himself sanctify you entirely," Bishop Wilson writes in his *Notes on the Holy Scriptures*, "All these [spirit, soul, body] have been defiled, and all must be regenerated" (VI. 638). In pursuing holiness, they greatly err

who place *holiness* in outward devotion; in attending the public worship; in hearing the Word, and observing ordinances. Christians should consider, that these are only means of attaining holiness; that as such they are necessary to be observed; but that they are otherwise of no value in the sight of God, if they do not help to free us from the slavery of sin, cure us of an immoderate love for the world, increase our faith and hope in God, and bring us to love Him with all our hearts, and our neighbour for His sake (Wilson, II. 440).

The means, as important as they are, are only means and not ends in and of themselves. Wilson continues: "Christians should know, that faith is the only principle of holiness; because it is faith only that can create in us those holy dispositions of thankfulness to God for His mercies, of loving His law, of desiring to please Him, and of dreading His anger; all which are absolutely necessary to fit us for the vision of God" (Wilson, II. 441). For "it is not the work of *nature* but of *grace*," to perfect holiness in the fear of God (Wilson, II. 443).

To be set free from the power and dominion of sin, "The first great instrument is faith" (Taylor, II. 17); "Because upon our believing in Him, He diffuseth that measure of His Grace and Holy Spirit into us, whereby our hearts are purified and made holy" (Beveridge, V. 395). Faith works so mightily upon the human heart that when it comes with its full strength "it turns all things upside down; it casts out all proud conceits, all inordinate desires, all unruly passions, every thing that corrupts and defiles the

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<sup>27</sup>Succinctly stated, "... whereas they who believe, have not only their sins all pardoned, but their hearts are also purified . . ." (Beveridge, IV. 36).

heart, and so purifies, or restores it, as far as it goes, to a pure and holy temper again” (Beveridge, IV. 30).<sup>27</sup> But faith is not merely a human faculty, for it is through the Holy Spirit that one’s heart is said to be purified by faith (Beveridge, IV. 35).

### “Love” as the End of Sanctification

For the Anglicans, love is the predominant fruit of holiness. According to Bishop Wilson, holiness

consists in such a *prevailing love of God* as makes a Christian hate all sin, as a thing most hateful to God; to be afraid of, and to avoid all temptations to every thing that he believes will displease God: such a love as makes us zealous to promote the glory of God, and to *please* Him in every thing; desirous to know His will, and resolved at all times to obey it; and cheerfully closing with all the *means* which He has ordained to work in us these holy dispositions (II.438).

With respect to one’s neighbor, holiness “consists in loving him sincerely; that is, in doing to *him* all that in reason we desire should be done to ourselves”; with respect to ourselves, holiness consists “in keeping the *body pure and undefiled, as the temple of God ought to be*” (II.439). He concludes, “And they that satisfy themselves with any thing less than this holiness which we have now described, they do it at their utmost peril” (II.439).<sup>28</sup>

Godliness is not only “mystical,” faith hidden in the soul with no outward expression, such as that found in Christian antinomianism, but is also a “manifestation.” Bishop Andrewes states that “the life of Jesus must not only be had in our spirit, but manifest in our flesh. For godliness is not only faith, which referreth to the mystery . . . but it is love, too. . . . And if faith work by love,” declares Andrewes, “the mystery will be so manifest in us, as we shall need no prospective glasses, or optic instruments, to make it visible; all men shall take notice of it” (Andrewes, I.42).

True love to God consists in embracing God as the highest good, thus having one’s entire soul fully inclined to God that no other affection can draw it away. “But when this sacred fire of Divine love is thus kindled

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<sup>28</sup>The Anglicans saw a correlation between “holiness and happiness” as well. Cf. Wilson, II. 436; Beveridge, X. 111.

in a man's breast, it is not confined there, but breaks forth immediately, and shows itself in his thoughts, in his affections, in his words, and in all the actions of his life" (Beveridge, V. 208) so that those who so love God cannot help but also love their neighbor (Beveridge, V. 209, 210).<sup>29</sup>

Commenting on 1 John 2:15 ("Love not the world . . ."), Bishop Wilson teaches: ". . . have not such an affection for life, or anything in the world, as may hinder your loving God with all your heart and soul, or hinder that obedience which ought to follow such a love" (VI. 689).

### **The Optimism of Grace in Anglican Theology**

Christ became human so that humans may become "partakers of the divine nature"; he made provision for redemption from sin and called his people to a perfect love of God. "But how can we ever make our unclean and sinful hearts thus pure and holy? For as the wise man observes, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? [Prov. 20:9]' " Bishop Beveridge inquires.

It is true that we can never do it by our own strength. But God has found a way whereby we may all do it if we will, even by the merits and assistance of His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, "Who," as St. John reports, "hath washed us from our sins in His Own blood," [Rev. 1:5]. "Which," as the same Apostle elsewhere observes, "cleanseth us from all iniquity." So that if we do but "confess our sins, God, for His sake, is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (V. 394).

Christ as a prophet speaks the word, as a priest he purges, and as a king he has the present power to purge, and the future power to exalt (Andrewes, I. 115, 116). "Look to the persons, Adam and Christ," directs Bishop Andrewes. "Shall Adam, being but a 'living soul,' infect us more strongly that Christ, 'a quickening Spirit,' can heal us again?" (II.215, 216).

The effects of sin are indeed great according to the theology of the Anglicans, but the effects of grace are greater still.

But could we once do that, what an excellent people should we then be! How soberly, how righteously, how godly should

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<sup>29</sup>" . . . his whole soul is inflamed with love unto Him. . . . He doth not only avoid the more gross and notorious, but all manner of sin . . ." (Beveridge, I. 351).

we then live! The Commandments of God would not then seem grievous but pleasant to us; because they are His Whom our souls love. If this sacred fire was once kindled in our breasts, it would soon inflame our hearts with such zeal for God, that we should be never easy in our own minds, but whilst we are labouring to promote His glory. We should then account it our only wisdom to know Him, our only pleasure to please Him, and the only honour we can ever have, to honour and glorify Him in the world. We should then despise this world and live above it. Nothing here below could molest or trouble us. For our love being placed upon God above all things else, all things else would seem as nothing to us. But whatsoever happens, our thoughts would still be running after Him, and our spirits rejoicing in Him, and pleased with every thing that he doth (Beveridge, V. 216).

“And therefore,” he continues, “I shall say no more of it, but pray to God that we may all be in the number of those who love Him, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (V. 217).

The saving grace of God is not irresistible, but requires a human response, so that:

Whoever therefore aspires after holiness, and lays hold of the means, *will certainly be renewed by the Spirit that is in him*. And though to us evil habits may seem incurable, and true holiness almost impossible, considering our corrupt affections, yet they are not so to HIM *Who hath called us unto holiness*; and Who, by doing so, has obliged Himself to give us all necessary assistance. But then, let us remember, that we never shall be *holy*, never *happy*, without our *own sincere endeavours* (Wilson, II. 445, 446).

The *synergism* found throughout the theology of the Anglicans was in response to the *monergism* of supralapsarian Calvinism. While for the Puritans “Pelagian,” “Romish,” and “Arminian” were synonymous adjectives, the Anglicans, in their struggle to preserve the integrity of Divine mercy and the necessity of human responsibility, believed they found a *via media*. Bishop George Bull (1634-1710)<sup>30</sup> wrote: “Whilst we avoid

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<sup>30</sup>Bull, along with others, such as Herbert Thorndike and Wesley’s contemporary William Law, unfortunately inverted justification and sanctification in the *ordo salutis*, which Mr. Wesley rectified, partly with a doctrine of final justification.

Pelagianism, by acknowledging the necessity of grace, let us take care, on the other hand, that we fall not into the abyss of Manichean folly, by taking away free will, and the co-operation of human industry. . . . In whatever manner you interpret these words of the Apostle [Phil. 2:13-14], they totally overturn the irresistible operation of grace; for unto what purpose would be this grave exhortation of the Apostle's, that we should work out our own salvation, if we could not work?" (217, 219).

Bishop Taylor,<sup>31</sup> whom Wesley specifically credits as being influential to his own understanding of Christian Perfection, particularly in the area of the "purity of intention" (*A Plain Account*, 9) states:

To sum up all: every good man is a new creature, and christianity is not so much a Divine institution, as a Divine frame and temper of spirit—which if we heartily pray for, and endeavor to obtain, we shall find it as hard and as uneasy to sin against God, as now we think it impossible to abstain from our most pleasing sins. . . . But we shall hate what God hates, and the evil that is forbidden we shall not do; not because we are strong of ourselves, but because Christ is our strength, and he is in us; and Christ's strength shall be perfected in our weakness, and his grace shall be sufficient for us; and he will, of his own good pleasure, work in us, not only to will, but also to do, "velle et perficere," saith the apostle, "to will and to do it thoroughly" and fully, being sanctified throughout, to the glory of his holy name, and the eternal salvation of our souls . . . (II. 19).

That the Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century should be led by

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<sup>31</sup>For a critique of the theology of Jeremy Taylor (and other later "Caroline Divines"), see C. F. Allison, *The Rise of Moralism*, The Seabury Press, New York: 1966. While arguing that Taylor's theology of grace smacks of Pelagianism, Allison finds what he sees to be contradictions in Taylor's writings which expose a much more orthodox "second Jeremy Taylor" (87). In partial defense of the popular Bishop, Allison writes: "Although his 'gospel' has serious shortcomings, and although he fails to emphasize the gratuitous nature of grace, Taylor has nevertheless made a significant contribution to theology by his exhortations to a holy life. . . . Taylor gives full and eloquent testimony that the will of man is essential to a holy life" (93, 94).

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Albert Outler's "Introduction," *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 1, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984, 21. Wesley's sermons, intended for "plain people" in open fields and near coal mines, were strategically entitled *Sermons on Several Occasions*, which was "a wholly conventional entitlement for sermons preached by ecclesiastical dignitaries in palaces and cathedrals" (40).

a loyal son of the Church of England is no mere coincidence. What the representative theologians of a century earlier, with their ornate rhetoric,<sup>32</sup> may have lacked in providing “plain truth for plain people,” John Wesley was more than able to supply as he continued in the tradition of proclaiming that Christians are, by God’s grace, partakers of the Divine nature.

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# JOHN WESLEY'S DOCTRINE OF THE NEW BIRTH

by

**Kenneth J. Collins<sup>1</sup>**

I am surprised that so little work has been done on John Wesley's doctrine of the new birth. Beyond Paul Sanders' piece, "John Wesley and Baptismal Regeneration,"<sup>2</sup> Timothy Smith's small volume, *Whitefield and Wesley on the New Birth*,<sup>3</sup> and Thomas Oden's contemporary translation of Wesley's sermons on the new birth,<sup>4</sup> little has been produced in the field on this specific theme. Granted, full-length theologies such as William Cannon's *Theology of John Wesley* or, on a more contemporary note, Randy Maddox's *Responsible Grace* do indeed explore this important topic; nevertheless, it remains something of an oddity that so little has been done on this doctrine in the periodical literature. In light of this void, I would like to explore Wesley's doctrine of the new birth and demon-

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<sup>1</sup>Presented as the Presidential Address to the 1996 annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society convened in Washington, D. C. For a more extensive treatment of this topic, see Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997).

<sup>2</sup>Paul S. Sanders, "John Wesley and Baptismal Regeneration," *Religion in Life* 23 (1954): 591-603. For a more extensive treatment of the topic of the new birth see my forthcoming work *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997).

<sup>3</sup>Timothy L. Smith, *Whitefield and Wesley on the New Birth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Francis Asbury Press of Zondervan Publishing House, 1986).

<sup>4</sup>Thomas C. Oden, *The New Birth: John Wesley* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984).

strate not only that it formed an integral component of his overall theology, but also that it has important implications for how we conceive and foster the work of holiness today.

### **The New Birth as the Foundation of the Christian Life**

In a letter to Dr. John Taylor, tutor at the Warrington Academy, Wesley countered the dissenting minister's latitudinarian notions by pointing out that, if we take away the doctrines of justification and the new birth, how is Christianity better than Heathenism?<sup>5</sup> Indeed, so crucial was the doctrine of the new birth for Wesley that less than a year later he noted in his sermon "The New Birth" that "If any doctrines within the whole compass of Christianity may be properly termed fundamental, they are doubtless these two—the doctrine of justification, and that of the new birth."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, demonstrating remarkable consistency, ten years later Wesley reaffirmed the fundamental nature of justification and the new birth in his piece titled "On the Death of George Whitefield," where he counseled his followers among other things: "Keep close to these good, old, unfashionable doctrines, how many soever contradict and blaspheme."<sup>7</sup>

Wesley's linkage of justification and the new birth in his discussions of the foundational doctrines of Christianity was by no means an accident. In order of time, he writes, "neither of these is before the other." In the moment we are justified by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also "born of the Spirit."<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, though justification and the new birth occur simultaneously in the life of the believer, and are therefore at least temporally linked, the doctrines themselves can be distinguished logically. That is, justification is that great work which God does for us, in forgiving our sins; the new birth is that great work which God does in us by renewing our fallen nature. The one relates to issues of guilt and forgiveness; the other to the nature or essence of a human being.

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<sup>5</sup>W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial ed., vol. 21: Journals and Diaries IV (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 205.

<sup>6</sup>Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial ed., vol. 1-4: Sermons (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-1987), 2:187.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:343.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:187.



Recently, there have been attempts by some scholars to explain how a justified person can lack Christian assurance by separating the doctrines of justification and the new birth and thereby claim that believers can be justified, forgiven of their sins, and yet not be born of God.<sup>9</sup> Wesley, however, once again insisted on the connection between these doctrines as evidenced in his comments to Thomas Maxfield in 1762:

I dislike your directly or indirectly depreciating justification: saying a justified person is not "in Christ," is not "born of God," is not a "new creature," has not a "new heart," is not "sanctified," not a "temple of the Holy Ghost" or that he "cannot please God," or cannot "grow in grace."<sup>10</sup>

Why did Wesley so stress the linkage between these doctrines? Clues can be garnered from his short piece, "A Word to a Condemned Malefactor" in which the one-time Oxford fellow reasons that if justification occurs without the kind of renewal of our nature which takes place in the new birth, then a renewed dominion of sin would not be far behind. Indeed, "If all your past sins were now to be forgiven," Wesley points out, "you would immediately sin again; that is, unless your heart were cleansed; unless it were created anew."<sup>11</sup> In addition, affirming justification without the new birth, that is, postulating freedom from the guilt of sin without the concomitant freedom from its power could easily result in the antinomianism (I'm forgiven, even though I continue to commit sin) that Wesley rightly deplored. So, for Wesley, it is clear that another and much different kind of work is required in the lives of Christian believers beyond justification. Simply put, forgiveness is not enough.

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<sup>9</sup>See Scott Kisker, "Justified But Unregenerate? The Relationship of Assurance to Justification and Regeneration in the Thought of John Wesley," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 28 (Spring-Fall 1993): 55 ff.

<sup>10</sup>Ward, *Journals*, 21:395.

<sup>11</sup>Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of Rev. John Wesley*, 14 vols. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1829-1831), reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978. Indeed, Wesley indicates that one of the prerequisites for being a gospel minister was to preach the whole counsel of God, even justification and sanctification preparatory to glory. Even more emphatically he adds: He that does not put asunder what God has joined, but publishes alike, 'Christ dying for us, and Christ living in us.'" Cf. Jackson, *Wesley's Works*, 10:456.

## The New Birth as a Necessary Change

Just as John Wesley linked the doctrines of justification and regeneration, so too did he link regeneration with the doctrine of original sin. In other words, as justification and the new birth are the foundations of the Christian life, so too is the doctrine of original sin the foundation of the new birth. In his 1760 sermon “The New Birth,” for example, Wesley observes: “This, then, is the foundation of the new birth—the entire corruption of our nature. Hence it is, that being born in sin, we must be ‘born again.’”<sup>12</sup> And a few years earlier, Wesley affirmed the same linkage but this time he employed the specific language of regeneration, indicating at least in this context that he used the phrases the new birth and regeneration interchangeably. “And as the corruption of our nature evidences the absolute necessity of regeneration,” Wesley notes, “so the necessity of regeneration proves the corruption of our nature.” So, with this particular linkage in place, we are now able to understand precisely why Wesley took such great pains to articulate his doctrine of original sin and thereby produce one of his largest theological treatises ever. That is, if the problem of original sin was misprized or even outright repudiated, then the solution of the new birth would be misprized as well.

Wesley’s preferred way, however, of underscoring the necessity of the new birth for holiness, and thus for salvation as well, often entailed a reference to and at times even a commentary on John 3:3, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” For example, in 1784 in writing to his nephew Samuel Wesley, a nephew who was accomplished in many respects and was undoubtedly the product of a godly home, the elderly Wesley nevertheless cautioned: “I feared you were not born again; and ‘except a man be born again,’ if we may credit the Son of God, ‘he cannot see the kingdom of heaven’ except he experience that inward change of the earthly, sensual mind for the mind which was in Christ Jesus.”<sup>13</sup> Others may have mistaken the various ele-

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<sup>12</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 2:190.

<sup>13</sup>John Telford, ed., *The Letters of John Wesley, A.M.*, 8 vols. (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 7:30. The circumstances of this correspondence were somewhat distressing to Wesley since Samuel, his nephew, had just made his way into the Roman Catholic Church, though he later had a change of heart. For additional references to Wesley’s use of John 3:3 Cf. Jackson, *Wesley’s Works*, 9:452, 459, 11:268; Outler, *Sermons*, 3:391; Telford, *Letters*, 7:231; and John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (Salem, Ohio: Schmuel Publishers), p. 218.

ments of Christian nurture or a degree of virtue for the reality of the new birth; clearly John Wesley did not.

Moreover, not only did Wesley, throughout his career, underscore the necessity of the new birth for holiness, but for happiness as well. He reasoned that as long as pride, self-will, and idolatry, these general sources of misery, reign in the heart, there can be no place for happiness. But these unholy tempers must reign, Wesley points out, "till the bent of our nature is changed, that is, till we are born again."<sup>14</sup> Here a familiar idiom has been given a slightly different modulation: being born in misery, we must be born again.

### **The New Birth as a Vast Change**

In his *Farther Appeal*, written in 1745, Wesley describes the new birth as a "vast, inward change."<sup>15</sup> Several years later, in commenting on John 3:3, he depicts the new birth in a similar fashion as an entire change of heart as well as of life.<sup>16</sup> However, this emphasis on the magnitude of the change entailed in the new birth, its entirety, is perhaps expressed most clearly, once again, in Wesley's sermon "The New Birth," written in 1760, in which he writes:

From hence it manifestly appears, what is the nature of the new birth. It is that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life; when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is "created anew in Christ Jesus."<sup>17</sup>

While there is clearly a sense in which the new birth as described in the preceding excerpt may encompass the entire process of sanctification,

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<sup>14</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 6:73. Observe in this context that Wesley underscores the *power* or *dominion* of sin in the human heart apart from the new birth. But even with this glorious change of regeneration, unholy tempers will *remain* in the heart until the grace of entire sanctification is received; the important point, however, is that these tempers will no longer *reign*. For more on these important distinctions, cf. Wesley's sermons "On Sin in Believers," and "On the Repentance of Believers," Outler, *Sermons*, 1:314-353.

<sup>15</sup>Gerald R. Cragg, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 11. *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 107.

<sup>16</sup>Wesley, *NT Notes*, 218.

<sup>17</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 2:193-94. See also Wesley's letter to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester in Telford, Letters, 4: 382-83, where he uses the same language.

it nevertheless would be a mistake to limit it to such a referent. Put another way, the vastness of the change of the new birth must not be understood simply in terms of Christian perfection or the larger process of sanctification, for that would be to look merely soteriologically “upward.” Its thoroughness must also be understood by looking soteriologically “downward” towards the doctrine of original sin which serves as its foundation. When this latter approach is taken a much different picture emerges. Observe, for example, in the following selection drawn from Wesley’s treatise *The Doctrine of Original Sin* how Wesley explores the thoroughness of the change of the new birth against the backdrop of the magnitude, the extent of original sin. Wesley writes:

Learn from hence the nature and necessity of regeneration.

(1) The nature: It is not a partial, but a total change. Thy whole nature is corrupted; therefore, the whole must be renewed. . . . It is not a change made by human industry, but by the almighty Spirit of God.<sup>18</sup>

In this context, then, the totality of the change of the new birth refers not to the entirety of the process of sanctification, but to the integrity, the thoroughness of its beginning. Speaking in a natural way, when a child is born the completeness of this work is not mistaken for subsequent growth and maturity. So too, spiritually speaking, the new birth is a complete work, in the sense of its nature and integrity, a work which nevertheless admits of further growth in grace. Again, by way of illustration, when a child is born into the world, its parents would not say that the child is somewhat born or almost born. On the contrary, they realize that the child is fully, completely born and indeed could never be “more” born than it already is. It is the same way with spiritual birth; it has a fullness and a completeness to it that nevertheless admits of future growth in grace and decisive change. In fact, not only did Wesley draw an analogy between natural birth and spiritual birth,<sup>19</sup> but he also pressed this analogy to illuminate precisely his teaching on the thoroughgoing change of the new birth. However, Wesley begins the analogy not with natural birth, as one would expect, but with spiritual birth and he then works backwards to draw the relation to natural birth in order to highlight the thoroughness of

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<sup>18</sup>Jackson, *Wesley’s Works*, 9:459.

<sup>19</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 2:198-199.

the latter! He writes: "for that which is regenerated was also generated or begotten; but the whole man is regenerated, therefore the whole man is generated."<sup>20</sup> The new birth, then, is not a partial change, but an entire, general, universal change; it is that change whereby a soul moves from death to life, whereby a soul—at least initially—becomes holy.

### **The New Birth as a Crucial Change**

**A. The Beginning of Holiness.** In his writings on the new birth, Wesley underscores that this soteriological event is not a natural change, one which could be brought about merely by human will or design, but a supernatural change. Accordingly, Wesley affirms in a letter to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, written in 1762, that it is the office not of humanity but "of the Holy Ghost to sanctify."<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere in his writings, Wesley likewise takes great care to distinguish all human effort and virtue from the vast change which takes place in regeneration through the power of the Holy Spirit. In his sermon "On a Single-Eye," for example, he declares:

Let them be ever so learned, ever so well versed in every branch of polite literature; yea, ever so courteous, so humane; yet if their eye is not singly fixed on God, they can know nothing of scriptural religion. They do not even know what Christian holiness means: what is the entrance of it, the new birth, with all the circumstances attending it.<sup>22</sup>

And in a note which some may suggest smacks of sarcasm, Wesley adds: They know no more of this [change] than do the beasts of the field.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, viewed in another sense, the connection between the doctrines of original sin and the new birth postulated by Wesley not only pointed to the absolute necessity of regeneration for salvation, as noted earlier, but also kept this crucial doctrine from being misunderstood in a moralistic way, as if an increase in education, virtue, or even the employ-

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<sup>20</sup>Ward, *Journals*, 21:436. See also Wesley's sermon, "On Living Without God," where he once again underscores that the new birth is not, and cannot be, a partial change. Cf. Outler, *Sermons*, 4:173-74.

<sup>21</sup>Telford, *Letters*, 4:380.

<sup>22</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 4:124. Compare this sermon also with *The New Birth*, a piece in which Wesley, once again, makes a distinction between conventional morality and the new birth. Cf. Outler, *Sermons*, 2:194-95.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

ment of the means of grace was all that was entailed in this glorious work of God. Wesley elaborates:

Go to church twice a day, go to the Lord's table every week, say ever so many prayers in private; hear ever so many sermons, good sermons, excellent sermons, the best that ever were preached; read ever so many good books—still you must be born again. None of these things will stand in the place of the new birth; no, nor any thing under heaven. Let this therefore, if you have not already experienced this inward work of God, be your continual prayer: "Lord, add this to all thy blessings, let me be born again!"<sup>24</sup>

Even more emphatically, Wesley distinguished the new birth, that supernatural work of the Most High, from all commonplace, though misguided, notions of this grace. In his piece, *The New Birth*, for example, he reasons:

Thousands do really believe, that they have found a broad way which leadeth not to destruction. "What danger," say they, "can a woman be in that is so harmless and so virtuous? What fear is there that so honest a man, one of so strict morality, should miss of heaven; especially if, over and above all this, they constantly attend on church and sacrament?" One of these will ask with all assurance, "What! shall not I do as well as my neighbours?" Yes, as well as our unholy neighbours; as well as your neighbours that die in their sins! For you will all drop into the pit together, into the nethermost hell! You will all lie together in the lake of fire; "the lake of fire burning with brimstone." Then, at length, you will see (but God grant you may see it before!) the necessity of holiness in order to glory; and, consequently, of the new birth, since none can be holy, except he be born again.<sup>25</sup>

The new birth, then, or what is sometimes called initial sanctification, marks the beginning not simply of an incremental change, not merely one of degree, but of a qualitative change which issues in a distinct kind of life, a life which men and women cannot bring about by themselves. In fact, Wesley so emphasizes this supernatural change that he maintains repeatedly throughout his writings that spiritual life itself

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 2:200-201.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 2:195.

commences when we are born again.<sup>26</sup> In the Conference Minutes of 1745, for example, Wesley and his preachers responded to the question, "When does inward sanctification begin? by pointing out: "In the moment we are justified. The seed of every virtue is then sown in the soul. From that time the believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace."<sup>27</sup> Again, Wesley observes: "Justification of life, as being connected with the new birth [is] the beginning of spiritual life, which leads us, through the life of holiness, to life eternal, to glory."<sup>28</sup> Wesley develops this same theme in his 1787 sermon *On God's Vineyard*, in which he argues that "The new birth is the first point of sanctification, which may increase more and more unto the perfect day."<sup>29</sup> In light of this evidence, and much more could be cited, it is clear that holiness, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the human heart in sanctifying power, begins not at the reception of prevenient or convincing grace, but at regeneration and justification. Prior to sanctifying grace, that grace which makes one holy, believers may be many things (recipients of prevenient grace, convinced of sin, moral and virtuous), but they are not yet holy.

Yet another way in which the elderly Wesley highlighted the soteriological importance of the new birth was to contend that "no good work, properly so called, can go before justification," and therefore before regeneration as well.<sup>30</sup> This was not merely an early emphasis of Wes-

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<sup>26</sup>Telford, *Letters*, 4:332. Compare this letter to Wesley's sermon, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," where he notes that salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) "preventing grace." This, however, does not contradict his earlier statements so long as it is realized that in the former Wesley is referring to salvation, properly speaking, which always includes holiness; but in the latter, he is simply highlighting a "degree" of salvation in that the sinner is at least on the way to holiness. In short, in no sense was Wesley arguing in his sermon "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" that those who merely have prevenient grace are in fact holy and are therefore redeemed, properly speaking. Cf. Outler, *Sermons*, 3:203.

<sup>27</sup>Jackson, *Wesley's Works*, 8:285.

<sup>28</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 2:411. Bracketed material is mine. Interestingly enough, in his sermon, "On Living Without God," Wesley indicates that at regeneration the spiritual senses of the believer come alive to discern the love of God. In this context, he employs such sensory language as "tasting" and "feeling" to make his point. Cf. Outler, *Sermons*, 4:173.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 3:507.

<sup>30</sup>Cragg, *Societies*, 11:449.

ley's, but a later one as well. In his 1781 sermon "On Zeal," he points out that no outward works are acceptable to him [God] unless they spring from holy tempers, without which no man can have a place in the kingdom of Christ and of God.<sup>31</sup> This issue of good works, like Wesley's views on regeneration, once again indicates the subtlety of his position. On the one hand, in light of his doctrine of prevenient grace, Wesley refused to refer to these works prior to justification and regeneration as "splendid sins" as the Calvinists were inclined to do, but on the other hand, since these works were not informed by sanctifying, regenerating grace, they were not deemed good, strictly speaking. The genius and balance of Wesley's theology, then, is that it holds both of these ideas together and without contradiction.

**B. The Temporal Elements as Key.** Perhaps Wesley's favorite way of underscoring the decisive nature of the new birth was to distinguish it from the larger process of sanctification and then to demonstrate, quite clearly, the significance of its temporal elements. For example, in his treatise on original sin, produced in 1756, Wesley notes:

But regeneration is not "gaining habits of holiness;" it is quite a different thing. It is not a natural, but a supernatural change; and is just as different from the gradual "gaining habits," as a child's being born into the world is from his growing up into a man. The new birth is not, as you suppose, the progress, or the whole, of sanctification, but the beginning of it.<sup>32</sup>

In a similar fashion, Wesley asserts that regeneration is not to be confused with the ongoing process of holiness: "This is a part of sanctification, not the whole; it is the gate of it, the entrance into it."<sup>33</sup> Even more emphatically, in 1787, Wesley criticized his one-time mentor, William

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<sup>31</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 3:320. Judging from the distinctions which Wesley makes in his sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation," with respect to works prior to justification, I contend that Wesley maintained that these works are in "some sense" good (because prevenient grace informs them), but that they are not good strictly speaking—the reason for this last judgment being that such works do not flow from *sanctifying grace*.

<sup>32</sup>Jackson, *Wesley's Works*, 9:310.

<sup>33</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 2:198. Bracketed material is mine.



Law, for confounding the new birth with the gradual process of sanctification. Wesley reasoned:

It is true a late very eminent author, in his strange treatise on regeneration, proceeds entirely on the supposition that it is the whole, gradual progress of sanctification. No; it is only the threshold of sanctification—the first entrance upon it.<sup>34</sup>

It should be apparent by now that, since Wesley distinguished the new birth from the process of sanctification, then he must have also considered, by way of corollary, the new birth itself to be a decisive, instantaneous event. This is precisely what is found throughout his writings. Thus, in a letter to John Downes drafted in 1759, Wesley not only underscores the supernatural flavor of this work, a commonplace by now, but also indicates something of the temporal elements involved:

We do believe regeneration (or in plain English, the new birth) to be as miraculous or supernatural a work now as it was seventeen hundred years ago. We likewise believe that the spiritual life, which commences when we are born again, must in the nature of the thing have a first moment as well as the natural.<sup>35</sup>

The next year, in his sermon *The New Birth*, Wesley depicted the instantaneousness of regeneration against the backdrop of the process of sanctification, and indicates that the former is a decisive aspect of the latter. Drawing a by-now-familiar analogy between natural birth and spiritual birth in this piece, Wesley points out that a child is born of woman “in a moment, or at least in a very short time.”<sup>36</sup> After this, the child continues to grow until it reaches maturity. In the same way, he argues, “a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 3:507. Also in this same material, Wesley highlights the instantaneous element of regeneration and maintains that a person is “born at once.”

<sup>35</sup>Telford, *Letters*, 4:332. Wesley’s additional comment, “Let it be wrought at all, and we will not contend whether it be wrought gradually or instantaneously,” does not detract from his basic position that the new birth is instantaneous; instead, it serves to highlight the importance of real transformation, a favorite theme of Wesley’s. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>36</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 2:198. Lindstrom notes that it is “this combination of the gradual and instantaneous that particularly distinguishes Wesley’s conception of the process of salvation.” Cf. Lindstrom, *Sanctification*, 121.

that he afterward grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”<sup>37</sup>

The relation, then, which holds between natural birth and maturation is similar to the relation between the new birth and sanctification. That is, Wesley is attentive to the crisis of the new birth, the instantaneous element, and to the process of sanctification, the gradual element. Both aspects are acknowledged; neither, therefore, should be neglected. Moreover, this instantaneous emphasis is not simply a concern of the middle-aged Wesley, but of the elderly Wesley as well. Notice, for example, in the following selection from his 1765 *The Scripture Way of Salvation* how Wesley never repudiates the instantaneousness and therefore the discreteness of the new birth. He writes: “At the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification, begins. In that instant we are ‘born again,’ ‘born from above,’ ‘born of the Spirit.’”<sup>38</sup>

The key, perhaps, to unraveling Wesley’s larger thought here is found in his further identification of the instantaneous element with inward religion, that is, of the association of a moment of grace, so to speak, with the activity of God. Thus, in an important 1775 letter to Mary Bosanquet, Wesley maintains that “inward holiness is mostly instantaneous . . . but outward holiness is mostly gradual.”<sup>39</sup> The former element refers to divine activity in terms of the gifts of grace and holiness; the latter refers to human activity, to works of piety, mercy and the like, which prepare one for the reception of these gifts. Put another way, inward holiness, making the heart and its dispositions sacred is the activity of God alone, for it is none other than the Holy Spirit—not the believer—who is both the fount and the cause of all holiness. To be sure, believers participate in the process of redemption, but they receive—they do not generate—the holy love of God.

So, the problem with many recent interpretations of Wesley’s thought on this score is that they conceive the language of “moment” and “instant” simply in a chronological sense, while Wesley utilizes such terminology also, and more importantly, in a soteriological sense. In other words, this terminology highlights not human response over time, but the graciousness and efficacy of divine initiative. That is, the instantaneous

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 2:158. I have underscored the words “moment” and “instant.” The other emphasis is Wesley’s own.

<sup>39</sup>Telford, *Letters*, 6:189-90.

elements of Wesley's *via salutis* are his principal vehicles for underscoring the crucial truth that it is God, not humanity, who both forgives sins and makes holy. Temporal elements, in other words, indicate soteriological roles. By way of analogy, observe Wesley's language in his sermon *The Scripture Way of Salvation* as he demonstrates that temporal elements (with respect to entire sanctification) are expressive of the relation between works and faith. He states:

And by this token may you surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done first, before you are sanctified. You think, "I must first be or do thus or thus." Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it as you are: and if as you are, then expect it now.<sup>40</sup>

This means, of course, that interpretations of Wesley's doctrine of salvation which identify the juridical aspects of redemption (justification or forgiveness) as instantaneous, and the therapeutic aspects (sanctification) as simply processive are wide of the mark. Indeed, Wesley's doctrine of redemption is much more sophisticated than this categorization can allow. Broadly understood, sanctification is characterized by both process and instantaneousness, for the new birth (initial sanctification), as with justification, must, to use Wesley's own words, "have a first moment."<sup>41</sup> In addition, it is precisely the introduction of the instantaneous element in terms of initial sanctification which brings the notion of grace as the unmerited favor of God back into the picture where it belongs. That is, regeneration, although it represents divine empowerment, is like justification in that it too underscores the gratuity of grace. Again, regeneration, as with justification, is by grace through faith. We cannot, after all, give birth to ourselves.<sup>42</sup>

### **The New Birth as Liberating Change**

When some of Wesley's peers heard from him of the great liberty of the children of God, especially in terms of freedom from the power of sin, where sin is defined as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God,<sup>43</sup> they balked and offered a number of qualifications to this teaching. One such

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<sup>40</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 2:169. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>41</sup>Telford, *Letters*, 4:332.

<sup>42</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 2:163.

qualification took this form. A Christian believer, one who is born of God, is not one who does not commit sin, but who does not commit sin habitually. Wesley, however, took exception to the addition of the word “habitually” which he judged to be an evasion. In his *Marks of the New Birth*, he questions his detractors, no doubt with some measure of exasperation:

Habitually! Whence is that? I read it not. It is not written in the Book. God plainly saith, But some men will say, “True; whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin habitually.” He “doth not commit sin.” And thou addest, “habitually”!<sup>44</sup>

A few years later, in 1756, Wesley responded to his detractors by exploring the example of a drunkard who maintained that the state of his soul was well since he was not drunk continually. In a letter to William Dodd, Wesley states:

I tell my neighbour here, “William, you are a child of the devil; for you commit sin: you was drunk yesterday.” “No, sir,” says the man, “I do not live or continue in sin” (which Mr. Dodd says is the true meaning of the text), “I am not drunk continually, but only now and then, once in a fortnight or a month.” Shall I tell him he is in the way to heaven or to hell? I think he is in the high road to destruction, and that if I tell him otherwise his blood will be upon my head.<sup>45</sup>

By the exclusion of the word “habitually” or “continually” from this context, Wesley believes he is safeguarding one of the precious promises of the gospel, namely, that so long as the children of God abide in the love of God and continue to believe, they will not commit sin. In other words, sanctifying, regenerating faith and willful sin are mutually exclusive in Wesley’s thought. When the one appears the other recedes. In fact, Wes-

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<sup>43</sup>Wesley’s definition of sin, unlike a Calvinist one, focuses on the issue of volition as revealed in the following: “Nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Therefore every voluntary breach of the law of love is sin; and nothing else, if we speak properly. To strain the matter farther is only to make way for Calvinism. There may be ten thousand wandering thoughts and forgetful intervals without any breach of love, though not without transgressing the Adamic law. But Calvinists would fain confound these together.” Cf. Telford, *Letters*, 5:322. See also Wesley’s sermon “The Great Privilege of those who are Born of God,” which was produced in 1748, in Outler, *Sermons*, 1:436, and additional comments in Telford, *Letters*, 4:155 and 5:322.

<sup>44</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 1:420.

<sup>45</sup>Telford, *Letters*, 3:169.

ley details the slow and subtle process of the loss of faith and a descent into sin—what some might call a reversal of the *via salutis*—in his sermon *The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God*.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, his emphasis is elsewhere; not on human sin and weakness, but on the sufficiency of God's grace. The optimism of grace, therefore, not the pessimism of nature is the major emphasis here.<sup>47</sup>

So then, Wesley's views on sin and grace highlight not only the moment by moment dependence of the believer on God, but also the availability of divine life-sustaining grace. Therefore, a Christian not only can but should be free from the power of sin. Nevertheless, the Christian can fall through a loss of faith and sin like any other person. Wesley holds both these ideas together.

### A Call to Holiness

It should be evident by now that Wesley held a relatively "high" view of the new birth. Indeed, his doctrine, so carefully crafted, marks a greater degree of grace and liberty than many theologies, Wesleyan or otherwise, can allow. For example, in some Methodist interpretations the cruciality of Wesley's doctrine of the new birth is mitigated in a process of incremental growth and development where qualitative soteriological distinctions are at the very least blurred. In other assessments the liberty of regeneration, the freedom which the sons and daughters of God actually enjoy, is misprized because of failure to consider properly the issue of infirmity and the ongoing presence of inbred sin. Here, so it is claimed, the believer can never be free from the power or dominion of sin. However, such a position is more descriptive of the theology of John Calvin and some of his followers than that of John Wesley. Calvin taught, in effect, that "we sin in thought, word, and deed every day."

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<sup>46</sup>Outler, *Sermons*, 1:439ff.

<sup>47</sup>Does Wesley's doctrine of sin, then, mean that those who are born of God can never sin again? Moreover, does the evidence of willful sin subsequent to the new birth indicate that one was never truly born of God? To these questions Wesley replies: "It is plain, in fact, that those whom we cannot deny to have been truly 'born of God' nevertheless not only could but did commit sin, even gross, outward sin. They did transgress the plain, known laws of God, speaking or acting what they know he had forbidden. . . . I answer, what has been long observed is this: so long as 'he that is born of God keepeth himself' (which he is able to do by the grace of God) 'the wicked one toucheth him not.' But if he keepeth not himself, if he abide not in the faith, he may commit sin even as another man." Cf. Outler, *Sermons*, 1:436, 438.

Beyond this, some Methodist interpretations deprecate or minimize the importance of the new birth precisely in order to highlight entire sanctification. While in one sense the motives in this approach may be noble, they nevertheless constitute a self-defeating strategy. For if Methodist theologians fail to grasp the beginning of holiness and spiritual life aright, how will they ever grasp the beauty of Christian perfection? Again, if they fail to comprehend the liberty of regeneration, how will they ever comprehend the gracious freedom of perfect love?

So then, if we think that we have found a different way to heaven, if we take comfort in faith and grace while neglecting the very substance of salvation which is holiness, then we are wide of the mark. If we think that we have discovered a more broad or easier path to blessedness, if we take refuge in doctrine or ideology, or the means of grace or works of mercy and the like while neglecting the very heart of redemption which is holy love, then again we are wide of the mark. Indeed, for Wesley, there are not two ways of redemption, a lower and higher way, a way of sin and a way of holiness. No, there is but one way, a way which begins redemptively in holiness at the new birth and is perfected by the magnificent grace of God at entire sanctification. Listen to Wesley thunder against the broad way and all such mistaken conceptions:

No, it cannot be; none shall live with God, but he that now lives to God; none shall enjoy the glory of God in heaven, but he that bears the image of God on earth; none that is not saved from sin here can be saved from hell hereafter; none can see the kingdom of God above, unless the kingdom of God be in him below. Whosoever will reign with Christ in heaven, must have Christ reigning in him on earth. He must have “that mind in him which was in Christ,” enabling him “to walk as Christ also walked.”<sup>48</sup>

In light of these things, how, then, shall we live? And how will we be able to face the King, the Lord of glory, if we neglect so great a salvation, if we appear before His throne without a glorious wedding garment? Let us, therefore, be attentive to the things which make for sanctity, let us ever be mindful of the holy and precious love of God, and in the words of the author of the book of Hebrews, which have reverberated throughout the history of the church as the clarion call of the Kingdom, let us “pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

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<sup>48</sup>Jackson, *Wesley's Works*, 10:364.

# **THE MEANS OF GRACE: TOWARD A WESLEYAN PRAXIS OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

**by**

**Dean G. Blevins**

In searching for the proper grounding for the authority of the Bible, scholars often appeal to certain intrinsic properties found in scripture or to an inherent relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Bible. While these approaches merit due attention and dialogue, they are not the primary concern here. An effective way to demonstrate this writing's identification of the predicament lies in a personal story.

## **The Predicament**

I was visited one evening by a friend who was completing his doctorate in the human sciences. My friend, who had an extensive background in a conservative branch of the Christian tradition, was in a state of spiritual disrepair and doubt. I inquired about his practice of reading the Bible and he admitted difficulty. He summarized his circumstance by saying: "I have problems staying with the reading because I feel I have already done all that stuff." The "stuff" my friend alluded to was the ordering of scripture around certain theological and moral propositional constructions which left little space for returning to scripture for a potentially creative second reading.

I also have found this problem in my teaching. Often in Bible study I have asked the class to consider what the text "is saying" or "means," hoping for an inductive search of the passage. The response often has

been that the text's meaning lies in a summary definition of a particular doctrine or moral code, more the result of an acquired folk theology than any disciplined thought. The biblical account was truly theological raw material,<sup>1</sup> but the problem occurred when it became limited material that resourced only specific formulations. Scripture, even when considered a first-order account of revelation, is collapsed into supporting second-order theological and moral constructions which are allowed to carry the greater weight of influence.

Amazingly, this problem often has occurred in a number of settings regardless of the person's position on the inherent authority of scripture. In spite of the claim to the primacy of scripture, in practice the Bible's authority had been subordinated to supporting particular theological or moral propositional truth claims. The predicament became one of scripture practically losing its authority to make its own claims. This same predicament also is experienced through certain forms of preaching when sermons are based on biblical passages that seem tangential at best to the point being made.

M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., has identified this problem as one of an informational-functional culture seeking to control its own environment through primarily rational, cognitive, and intellectual dynamics.<sup>2</sup> Mulholland lists several characteristics of informational reading, two of which are of special consideration: the tendency to try to master the text to bring it under our control; and the tendency to see the text as an object "out there" for manipulation.<sup>3</sup> Mulholland observes:

From within our entrenched position, we seek to read the Bible to find more support for our position or to explain away anything which seems not to fit our position. This is the analytical, problem-solving dynamic of the informational mode. The text is an object to be controlled and manipulated. The text is something "out there" which we control, and the basis of our control is that entrenched position we bring to the text. It doesn't make any difference, as [Thomas] Merton said,

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<sup>1</sup>Greathouse, William and H. Ray Dunning, *An Introduction to Wesleyan Theology* (rev.) (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1989), 15.

<sup>2</sup>M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., *Shaped by the Word* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1985), 48-49.

<sup>3</sup>Mulholland, 21-22 & 49-50.



whether it is a religious presupposition or a cultural one; the text remains an object of our manipulation.<sup>4</sup>

Many people do not consciously intend to manipulate the biblical text inappropriately. Persons often do, however, file the scriptural text away, like a computer file in a particular theological or moral subdirectory, to be retrieved only when that subdirectory is addressed. The problem occurs when that particular subdirectory not only captures the text, but also inhibits the reader of scripture from truly attending to the text for additional meaning. This may not be the fault of the particular doctrine or moral code. Theological construction is not the issue. The failure lies in the reader's inability to understand the relationship between the construction and the Bible, often creating a form of presumed cognitive mastery of the Bible which inhibits personal engagement with its revealing text.

This inability to re-engage a scriptural account with depth, to pause before the text and seriously offer full attention to the text because of previous constructions, thereby limits the authority of scripture for that individual. To overcome this lack of appropriate attention, Robert Mulholland offers a particular method of reading scripture based on John Wesley's guidelines.<sup>5</sup> While this approach is commendable, it is my opinion that it does not grasp the full resources available to us for overcoming the problem.

Wesley's understanding of the role of scripture should be addressed within the larger framework of Methodist praxis, particularly understood as participating in the means of grace. The Christian educator, utilizing the full range of the means of grace, places the practice of reading scripture in an ecology of holistic practices, some fixed and some contextual, which operate interdependently. To understand this ecology of practices, the following first surveys Wesley's descriptions of the means of grace and then explores one possible understanding of how the practice of prayer, in relation to scripture reading, may compensate for a preoccupation with cognitive mastery.

### **The Means of Grace**

A key quote comes from Wesley's sermon "The Means of Grace" that emerged in part during Wesley's dispute with certain Moravians and from his assertion of the value of participating with God's redemptive work.

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<sup>4</sup>Mulholland, 51.

<sup>5</sup>Mulholland, 119-128.

By “means of grace” I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying or sanctifying grace.<sup>6</sup>

Wesley also would interchange the word “means” with the word “ordinances” on occasion<sup>7</sup> as an indicator that this participation was expected by God. The “means,” however, were not an end in themselves:

But we allow that the whole value of the means depends on their actual subservience to the end of religion; that, consequently, all these means, when separate from the end, are less than nothing and vanity; that if they do not actually conduce to the knowledge and love of God, they are not acceptable in his sight.<sup>8</sup>

While the means themselves were understood to have no intrinsic worth, they were channels by which the Holy Spirit worked to communicate grace for the full work of salvation. Jesus Christ is the ground of this grace, particularly through the act of the atonement: “the merit is that of the Son.”<sup>9</sup> The means, like grace, are available to all, even to those who do not yet experience what Wesley would call “salvation” (or the witness of the Spirit). As grace is a dynamic, so are the means of grace. The result is that there are many different forms which Wesley categorized as either “Instituted” or “Prudential” means of grace.

### **The Instituted Means of Grace**

Wesley believed that there were five means of grace that had been evident in the life of Jesus.<sup>10</sup> They are the Lord’s Supper, Prayer, Fasting, Scripture, and Christian Conference or Conversation.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1832, 1986), vol. 5, 187.

<sup>7</sup>Wesley, 185.

<sup>8</sup>Wesley, 188.

<sup>9</sup>Henry Hawthorn Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: A Contemporary Understanding of John Wesley’s Means of Grace* (Ph.D. diss. Emory University, 1987, Ann Arbor:UMI, 1987), 59.

<sup>10</sup>Steve Harper, *The Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1983), 19.

<sup>11</sup>Wesley, vol. 8, 323-324.

**1. The Lord's Supper.** In coming to understand Wesley's explanation of how grace might be channeled, the sacrament of Eucharist or the Lord's Supper is particularly enlightening. The Eucharist, primarily a communal act, connects individuals to each other and to the grace available through the work of the Holy Spirit in our taking the bread and cup. What makes the Lord's Supper such a powerful introduction to the means of grace is its ability to operate at different levels of meaning: as a memorial; as an immediate divine presence; and as an eschatological promise.

The memorial aspect of the Supper for Wesley is not just a solemn recalling to mind of the events of Christ's death. Rather, it communicates a deeper sense of reliving the event. "Not only our mind or memory is involved, but all our senses as well."<sup>12</sup> In this dynamic drama of worship, the Eucharist is re-presented.<sup>13</sup> The events are recreated, connecting the worshiper not only with the initial Supper but also with each subsequent re-enactment.

The second aspect of the Lord's Supper is the immediate availability of grace. In an earlier dispute, certain Moravian quietists, who were part of the Fetter Lane society, were stressing that, since salvation came by faith alone, they were not "bound or obliged" to practice the ordinances of grace, including the Eucharist. Wesley, as noted in his journal from June 22 to July 20, 1740, opposed this viewpoint and ultimately he, along with eighteen or nineteen others, left the society.<sup>14</sup> The heart of Wesley's argument was that the power of the Lord's Supper includes its actively and immediately conveying grace. For instance:

Sat. 28 (1740). I showed at large (1) that the Lord's Supper was ordained by God to be a means of conveying to men either preventing or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities; (2) that the persons for whom it was ordained are all those who know and feel that they want the grace of God, either to "restrain" them from sin, or to show their sins forgiven, or to renew their souls in the image

<sup>12</sup>Ole E. Borgen, "John Wesley: Sacramental Theology, No Ends Without the Means," in *John Wesley: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. John Stacey (London: Epworth Press, 1988), 70.

<sup>13</sup>Ole E. Borgen, *John Wesley on the Sacraments*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 70.

<sup>14</sup>Wesley, vol. 1, 282.

of God; (3) that inasmuch as we come to his table, not to give him anything but to receive whatsoever he sees best for us, there is previous preparation indispensably necessary but desire to receive whatsoever he pleases to give; and (4) that fitness is not required at the time of communicating but sense of our "state", of our utter sinfulness and helplessness; every one who knows he is fit for hell be just fit to come to Christ, in this as well as all other ways of his appointment.<sup>15</sup>

The question remains if it is the actual elements, the bread and cup, which convey divine grace. Wesley would say no. He draws from a variation of the Reformed doctrine of virtualism: "that the elements remained unchanged but Christ is nonetheless present through the Holy Spirit."<sup>16</sup>

A third aspect of the gracious efficacy of the Lord's Supper's is its eschatological nature. Beyond Wesley, theologians such as Geoffrey Wainwright have understood that participation in the Eucharist is participation in the "sign of the future banquet of the heavenly kingdom."<sup>17</sup> Since this heavenly banquet is open to all, the Eucharist carries not only an eschatological message, but also an eschatological mission to announce its availability.

It should not be surprising that Wesley believed "it is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord's Supper as often as he can."<sup>18</sup> Wesley admonished his ministers and laity that communion be served "every Sunday and holiday of the year."<sup>19</sup> Wesley himself participated on the average of once every four or five days.<sup>20</sup> He did this not only because it was "a plain command of Christ,"<sup>21</sup> but also because of the Supper's ability to empower the spiritual life. "This is food for our souls: This gives strength to perform our duty and leads us on to perfection."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Wesley, 280.

<sup>16</sup>Knight, "John Wesley: Sacramental Theology, No Ends Without the Means," 191.

<sup>17</sup>Geoffrey Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 56.

<sup>18</sup>Wesley, vol. 7, 147.

<sup>19</sup>Wesley, 156.

<sup>20</sup>Harper, 36.

<sup>21</sup>Wesley, vol 7, 145.

<sup>22</sup>Wesley, 148.

**2. Prayer.** The central theme of Wesley was always heartfelt prayer. He said that prayer is the lifting up of the heart to God.

All words of prayer, without this, are mere hypocrisy. When-ever therefore thou attemptest to pray, see that it be thy one design to commune with God, to lift up thy heart to him, to pour out thy soul before him.<sup>23</sup>

What is significant is that Wesley advocated that this heartfelt prayer could be found in many forms of either extemporaneous or written prayer. In advocating extemporaneous prayer in the morning, Wesley said: “Consider both your outward and inward state and vary your prayer accordingly.”<sup>24</sup> He believed that this form was “a more excellent way” of prayer than dull repetition of a standard form.<sup>25</sup> Wesley identified four basic elements of prayer: petition, confession, intercession and thanksgiving.<sup>26</sup>

He also cherished written prayers and kept a personal diary of other people’s prayers.<sup>27</sup> The major source for Wesley’s written prayers was his Anglican heritage. For John Wesley *The Book of Common Prayer* was “only just less inspired than the Bible.”<sup>28</sup> This book, however, was not above revision, which Wesley did for American Methodists out of ecclesiastical and liturgical necessity.<sup>29</sup>

In 1733 Wesley published a series of written prayers for the morning and evening of each day of the week, with questions for meditation and themes for each day. He also wrote morning and evening prayers for families to use each week and also prayers for children.<sup>30</sup> The power behind these written prayers was that Wesley expected them not only to be read but to be prayed as well. Each prayer would be read until their meaning was a part of the person who read them. The prayers then became a daily extension of each individual and each community.

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<sup>23</sup>Wesley, vol. 5, 330.

<sup>24</sup>Wesley, vol. 7, 30.

<sup>25</sup>Wesley, 30.

<sup>26</sup>Knight, 171.

<sup>27</sup>Harper, 75, note 11.

<sup>28</sup>Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 234.

<sup>29</sup>Baker, 242-249.

<sup>30</sup>Wesley, vol. 11, 201-259.

**3. Fasting.** Fasting for Wesley was closely connected with the continuing practice of prayer: “It is a help to prayer; particularly when we set apart larger portions of time for private prayer.”<sup>31</sup> Wesley observed that fasting could occur in multiple forms and for varying lengths of time. He also noted that “of all the means of grace there is scarce any concerning which men have run into greater extremes.”<sup>32</sup>

Wesley connected fasting with levels of abstinence, the restriction of certain foods, particularly pleasant foods. He advocated limited forms of fasting particularly for those who might have health problems. Even in his later years, Wesley resorted to abstinence more than to his traditional one-day fast. Food was always the object of the fast, so some liquids might be taken.<sup>33</sup> He was constantly alert that fasting might be done for the wrong reasons.<sup>34</sup>

Wesley also associated fasting with “almsgiving”—“works of mercy, after our power, both to the bodies and souls of men.”<sup>35</sup> Citing Isaiah 58, he noted that fasting had a very social consequence as well.

**4. Scripture.** Wesley has long been described as the “man of one book,” while it is well-known that he read extensively in other fields and published approximately six hundred works of various themes.<sup>36</sup>

I want to know one thing—the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way: this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me that book of God! I have it: Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be “*homo unius libri*” [a man of one book]. I sit down alone: Only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book; for this end, to find the way to heaven.<sup>37</sup>

For him, scripture spoke to life, in its reading and proclamation, at deeply human levels.

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<sup>31</sup>Wesley, vol. 5, 351.

<sup>32</sup>Wesley, 345.

<sup>33</sup>Harper, 49-50.

<sup>34</sup>Wesley, vol. 5, 358-359.

<sup>35</sup>Wesley, 360.

<sup>36</sup>Harper, 28.

<sup>37</sup>Wesley, vol. 5, 3.

Wesley's hermeneutical process was not as sophisticated as many methodologies today, but it was not a static process. When confronted with difficult passages, Wesley would first turn to divine guidance, then he would compare the text with similar parallel passages, meditate upon the text and even consult other commentaries by "those who are experienced in the things of God."<sup>38</sup> He was deeply concerned that the meaning of each text be accessible, so much so that he wrote explanatory notes on the Bible. His concern for his translation and accompanying notes (many of which he acknowledged that he borrowed from other commentators) was not only for an academically precise text, but also for an understandable one.<sup>39</sup>

**5. Christian Conference.** The religious life and community were also inseparable for Wesley. The literal meaning of "conference" is an intensive meaning of the word "together."<sup>40</sup> Conference was not merely a loose association of individuals, but an intensive, accountable, organic community. Specifically, Wesley would use the word to describe groups of people, particularly lay preachers from different Methodist circuits, who met with John and Charles.

This I did for many years, and all that time the term "Conference" meant not so much the conversation we had together, as the persons that conferred; namely those whom I invited to confer with me from time to time.<sup>41</sup>

Generally the term might be used to include all of Methodism in its various social groups. The emphases of Wesley's groups were spiritual renewal, mutual accountability, mutual responsibility, and Christian practice in the world.<sup>42</sup>

The heart of Christian Conference was to provide different levels of fellowship and accountability based on the different needs of the individual. An overview of the different forms of the Methodist groups indicates

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<sup>38</sup>Wesley, vol. 5, 3-4.

<sup>39</sup>Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, preface, n.p.

<sup>40</sup>James D. Nelson, "Christian Conference" in *Wesleyan Spirituality in Contemporary Theological Education*, ed. Hal Knight (Nashville: Division of Ordained Ministry of the United Methodist Church, 1987), 48.

<sup>41</sup>Wesley, vol. 13, 248.

<sup>42</sup>Knight, 139-143.

that all groups were voluntary and were designed to impact people at different levels of the Christian life. John Drakeford describes five levels:

- 1) **Associational** (the Society): primarily for fellowship and encouragement, including non-believers;
- 2) **Behavioral** (the Class): primarily for examining the behavior of Christians and providing encouragement and correction;
- 3) **Motivational** (the Band): extended examination beyond behavior to the very intent of the Christian;
- 4) **Aspirational** (the Select Society): for the most enthusiastic member, seeking as full a Christian life as possible;
- 5) **Reclamation** (the Penitent Band): for those who had failed in other groups but were willing to attempt to return.<sup>43</sup>

Tickets were issued quarterly for admission to closed groups in order to insure that members would take attendance seriously and to prevent hostile members from continuing. Affiliation was determined by the Society members. Those rejected had opportunity to answer questions or to face their accusers in order to determine true intent. If repentant, they were allowed a provisional membership for two months.<sup>44</sup> Band members were carefully screened and divided into separate peer groups according to sex.<sup>45</sup>

Wesley understood that spiritual life and communal life are connected. He also understood that his groups provided a means of grace by allowing people to embrace the communal life without having to fully withdraw from their everyday world. At issue was the necessity of living a practical Christian life (engaging daily with the world), and yet having a community available that was designed specifically for renewal and growth. Methodist groups gave people a sense of identity while incorporating them into Christian life. They were offered neutral ground to experiment with this life on cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels.<sup>46</sup> Wesley trusted the Holy Spirit to communicate grace to the individual at his or her level.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>John W. Drakeford, *People to People Therapy* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 11-20.

<sup>44</sup>Henderson, 98.

<sup>45</sup>Drakeford, 17.

<sup>46</sup>Henderson, 161.

<sup>47</sup>David Lowes Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1987), 87.



## The Prudential Means of Grace

The “Prudential” means of grace were designed to meet the person at the point of need. Such means could vary “according to the person’s needs and the circumstances, thus showing Wesley’s simple concern for man’s particular historical situation.”<sup>48</sup>

The prudential means of grace spanned those activities found in the instituted and the general means of grace. They also included Christian social praxis.<sup>49</sup> They were contextual. While the instituted means belong to the universal church in all eras of history and in all cultures, by contrast the prudential means of grace vary from age to age, culture to culture, and person to person. They reflect God’s ability to use any means, in addition to those instituted, in accordance with different times and circumstances.<sup>50</sup> Henry Knight lists several prudential means:

1. Particular rules or acts of Holy Living.
2. Class and Band Meetings.
3. Prayer meetings, covenant services, watch night services, love feasts.
4. Visiting the sick.
5. Doing all the good one can, doing no harm.
6. Reading devotional classics and all edifying literature.<sup>51</sup>

Wesley included several metaphors for living the Christian life which Knight places under the “General Means of Grace.”<sup>52</sup> These metaphors were “watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God.”<sup>53</sup>

Wesley also understood that it was prudential to utilize the instituted means of grace. The replication of Christian Conference in some instances as both instituted and prudential means of grace meant that all ordinances were to have a “contextual” meaning. In every use of the means, Wesley was concerned about spiritual pride. He would tolerate no sense of works righteousness. He endeavored to make sure that each individual first recognized God’s activity on their behalf.

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<sup>48</sup>Borgen, “John Wesley: Sacramental Theology, No Ends Without the Means,” 105.

<sup>49</sup>Harper, 64.

<sup>50</sup>Knight, 4.

<sup>51</sup>Knight, 7.

<sup>52</sup>Knight, 178-184.

<sup>53</sup>Wesley, vol. 8, 323.

Wesley wanted Christians to realize that there was to be an outcome to the holistic use of the means of grace within the life of each person and group. Grace resulted in a life of holiness and righteousness. The outcome of grace was not to be received through mere practicing of one of these ordinances in isolation. This grace, springing from the merits of Christ, became available as one participated in a myriad of practices, often used interdependently, just as the Instituted and Prudential means found a common point of reference through Christian Conference. Grace was available through the holistic practice of the dynamic family known as the means of grace.

### **Scripture And Prayer In Holistic Praxis**

Since, for Wesley, scripture was part of this larger ecology dedicated to communicating grace, we need a way to illuminate the interdependence of the means of grace by overcoming this problem of inattentiveness to scripture. A possible corrective is to be found in the Bible's relationship to prayer as viewed from the perspective of psychology and religion. According to Ann Ulanov, prayer often suffers from inattention because of our limited preconceptions of God.<sup>54</sup> Our picture of God becomes distorted by self or other images based on authority figures or poor religious pedagogy.<sup>55</sup> Ulanov suggests, however, that our attentiveness to God increases at a deeper psychic level as we confront our projections and continue in prayer.

We become disillusioned with our projected images. In religious language this usually is called a "stripping away," a "scouring," in the experience of the "dark night of the soul." In psychological language this is the experience of exhausting the power of our projected inner objects. We know now that we cannot impose them onto the reality of God. . . . In the venerable phrase of Christian spirituality, we die to the world, the outer world and the densely populated psychic world within.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Ann Belford Ulanov, "What do We Think People are Doing When They Pray?" in *Picturing God* (Boston: Cowley Press, 1986), 84-89.

<sup>55</sup>See James Hamilton, *The Faces of God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1984); and J. B. Phillips, *Your God is Too Small* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1961), 15-59.

<sup>56</sup>Ulanov, 89.

We begin not only to understand better the personage of God, but also recognize this personage through the limitations of the very preconceptions that we originally had. This is the movement from seeing our projections of God as imitative of God to a new perception which explores those same projections.

The common stuff of our human life—all the different kinds of psychic structures composed of introjected and projected materials—come eventually in prayer to achieve a transparency through which is glimpsed the unstructured, open, welcoming face of God found in Christ.<sup>57</sup>

Under Ulanov's model, the very constructions of our understanding of God in prayer become a gateway to actually attending to God at a deeper level: "Somewhere along the way an obstacle is turned into a vehicle"<sup>58</sup>

A person versed in this understanding of prayer (or even in the process of acquiring this understanding of prayer) might then approach scripture from the same perspective. This form of tacit knowing, often occurring at a level below our immediate cognition,<sup>59</sup> would then inform the scriptural reading process so that second-order formulations would also serve as gateways *into* scripture rather than summary statements *about* scripture. The person of prayer might then approach scripture with an attention level which subverts the informational-functional process. The invitation to "pray as we read and read as we pray"<sup>60</sup> would then convey new meaning.

The conclusion drawn for Christian education is that any serious consideration of the role of scripture in the Wesleyan tradition should always be done with attention to the full range of the means of grace. This attention is crucial if we are to be true not only to John Wesley in his day, but also true to the very sources Wesley used and the implications of those sources for our day.<sup>61</sup> Like Wesley, Wesleyan Christian educators

<sup>57</sup>Ulanov, 92.

<sup>58</sup>Ulanov, 94

<sup>59</sup>Michael Polanyi, "Tacit Knowing: Its Bearing on some Problems of Philosophy," in *Knowing and Being* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 164.

<sup>60</sup>Greathouse and Dunning, 14.

<sup>61</sup>Albert C. Outler, "A New Future for Wesley Studies: An Agenda for 'Phase III'" in *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 46-47.

should wish to insure that the primary outcome is that of holistic Christian praxis, which results in grace received and lived. This form of holistic praxis also might contain the very comprehensive resources necessary to overcome some of the practical problems we see in a lack of attention to scripture or in other areas of spiritual formation when they are isolated from the fullness of the means of grace.

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# PREMILLENNIALISM IN THE EARLY WRITINGS OF CHARLES WESLEY<sup>1</sup>

by

Kenneth G. C. Newport

Premillennialism, belief in the literal, visible and apocalyptic appearance of Jesus prior to the inauguration of the millennium described in Revelation 20, is not a belief which has generally been associated with the Wesleyan theological tradition. Indeed, premillennialism, with its concurrent theological pessimism, is sometimes said to be out of tune with bedrock Wesleyan theology.<sup>2</sup>

In premillennialism people are perceived to be fundamentally wicked and unable even to seek their own salvation, let alone work with

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<sup>1</sup>It is a pleasure to acknowledge my gratitude to the Board of the John Rylands Research Institute, University of Manchester, for the award of a generous research bursary without which this article would not have been written. I am grateful also to Gareth Lloyd, Methodist Archivist at the John Rylands University Library, for numerous helpful suggestions and comments.

<sup>2</sup>Harris Franklin Rall, "Methodism and Premillennialism," *Methodist Review*, fifth series, xxxvi(1920):209-219. (Rall was also the author of *Modern Premillennialism and the Christian Hope* [New York: Abingdon, 1920]). A similar position to that of Rall is taken by D. N. Hempton ("Evangelicalism and Eschatology," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31[1980]:179-194; *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* [London, Hutchinson, 1984], 77, 95). Like Rall, Hempton draws a distinction between those who hope for a basically apocalyptic answer to humankind's ills and those who look rather for a gradual improvement resulting from the spread and acceptance of the gospel message. Methodism, states Hempton, fits more into the latter category, though unlike Rall he does not claim that this has always been the case.

God (through the church) for the salvation of others. Humankind, the world, and the church are destined to slip further and further into a state of corruption and decay, and this situation will change only as a result of the direct and cataclysmic intervention of God. The present evil age, according to the premillennialist, will go out with an apocalyptic bang and not an evolutionary fizz.

Wesleyans, however, are said to be more positive regarding the transformable nature of people and the church, and it is through these that God's grace and power are prepared to transform the world. Consequently, it has been argued, John Wesley himself, in bringing the gospel to "the brutish and besotted peasantry of his England," bore witness to his faith that it was through "the power of the Spirit of God" that "God purposed to make a new world."<sup>3</sup> This, it is argued, is the historic Wesleyan faith which has been espoused "from the first."<sup>4</sup> Thus, according to this view, Wesleyans and premillennialists are (and always have been) in disagreement on the answer to the very practical question: How shall the kingdom of God be brought upon earth?<sup>5</sup>

This attempt to contrast premillennialism and Wesleyanism raises numerous issues. One might wish to question the validity of the direct equation made between premillennialism and theological, anthropological, or social pessimism, for it is clear that not all premillennialists are socially inactive or espouse a negative "Augustinian" view of man.<sup>6</sup> But

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<sup>3</sup>Rall, "Premillennialism," 211-212.

<sup>4</sup>Rall, "Premillennialism," 210.

<sup>5</sup>Rall, "Premillennialism," 209.

<sup>6</sup>We might note, for example, the activities of the Millerites, a group of mid nineteenth-century date-setting premillennialists who expected Christ to return on Oct. 22 1844. Some Millerites took a very firm stance on slavery and, notwithstanding the expected dawn of the perfect millennial kingdom, sought actively to rid the present society of this perceived ill (see Ronald D. Graybill, "The Abolitionist-Millerite Connection" in Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler, eds., *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* [Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987], 139-152). Similarly, one of the denominational successors of the Millerites, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, continues to maintain a rigid and uncompromising premillennialism and yet combines this with extensive missionary, educational, famine and disaster relief work. The Seventh-day Adventist Church also provides a counter example to the suggestion that premillennialists are invariably Augustinian in their understanding of human nature, for it is clear from Adventist literature that the theology of this particular group is more akin to the thinking of Pelagius than Augustine (see further *Seventh-day Adventists Believe. . . : A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* [Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988], 78-96).



the purpose of the present study is to make a case countering the view that Wesleyanism and premillennialism have always run along parallel or mutually exclusive lines. This will be done with particular reference to the early writings of Charles Wesley, though as I have argued elsewhere, there is evidence to suggest that Charles was not alone in this particular aspect of his theological vision.<sup>7</sup>

### Evidence in Charles Wesley's Early Writings

In a previous publication I drew attention to the existence of a letter written by Charles Wesley in 1754.<sup>8</sup> The letter is extraordinary in its presentation of a premillennial expectation characterized by chronological precision. Charles was, in 1754 at least, a premillennialist who thought that a date for the dawn of the millennial kingdom of Christ could be discerned from scripture. The end would come in 1794. Prior to this date the Jews would be converted (1761-1762) and the seven last plagues (Rev. 16) would fall upon the earth. Speaking of the eschatological events, Charles wrote:

As for the events themselves it is only proper at this time to mention in general, that they are the conversion of GOD's antient [sic] people the Jews, their restoration to their own land; the destruction of the Romish Antichrist and of all the other adversaries of Christ's kingdom; the inbringing of the fulness of the Gentiles, and the beginning of that long and blessed Period when peace, righteousness and felicity are to flourish over the whole earth. Then<sup>9</sup> Christ the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Sion, and in Jerusalem and before his Elders gloriously. . . . But O! dreadful days that are coming on the earth before the last of the above mentioned events, I mean before the long and blessed period takes place. There is a long

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<sup>7</sup>Kenneth G. C. Newport, "Methodists and the Millennium: Eschatological Beliefs and the Interpretation of Biblical Prophecy in Early British Methodism," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 78(1996):103-122.

<sup>8</sup>The contents of this letter are discussed in detail in Kenneth G. C. Newport, "Charles Wesley's Interpretation of Some Biblical Prophecies according to a Previously Unpublished Letter Dated April 25th, 1754," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 77(1995):31-52.

<sup>9</sup>The general sense of this letter strongly suggests that the "then" here is probably best taken as indicating consequential relationship (or as a conjunctive adverb) rather than chronological sequence.

train of dreadful judgments coming on the earth, more dreadful than ever it yet beheld.

And regarding the timescale:

The Scriptures point out the time when the judgments shall end and when the blessed days shall begin, but do not, so far as I have yet observed, point out the precise year when the judgments are to commence; only it is clear from scripture that they will begin before the end of SEVEN years hence. And tho' they should commence this very year, it would be no way inconsistent with the scripture-prophecies, but when once they are begun, they will go on in a continued train of one judgment on the back of another, till the end of the FORTY years, counting from this present year. Wars, famine and pestilence shall be but the beginning of sorrows; for besides and on the back of all these, shall follow all the woes contained under the Seven Trumpets and Seven Vials; only that the Vials (the last excepted which extends to the wicked in general over the whole earth) seem chiefly, if not only, for the beast and his followers.<sup>10</sup>

It would appear, then, that at the time of writing this letter Charles was clearly of a premillennial persuasion. What is not so clear, however, is the extent to which this particular letter is representative of Charles' thought in general. On two counts the letter itself suggests that Charles' interest in eschatological matters was more than surface deep.

First, the evident detail with which Charles has worked out his interpretation indicates more than a brief flirtation with such matters. Second, Charles himself says that the first time he became interested in prophetic interpretation was in the year 1746.<sup>11</sup> In the light of these indications, some further investigation of Charles' writings is clearly called for. The scope of the material presented here is limited and focused primarily on the period before and immediately after the writing of the letter noted above. Preliminary investigation suggests that Charles' interest in apoca-

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<sup>10</sup>The letter is held in the Methodist Archives and Research Centre at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester (hereinafter MARC), ref. DDCW 1/51. A full transcription appears in Newport, "Biblical Prophecies," 33-37.

<sup>11</sup>"The first time I began to attempt the scripture calculations relating to the conversion of the Jews, the fall of Antichrist and the introduction of the fulness of the Gentiles was in the year 1746," (Newport, "Biblical Prophecies," 36 § 12).

lypticism waned with the passing of time. However, as the present study seeks to make clear, in the period up to c.1760 at least his concern with such matters was very much alive and well.

## Journal Evidence

Charles' journal entries around the time of the writing of the 1754 letter quoted above seem significant. It is unfortunate that the journal was not kept (or has been lost) for the period 6th December 1753 to 8th July 1754, but Charles' entry for July 24, 1754, is illuminating. He wrote:

My congregation at night was considerably increased by marketfolk out of the country. I preached repentance from Rev. i. 7: "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him," &c.<sup>12</sup>

On July 23, 1754, Charles had preached on "the end of our Lord's coming, even that they might have life and have it more abundantly"<sup>13</sup> and these two references (July 23, 24) suggest that the kinds of issues addressed in detail in the letter of April 25 were still very much in Charles' mind three months later. In the same context, the journal entry for December 3, 1753, ought to be noted. On this date, Charles states that he was at a loss for a subject, but then opened the book of Revelation and began to expound it. Luther might well say in times of trouble,<sup>14</sup> "Come, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm," but Charles would rather say "Let us read the Revelation of Jesus Christ," for:

What is any private or public loss, or calamity; what are all the advantages Satan ever gained or shall gain, over particular men or churches; when all things, good and evil, Christ's power and Antichrist's, conspire to hasten the grand event, to fulfill the mystery of God, and make all the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdoms of Christ?<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>*Journal* 2:104.

<sup>13</sup>*Journal* 2:104. One might, of course, argue that this latter reference is to a sermon on the incarnation rather than on the eschatological coming of the Son of Man, but, given the broader context, this seems unlikely.

<sup>14</sup>The trouble in question, in Charles' case, was of course the severe sickness of his brother, who was "far gone in a galloping consumption" and whom Charles did not expect to recover (*Journal* 2:96).

<sup>15</sup>*Journal* 2:98.

It would seem reasonably clear, then, that around the time of the writing of the April 25 letter Charles expected the literal, visible appearance of Christ. Several later journal entries are also open to this interpretation. Unfortunately, Charles says little regarding the content of his “expositions”<sup>16</sup> during this period, but a number of his journal entries suggest that some of his preaching had a distinctly eschatological ring.

On August 2, 1754, for example, Charles preached on “blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” and proceeded to bring “all the threatenings of God’s word” to bear upon one particular gentleman. The threatenings mentioned here are presumably the threatenings of judgment which play such a central role in the eschatological scheme laid out by Charles in the letter of April 25. If so, then the kingdom which the poor in spirit, according to Charles’ exposition of Matt. 5:3, are destined to inherit is perhaps more likely to be a literal than a spiritual realm. The very first line of the April 25 letter is, “Dear Sir, the answer of many prayers is at hand; I mean the kingdom of our Lord in its fullness upon earth,” and throughout the letter it is apparent that Charles is thinking in literal and not spiritual terms. So too, then, perhaps here also the promised kingdom is understood as a literal kingdom on earth where “Christ the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Sion, and in Jerusalem and before his Elders gloriously.”<sup>17</sup>

On the same day (August 2, 1754) Charles also expounded the text “The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with songs unto Zion” (Isa. 35:10),<sup>18</sup> and four days later (August 6) Christ assured the congrega-

<sup>16</sup>It has been argued by John Tyson (*Charles Wesley: A Reader*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, 13-20) that Charles’ style of preaching underwent a distinct shift in October, 1738. Before this date Charles seems to have been dependent on written compositions which he “preached” or “read” to his audiences (as for example he did on August 31, 1738, when he “read” his sermon on Gal. 3:22 to the society at Stanton-Harcourt, *Journal* vol. 1, 129). After this date, argues Tyson, Charles turned more to *ex tempore* exposition of biblical passages. The argument seems to carry weight, but clearly the distinction is not hard and fast. In 1742 Charles published his sermon “Awake thou that Sleepest” and in 1750 he wrote and later published his sermon on Earthquakes. It would appear from the journal, however, that as he matured and gained mastery of the art of speaking *ex tempore*, Charles did indeed turn more and more to unprepared exposition on biblical texts (sometimes chosen at complete random by opening the Bible and beginning to expound the first words that came to his attention (see, e.g., *Journal* 2:96). Such a process might help to explain why it is that so few of Charles’ sermons have survived.

<sup>17</sup>MARC, ref. DDWC 1/51 (Newport, “Biblical Prophecies,” 34).

<sup>18</sup>*Journal* 2:108.

tion (through Charles' words), "Fear not, little flock: it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."<sup>19</sup> Again, these entries cannot be said unequivocally to indicate premillennial expectation, but the case is surely arguable when such material is seen within its broader context.

Even clearer is the entry for July 16, 1751. Again it seems that Charles' mind is on the book of Revelation and again the particular text is Rev. 1:7, "Behold, he cometh with the clouds and every eye shall see him." As noted above, Charles preached on this text on July 24, 1754, and it hardly needs to be noted that it is this very text that provided Charles with the opening line of what was to become a classic of advent expectation, "Lo he comes with clouds descending," a verse first penned in 1758.<sup>20</sup> It is probably significant that in Jackson's edition we read that these words from Rev. 1:7 contain "that *most* glorious promise," where the italics represent Charles' own underlining in the MS journal.<sup>21</sup> For Charles, the promise of Christ's coming was not peripheral, but rather central to the gospel message.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup>*Journal* 2:111.

<sup>20</sup>See below, n. 55.

<sup>21</sup>MARC, ref. DDCW 10/2 (a bound copy of Charles' journal in his own hand), 432.

<sup>22</sup>One further relevant journal entry is relatively well known and needs therefore to be repeated only in brief form. In any case, the reference is too early (and somewhat ambiguous) to be of central importance here. In May, 1738, Charles lay sick. On Sunday, May 21, 1738, reports Charles, "I waked in the hope and expectation of His coming" (*Journal* 1:90). Again, the reference might be to a spiritual advent (or indeed to the coming of the Holy Spirit since it was Pentecost), but such is perhaps not the only possible interpretation, especially so in the light of what comes immediately after Charles' expression of "hope and expectation." Mrs. Musgrave took it upon herself to come into Charles' room (while his eyes were closed) and say, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities" (*Journal* 1:90). Charles guessed it was Mrs. Musgrave by the voice, but on reflection thought that he ought at least to check and see if it were not Christ himself who had spoken the words. He, therefore, sent Mrs Turner to enquire into the matter and investigations eventually revealed that it had been Mrs. Musgrave and not Christ who had come into the room and spoken the words. This "coming" of Christ, which was expected and which, for a moment at least, Charles believed he may have experienced, was not a spiritual one. The events recorded in this part of the journal do not, it is true, bear witness to a belief in the apocalyptic coming of the Son of Man. However, at the very least the entry does indicate that, when Charles writes of the Christ's coming, he does not invariably mean a spiritual advent or harness it chronologically to the moment of his own death.

It would appear that Charles' journal is strongly suggestive of the fact that its author held a belief in the literal and visible descent of Christ to this earth, a descent which would take place prior to the onset of the anticipated millennial period. For example, as is noted briefly below,<sup>23</sup> Charles' journal entries for October and early November, 1756, strongly suggest that the content of his preaching during this period moved in the direction of an urgent warning of the expected and imminent eschaton.

## Letters

The letters of Charles Wesley have not to date received the kind of detailed attention they certainly deserve. No critical edition of this important and substantial collection of primary materials has as yet appeared, and references to them appear only infrequently in Wesleyan historical and theological research. Some indication of the wealth of these materials can perhaps be gained by noting the results of only a brief investigation into a relatively small selection of the corpus on the question of Charles' apparent interest in eschatological matters and premillennial beliefs. As with the journal entries noted above, the situation seems relatively clear.

We have noted already the very detailed letter which Charles wrote in 1754 regarding the fulfilment of prophecy, the coming of judgment and the visible, literal return of Christ. This evidence, however, does not stand alone. Some two years later Charles wrote to Vincent Perronet urging the latter to "watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape the judgments coming on the world, and to stand before the Son of Man,"<sup>24</sup> words which seem to voice clearly enough a premillennialist position. The words "watch and pray" are part of a biblical injunction which appears more than once in Charles' writings. The precise biblical reference is unclear and there are several possibilities (of which Luke 21:36 is perhaps the most likely). However, whichever text is in view, the point of the injunction is much the same: the believer must be always vigilant since the return of Christ will come when least expected (cf. Mark 13:35, 14:36; Matt. 24:42-43, 25:13; Luke 21:36 [cf. Luke 21:34]). We have noted above how Charles brought "all the threatenings of God's word" to bear on one of those listening to his sermon of August 2, 1754.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Below, n. 52.

<sup>24</sup>MARC, ref. DDCW 1/15a.

<sup>25</sup>See in pages above.

We have noted also that “judgements” play a key part in the April 25 letter (e. g. the “long train of dreadful judgments” which are to come upon the earth). Charles’ letter to Perronet probably refers to the same expected cataclysmic events.

To be noted also is a letter written from Dublin on Dec. 18 [1747] in which Charles assures “Sally” (Sarah Whitham) that “Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and take us all into everlasting habitations.”<sup>26</sup> This reference is short and to the point and its implication unmistakable. Similarly in c.1750 Charles wrote to Mrs. Jones at Fonmon castle at a time when she was evidently suffering some “fresh troubles” and afflictions. Charles’ advice, which he gives in the first line of the letter, is simple enough and linked to an expected chronological framework: “bear up under your burthen, till the everlasting comforter comes.”<sup>27</sup>

It might be argued that in this case Charles is thinking not of the literal premillennial return of Christ, but of the coming of the Spirit into the hearts of believers (the word “comforter” may be taken from John 14:16 [in the King James Version]), but within the broader context sketched above such an interpretation seems unlikely. Also, from 1750 (August 10) comes a letter Charles wrote to John Bennet where again the premillennial views of its author seem plain enough: “We see our calling,” writes Charles to Bennet, “which is to suffer all things; disrespect and ingratitude in particular from those we serve in the Gospel. But we expect no reward, ‘till the great shepherd comes’ ” Only the coming of Christ then, will bring the reward. Does Charles have in mind Matt. 16:27—“For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works”? On the same MS as this letter to Bennet, Charles added a note to Grace [Murray] which includes the words: “Fear not: in six troubles the Lord hath saved you. A little more suffering, and the end cometh, and the Lord and bridegroom of our souls.”<sup>28</sup>

The letters strongly suggest that in the 1740s and 1750s at least Charles’ eschatology was imminent and premillennial. This world would not get better. The end to troubles would not come in this present age and rewards could not presently be expected. Rather, when “the great shep-

<sup>26</sup>MARC, ref. DDCW 1/16.

<sup>27</sup>MARC, ref. DDCW 1/32.

<sup>28</sup>MARC, ref. DDCW 1/37.

herd comes," rewards will be given and at the coming of the Lord and bridegroom troubles will cease. Trouble, not joy, lies ahead and things will get worse, not better. Only the coming of Christ will bring sin and evil to an end. The following extract has been quoted already, but its developmental pessimism is worth noting again:

But O! dreadful days that are coming on the earth before the last of the above mentioned events, I mean before the long and blessed period take place. There is a long train of dreadful judgments coming on the earth, more dreadful than ever it yet beheld.<sup>29</sup>

To this passage might be added one further example of Charles' belief that things will get worse before getting better. Speaking of expected persecution at the hands of the Roman Church (which was generally identified as antichrist in this period),<sup>30</sup> Charles notes that this church had as yet "gained but a small increase in comparison of what it has yet to gain."<sup>31</sup> The final destruction of the Romish Antichrist is certain, but:

. . . before she shall be brought to her final Ruin, power shall be given her to distress the Protestant Churches by wars and persecutions, and many of Christ's faithful ones in those days shall be tried and purified and made white.<sup>32</sup>

The main beams of the premillennial theological structure seem to be in place in the Charles Wesley letters which have been quoted. Things will get worse rather than better and the end to trouble will come instantaneously with the literal advent of Christ, not gradually with the spread of Christian sociaethical standards. This letter evidence confirms and complements that gleaned from the contemporary journal entries referred to above.

## Sermons

Assessing the evidence of Charles' surviving sermon material is difficult indeed. This problematic situation is largely the result of the confu-

<sup>29</sup>Newport, "Biblical Prophecies," 34.

<sup>30</sup>See further Kenneth G. C. Newport, "Revelation 13 and the Roman Antichrist in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in New Testament Eisegesis," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* (forthcoming).

<sup>31</sup>Newport, "Biblical Prophecies," 34.

<sup>32</sup>Newport, "Biblical Prophecies," 34.



sion that surrounds Charles' sermon MSS. As is well known, a collection of twelve sermons attributed to Charles was edited and published in 1816,<sup>33</sup> but it is now clear that at least seven of these were not in fact written by him, but were copies made from his brother's MSS.<sup>34</sup> Conversely, two of the sermons included among early collections of the sermons of John Wesley ("Awake thou that Sleepest" and "On the Cause and Cure of Earthquakes") turn out to be by Charles. Nonetheless, the following material appears relevant to the present investigation.

**1. Sermon on Phil. 3:13, 14 (1735).**<sup>35</sup> On October 21, 1735, Charles either preached or wrote (or both)<sup>36</sup> a sermon on board the Simmonds, the ship on which he sailed to America. Charles' text was Phil. 3:13-14 and

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<sup>33</sup>*Sermons by the Late Rev. Charles Wesley. A.M., Student of Christ-Church. Oxford. With a Memoir of the Author by the Editor* (London: 1816). The editor is not named, but is often thought to have been Sarah Gwynne, Charles' wife.

<sup>34</sup>See Richard P. Heitzenrater, "John Wesley's Earliest Sermons," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 37(1969-1970), 112-113.

<sup>35</sup>The sermon is printed as number 11 in the 1816 edition (186-206). The MS of this sermon (which has been edited significantly in the 1816 edition) is now held in the MARC (ref. CW Box V). As noted briefly above, it is difficult to assess the probability that this sermon was composed by Charles himself. Thomas Albin, for example, thinks that the case is "exceedingly weak" (Thomas R. Albin, "Charles Wesley's Other Prose Writings" in S. T. Kimbrough, ed., *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian* [Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1992, 89]), stating that the only evidence is that the MS is in Charles' own hand. However, this evidence is surely not to be ignored. The fact that Charles took care to indicate (in Byrom's shorthand) that he had copied some of the sermons from his brother or some other unspecified source (as is the case with a sermon on Luke 16:8 [MARC ref. CW Box V, printed in Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984-1987), 4:361370]) suggests that (counter evidence being lacking) those that are not specifically said to be copies are original compositions.

<sup>36</sup>The MS does not indicate whether the sermon was preached on October 21, 1735, or merely written (or copied) on that day. Charles' journal does not begin until March, 1736, and so cannot be called upon to shed light. John's journal for October 21, 1736, indicates only that Charles "writ sermons" and does not say if Charles preached on that day (*The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. [London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872; repr. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, n.d., 1:18] hereinafter WJW). If Charles did preach the sermon on 21 October it may well have been the first sermon he had ever preached, since he had been ordained only three weeks before.

the central point of his sermon is the need for Christians to move constantly onward and grow in spiritual maturity and moral rectitude. The goal may never be reached, but the effort to reach it is nevertheless a solemn duty. In the course of this sermon Charles reminds his hearers of the words of Jesus reported in Mark 13:35, 14:36 and Matt 24:42-43, 25:13 and urges his hearers to “watch and pray.” Charles does not finish the quotation, though its context is significant (“ . . . for you know not the hour in which your Lord cometh.” cf. Mark 13:35; Matt 24:42-43; Luke 21:36, etc.). In one passage, Charles’ thinking emerges clearly . The relevant section reads:

Caution and watchfulness is a necessary characteristic of a true Xtian. It is enjoined by our blessed Lord himself frequently to his disciples, and by them the obligation to it extended to all mankind; “what I say unto you I say unto all, watch.” None you see excepted from the duty, no excuse can be urged for not performing it. Watch therefore for the coming of your Lord, for you know neither the day nor hour of his coming. “Let your loins be girded, your lamps burning and ye yourselves like unto men that watch for their Lord that they may be ready to enter in with him when he cometh. For blessed are those servants whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” Stand fast therefore in the faith, be strong and quit yourselves like men, that so in God’s good time ye may at length apprehend or attain the crown of glory, which is laid up for those that unfeignedly love God, that faithfully strive serve, honour, and humbly obey him.<sup>37</sup>

Such words seem fairly plain. Of course, one might argue that what Charles meant by the “coming” here was the coming of Christ to the individual at death and that “Watch therefore for the coming of your Lord, for you know neither the day nor the hour of his coming” means, to Charles, “you never know the hour of your death”; however this interpretation seems rather strained. Charles probably here is urging his hearers never to slacken from their task of reaching Christian perfection (even if it can never be attained), lest the Lord return unexpectedly and catch them idle in their duties.

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<sup>37</sup>I have used the original here (MARC, ref. CW Box V). The form in the 1816 edition is a little different (196-197).

**2. Sermon: Awake, Thou That Sleepest (1742).**<sup>38</sup> The tone of Charles' sermon "Awake, Thou That Sleepest" is well known. In this sermon Charles calls the slumbering sinner (the one who "sleeps in the arms of the Devil") to awake and return to God. The sermon is, as Outler notes, "a lively evangelical statement, a personal identification with the Revival and a valedictory to Oxford."<sup>39</sup>

The theme of judgement runs throughout the sermon. Charles does indeed call the sleeper to awaken, and part of the force of his sermon on the matter is his appeal to the threat of coming judgment. For example, at a fairly early stage of the sermon's development Charles refers to those who disregard "the warning voice of God 'to flee from the wrath to come.'"<sup>40</sup> Farther on we read:

Wherefore, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." God calleth thee now by my mouth; and bids thee know thyself, thou fallen spirit, the true state and only concern below: "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise! Call upon the God, if so be thy God will think upon thee, that thou perish not." A mighty tempest is stirred up round about thee, and thou art sinking into the depths of perdition, the gulf of God's judgments. If thou wouldst escape them, cast thyself into them. "Judge thyself," and thou shalt "not be judged of the Lord."<sup>41</sup>

This is an intense passage. It is a call to renewal, but the threat of judgment hangs heavy. Again, it might be argued that what Charles has in mind here is an individual judgment which each professed believer must face at death, or perhaps a collective future judgment to be faced in the celestial realms. However, such an interpretation is not the only one possible. In the April, 1754, letter Charles argues clearly that the "judgments" of God are the punishments meted out under the seven vials of Revelation 16, when few indeed shall escape the plagues that are poured out upon the earth. In 1756 Charles warned Perronet to "watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape the judgments coming on the world and to stand before the Son of Man."<sup>42</sup> In this present sermon, Charles,

<sup>38</sup>Outler, *Sermons* 1:142-158.

<sup>39</sup>Outler, *Sermons* 1:112

<sup>40</sup>Outler, *Sermons* 1:143.

<sup>41</sup>Outler, *Sermons* 1:147.

<sup>42</sup>MARC, ref. DDCW 1:15a.

echoing the words of John the Baptist, warns his hearers to “flee from the wrath to come” and, in the passage immediately following the one quoted above, to

Awake, awake! Stand up this moment, lest thou “drink at the Lord’s hand the cup of his fury.” . . . At least, let the earthquake of God’s threatenings shake thee.<sup>43</sup>

It would appear then that in this sermon Charles has in mind not simply the judgment of the individual at death, nor even a general celestial/spiritual event, but rather the grand visitation of God “on the day of the Lord” when he will call the inhabitants of the earth to account.

Two other passages from the sermon make this interpretation seem plausible. Both are from the concluding part which, we might reasonably expect, brings to a head the arguments that Charles has been developing to that point. Speaking of the deplorable condition into which mankind has slipped and the need for Christians to rise above it, he warns his hearers:

And “shall not I visit for these things?” saith the Lord. “Shall not my soul be avenged on a nation such as this?” Yea, we know not how soon he may say to the sword, “Sword? go though this land!” He hath given us long space to repent. He lets us alone this year also. But he warns and awakens us by thunder. His judgments are abroad in the earth. And we have all reason to expect that heaviest of all, even “that he should come unto us quickly, and remove our candlestick out of its place, except we repent and do the first works.”<sup>44</sup>

And the whole sermon rounds off with a passage which begins with the words:

My brethren, it is high time for us to awake out of sleep; before “the great trumpet of the Lord be blown,” and our land become a field of blood. O may we speedily see the things that make for our peace, before they are hid from our eyes! Turn thou us, O good Lord, and let thine anger cease from us. O Lord, look down from heaven, behold and visit this vine; and cause us to know the time of our visitation.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Outler, *Sermons* 1:147.

<sup>44</sup>Outler, *Sermons* 1:157-158.

<sup>45</sup>Outler, *Sermons* 1:158.

Taken together and given the more general context of the sermon, these passages provide an interesting insight into Charles' expectations. This world, for Charles, was not set to improve with a gradual spreading of the kingdom of God through the preaching and acceptance of the gospel. Rather, the future has a definite apocalyptic climax which will itself bring the age to a close. Things are bad and will get worse. Even professed Christians are slipping into perdition unawares. But, though the Lord has spared the earth "this year also," the space to repent is getting ever smaller. Indeed, the time will come when "the things that make for our peace" will be hidden and it will be too late. Then the Lord will say "Sword, go though this land." The wrath to come will have come and unpleasant indeed will it be for those who have not fled from it. While the whole eschatological scheme it is not laid out in detail in this sermon, the general picture is distinctly and unmistakeably premillennial and agrees with the thrust of the evidence detailed above.

**3. Sermon: On the Cause and Cure of Earthquakes (1750).** It would be rather unwise to take Charles' sermon "On the Cause and Cure of Earthquakes"<sup>46</sup> out of context. The earthquakes which hit London in 1750<sup>47</sup> gave rise to a general upsurge in warnings of impending apocalyptic doom, and Charles was not alone in seeing in them the hand of God.<sup>48</sup> This one sermon, then, may have been relatively uncharacteristic of Charles' general frame of mind (though he also wrote at least eighteen hymns on the same subject).<sup>49</sup> It has been argued here, however, that a

<sup>46</sup>This sermon was printed in WJW 7:386-399.

<sup>47</sup>An account of the earthquake is found in John Wesley's journal for March 8, 1750 (WJW 2:175) with a briefer note on the earlier shake on February 8 (WJW 2:172-173). Charles records on February 8 simply that "there was an earthquake in London" (*Journal* 2:67). Charles' journal has no entry for March 8, but the entry for March 10 records how Charles preached on Isa. 24, "a chapter I had not taken much notice of, till this awful providence explained it." See also Luke Tyerman's account of the events and its effect on the Wesleys (Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*, 3 vols. [1870-1871], 2:71-74) and that of Thomas Jackson (*The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.*, 2 vols. [1841], 1:549-556).

<sup>48</sup>Brief details of this eighteenth-century interest are found in Outler, *Sermons* 1:357 n. 6.

<sup>49</sup>Charles Wesley, *Hymns Occasioned by the Earthquake March 8, 1750*, Parts I and II (1750); reprinted in George Osborn, ed., *Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, 13 vols. (1868-1872, hereinafter PW), 6:17-52.

premillennial and pessimistic apocalypticism and expectations of the coming wrath of God are not uncharacteristic of Charles' work. This sermon on earthquakes is but further evidence in support of the general argument that has already been advanced on the basis of other materials from the Charles Wesley corpus.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Charles' sermon on the cause and cure of earthquakes is its theological pessimism. Rall correctly noted that in general (though not invariably) those who look for the sudden appearance of Jesus as Son of Man and judge are not at all optimistic regarding the possibility of human progress. Things are set to get worse, not better. Society will continue to slide downwards into a moral and spiritual abyss until the great eschaton, the coming of Christ, sets all things right. The wicked will finally be destroyed and the good rewarded.

In this sermon on earthquakes Charles seems to express just this kind of thinking. To be sure, it is his task to call those who will respond to escape the coming wrath, but this faithful remnant is not typical of the whole. People are not able on their own to come to repentance or even see the danger. Rather, thinks Charles, the gracious God has sent a sign of what is to come in an effort to awaken the sleeping sinner. Earthquakes are a "call to repentance." For instance:

In the name of the Lord Jesus, I warn thee once more, as a watchman over the house of Israel, to flee from the wrath to come! I put thee in remembrance (if thou hast so soon forgotten it) of the late awful judgment, whereby God shook thee over the mouth of hell!<sup>50</sup>

Such predictions of woe run throughout the course of the sermon. The present earthquakes were only one timely reminder of more awful things to come.

He hath spared thee for this very thing; that thine eyes might see his salvation. Whatever judgments come in these latter days, yet whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord Jesus shall be delivered.<sup>51</sup>

The sermon concentrates on the possibility of escape from these judgments and wrath. Charles is in the business of seeking to save those

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<sup>50</sup>WJW, 7:397-398.

<sup>51</sup>WJW, 7:399.

he can from falling headlong into the apocalyptic abyss. No details of the expected apocalyptic timetable are immediately obvious from the content of this sermon, but, as has been said, its vision of doom is more characteristic of premillennial pessimism than postmillennialist optimism. Some might be saved, but the outlook for many is grim indeed.<sup>52</sup>

One further scrap of information is worth noting. The full content of the sermon which Thomas Illingworth heard Charles preach in October, 1756, is unknown. However, Illingworth reported:

He [Charles] spoke much concerning the end of the World, telling us the Signs foretold were so fully accomplish'd as demonstratively shew'd its Dissolution near.<sup>53</sup>

The sermon evidence seems to point in the same direction as that in the journals and letters. Charles looked forward with hope. However, his hopes were pinned not on a gradual spread of Christian ethics and a consequent improvement in the lot of individuals and societies. Individual Christians may grow in spiritual awareness and moral rectitude, but the world at large was doomed. Only at the sudden appearance of Christ would evil be fully dealt with, and only then and in that way would humankind's pristine condition be restored.

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<sup>52</sup>Note further the hymn "Tremendous Lord of Earth, and Skies" (PW 6:21-23), the sixth verse of which begins:

If earth its mouth *must* open wide,  
To swallow up its prey,  
Jesus, Thy faithful people hide  
In that vindictive day.

<sup>53</sup>As quoted in Frank Baker, *William Grimshaw 1708-1763* (London: Epworth, 1963), 195; cf. Charles' journal entries for October 1756, many of which could be quoted here with profit. On October 7-9, for example, Charles appears to have spoken several times to different audiences on Luke 21 (the apocalyptic discourse) and concluded, "I have no doubt but they will be counted worthy to escape, and to stand before the Son of Man" (cf. Luke 21.36). Later on the 9th of October he warned his audience of the "impending storm." On the 10th of October, wrote Charles, "between four and five thousand were left to receive my warning from Luke xxi" and later he judged those to whom he spoke to be like men prepared to meet the Lord." The remainder of the journal continues in this vein right up to the last few entries. It would appear, then, that during October and the first few days of November, 1756, Charles was much concerned to warn of an impending crisis. The Lord was about to come. Indeed, the next to last entry in the journal (November 4, 1756) reads, "I described the last times to between forty and fifty at our sister Blackmore's; and it was a solemn time of refreshing."

## Hymns and Poems

The above material represents only a small portion of Charles' literary output, and far more extensive is the corpus of his poetical works, estimated to include some 9000 individual hymns and other poetical compositions.<sup>54</sup> Obviously no claim can here be made to comprehensiveness, but even a preliminary study of some of these materials provides further evidence supportive of the general argument advanced above. Perhaps the most obvious composition from which to quote is that classic of advent hope "Lo! he comes with clouds descending" (1758), the first verse of which is worth repeating here in full:

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,  
Once for favour'd sinners slain!  
Thousand, thousand saints attending,  
Swell the triumph of his train:  
Hallelujah!  
God appears on earth to reign!<sup>55</sup>

To this hymn could be added a multitude of others, all of which similarly witness to Charles' expectation of the literal, visible return of Christ in the not-too-distant future. Indeed, in the hymn "He comes! He comes! the Judge severe," a hymn published in the same collection as "Lo! He comes with clouds descending," Charles' belief in an imminent and visible return of Christ comes into relief.

He comes! He comes! the Judge severe!  
The seventh trumpet<sup>56</sup> speaks Him near!  
His lightnings flash, His thunders roll,  
How welcome to the faithful soul!<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>PW; Oliver A. Beckerlegge and S. T. Kimbrough, eds., *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, 3 vols. (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1988-1992).

<sup>55</sup>PW 6:143.

<sup>56</sup>The reference here to the seventh trumpet is of course a reference to the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15. During the course of the eighteenth century this biblical book was read as a chart of world and church history stretching from the time of the prophet John to the end of the world. The seventh trumpet, the last in its sequence, was naturally taken as heralding the close of the present age and the dawn of the age to come.

<sup>57</sup>PW 6:141.



This is an interesting verse. Christ is expected to come as “judge severe” and it is only to the “faithful soul” that the event is a welcome one. Such sentiments seem to fit into the more general picture sketched above: things are set to get worse, but some will awaken to the call of God and be prepared to meet the great Shepherd whenever he comes. Others, however, will not be so prepared and will as a consequence suffer the “wrath which is to come.”

Any one of Charles’ eighteen *Hymns Occasioned by the Earthquake* (1750)<sup>58</sup> might also be quoted here. Sample verses of one will suffice.

1. Vengeance on Thy foes to take,  
Hast thou in anger sworn?  
Sworn again our earth to shake,  
And from its base o’erturn?  
Surely then to Abraham’s seed  
Thou shalt reveal the wrath to come,  
Speak the punishment decreed  
And warn us of our doom.

4. Blessed are thy servants, Lord,  
Whom thou shalt watching find,  
Hanging on thy faithful word,  
And to thy will resign’d;  
Safe amidst the darts of death,  
Secure they rest in all alarms,  
Sure their God hath spread beneath  
His everlasting arms.<sup>59</sup>

A later hymn, written after the Lisbon earthquake and added to the edition of *Hymns Occasioned by the Earthquake* published in 1756, is even clearer. A few sample verses follow.

1:1 Woe! to the men on earth who dwell,  
Nor dread the’ Almighty’s frown;  
When God doth all His wrath reveal,  
And shower his judgments down!  
Sinners, expect those heaviest showers;  
To meet your God prepare!  
For, lo! the seventh angel pours  
His phial in the air.

<sup>58</sup>See in pages above.

<sup>59</sup>PW 6: 23-24.

1:4 Lo! from their roots the mountains leap;  
 The mountains are not found;  
 Transported far into the deep,  
 And in the ocean drown'd.  
 Jesus descends in dread array  
 To judge the scarlet whore:  
 And every isle is fled away,  
 And Britain is no more!

2:4 Yet still the Lord, the saviour reigns,  
 When nature is destroy'd,  
 And no created thing remains  
 Throughout the flaming void.  
 Sublime upon his azure throne,  
 He speaks the almighty word:  
 His fiat is obeyed! 'tis done;  
 And Paradise restored.

2:5 So be it! let this system end,  
 This ruinous earth and skies;  
 The New Jerusalem descend,  
 The new creation rise.  
 Thy power omnipotent assume;  
 Thy brightest majesty!  
 And when Thou dost in glory come,  
 My Lord, remember me!<sup>60</sup>

Sentiments such as these must, of course, be taken in the context in which they were penned. However, as we have seen, it was not only following disturbing natural disasters such as earthquakes that Charles could give vivid voice to what appears to be a basically premillennial faith.

## Conclusion

Evidence to support the view that Charles Wesley espoused a pre-millennial faith (at least during the period with which this study has been concerned) is not difficult to locate. Perhaps the clearest indication of this aspect of Charles' belief is the letter of April 25, 1754, a document which not only contains a detailed account of expected premillennial events, but also gives precise dates for their occurrence. It might be argued of course that this letter is not representative of Charles' general thinking on the

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<sup>60</sup>PW 6:25-28.

matter, but rather bears witness to a bout of severe pessimism, perhaps brought on by his brother's and wife's recent illnesses and the death of his son, John. However, such an understanding does not do justice to the surviving historical data, for the 1754 letter does not stand alone. Rather, it is but the best and most detailed example of the setting forth of this distinctive theological position. Similar expressions seem ubiquitous in the early Charles Wesley corpus. They are found in the journal, the letters, the sermons, and the hymns.

It is worth noting that, if Charles was of a basically premillennial persuasion, he stands out in relief against his general eighteenth-century background. Premillennialism has always had its exponents, but in general it was with the turn of the eighteenth-century that vivid belief in the literal return of Christ prior to the onset of a millennial period really began to be expounded with a clear voice. By contrast, the standard view in the eighteenth century was that, as the Christian gospel spread throughout the world and individuals and societies came under its sway, a perfect kingdom would gradually emerge and take the place of the corrupt kingdom presently in existence. This perfect kingdom, which would last either literally for 1000 years or at least for some lengthy period, would prepare the people of God to meet Lord when he returned at the millennium's close.<sup>61</sup> In this context John Wesley's sermon "The General Spread of the Gospel"<sup>62</sup> seems reasonably typical of his age. Charles, however, seems to have seen things differently.

That Charles was able to hold in tandem (1) a hope in the soon return of Christ and (2) a belief in the centrality of the individual and the church in the plans of God for the salvation of the world is not a point to be passed over quickly. For Charles, even though it is God who will ultimately set the world aright, this is no excuse for a lack of human endeavour. God, for Charles, is calling the world to repentance and has spared the world "this year also" so that the task may be carried out. However, individuals are free and not all will respond positively to the call. Those

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<sup>61</sup>The literature on this topic is significant. The classic study is Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949). A brief summary is to be found in Richard Bauckham's contribution to the entry "Chiliasmus" in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (1980) 7:737-745, while D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 60-63, 81-86, gives an overview of British schemes.

<sup>62</sup>Outler, 2:485-499.

who do respond must press forward and do the will of God and not be caught idle when the Master returns. God is a righteous God and the judgments which are coming on the world, while terrible, are an expression of that uncompromising righteousness. Human freedom, individual responsibility, moral progression, ecclesiological endeavour, divine omnipotence and righteousness, and an acute awareness of the reality and durability of sin are thus all held in balance with one another by Charles. No doubt the system would reveal cracks if placed under sufficient philosophical strain. However, Charles was not a philosopher, but an experiential theologian who sought to do justice both to his received traditions, his understanding of the Bible, and his experience of the world. While it might be easy enough to find weak points in the theological edifice he constructed, it would not perhaps be as easy to build a better one.

# ANTHONY BENEZET: TRUE CHAMPION OF THE SLAVE

by

Irv Brendlinger

Anthony Benezet was the greatest eighteenth-century influence toward the ending of British slavery and the slave trade. While names such as Wilberforce, Sharp and Clarkson ring with familiarity as champions of the slave, it is Benezet who occupies the position of foundational influence on these men and the entire cause. To substantiate this claim I shall introduce his life and then examine his anti-slavery activities and influences, including on John Wesley. It is most fitting to begin with his death and the public response to it. In the following scene we receive a clear vision of his life.

**Philadelphia. May 3, 1784.** Anthony Benezet was dead. The funeral would be on May 4. He would be mourned by hundreds of people, people of all social standings and educational levels, of diverse religious persuasions, of a broad range of vocations, and most indicative of his life's accomplishments, by people of different races. For an eighteenth-century Philadelphia funeral to be so attended is a clear statement of the unique character and accomplishments of the man being honored. A contemporary observed:

The greatest concourse of people that had ever been witnessed on such an occasion in Philadelphia was present, being a collection of all ranks and professions among the inhabitants, thus manifesting the universal esteem in which he was held. Among others who paid that last tribute, of respect were many

hundreds of black people, testifying by their attendance, and by their tears, the grateful sense they entertained of his pious efforts in their behalf.<sup>1</sup>

Even more revealing of Benezet's core values is his will, reviewed five days before and completed on the very day of his death. After providing for the ongoing support of his wife through trust of his possessions or sale of his property, if the interest from the trust were not sufficient, he instructed that a permanent trust be established to

. . . employ a religious minded person or persons to teach a number of Negroe, Mulatto, or Indian Children to read and write, Arithmetic, plain Accounts, Needlework &c. And it is my particular desire founded on the experience I have had in that service that in the choice of such a tutor special care may be had to prefer an industrious careful person of true piety, who may be or become suitably qualified, who would undertake the service from a principal [sic] of Charity to one more highly learned not equally so disposed.<sup>2</sup>

With an eye to the individual as well as the group and the institution, the last sentence of the will reads: "And I leave unto Margaret Till an appresst & much afflicted black woman [ . . . ] the sum of five pounds."<sup>3</sup>

Not only was Benezet concerned for the individual and a system of education, but he provided also for legal assistance for those trying to break the bonds of the institution that produced and perpetuated the causes of degradation, the institution of slavery:

I also give unto James Star & Thomas Harrison the sum of fifty pounds in trust for the use of a certain Society who are forming themselves for the relief of such Black People & other who apprehend themselves illegally detained in Slavery to enable them to employ lawyers &c. to appear on their behalf in law & in all other cases afford just relief to these oppressed people.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Roberts Vaux, *Memoirs of the Life of Anthony Benezet* (Philadelphia: James P. Parke, 1817), 134.

<sup>2</sup>"The Will of Anthony Benezet," Pemberton Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, cited in Brookes, 166.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., cited in Brookes, 167.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

We will now take a closer look at the individual so honored by both blacks and whites at his funeral, the one who focused purposefully and almost exclusively in his will on the special needs of black people.

### **Benezet's Life<sup>5</sup>**

Anthony Benezet was born in St. Quentin, France, 31 January, 1713. He was a descendant of the legendary Benezet reputed to have received God's instructive vision of building the bridge across the Rhone at Avignon in the 12th century. This earlier Benezet was canonized and the bridge was named "St. Benezet's Bridge."<sup>6</sup> Later generations of Benezets became Protestants, some of whom were persecuted and even martyred for their faith. When Anthony was only two years old, his Huguenot father's property was confiscated in Catholic France. His parents, Stephen and Judith, fled to Rotterdam with their two-year-old son, Anthony and their four-year-old daughter, Marie Madelaine Judith. Brookes records an interesting event in the escape:

They secured as their guide in the hazardous enterprise a clever youth, who used coolheaded strategy at one of the military outposts which then skirted the frontier. The youthful companion, approaching the sentinel at the border, displayed a gun which he was holding in one hand and a bag full of gold in the other, and naively said: "Choose! either you will allow these good people, who are victims of persecution, to pass, and you will be rewarded—or resist, and you shall die!"<sup>7</sup>

Obviously, the ploy succeeded, although one wonders how Benezet would have considered it in his adult, Quaker life! The journey would have been not only dangerous but difficult, covering 170 miles in twelve days, with the young mother pregnant. She delivered three and a half weeks after their departure, but the child died within three months.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>This biographical section on Benezet is extracted largely from the thorough and excellent source, *Friend Anthony Benezet* by George S. Brookes, 1937.

<sup>6</sup>The story of this legend can be found in Brookes, 2-3.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 14 (citing Jacques Pannier, *Antoine Benezet, un Quaker en Amerique*, Toulouse, 1925).

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 14-15. The departure date from St. Quentin was 3 February, 1715. Years later Anthony would reflect on his Huguenot heritage: "It was by the intolerants that one of my uncles was hanged, that an aunt was sent to a convent, that two of my cousins died at the galleys and that my father, a fugitive, was ruined by the confiscation of his goods." This quotation is contained in a letter from Francois, Marquis de Barbe'-Marbois, quoted in full in Brookes, 451ff.

The following August, 1715, the family left Rotterdam for England, staying one month in Greenwich before finding more permanent lodging in London. They remained in London for sixteen years. Stephen was naturalized in England and prospered sufficiently so that upon emigrating to America he was able to purchase 1,000 acres and a brick home in Philadelphia. By now the family had increased to seven children, with an additional five having died in England.<sup>9</sup> Anthony was eighteen years old and had received some education in business (mercantile).

Anthony's father, Stephen, had both Quaker and Moravian acquaintances. In London he was familiar with the Quakers who supported the school that Anthony probably attended (in Wandsworth), and he actually joined the Quakers.<sup>10</sup> Stephen also knew Peter Böhler,<sup>11</sup> the Moravian so influential a few years later in John Wesley's life.<sup>12</sup> Once in America, Stephen joined the Quakers (Philadelphia Meeting). Eventually, however, his Moravian connections became stronger. Both Spangenberg and Zinzendorf stayed in the Benezet home, and in 1743 Stephen left the Quaker meeting and became a Moravian. When a Moravian congregation was formed in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, he became the first treasurer and covered the cost of the first catechism printing. In 1743 he moved from Philadelphia to Germantown (now in the NW section of Philadelphia). At this time he became a trustee of the Charity School, whose purpose it was to educate poor children without payment. The Charity School later became the College of Pennsylvania, and eventually the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>13</sup> In 1751

<sup>9</sup>Brookes, *passim*.

<sup>10</sup>Brookes, 17, 19.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>12</sup>Peter Böhler is the Moravian whom John Wesley asked in May of 1738, before his Aldersgate experience, if he should quit preaching because he was not fully assured of his own faith. Böhler responded with the encouraging words: "Preach faith 'till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith" (*The Works of John Wesley*, Jackson Edition, 1872, Vol. 1, 86).

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 21. Closer examination reveals that the Charity School was founded in 1740 but didn't function as a school, rather as a "house of Publick Worship." The building was called the "New Building," located on Fourth Street near Arch, and George Whitefield preached there in November, 1740. One of the original trustees, from 1740, was Benjamin Franklin. In 1751 a "Publick Academy," which had been envisioned by Franklin in 1749, opened in the "New Building." Franklin served as the president of the board until 1756. It was this institution which offered free education to the poor and later became the University of Pennsylvania. It is fascinating to trace the University of Pennsylvania to the building housing the Charity School of which Anthony Benezet was a Trustee (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, 1910-1911, Vol. 21, 115). It is also interesting to realize that Stephen Benezet had been a fellow trustee with Franklin in 1743.



Stephen Benezet died; his funeral was preached by the Presbyterian, Gilbert Tennent.<sup>14</sup>

Anthony soon joined the Quakers after arriving in America at age eighteen (1731).<sup>15</sup> Five years later, age 23 (1736), he married Joyce Marriott (also age 23) who had been recognized by the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting as a Quaker minister since she was eighteen years old.<sup>16</sup> Anthony and his new bride spent the next three years in the Philadelphia area, but he had no clear vocational direction. During this time a daughter was born to them, but she died within her first year. In 1739 the couple moved to Wilmington, Delaware, where Anthony pursued a manufacturing career. This enterprise was short lived; they returned to Philadelphia within six months.<sup>17</sup>

In 1739, the year after John Wesley's Aldersgate awakening in London, Benezet embarked on the career that he would follow for the rest of his life. He began teaching school at Germantown. During this time he also served as proofreader in a printing office that produced a German newspaper, tracts, books, almanacs, and a Bible. Thus, it appears that he was fluent in German, English, and French. He remained at the Germantown school for three years, until 1742, when he began teaching at the Friends' English School of Philadelphia (also known as the Philadelphia Public School, English, and later as the William Penn Charter School). His annual salary was fifty pounds.<sup>18</sup> He remained at this post for twelve years (until 1754), and during his fourth year was encouraged by the completion of a new school house located at the southeast corner of 4th and Chestnut.<sup>19</sup>

During his second year of teaching in Philadelphia, his son, Anthony, was born, but the infant tragically died after only six days.<sup>20</sup> For the first three years of teaching in Philadelphia, the Benezets lived in Ger-

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 21-2.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 16. Henry Van Etten, *George Fox and the Early Quakers*, p. 124, indicates that four years earlier in England he had joined the Quakers, but that is not verifiable. Brookes (16) mentions that Roberts Vaux (*Memoirs*) gives the same view.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 28-30

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 27.

mantown, probably about eight miles from the school on Chestnut. In 1745 they moved nearer the school and in 1753 they purchased a house on the north side of Chesnut, very near the school.<sup>21</sup> It was during this period that Benezet began a special and unusual teaching ministry that continued for twenty years. From 1750 to 1770 he used his evenings to teach black persons in his home. The curriculum included the basics of education as well as principles of the Christian faith.<sup>22</sup> In 1770 Benezet persuaded the Quakers of Philadelphia to construct a school building solely for the purpose of giving black children a free education. Funds were contributed by Benezet's personal friends, Philadelphia Quakers and London Quakers, and from his own private resources.<sup>23</sup>

In 1754 Benezet resigned his position at the Friends' School, apparently for reasons of needing a less strenuous schedule. Within one month, however, he was back teaching, but this time at a Quaker school for thirty girls who each paid tuition of forty shillings. Classes were mornings only and Benezet's salary was eighty pounds for the year. This position lasted only for a year and 1755 found Benezet serving as an Overseer of the Public Schools and taking the position of manager of the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia.<sup>24</sup> Two years later, when the teacher of the girls' school resigned, Benezet returned, under the arrangements of the newly resigned teacher: tuition of thirty shillings per girl and a salary of twenty pounds for the year.<sup>25</sup> After nine years, in 1766, he resigned for health reasons.<sup>26</sup> At that time he moved to Burlington, New Jersey, where he had built a home some two years earlier. Both he and Joyce were active in the Burlington Monthly Meeting, she as a minister and he as an elder.<sup>27</sup> Although he used the respite to write, it appears that he was not happy away from teaching. Nine months later he returned to Philadelphia to resume teaching, leaving Joyce in Burlington. He taught twelve poor girls for an annual salary of twenty pounds.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 47.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 38. He served as hospital manager for one year, elected in 1757 (Brookes, 39, f.n. 23).

<sup>25</sup>William Penn Charter School Records, cited in Brookes, 40.

<sup>26</sup>William Penn Charter School MS Records, cited in Brookes, 42-3.

<sup>27</sup>Brookes, 44.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

Benezet remained at this teaching post until 1782, when he was 69 years old. At this time the Negro school<sup>29</sup> which he had initiated in 1770 was without a teacher. Rather than allow it to stop functioning, Benezet resigned at the Girls' School in order to give his last two years to the Negro school. He would have made the change a year earlier had he not been dissuaded by friends who were concerned that the task would be too strenuous for him.<sup>30</sup> The curriculum included reading, writing, and arithmetic.<sup>31</sup> So it was that Benezet spent his last years teaching, and more particularly, teaching those he had worked so hard to liberate (see the next section). However, before leaving the biographical section which has focused on his teaching career, it would be well to look briefly at the spirit and wisdom of the man as reflected in some of his teaching experiences.

Anthony was clearly a man ahead of his time. In an age that saw corporal punishment as not only necessary for classroom order but also as beneficial to the student, Benezet had a different approach. He frequently used creativity to help his students progress past their inappropriate behavior rather than simply reacting with punishment.<sup>32</sup> He scheduled times of recreation and exercise to break up the study day.<sup>33</sup> In an age that saw speech and hearing deficiencies as problems to be punished, Benezet was moved with compassion. On one occasion a girl who was deaf and dumb was enrolled in his school. Brookes indicates that Benezet "devised plans whereby he could instruct her, and [ . . . ] after two years of tuition, accompanied by faith and patience and perseverance, she was enabled to

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<sup>29</sup>Although the term "Negro school" would not be appropriate in the late twentieth century, it is used here because it was the normal designation in the eighteenth century and also was the term Benezet used.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 47. The first teacher at the Negro school was Moses Patterson; John Houghton immediately preceded Benezet as master (47-48).

<sup>32</sup>Brookes gives a delightful example, 34. It seems that two boys constructed a miniature pillory (a sort of stocks) and placed a tortured mouse in the pillory, with all going on Benezet's desk. The following poem was attached: "I stand here, my honest friends, For stealing cheese and candle-ends." Of course, the test was to see how the teacher would respond. Rather than react in anger and punish the boys, once they were identified, Benezet pointed them out as examples of compassion, comparing them to most who would have killed the mouse for its theft. Rather than punishment, it was a lesson in compassion.

<sup>33</sup>Letter from Deborah Logan, former Benezet student, to Roberts Vaux, about 1825 (in Brookes appendix, pp. 466-470).

share in a degree the fellowship of society denied her by an age which despised such unfortunate children, and sometimes put them to death.”<sup>34</sup>

In an age that was only just beginning to see the value of high quality education for children, Benezet wrote a tract proposing numerous innovations which have since become normative: a fixed and livable income so a stable teacher, even one having a family, could establish a permanent career in contrast to the customary low wage that attracted only transient, single teachers; a home, garden, orchard and stable be erected on the school property for the teacher; the giving of money by the community so a fund could be established, rather like an endowment which would provide for a teacher’s salary and for educational expenses of the poor. For children who lived too great a distance from school to attend, he offered the plan of their boarding with the school master, thus giving him a financial increase from the board and giving them an otherwise impossible opportunity.<sup>35</sup> Finally, in an age that saw black people at worst as less than human, at best, inferior to the white race, Benezet transcended the 18th-century prejudices by open-mindedly observing reality. He spoke as follows on this topic:

I can with truth and sincerity declare, that I have found amongst the negroes as great a variety of talents as amongst a like number of whites; and I am bold to assert, that the notion entertained by some, that the blacks are inferior in their capacities, is a vulgar prejudice, founded on the pride of ignorance of their lordly masters, who have kept their slaves at such a distance, as to be unable to form a right judgment of them.<sup>36</sup>

Motivated by a genuine concern for fellow human beings, Benezet tuned his heart to their needs and became resourceful and innovative in trying to respond to those needs. As a result, his reputation as an effective and compassionate teacher extended far. And the same genuine concern for others caused Benezet’s influence to go beyond the structure and the discipline of the classroom. It caused his eyes to be open to the injustices that society caused, perpetuated, and rationalized.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>35</sup>*Some Observations Relating to the Establishment of Schools*, Submitted by the Committee, Anthony Benezet and Isaac Zane, to the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, 1778 (contained in Brookes, 492ff).

<sup>36</sup>Brookes, 46-47, citing Roberts Vaux, *Memoirs of Anthony Benezet*, 30.

## Benezet and Slavery

It is difficult for us of the twentieth century to imagine the injustices of the eighteenth century when the church as an institution and the overwhelming majority of Christians unequivocally supported the enslaving of one race by another. The atrocities are incomprehensible to us, with the number of black persons victimized being perhaps three times greater than the number of Jews later killed in the holocaust. There were, however, voices in the wilderness, those solitary persons of sensitive conscience who could see a greater truth beyond the social conventions and the biblical hermeneutic of their day.

There were even fewer who not only could see, but also were willing to act, taking whatever steps possible to change the situation of the oppressed. Such individuals are rightly termed “prophets,” those who speak forth the truth, who act upon that truth, and who inspire others also to see and act upon God’s truth. By this definition Anthony Benezet was a prophet.

Following is a brief introduction to Benezet’s antislavery writings, with an exploration of his influence on other antislavery activists and an assessment of his significance in the antislavery fight.

Before perusing the content of some of Benezet’s antislavery writings, it is helpful to list them in chronological order, setting them in the overall context of his life:

**1754.** *The Epistle of 1754, Presented to the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends*, written during his final (12th) year at the Friends’ English School of Philadelphia (William Penn Charter School) and a year after he had moved into his own home on Chestnut Street.

**1759.** *Observations on the Enslaving, Importing and Purchasing of Negroes with some Advice thereon extracted from the Yearly Meeting Epistle of London for the Present Year*, written while he was teaching at the Quaker Girls’ School in Philadelphia.

**1762.** *A Short Account of that Part of Africa Inhabited by Negroes*, written while still at the Girls’ School.

**1766.** *A Caution and Warning to Great-Britain, and Her Colonies, in A Short Representation of the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions*. 1766 was the year Benezet moved to Burlington, New Jersey, devoting him-

self to writing and not teaching for a brief tenure of only nine months. This forty-five page tract is almost exclusively extracted from *A Short Account*, but some of its content is also included in *Some Historical Account*.

**1771.** *Some Historical Account of Guinea, Its Situation, Produce and the General Disposition of its Inhabitants with an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave Trade.*

**1772.** *A Mite Cast into the Treasure: or, Observations on Slave-Keeping.*

**1778.** *Serious Reflections affectionately recommended to the well disposed of every religious Denomination, particularly those who mourn and lament on account of the Calamities which attend us.* Benezet wrote the three documents from 1771-1778 while teaching a small number of girls at the Girls' School in Philadelphia.

**1783.** Letter sent to Queen Charlotte of Great Britain.

**1784.** *The Case of our Fellow-Creatures, the Oppressed Africans, respectfully recommended to The Serious Consideration of the Legislature of Great-Britain, by the People called Quakers.* The final two pieces were written while Benezet was teaching at the Negro school he had initiated in Philadelphia, the last tract composed in the year of his death.

Benezet's first writing on slavery, *The Epistle of 1754*, is a brief (three page), but clear statement against slavery and the slave trade intended to motivate Quakers to take consistent action against slavery.<sup>37</sup> He begins by acknowledging the fact that the Yearly Meeting has opposed the importing and buying of slaves, but in spite of that the number of slaves among Quakers has increased. He then specifies the reasons slavery should not be allowed among Friends:

- To live in ease and plenty by the toil of those whom violence and cruelty have put in our power, is neither consistent with Christianity nor common justice;
- Where slave-keeping prevails, pure religion and sobriety declines;
- To enslave another clearly contradicts Christ's command that we "love one another as I have loved you";

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<sup>37</sup>*The Epistle of 1754 Presented to the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends*, reprinted completely in Brookes, 475-477.

- Separation of slave husbands from their wives promotes adultery;
- Slavery tends to “lessen our humanity.”

Finally, he implores fellow Quakers to examine their motives in keeping slaves. If their motives are anything other than for the slave’s own good, then the “love of God” and the “influence of the Holy Spirit” are clearly “not the prevailing principle in you. . . .”<sup>38</sup> It is obvious from the rest of the Epistle that the slave’s own good is never the primary motivation for slavery. Some of the themes he developed more fully in subsequent tracts are found in seminal form here.

While each of the tracts is valuable, the most significant are *A Short Account*, 1762, *Some Historical Account of Guinea*, 1771, and *A Mite Cast into the Treasure: or, Observations on Slave-Keeping*, 1772. In the eighty pages of *A Short Account*, Benezet states early his threefold purpose. He intends: (1) to show how evil slavery is—it subverts our relationship both to God and to our fellow human beings; (2) to discount arguments in support of slavery so as to prevent those considering involvement; and finally, (3) to demonstrate the danger to those already involved in the business.<sup>39</sup> To reinforce his arguments, Benezet quotes numerous persons who have traveled in Africa and witnessed African culture and the capturing of slaves. His arguments include the horrendous nature of both the processes which enslave Africans and the “seasoning” which makes them fit slaves. Little is left to the imagination.<sup>40</sup>

By contrast, Benezet points to the high level of culture, intelligence, and industry of the native Africans. Quoting philosophers such as George Wallace and Francis Hutcheson, he buttresses his argument with the principles of liberty and the foundation of human benevolence. Also using the Bible, Benezet recalls the New Testament story of the debtor who cast into prison a fellow who was indebted to him. Benezet challenges: “Think

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Benezet, *A Short Account*, 6.

<sup>40</sup>For example, Benezet cites a method utilized to persuade slaves to eat: they were forced to eat pieces of a fellow slave who had been chopped up, the fate they could all expect if they failed to eat. After an attempted slave revolt, slaves were forced to eat the hearts and livers of some of the rebels and then forced to watch the execution of a woman, hanged by her thumbs. This account is contained in *A Short Account*, p. 49, *Some Historical Account*, p. 124, and *A Caution and Warning*, 27.

then, and tremble to think, what will be your Fate, who take your fellowservants by the throat, that owe you not a penny, and make them prisoners for Life.”<sup>41</sup> Closing the tract on the topic of the problem of riches compared to the needs of the poor, Benezet calls to mind the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.<sup>42</sup>

*Some Historical Account of Guinea* (1771) is a lengthier treatment (some 143 pages) of the problem of slavery that again quotes African travelers, philosophers, and theological writers. Benezet introduces the work by stating his purpose to “republish most serious parts of said tracts” so those of influence may “put a stop to any further progress” of slavery and the slave trade.<sup>43</sup> He makes a very strong case for the natural state of Africans, noting their excellent qualities which are only ruined by contact with Europeans. He repeatedly appeals to the humanity and sympathy of the reader as he explicitly describes inhuman atrocities inherent in slavery. He adds the future judgment and retribution of God in case the appeal to humanity is not sufficient.

For practical consideration and to give evidence to the reality of the overwork and insufficient care of slaves, he gives the statistics of necessary slave replacements. Repeatedly he cites “gain” as the predominant motive for slavery and notes the ability of slaveholders to “justify” the practice by means of their hardened hearts. He quotes the French philosopher Montesquieu to show that slavery is harmful to both the slave and the master. Quaker John Woolman is cited giving five principles that oppose slavery (pp. 74-75) and Benezet takes an unequivocal position on negro equality. He then appeals to the British legal system to show that slavery is inconsistent with the foundational laws of the empire. Finally, he answers objections to negro equality and sets forth three proposals to deal constructively with the ending of slavery and the subsequent adjustment of the work force.

A short, but pithy tract published in 1772 addresses the major issues of slavery: the equality of negroes and whites; the problem of overcoming prejudice; how the slave trade fuels the institution of slavery; and how slavery and Christianity are completely incompatible. In *Observations on*

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 62-3.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 79-80.

<sup>43</sup>Benezet, *Some Historical Account of Guinea*, ii.



*Slave Keeping*, Benezet<sup>44</sup> marshals a number of forces to drive home his points, including biblical quotations, allusions to Biblical pericopes, threat of God's judgment, quotations of John Locke, and explanations of how difficult it is to overcome prejudice. He begins his argument by asserting the strength of prejudice when associated with a vested interest. This appears to be an attempt to disarm the reader by rocking the foundation of his or her position: "The power of prejudice over the minds of mankind is very extraordinary; hardly any extreams [sic] too distant, or absurdities too glaring for it to unite or reconcile, if it tends to promote or justify a favourite pursuit."<sup>45</sup> With time and reinforcement, he explains, such prejudice becomes "so rivited" that even religious people cannot "hear the voice of impartial justice."<sup>46</sup>

Benezet then quotes the Bible encouraging aid on behalf of the poor (Proverbs 31:8-9), adherence to the golden rule and recognition of the biblical prohibition against stealing a man, which was a capital offense (Exodus 21:16).<sup>47</sup> Five pages from the end he offers a threat based on a biblical story: " 'But if, with Dives, thou art preferring this world's treasure [a reference to slavery fueled by profit motive] to that which ought to be laid up in heaven,'—I fear thou will share his lot in the conclusion."<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the tract statements appear that assert human equality. One wonders if his experience of teaching black persons in Philadelphia enlightened his understanding. He reflected, "they are equally the work of an Almighty hand, with a soul to save or loose [sic]." The implication was obvious: "Every individual of the human species by the law of nature comes into the world equally intituled [sic] to freedom at a proper age."<sup>49</sup> To defend slavery for the sake of Christianity (to evangelize Africans) was to Benezet tantamount to describing the Spanish Inquisition as an expression of love.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>While the title page does not list an author, there is sufficient evidence for Benezet's authorship, including style, consistency of argument bases, and the fact that the tract is bound together with other Benezet writings. The full title of the tract is: *A Mite Cast into the Treasure: or, Observations on Slave-Keeping*.

<sup>45</sup>Benezet, *Observations on Slave Keeping*, 3.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 9, 19-20.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 20.

The tract concludes with quotations of John Locke that clearly promote personal liberty and responsibility: "Every man has a property in his own person, this nobody has a right to but himself, the labour of his body, and work of his hands are his own." "For one man to have an absolute arbitrary power over another, is a power which nature never gives"<sup>51</sup> Such perspectives clearly imply an understanding of human equality, liberty, and the responsibility to effect justice that are beyond the norm of the eighteenth century. The tract remains good reading and retains its relevance two and a quarter centuries later.

Much more could be said about Benezet's writings, but this brief survey reveals both the flavor and the thoroughness of his approach. While not normally prooftexting from the Bible, he reflected its principles and was particularly skillful in utilizing parables and other pericopes. He occasionally used scripture either to introduce or to tie together his argument. It seems as if the biblical ethic of love and mutuality were the underpinnings of his entire antislavery endeavor. However, he did not stop there. Benezet's wide reading is revealed by his frequent and relevant citing of such philosophers as Locke, Wallace, Hutcheson, and Montesquieu. In fact, one of his major contributions is that he took the philosophical arguments against slavery of such individuals and made them available to the populace, showing the relevance of academic thought to a practical problem.

Sound philosophical insight was no longer isolated in the cloister, but applied to life. Individuals not accustomed to reading philosophy could benefit by discovering it in Benezet's writings in a form that could be understood in the context of a societal dilemma. This blending of biblical and philosophical insight with a drive to effect change significantly influenced other antislavery activists. Benezet not only wrote for the general population, but was also eager to influence those with political power, as may be seen in his letter to Queen Charlotte of England in 1783. The letter introduces the accompanying antislavery tracts and encourages the queen to consider the plight of the slaves and the "divine displeasure" that may occur to the nation that promotes such injustice.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>52</sup>The letter is quoted in Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament*, Vol. 2, 172-175.

Anthony Benezet exerted an influence on individuals who became significant in the fight against slavery. This influence was far out of proportion to his learning, his office, or his location. As one examines key figures who brought about the end of British slavery and the slave trade, there is an unusual frequency of intersections involving themselves and Benezet through his writing. Not all influence can be traced, but there is evidence that Benezet was a key factor in the antislavery work of Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, and John Wesley on the English side, as well as a number of persons on the American side.

Granville Sharp was a dominant antislavery activist in England who represented slaves in lawcourts. His work resulted in triumphs which eventually led to the benchmark Somerset case in 1772 (Sharp represented James Somerset), after which slave owning in England proper was no longer legal. He entered the cause by advocating for Jonathan Strong, a runaway slave in 1767. At that time he became acquainted with the writing of Benezet. In Sharp's words: "When G. S. was involved in the first law-suit [ . . . ] in 1767, he accidentally met with a copy of this book [probably 1762, *A Short Account*] on a stall, and, without any knowledge whatever of the author, caused this edition to be printed and published."<sup>53</sup> From this point the two men corresponded regarding slavery and the slave trade, and it is probable that this correspondence was a major factor in Sharp's increasing successes in the abolition of slavery in England.<sup>54</sup>

Thomas Clarkson became the dominant researcher in the cause, supplying the abolitionists, especially William Wilberforce, with primary material for the extensive antislavery battle in Parliament. Clarkson entered the cause, however, as the result of the senior essay contest at Cambridge in 1785. The assigned topic was, "Is it right to enslave men against their will?", an issue about which Clarkson knew little and was not deeply concerned. Benezet's 1771 tract, *Some Historical Account*, had been circulated in England that very year, and Clarkson discovered it in researching for his essay. Clarkson not only won the contest, but he altered his vocational plans from ministry to give his life to antislavery

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<sup>53</sup>Prince Hoare, *Memoirs of Granville Sharp, Esq.* (London, Henry Colburn and Co., 1820), 97. Hoare notes that two years later, 1769, when Sharp published his first tract against slavery titled *The Injustice and dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery*, Benezet republished it in Philadelphia with no knowledge that Sharp had republished his own *Short Account*.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 115.

work. His own comment establishes the significance of Benezet in his initial research and in discovering his new life direction: "In this precious book I found almost all I wanted."<sup>55</sup>

John Wesley's entering the battle against slavery can be connected directly to Benezet's influence. Wesley's journal entry for 12 February, 1772, states:

I read a very different book, published by an honest Quaker, on that execrable sum of all villainies, commonly called the Slave Trade. I read of nothing like it in the heathen world, whether ancient or modern: And it infinitely exceeds, in every instance of barbarity, whatever Christian slaves suffer in Mahometan countries.<sup>56</sup>

Frank Baker indicates:

Immediately he became Benezet's ally in this great campaign, and a month or two later Benezet wrote to Granville Sharp: "My friend, John Wesley promises he will consult with thee about the expediency of some weekly publications in the newspaper, on the origin, nature, and dreadful effects of the slave trade."<sup>57</sup>

Two years later Wesley published his *Thoughts Upon Slavery*. In this work the influence of Benezet can be most clearly seen. More than half of the tract is so fully dependent on Benezet's *Some Historical Account* that Stanley Ayling accused Wesley of plagiarism.<sup>58</sup> The path of Benezet's influence followed these lines. It appears that Wesley wrote Sharp of his desire to publish against slavery and Sharp supplied Wesley with "a large bundle of Books and Papers on the subject," including Benezet's tract.<sup>59</sup> Sharp then responded to Wesley with an evaluation of Wesley's unpublished manuscript. The letter indicates "great satisfaction" and that no

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<sup>55</sup>Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the . . . Abolition of the African Slave Trade*, Vol. I, 207.

<sup>56</sup>John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, Jackson Edition, Vol. III, 453.

<sup>57</sup>Frank Baker, *The Relations Between the Society of Friends and Early Methodism*, London, 1949, 22.

<sup>58</sup>Stanley Ayling, *John Wesley*, London, 1979, 283.

<sup>59</sup>Letter from Sharp to Benezet, 7 January, 1774, quoted in Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760-1810*, London, Macmillan, 1975, 240.

“alteration is necessary.” It also acknowledges that “you have very judiciously brought together and digested . . . some of the principal Facts cited by my Friend Mr. Benezet and others.”<sup>60</sup> After Benezet saw Wesley’s published tract, he wrote Wesley a complimentary letter and had the tract republished in America.<sup>61</sup>

The reality, however, is that not only did Benezet influence Wesley, but also through Wesley his own influence continued to spread. Wesley’s tract reached three editions in 1774, a fourth in 1775, and a fifth in 1776. A copy was found among the 354 books of George Washington’s library.<sup>62</sup> Even beyond the tract, Benezet’s influence on Wesley and through Wesley continued. In a letter that Wesley wrote to the *Monthly Review*, November, 1774, he quoted American newspaper advertisements offering rewards for the severed heads of runaway slaves. Benezet had sent the ads to Wesley in a letter of May, 1774.<sup>63</sup> The expansive mix of influence can be seen in future interconnections as Wesley corresponded with Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp, and eventually William Wilberforce.

Through his writings Benezet was able to attract significant and influential people to the antislavery cause. Sharp, Clarkson, and Wesley are formidable examples. On the other side of the Atlantic, his influence can be seen in his relationship with Benjamin Rush and Benjamin Franklin, among others, whom he enlisted to the cause. Further, within his own denomination he was a key thinker in shaping Quaker policy on slavery and the slave trade. He helped translate the ideals and values of George Fox and John Woolman into specific practice for Yearly and Monthly Meetings. His ability to blend philosophical concepts with biblical principles and passages and apply them persuasively to elicit an empathic human response enabled him not only to effect change within the Society of Friends, but also to transcend denominational and geographical boundaries in his concern for human justice and dignity. Roger Anstey aptly states that Benezet brought “the moral philosophy of the

<sup>60</sup>Letter from Granville Sharp to John Wesley, undated, but datable to early 1774, in the private collection of Wesley College Library, fo. 314, used by permission of Dr. Dairmaid MacCulloch.

<sup>61</sup>Letter from Benezet to Wesley, 23 May, 1774, quoted in Brookes, 85.

<sup>62</sup>John S. Simon, “George Washington’s Library” *WHS Proceedings*, Vol. XIII, 1.

<sup>63</sup>Letter from Benezet to Wesley, 23 May, 1774, quoted in Brookes, 105.

age, with all its appealing emphasis on liberty, benevolence, happiness, justice, and so forth, to the support of a position reached on religious grounds, and so makes a more comprehensive case to the world at large.”<sup>64</sup> It is difficult to overstate the importance of Benezet.

### **Summation: The Contribution**

What gives one’s life such a clear sense of direction and such a persistent pursuit of that direction, especially when it stands in direct opposition to the cultural norms and the overwhelming Christian opinion of the day? In reading both the tracts and correspondence of Anthony Benezet, it becomes clear that his foundational and consistent motivation was his Christian faith. While it would be exciting to discover one theological distinctive or unique hermeneutic on which his entire system pivoted, such is not the case with Benezet. His response was simply one of common sense and the practical application of the overarching principles of Christianity, particularly the love of God and the love of neighbor. Granted, his Quaker pacifism stood in direct conflict with slavery because slaves were both taken and retained by an “act of war.” Yet even his pacifism was subsequent to the more central truth of love of neighbor. Genuine love *demands* practical expression.

Benezet himself recognized this Christian motivation and gave expression to it. The opening sentence in his letter to Queen Charlotte states that he was acting from “a sense of religious duty.”<sup>65</sup> In a letter to Granville Sharp he articulated both his core motivation and his understanding of black people, whom he described as “our neighbors, whom we are by the Gospel enjoined to love as ourselves.”<sup>66</sup> The common sense test of our love was simply the golden rule, which, when applied to slavery, could have no other outcome than the abolishing of such an unequal relationship. To Benezet, all arguments based on biblical prooftexts which seemed to support slavery (e. g., Paul’s encouraging slaves’ obedience in Eph. 6:5-8), or theological systems that appeared to work around the difficulties of slavery were demolished by the principle of love and the mutuality of the golden rule. Anything else was rationalization, justification of greed, or an example of the power of prejudice when it facilitated financial gain.

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<sup>64</sup>Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, 217.

<sup>65</sup>Letter from Benezet to Queen Charlotte, 1783, quoted in Clarkson, *History*, Vol. 1, 172.

<sup>66</sup>Benezet to Sharp, 14 May, 1772, quoted in Brookes, 292.

Because the gospel made this kind of love possible, Benezet opposed anything that deterred the spread of that gospel, and in his mind nothing deterred it as effectively as slavery. In 1767 he wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which supported slavery, stating that the slave trade and slavery were the “greatest impediment to the promulgation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>67</sup> Benezet’s motivation was

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<sup>67</sup>Benezet to the S.P.G., 26 April, 1767, quoted in Brookes, 272. While the above focus on the common sense principles of love and mutuality are true, this was discovered by the present writer only after suspecting that there *might* be a doctrinal distinctive that fueled Benezet’s singlemindedness. When it was discovered that Benezet had translated from the French and republished a tract entitled *The Plain Path to Christian Perfection*, the suspicion was fed. Perhaps Benezet had been influenced by Wesley’s concept of Christian Perfection. Perhaps his emphasis on love was similar to Wesley’s perspective that “Christian perfection, is neither more nor less than pure love” (John Wesley, *Letters*, Telford, Vol. VI, 223, To Walter Churchey, 21 Feb., 1771). The same theme is seen in another Wesley letter: “what is it [perfection] more or less than humble, gentle, patient love! (*Letters*, Vol. VII, 120, to Ann Loxdale, 12 April, 1782). In his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* Wesley affirmed that we should aspire to “nothing more but more of . . . love” (*Works*, Vol. XI, 430, Jackson ed., 1872). Would it not be exciting to learn that, while Benezet clearly influenced Wesley to work against slavery, Wesley was the theological influence that persuaded Benezet of the power of holiness and its social implications? After examining the book and reading Benezet’s preface, it became apparent that “Christian Perfection” of the title was not the equivalent of Wesley’s doctrine. In fact, the book that Benezet translated from the French, according to his 1780 preface, was originally written “in the German language about two hundred and fifty years ago” (*The Plain Path to Christian Perfection*, Philadelphia, 1831, preface by Benezet for an edition printed in 1780, iii). The thesis of the small book is that reconciliation with God is to be found “solely by renouncing ourselves, denying the world, and following our blessed Saviour in regeneration” (subtitle, preface, i). Benezet’s preface points out that early Christianity was characterized by humility, contrition towards God, and love towards others. This was the sacrifice acceptable to God, but it was lost after the early church, and replaced by “pomp and show, strange modes of worship and confused and dark opinions” with teachers and leaders who “assumed an authority and respect from their offices” (preface, 4). It is only by an inward work, a purifying fire, that the “corruption and hardness of their hearts” can be changed and the “root of sin” destroyed (preface, ix-x). Benezet’s preface concludes with the words: “The Christian religion, is indeed the simplest thing in the whole world, and the most easy to understood, if *self* is but truly renounced” (preface, xii). The book then lays out in ninety-nine pages (15 chapters) ways to die to sin and to renounce the will. The flavor of the book is more reflective of a medieval mystical approach than that of John Wesley. The point of this discussion is simply to confirm that Benezet’s motivation lay not in a particular doctrine, but the whole of the Christian message which he believed focused on love.

linked to the whole of Christianity, especially to the all-pervading central core of love for God and love for all humankind. Granted, Benezet's application of his faith was common sense and practical rather than theologically complex and sophisticated. But, above all, it was his faith that drove his tireless endeavors on behalf of the slave. It was the practicality and inclusiveness of his faith that enabled him to link arms and even celebrate friendship with people of such diverse religious persuasions and vocations as the deist Benjamin Franklin, the physician Benjamin Rush, the Calvinist George Whitefield, the Anglican Granville Sharp, and the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. It was his faith that fostered the persistence which contributed to his extensive influence.

Anthony Benezet is buried in an unmarked grave in the Friend's Burial Ground in Philadelphia, as was his desire. While we shall keep faith with his desire to avoid vanity and ostentation, it is genuinely in keeping with his spirit and purpose if we can learn from his life and example how we too may influence our age with the claims of the gospel of love, touching the deepest recesses of human need with the imperatives of the Kingdom of God. Anthony Benezet is dead, but his example continues exerting a powerful influence and motivation for those who see the injustices of society and are not willing to be cynical or passive about bringing change where human need cries for human care. In the truest spirit of Christian love and responsibility, Anthony Benezet is still alive.

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# PLACE AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE HOLINESS TRADITION<sup>1</sup>

by

Merle D. Strege

We have before us now a large and growing body of literature that examines the phenomenon of the church-related or Christian colleges. Recent works by leading Evangelical scholars Mark Noll and George Marsden have focused attention respectively on the life of the mind and the secularization of the American university.<sup>2</sup> These two volumes, especially Marsden, have helped us considerably to understand the forces at work on American colleges and universities, including church-related or Christian colleges. In a curious way, both Noll and Marsden themselves bear the marks of such influence. After all, one cannot expect to be taken seriously as an academic unless one's work follows academic conventions and standards.

I wish to pursue a line of thought here which considers an idea related to the following somewhat commonplace observation. Beginning with Stephen Toulmin's observations about the Enlightenment, I want to suggest the importance of "place" in the intellectual life of the colleges and universities sponsored by the Wesleyan-Holiness churches.

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<sup>1</sup>The bulk of this article was originally developed as a paper read to the Anderson University faculty in March, 1995. Elements of that paper were also developed for papers read to the faculty of Point Loma Nazarene College faculty in August, 1996. I wish to thank both faculties for the invitations to produce papers which required me to think about these matters.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994) and George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

In his stimulating and provocative analysis of modernity and its agenda, philosopher-physicist Toulmin fastens on the opening paragraph of the entry on philosopher René Descartes found in *La Grande Encyclopedie*. That entry opens:

For a biography of Descartes, almost all you need is two dates and two place names: his birth, on March 31, 1596 at La Haye, in Touraine, and his death at Stockholm, on February 11, 1650. His life is above all that of an intellect [*esprit*]; his true life story is the history of his thoughts; the outward events of his existence have interest only for the light they can throw on the inner events of his genius.<sup>3</sup>

Toulmin continues: “In thinking about Descartes, the authors tell us, we can abstract from their historical context not just the philosophical positions he discusses, and the different arguments he presents, but also his entire intellectual development.”<sup>4</sup> Toulmin thinks that the encyclopedia’s ahistorical description of Descartes is no accident. As he further explains, the Enlightenment’s commitments to universal, timeless, general, and written descriptions predisposed the *Encyclopedie*’s authors to describe Descartes’ work as the product of a disembodied mind. Toulmin challenges this predisposition with his own account of a Cartesian philosophical program profoundly shaped by the tumultuous events of early seventeenth-century France. In his view, one cannot conceive of Descartes’ revolutionary philosophy, or the work of any other person, apart from the socio-political location it inhabited.

Below is a tying of Stephen Toulmin’s observations on Descartes and the Enlightenment to the theme of place and the university in three ways. (1) I will apply Toulmin’s description of Descartes to my own institution, Anderson University, and comparable institutions to say, first, that descriptions of the university abstracted from its social and intellectual location make no more sense than the French encyclopedia’s article on Descartes. Colleges and/or universities are not all alike (at least, we should not think them so); they inhabit different cultural, religious, and socio-political locations. Those institutions which pretend to deny the existence and influence of such locations sever the connections which make them intelligible and

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 45.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

distinctive. (2) The second connection will be a prescriptive argument correlative to the first point: universities should practice a politics, a way of being together, that embodies the intellectual traditions of their constituent communities. (3) Thirdly, along the lines of the first two connections, I want to suggest a description of the possible politics of Anderson University, a university sponsored by the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana). It is the holiness movement institution with which I am most familiar. This description will entail the notion that at least some part of our intellectual life will draw upon salient theological notions of the Church of God, resulting in their contribution to the shape of the university's politics. As a part of that description I will offer some illustrations of what these important theological notions might be. Finally, I offer a brief exposition of the biblical story of Daniel and the bright young men of Israel to suggest why these topics merit further consideration.

### **On the Social and Political Locations of Colleges and Universities**

Perhaps it is only in the United States that the standardization of university education is believed to be desirable. Medieval universities differed markedly in subject matter and governance. Bologna, Paris, and Oxford resembled each other hardly at all, each of them giving institutional expression to quite different intellectual and political traditions. In a similar fashion intellectual and political commitments distinguished early twentieth-century European universities from one another. For example, in the 1920s the reigning theology in Göttingen was anathema at Berlin. In the United States, however, and especially among schools that are dominated by undergraduate studies, claims of institutional distinction are based not in intellectual differences, but in assertions of superiority. Does Harvard claim to be different than Yale or Stanford, or is the claim about superiority, one of emphasis on the level of attainment as opposed to difference in tradition or type? Or on another scale, Anderson University claims to be "better" than rather than different from Taylor or Indiana Wesleyan Universities. Unless we are content with this academic version of little boy's comparisons of paternal superiority, we might pause to ask why it is we tend to compare in terms of *degree* rather than *kind*.

I suspect that one answer to this question might be located in the dominance of the academic and professional guilds in American higher education. Accreditation, whether by regional or professional associations, tends to blur institutional distinctiveness as it standardizes the pro-

grams offered by its related institutions. To cite but one example, NCATE will have its way, whether at Anderson, Taylor, or Indiana University, which is but another way of saying that as NCATE dictates standards for departments of education, their curricula cannot help but closely resemble each other. The same point obtains concerning virtually all other professional societies and associations. If this is the case, we find ourselves in the rather odd position of saying that, as concerns curriculum—the heart of our universities, need we be reminded—an Anderson education will not differ substantially from what a student might get at Ball State University or Goshen College. Correlatively, the characteristics by which we distinguish ourselves from one another will be secondary matters; at least, they will not pertain to the curriculum. This unfortunate situation forces us to ask whether the primary allegiance is to academic guilds or to the institutions of which we are members.

The present situation of American higher, then, seems a denial of the historical, social, and political particularities of individual colleges and universities. Such a denial is as unfaithful to historical circumstance as it is undesirable. That an ahistorical approach dominates American higher education is, however, not surprising. American culture has deep roots in the Enlightenment, the premium it places on instrumental reason, and its denial of importance to that which “enlightened” thinkers judge to be local, timebound, particular, or oral. For such historical particularities we have substituted a discourse of procedures and means. Such a language may serve industry and business well, although there are growing reservations about its value even there. But thinkers such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Wendell Berry raise very troubling questions about the suitability or even the possibility of a procedural, means-oriented language as the dominant form of university discourse.

In his insightful essay, “The Loss of the University,” Berry argues that universities have lost sight of a common goal to which their specific departments might be oriented. Even worse, he contends, is that universities have lost the common language which enabled their members to converse about the ends for which their institutions exist.<sup>5</sup> In his Gifford Lectures of 1988 MacIntyre extends this point, arguing that we can no longer make the assumptions about the encyclopedic nature of knowledge which

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. Wendell Berry, “The Loss of the University” in *Home Economics* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), 77-97.

underwrote such projects as the Gifford Lectures, the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, or the Enlightenment version of the institution called a university.<sup>6</sup>

The accuracy of Berry's and MacIntyre's analyses is born out when we ask, What then holds universities together in the absence of a common language? The most common American answer to this question is "the university administration." The common language of the American university then becomes "administrationese": GPA, FTE, FAF, major, minor, GRE, outcomes assessment, and the like. Harold McManus, Roberts Professor of Church History at Mercer University, argues that administrations expand as the inverse function of the university's loss of coherence.<sup>7</sup> The only means of holding together universities which have lost their capacity for conversing about their ends is bureaucratic management. It scarcely need be noticed, however, that such a move gives up the language of ends for the language of instrumental reason.

I submit that it makes no historical sense to deny the very real differences that distinguish American colleges and universities from one another. These differences should be understood as extending beyond the quantifiable, unless we believe that the determinative difference between Anderson and Goshen, for example, is that the library at one of them has more holdings than the other. To deny or even ignore institutional particularities simultaneously denies that we have histories and forces us to the false claim that we are self-generating, all of which flies patently in the face of the facts. Furthermore, that powerful cultural forces such as instrumental reason, the industrial economy, and bureaucratic management combine to press American colleges and universities into bland and homogenized similarity is undesirable. Such homogenization devalues the specific historical and social locations of educational institutions which actually are quite diverse and deserve to be so recognized.

### Universities as Embodied Intellectual Traditions

Two years ago my colleague Nancy Fischer offered a lecture to the Anderson University community in which she asked each member of the

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<sup>6</sup>*Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990).

<sup>7</sup>"Community and Governance in the Christian University" (Nashville: The Committee of Southern Churchmen, 1983).

audience to draw a map of the city of Anderson. She employs this learning exercise in one of her courses, intending to heighten class members' perceptions of and sensitivities to their location. I infer from this exercise that she hopes that students come to a greater appreciation of the role of place in people's lives. If my inference is correct, she shares with Wendell Berry a sense of the importance of local culture.<sup>8</sup> Following Professor Fischer's lead, I have begun recommending to my freshmen students that they eschew the local franchises of MacDonald's and Pizza Hut in favor of such famous Anderson eateries as The Toast, The Lemon Drop, and Art's Pizza No. 1 (even though Art's does not have black olives available as a topping). In this way I want my students to become at least marginally aware of the place where they will live and study for the next several years. I want them to ask questions about the impact of geographic locale upon their education at AU. Even more desirable is that they learn to think about the way place shapes institutions through language and local culture.

Even if one did not know its name, Calvin College's Reformed theological ethos would soon become apparent even to the most insensitive and culturally unaware. Similarly, the Mennonite ethos unmistakably marks Goshen College, even as the intellectual commitments of the Society of Jesus shape Jesuit colleges and universities. It seems to me that such variety in American higher education is highly desirable. To recognize this variety is to acknowledge the historicity of these various institutions and begin to appreciate the real differences by which they are to be distinguished from one another and other institutions as well. If I might be permitted a rhetorical question, who wants to live in an educational culture where all cats are gray? I would like to believe that Calvin, Goshen, and Jesuit colleges and universities are the rule rather than the exception. Unfortunately, it would appear that they are not.

I am not suggesting that we flout the recommendations and standards imposed by our learned societies, professional and regional accrediting associations. But is it not reasonable to ask that the moral, religious, and intellectual traditions of any particular college or university modify or contextualize those external forces, thereby adapting them to particular institutional landscapes. In the case of church-related colleges and univer-

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. Wendell Berry, "The Work of Local Culture" in *What Are People For?* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), 153-169.



sities this means that their work will need to be informed in some way by the theological traditions of the sponsoring church groups. I am not issuing a call for each and every course to have a religious or a spiritual component. Neither is it desirable that religion be the only acceptable discourse on the campus. Mine is no appeal for "Christian Swimming" or "Biblical Business." I appeal, rather, for the necessity of theology and its critique of the intellectual commitments and presuppositions of the university curricula which have such traditions.

In his book *The Fragility of Knowledge*, Edward Farley argues that theological tradition, along with intuitive imagination and praxis, serve crucial roles as correctives in the modern university. Such universities conform to what Farley terms the "Enlightenment tradition" with its ideals of critically acquired knowledge and empirical demonstration. In the name of intuition, Romantics have criticized such universities' perpetuation of abstraction for the sake of rigor, evidence and precision. On the other hand, praxis critics challenge modern universities for forgetting that ". . . institutions of pure reason. . .hide from themselves their complicity in societal agendas of power."<sup>9</sup>

Theological criticisms of the Enlightenment university, Farley observes, have taken several lines of attack. The more superficial of these lines exposes and asserts the limited worldview of commitments to critical principles, empirical demonstration and instrumental reason. A more fundamental challenge rests in the theological tradition's argument that ". . . the corporate experience of past ages and peoples can produce a wisdom that is illuminating and pertinent beyond the past. If this is true, the task of knowledge is confronted not just by the facts about the present to be explained but by sediments of past culture to be interpreted."<sup>10</sup>

Farley's work underlines the importance of a theological critique of the university curriculum. Such traditions may also contribute to the institution's life in another way. Valparaiso University professor Mark Schwehn argues that certain religious virtues bear a marked similarity to certain academic virtues commonly hoped to be developed in our students.<sup>11</sup> One thinks, for example, of the virtue of humility. I work at help-

<sup>9</sup>Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 6-9, *passim*.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>*Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

ing my students to appreciate St. Augustine's intellectual achievement and his arguments so they will not prematurely dismiss his conclusions about free will and predestination with the sophomoric and arrogant prejudice that "Augustine was stupid." The awareness that we do not and cannot know everything strongly resembles the religious virtue of humility. Since that is so, we are warranted in thinking that the presence of theological traditions which prize the virtue of humility should also have positive intellectual application.

Even as the Reformed and Mennonite theological traditions are resources for the intellectual work of scholars at Calvin and Goshen, respectively, so ought the theological traditions of the Church of God (Anderson) inform the general intellectual life of Anderson University. I say "ought" because, in my judgment, this has not frequently been the case or, if so, in ways marginal to the university's intellectual life. As stated earlier, I suspect that many other church-related and/or Christian colleges fit this description. Somewhat ironically, then, those that have strong relationships to sponsoring churches describe themselves as institutions that are tightly connected to their churches politically, but only marginally as far as intellectual matters are concerned. What might some of these intellectual/theological currents be? Could there be a positive role for them to play in the intellectual life of church-related and/or Christian colleges? As a case study familiar to this writer, I will respond to these questions with reference to Anderson University and the Church of God (Anderson).

### **Theological Traditions of the Church of God (Anderson)**

Notions such as the categories of experience, community, holiness, and vocation have been important elements in the theological tradition of the Church of God. They also have affinities with other colleges and universities of the holiness tradition. I suggest that they also might inform intellectual life and institutional politics at Anderson University.

"Holiness" surely is an idea deserving of informing ethics and moral philosophy, but perhaps also courses in public policy or political science. To be sure, the Church of God (Anderson) along with many other holiness groups has, in the main, conceived the idea of holiness in moralistic and individualist terms. But in Walter Brueggemann's recently published volume, *Old Testament Theology*, we find an example of how such traditional and conservative notions of holiness might be enlarged to undergird

important political, economic, and ethical themes. Brueggemann demonstrates the relationships between Israel's conception of God, its understanding of its own social location "among the nations," and God's evolving commitment to justice and righteousness as expressions of God's holiness.<sup>12</sup> Brueggemann connects this insight to Israel's perception of the importance of the cry of suffering to the life of God. The cry of pain, i.e., the notice Israel takes of the dysfunctional, is its protest against the normative theology of its surrounding world, a theology which it partially embraced and which taught Israel to trust in the system to provide solutions to the people's dilemmas. To follow Brueggemann's lead will mean that the idea of holiness, whether of God or God's people, will inform discussions in areas such as ethics, economics, theories of management, and public policy. Space will not permit further digression into Brueggemann's stimulating and provocative analysis; here it sufficiently serves to illustrate how discussions of theological themes such as the holiness of God have broad applicability in a liberal arts curriculum.

Another illustration of the applicability of the idea of holiness to AU's curriculum lies in the idea of "wellness." Wendell Berry explores the connections between health and various aspects of human being in an essay entitled "Health Is Membership."<sup>13</sup> He touches on the etymological connections of such words as "health," "wholeness," and "holiness" in order to explore the manifold influences which contribute to people's health. Indeed, Berry argues that such connectedness is vital to a person's health. These connections extend, obviously, to other people, but they also include land, culture, and spirit. Moreover, health ultimately is situated in communities of love. In Berry's careful assessment, "health" bears a marked resemblance to the biblical ideal of shalom, peace in the most comprehensive of understandings. Institutions such as Anderson, contemplating wellness programs, might develop their programs out of their historical commitments to the idea of holiness, now broadened to be understood as wholeness, especially when such wholeness rests on the presence of the kind of love which St. Paul said is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>12</sup>Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: Essays on Structure, Theme, and Text*, edited by Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 22-44.

<sup>13</sup>Published in *Another Turn of the Crank* (Washington, D. C.: Counterpoint, 1995), 86-109.

Berry's sense of health's dependence on vital human relationships leads to another of the Church of God movement's deep theological commitments—the idea of the church as a gathered community. Ideas associated with the notion of community provide very fertile ground for research and reflection in the social sciences. Indeed, the communitarian movement is presently demonstrating the value of such notions to national political life. Had Anderson University taken its own theological traditions seriously at an earlier point in its history, it might have found itself poised to enter more fully into the current national debate about a good society.

Anderson University professors such as Willard Reed (philosophy) have interpreted the Church of God movement's theological idea of experience in a manner which bears directly on the university's intellectual life. Reed observes that the Church of God has long maintained an epistemology that places experience ahead of rationalistic conceptions about knowledge. Furthermore, he contends that, insofar as faith is concerned, members of Anderson University need not be threatened by rationalistically framed propositions since they cannot threaten religious experience. Reed has interpreted a salient theological idea of the Church in a manner which clearly underwrites the freedom essential to academic inquiry and debate. To be quite sure, the Church of God is a conservative Protestant church group, but its emphasis on the category of experience has created at AU a degree of freedom unusual in colleges sponsored by such groups.

The surest illustration of my point is that no Anderson faculty appointment is conditional on a signature of confession or creed. That faculty members are not required to sign a belief statement is not due to the Enlightenment-based notion that one's religious commitments are private. Rather, it is precisely because Anderson University is shaped by the ethos of the Church of God that the university says that one's religious experience cannot be reduced to a set of propositions and, therefore, faculty members will not be required to sign a creed. The same could not be said at all member institutions of the Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities. My point here is not to claim some superiority for my own institution. Rather, it is to illustrate the manner in which specific characteristics rise out of the particularities of institutional historical locations.

One last theme important to the theological life of the Church of God has been the tradition of vocation. It is, of course, the case that the idea of calling has been important throughout Christianity. I am not

claiming that the concept is unique to the Church of God. But the idea has nevertheless received considerable stress and broad interpretation among us. The Church of God has thought of people's vocations largely in terms of the ministry; men and women receive a "call to full-time Christian service," as we often have said. But vocation could also be extended beyond the sacred to the secular, and in its earlier years AU played an important role in broadening the meaning of vocation to include gainful employment in service to a particular place. It would not be difficult to make a case for certain professors' understanding of their work at Anderson University as a calling, professors of accounting, economics, art, or physical education. One need not teach in the Seminary or the Department of Religious Studies to be said to have a vocation. In the past the idea of practicing one's work as a vocation extended throughout the institution to include all its members. Two custodians, for example, Charlie Kissel and Leonard Warren, are examples of people who understood themselves to have been called to their work of cleaning the buildings of Anderson College (University).<sup>14</sup> They may have been janitors, but they worshipped and entered into the life of the college as fully as any professor. Why? Because Kissel and Warren understood themselves to have a vocation here, and the institution recognized their self-understanding. We must consider the possibility that the university flourished in part through their faithful service as these two men taught generations of Anderson students the idea of work as a calling rather than a utilitarian means to pursue the transient goods of this earth.

This last reference to the theological tradition of vocation illustrates further the possibility that such traditions contribute to the shape of an institution's polity, i.e., its way of ordering the life together of its members. Language, after all, possesses the power to shape—if not create—the social realities we inhabit. Theological discourse, then, like any other, then will have such power if it is included as a conversation partner. Because language possesses this kind of reality-making power, it is very troubling to observe the increased use of market, corporate, and advertising metaphors as descriptions of colleges and universities in general, and especially those which claim a religious center. Metaphors and forms of

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<sup>14</sup>References to the significance of Kissel and Warren, and many others, is found in Barry L. Callen, *Guide of Soul and Mind: The Story of Anderson University* (Anderson, Ind.: Anderson University and Warner Press, 1992).

discourse certainly have legitimacy in their own social spheres. However, metaphors of one sphere rarely translate well to other spheres of life. Instead, one sphere colonizes another as its language transforms the basic relationships of the latter. Consider, for example, the unfortunate consequences of the application of the market metaphor to marriage partners. Similarly, reference to the university as a corporate machine will eventually transform colleagues into cogs.

These reflections on language call to mind Donald Thorsen's stimulating attempt to recover the word "scholarship." Thorsen means to use this word to bridge the customary distinction between research and religion.<sup>15</sup> "Research" commonly refers to the kind of knowledge we produce under Enlightenment rubrics, that which can be demonstrated scientifically and objectively. Paul Giurlanda effectively demonstrates the extent to which such knowledge, as every other form of knowledge, depends on faith.<sup>16</sup> If that is the case, then Thorsen's suggestion is significant. The scholarship of holiness colleges and universities can and should embrace the theological and moral considerations of teaching as well as the pursuit of knowledge in specialized ("scientific") fields of inquiry. Our knowledge, our faith, and our communities interpenetrate. "Scholarship" names our efforts to introduce others into that life.

To stress the intellectual and political significance of the theological traditions of sponsoring churches should not be taken as underwriting a policy that requires all faculty members to deny time to their research in order to ponder only such matters as those outlined here. Nevertheless, we should expect to find these fibers woven through the intellectual fabric of our colleges and universities. Important institutional courses hinge on our decision to accept or ignore the theological traditions which are woven into that fabric. In the final analysis, such traditions, and others drawing from the ideas of service and liberal education, vitally inform our discourse about the ends for which the university exists and which we encourage our students to pursue throughout the course of their lives. It is the moral and theological shape of this discourse which gives Anderson, and comparable colleges and universities, its unique character. The alter-

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<sup>15</sup>Donald Thorsen, "Reuniting the Two So Long Disjoined: Knowledge and Vital Piety," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol. 31, no. 2 (Fall, 1996), 192-209.

<sup>16</sup>Paul Giurlanda, *Faith and Knowledge* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987).

native to such uniqueness is the attempt to be a university without a context, and that is the academic version of *USA Today*—news from nowhere. To follow such a nowhere alternative will also be to give ourselves over to a politics of means, a politics alien to the life and spirit of universities constituted as intellectual communities.

### **Daniel and the Bright Young Men of Israel**

As one final means of making my point and also considering a possible fate if we ignore the traditions which are our historical and political contexts, let me offer a reading of the story of Daniel and his fellow Israelites as told in Daniel 1. After all, this text comes from a book which is determinative for our scholarly life together in Donald Thorsen's sense of that term.

The story is familiar. The children of Israel have been invaded, defeated, their capital laid waste, and many of them deported to Babylon. There they exist only at the sufferance of their masters, on the very fringes of an alien society where they have been made to eat the tasteless bread of exile. But King Nebuchadnezzar has a plan for this people. He wishes to bring the best and the brightest of the Israelite young men into the palace and train them in the ways of the Babylonians. After their training these "best and brightest" will enter the royal bureaucracy.

The focal point of the story, interestingly enough, is food. The king insists that these young men eat the food served at court, but they refuse. The royal table is laden with food seasoned with socio-political expectations. To be sure, it is wonderful, tasty beyond the wildest dreams of impoverished, hopelessly dependent exiles. But this food may be eaten only by Israelites willing to pay a terrible price. That is precisely why this food sticks in the throats of Daniel and his friends. It is rich food prepared for the rich and powerful, and its price is forgetfulness. This rich Babylonian food will blur Israelite memories of exile and their brothers and sisters still dwelling in the camps and shanty-towns on the outskirts of the city. The loss of this kinship of memory inevitably will carry with it the loss of identity of Daniel and his friends, for we can answer the question "Who am I?" only by answering the prior question, "Of what stories am I a part?"

One may read Nebuchadnezzar's invitation as a wonderful opportunity. The king has offered these young men a chance to move to the right side of the tracks where power, privilege, and respectability abound. It is

an invitation to “upward social mobility,” a chance for some displaced Israelite captives actually to become movers and shakers in Babylonian society. The king has invited Israel’s best and brightest to learn the system which keeps society in order and rewards its powerful members. The young Israelites might be tempted to accept such an invitation selfishly and use it as a means of their own advancement. They might prize the invitation as an opportunity to ameliorate Israel’s plight as strangers in a strange land.

But the king’s invitation is laden with potential for disaster. One cannot expect to employ, even for a good cause, the king’s wealth and power without compromising attachments. Sooner or later, the language of means must be circumscribed and controlled by the language of ends. Daniel and his three friends understand that they cannot eat the king’s food without becoming the king’s possessions. If these best and brightest of Israel would remain members of the people of God, they must eat the simple food of Israelites. They must remember the traditions which enable them to answer fundamental questions of identity and ethics.

Like Daniel and his friends, we appear to face a choice between two modes of being: either we will ground ourselves in the traditions and politics of our larger church communities or we will speak the discourses of systems which claim to provide the solution to our problems. Daniel and his friends had to choose whether to eat the bread of exiles, a food which empowered them to live out of their identity as Israelites, or eat the rich food of a royal bureaucracy which promised “success.” In the final analysis, Daniel and his friends were confronted with a situation that required them to own their people and the socio-political location which gave them their identity. Out of that identity they were able to answer the question, “What are we to do?”

Today institutions of higher education should be answering the same vital question. For those colleges and universities whose historic identities lie in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, there is richness to be recovered, an important location to be reclaimed, stories out of which institutions can and should be living.



# **THE FAITH AND ORDER MOVEMENT: HOLINESS CHURCH PARTICIPATION**

by

**Gilbert W. Stafford**

The phrases “holiness movement,” “ecumenical movement,” and “charismatic movement” are widely used in general conversation. They evoke responses of allegiance and/or concern. The “faith and order movement,” however, is a term not widely used in general conversation and therefore may evoke little more than a blank stare. It is a movement of significance to contemporary Christianity and one to which bodies associated with the “holiness” tradition should give increasing attention.

## **The Genesis and History of Faith and Order**

The genesis of the Faith and Order movement can be traced to an event that took place at the 1910 World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland. There, for the first time since the rise of denominational Christianity, a world conference was held with participants who were not simply those interested in the subject matter, but persons officially chosen by denominations and missionary societies. Those at Edinburgh had the responsibility of representing the positions and concerns of their ecclesial sponsors. This put a different stamp on the character of this conference. It was first and foremost an officially representative gathering.

In the course of the conference it became apparent, at least to some, that the identities imposed on emerging churches around the world were the result of theological and doctrinal disagreements having historical roots and social contexts that were foreign to the newer churches. These

various denominational identities, therefore, did not reflect their own wrestling with faith issues. This was of such great concern to Bishop Charles H. Brent of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States—at the time Bishop of the Philippine Islands—that near the end of the Edinburgh meeting he pled for the churches in the future to convene for the purpose of addressing not only missionary concerns but doctrinal concerns as well.

After Edinburgh, Brent did what he could in his own church to bring this about. In October of that year—on the day prior to the convening of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Cincinnati, Ohio—Brent addressed a mass meeting of Episcopalians. He shared his passionate concern that the churches begin addressing doctrinal issues—i.e., matters of faith and order—in formalized discussions between persons officially chosen by their respective communions to represent them. On October 19, 1910, the Episcopal church responded by passing unanimously the following resolution:

That a Joint Commission be appointed to bring about a Conference for the consideration of questions touching Faith and Order, and that all Christian Communions throughout the world which confess Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour be asked to unite with us in arranging for and conducting such a Conference.<sup>1</sup>

The vision was caught by other churches and in 1911 the proposal for such a conference was communicated in a letter to Christian communions around the world. While the response was positive, the intricacies of planning such a gathering and the turmoil associated with World War I slowed down the process. Finally, though, the first World Conference on Faith and Order was held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1927 with 394 delegates representing 108 churches from around the world.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent

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<sup>1</sup>Tissington Tatlow, “The World Conference on Faith and Order,” *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, Fourth Edition, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill, Vol. I of *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1968* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993), 407.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 420. For conference papers, proceedings, decisions, and membership, see H. N. Bate (ed.), *Faith and Order: Proceedings of the World Conference, Lausanne, August 3-21, 1927*. New York: Doran, 1927.

conferences were held in Edinburgh (1937),<sup>3</sup> Lund, Sweden (1952),<sup>4</sup> Montreal, Canada (1963),<sup>5</sup> and Santiago de Compostela, Spain (1993).<sup>6</sup>

Besides the Missionary Conference movement and the Faith and Order movement, a third development, called the Life and Work movement, also emerged. Bishop Nathan Söderblom of Sweden was convinced that contemporary international and societal issues could be addressed adequately only by a Christian church united for social witness. The view held was that, whereas doctrine inevitably divides, social witness can be an opportunity for a united Christianity. On the basis of these strong convictions, the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work was convened in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1925, and the second conference was held in Oxford, England, in 1937.

By this time, however, there was a growing realization that life-and-work was inevitably theological, and, consequently, could not be kept in isolation from faith-and-order considerations. In 1937, with Life and Work meeting in Scotland, and Faith and Order meeting in England, it was convenient for the two to consider working as one unit. The decision was made to formalize the union of the two movements, to be known jointly as the World Council of Churches. The chaos of World War II, however, kept this process from coming to culmination until 1948 when the WCC held its founding Assembly in Amsterdam, Holland.<sup>7</sup>

With the union of Faith and Order and Life and Work, the latter ceased to exist as a separate entity whereas Faith and Order continued as a distinctive movement which, while now sponsored by the WCC, continued to be wider than WCC membership.

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<sup>3</sup>See Leonard Hodgson (ed.), London *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order Held at Edinburgh, August 3-18, 1937*: Student Christian Movement Press, 1938.

<sup>4</sup>See Oliver S. Tomkins (ed.), *The Third Conference on Faith and Order Held at Lund, August 15th to 28th, 1952*. London: SCM, 1953.

<sup>5</sup>See P. C. Rodger and Lukas Vischer (ed.), *The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, Montreal 1963*. New York: Association, 1964.

<sup>6</sup>See Thomas F. Best and Günther Gassmann (ed.), *Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order: On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994. Also, Günther Gassmann (ed.), *Documentary History of Faith and Order, 1963-1993*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993.

<sup>7</sup>All three streams finally came together when in 1961 the International Missionary Council merged with the WCC at New Delhi, India.

## The Holiness Presence in Faith and Order

No representative from an American holiness church was present at Lausanne, Edinburgh, or Lund. The first holiness participation was at Montreal in 1963 with a delegate (Gene W. Newberry) and two observers (Louis Meyer and John W. V. Smith) from the Church of God (Anderson),<sup>8</sup> and with two U.S.A. delegates from the Salvation Army (Commissioner S. Hepburn and Lt-Col. P. S. Kaiser).<sup>9</sup> At Santiago de Compostela in 1993, holiness representatives included Cheryl Bridges-Johns of the Church of God (Cleveland)<sup>10</sup> and Susie C. Stanley of the Church of God (Anderson).<sup>11</sup>

In 1957 Faith and Order sponsored a conference particularly for the church in the United States and Canada. Called the North American Conference on Faith and Order, it was held September 3-10 of that year in Oberlin, Ohio. Regarding holiness participation, the Salvation Army was a full member with two representatives. One was a member of the study section on "Authority and Freedom in Church Government," and the other in the section on "Racial and Economic Stratification."<sup>12</sup> In addition to this, the holiness movement was indirectly represented by James Royster of the Church of God (Anderson) who was a youth delegate from the Interseminary Movement.<sup>13</sup> Consultants from churches that were not members of the World Council included Donald Demaray from the Free Methodist Church, who worked in the section on "Baptism Into Christ,"<sup>14</sup> and John W. V. Smith from the Church of God (Anderson) who worked in the section on "Doctrinal Consensus and Conflict."<sup>15</sup> In addition, observers a category for those who, while not official delegates of the sending churches, could nevertheless participate-included three from the Church of God (Anderson): Clarence W. Hatch who worked in the study

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<sup>8</sup>Rodger and Vischer, op. cit., 107.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>10</sup>Best and Gassmann, op. cit., xx.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., xxii.

<sup>12</sup>Paul S. Minear (ed.), *The Nature of the Unity We Seek: Official Report of the North American Conference on Faith and Order, September 3-10, 1957, Oberlin, Ohio* (St. Louis: Bethany, 1958), 295.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 296.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 297.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 298.

section on “Authority and Freedom in Church Government,”<sup>16</sup> Gene W. Newberry who worked in the section on “The Life of the Congregation”<sup>17</sup> and Harold Phillips in the section on “Imperatives and Motivations.”<sup>18</sup>

Ever since Oberlin the Church of God (Anderson) has continued to participate. Serving as commissioner until his death in 1984 was John W. V. Smith, and for a short time in 1983-84 Juanita Lewis, and since 1984, Gilbert W. Stafford. The only other holiness church (though also pentecostal) that currently participates is the Church of God (Cleveland) represented by Cheryl Bridges-Johns. Two additional holiness churches participate indirectly by virtue of the Wesleyan Theological Society’s appointment of Paul Bassett of the Church of the Nazarene and Donald Dayton of the Wesleyan Church. WTS participation began in 1985 with the appointment of Dayton and David Cubie of the Church of the Nazarene. Bassett followed Cubie in 1988. The Church of God (Anderson) is, therefore, the only non-pentecostal holiness church that participates officially as a church.

Faith and Order work in the United States is now sponsored by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCC). In keeping with the long-standing tradition of including churches that are not members of the NCCC, present membership encompasses a wide range of non-NCCC churches, including Roman Catholic, Church of God (Cleveland, TN), Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, Friends General Conference, International Evangelical Church, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Independent Christian Churches, Assemblies of God, Christian Reformed, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Korean Presbyterian, Churches of Christ (non-instrumental), and the Church of God (Anderson).

### **The Ongoing Vision of Faith and Order**

In my years of Faith and Order work, I have found that the original purposes of the movement are still in place:

to proclaim the essential oneness of the Church of Christ and to keep prominently before . . . the churches the obligation to manifest that unity and its urgency for the work of evangelism.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 299.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 300.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

to study questions of faith, order, and worship with the relevant social, cultural, political, racial and other factors in their bearing on the unity of the Church. . . .

to study matters in the present relationships of the churches to one another which cause difficulties and need theological clarification. . . .<sup>19</sup>

What Samuel McCrea Cavert said in 1970 about Faith and Order is still true:

The Faith and Order movement, in both its worldwide and its national aspects, has consistently adhered to the policy of making its contribution through study and dialogue. It has carefully refrained from presenting any particular plan of union, regarding this as necessarily the responsibility of the ecclesiastical bodies themselves.<sup>20</sup>

The inaugural report of the 1996-1999 quadrennium of study states the current vision of Faith and Order in North America:

To further the longstanding work of Faith and Order on theological issues that are church-dividing and church-uniting by engaging more fully and directly the faithful people of the churches of Christ in ecclesial settings of ongoing worship and witness, with renewed commitment to engagement with churches in wide ranging ecclesial traditions, and thereby to nurture the NCCC's commitment to fuller ecclesial fellowship.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Benefits of Participating in Faith and Order**

What, then, are the benefits of a church's participation in Faith and Order? I list the following.

**1. Participation is an opportunity to learn *about* other traditions in a dialogical setting.** One of the more rewarding intellectual experi-

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<sup>19</sup>Quoted from the original constitution of Faith and Order in Minear, op. cit., 13.

<sup>20</sup>Samuel McCrea Cavert, *Church Cooperation and Unity in America* (New York: Friendship, 1970), 336 f.

<sup>21</sup>"Conspectus of Study, 1996-1999," Faith and Order, The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (distributed at Pasadena, CA.: Fuller Theological Seminary, March 15-16), 2.

ences of my life was my sub-group's discussion in an earlier triennium (as it was then) of our several understandings of apostolic faith. The fact that each Christian tradition makes claims of being apostolic in its faith provided a basis for vigorous discussion. In our extended deliberations we learned enough about each other's traditions to be able to identify points both of agreement and of divergence. We came to appreciate that all of us agree that being a church of apostolic faith includes at least these basic components: the confession that Jesus Christ is God and Savior; the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit; the authoritative witness of the Scriptures; and the church as the community of faithful worship, witness, and service in the world. But we differ when it comes to other characteristics of what it means to be apostolic. Some traditions emphasize normative creedal and confessional statements; others emphasize normative teaching offices and polities; and others emphasize normative experiences of conversion, sanctification, holiness, and liberation.<sup>22</sup>

**2. Faith and Order is an opportunity to learn from other traditions.** Other traditions of the faith ask questions about one's own tradition that insiders tend not to ask. Once in a discussion about creeds, I explained that traditionally my own church (Church of God, Anderson) has been anti-creedalistic and that we even have a song one stanza of which begins: "The day of sects and creeds for us forevermore is past."<sup>23</sup> "What!" an Orthodox priest exclaimed, "how can you be Christian if you don't believe something?" He asked the right question and pressed the right issues for a tradition that has perhaps been too unreflective in its anti-creed rhetoric.

**3. Faith and Order provides an arena of discussion with a wide spectrum of Christian traditions.** This arena is wider than any other I know. Obviously, wide spectrums can be found in seminaries, theological forums, the academy, and in informal conversations. That which makes Faith and Order distinct from these, however, is that its members are, for the most part, chosen in some official way to represent their respective churches or organizations. In my case, I am elected by the Commission on Christian Unity of the Church of God, a commission made up both of

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<sup>22</sup>See Thaddeus D. Horgan (ed.), *Apostolic Faith in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 60-66.

<sup>23</sup>Charles W. Naylor, "The Church's Jubilee," *Worship the Lord: Hymnal of the Church of God* (Anderson: Warner, 1989), No. 312.

representatives from our several national agencies and persons elected by the General Assembly of the Church of God.

The role of a participant is not that of setting forth his or her own personal theological positions, but those of the church being represented. Faith and Order participants are, in a sense, personifications of the differing traditions of Christian faith. For instance, when in my own sub-group Samuel Nafzger of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod speaks, we want him to give voice to the Missouri Synod. The assignment is not "Tell us what you personally think about this issue," but "Tell us, to the best of your ability, what you believe your church tradition holds concerning this matter." That goes even for the most overtly independent participants. When Doug Foster, a member of the Churches of Christ (non-instrumental), speaks, he, true to his tradition, makes it clear that he speaks only as Doug Foster, but we push him to represent to us, to the best of his ability, the Church of Christ tradition, not the Doug Foster view.

Where else can one find such a wide spectrum of thought being expressed by those who seek earnestly to speak for the respective traditions out of which they come? In my sub-group this quadrennium are representatives from churches as diverse as United Methodist, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Churches of Christ (non-instrumental), Quaker, Evangelical Lutheran, Reformed Church in America, Assemblies of God, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, National Baptist, and Church of God (Anderson).

**4. Faith and Order provides each participant the opportunity to teach other traditions about one's own tradition.** It is as though each tradition has the opportunity to bring other Christian traditions into its classroom for a short while for the purpose of teaching something about the Christian faith which it believes God has entrusted to it. Over the course of several years, for example, I have had the opportunity to present to my colleagues in Faith and Order several short papers: two on "The Apostolic Faith" as understood by the Church of God (Anderson), another titled "The Holy Spirit and the Experience of Church," and two papers on authority: "Authority in the Church of God (Anderson . . .)" and "Authorities for Making Decisions in the Church of God. . . ." Also, I prepared a paper in answer to the question: "What would be the prerequisites for the Church of God (Anderson) to become a part of a Christian organization which is inclusive of Christian faith in its widest possible spectrum?"



Another paper was prepared under the title, "Visioning for Koinonia in the Life of the Church." All of these were opportunities to teach others about matters which my church believes are crucial if the church at large is to be in health.

More recently, my papers have centered especially on our identification as a holiness church. I presented a paper titled: "The Nineteenth Century Holiness Movement and Christian Unity." At the time of this writing, I am working with two other colleagues on presentations for an upcoming meeting in New Orleans. The first project has to do with "The Unitive Power of Holiness." The sub-group will consider my paper from the holiness perspective and that of Father Kevin McMorrow, editor of *Ecumenical Trends*, from the Roman Catholic perspective. Upon exchanging papers, each of us will write a response that will include three components: points of resonance with each other, differences, and points at which we simply do not understand the other. These four papers, then, will be presented to our sub-group for discussion.

The second project will use the same dialogical method on the subject of "The Hermeneutics of Reconciliation in Worship." My partner is John Erickson, professor of theology at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York. In preparation for this assignment, Professor Erickson told me that since he had never worshipped in a holiness church, he would like to have that experience. I put him in touch with a Church of God congregation which, without my knowing it, turned out to be close to St. Vladimir's. He has already worshipped there and has invited the Church of God to be guests at St. Vladimir's. In New Orleans, he and I will present our papers to the plenary, which we hope will be enriched both by holiness and orthodox insights.

**5. Faith and Order work is the opportunity for one's own tradition to recognize in other traditions dimensions of the apostolic faith which lie dormant in one's own.** While for one Christian tradition verbal confession about the person and work of Christ may be very much alive, an emphasis on the converting ministry of Christ in the here and now may lie dormant. In another tradition the enlivening presence of the Holy Spirit may be very much front and center, but the hard sayings about Kingdom life may lie dormant. For still another tradition an emphasis on personal conversion may be alive, but communal confession of the faith may be dormant. And for another tradition Kingdom teachings may be considered

with great seriousness, but the joy of the risen Christ may be dormant. Faith and Order provides an ecclesial opportunity for each tradition of the faith to feed into the bloodstream of other traditions. It is in this kind of setting that the emphasis on personal sanctification, which holiness churches are convinced is part and parcel of the apostolic faith, can be fed into the bloodstream of a wide spectrum of other Christian traditions.

An example of how this happens is reflected in the following segment of the summary report of the last quadrennium:

At Newark the Episcopal representative was inspired by what the Church of God (Anderson) representative had said about . . . join[ing] his church. When asked how people become members, he replied: "The process would be similar to the acceptance around this table. None of us has been formally 'checked out.' We sense some basic assumptions as we talk with each other. We share. It's not legalistic. . . ." As the representative of the Church of God (Cleveland) said in response to the information about the lack of formal joining in the Church of God (Anderson): "You are probably providing a model for the future, where things aren't so sharply defined as [they are] by organizational entities."<sup>24</sup>

Whether one agrees with the subject mentioned in this excerpt is not the point. It is simply an illustration of how one tradition can feed into the bloodstream of other traditions. In this instance an anabaptist-holiness tradition, a pentecostal-holiness tradition, and a mainline-anglican tradition were engaged in conversation about a new paradigm never before considered by some.

I cherish the possibility of the Church of the Nazarene, the Wesleyan Church, the Free Methodist Church, the Salvation Army, and others, as *churches*, taking advantage of the Faith and Order opportunity to feed their own rich understandings of the apostolic faith into the bloodstream of the wider church.

**6. Faith and Order is the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of one's own tradition.** It is both refreshing and challenging to explain one's tradition to those who may be learning about it for the first time. As we are pressed to explain the meaning of a

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<sup>24</sup>O. C. Edwards in "Faith and Order Reports 1992-1995" (New York: The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A, 1995), 21.

particular aspect of our tradition, we are required to rethink the dynamics of it. That which within the circles of the tradition itself is dealt with in a shorthand way has to be written out in longhand, so to speak, for those unacquainted with it. The end result is that one's understanding of one's own tradition matures.

7. Faith and Order work is the opportunity for churches **to guard against becoming root bound** within their own narrower tradition. Just as root-bound plants eventually die, so do Christian traditions that limit themselves to their own little bit of Christian soil. Doctrinal development in controlled theological hot houses may lead to only superficially healthy churches. In order to be in health, all churches need to develop in the open spaces of doctrinal discussions in the church at large.

8. Faith and Order is the **opportunity for a wide spectrum of ecclesial bodies to work together** in theological endeavors. In 1982 at a Faith and Order meeting in Lima, Peru, over one hundred theologians unanimously agreed to present a statement for common study by and official responses from any and all churches willing to do so. Published under the title "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (BEM), it is the product of some fifty years of study and consultation representing Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, Methodist, Disciples, Methodist, Adventist, and Pentecostal traditions. BEM has become one of the more widely discussed theological documents in the church's history.

In 1984, the Believers Church Conference (consisting of churches that stress believer baptism) was hosted by Anderson School of Theology for the purpose of discussing the baptism section of BEM. Participants included Brethren, Mennonite, Church of God (Anderson), Adventist, Churches of Christ, Disciples, and Baptist theologians and church historians. But also present were scholars from infant baptism churches, including the associate director of Faith and Order (NCCC), Brother Jeffrey Gros, a Roman Catholic. On the basis of four days of papers and discussion, the conference affirmed eight points of agreement with BEM on baptism, stated six points of disagreement, listed two consequences that so-called believers churches can draw from BEM for their relationships and dialogues with other churches, and stated four contributions that BEM can make to them as believer baptism churches. The report concludes by giving three suggestions for the ongoing work of Faith and Order, which included the view of some in the conference that "Scripture

. . . [should] be regarded as the sole source and criterion of Christian belief, standing as the authoritative corrective to our various traditions.”<sup>25</sup>

My only reason for lifting up this last issue is not to emphasize the “Bible only” position, but to use it as an illustration of the opportunity that Faith and Order both provides and promotes for a wide spectrum of ecclesial traditions to be heard as they work together in theological endeavors.

One of John Wesley’s well-known sermons is on the “Catholic Spirit.” His text is 2 Kings 10:15, “Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart: And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand.” In the sermon, Wesley spells out what he has in mind by one’s heart being right: it is right with God; it believes in the Lord Jesus Christ; it is “filled with the energy of love”; it is doing the will of God; it serves the Lord with reverence; it is right toward one’s neighbor; and it shows love by what it does.

This “catholic spirit” is to be expressed both towards those outside the faith and within. Regarding those outside the faith, Wesley says that the person with a catholic spirit “embraces with strong and cordial affection neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. This is catholic or universal love. And he that has this is of a catholic spirit. For love alone gives the title to this character: catholic love is a catholic spirit” (III.4).

Following this consideration, Wesley then deals with the catholic spirit in relation to fellow believers. He refers to love for all “whatever opinion or worship or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who love God and man, who, rejoicing to please and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil and zealous of good works.” Continuing, Wesley says that the one who is of a truly catholic spirit, “having an unspeakable tenderness for their persons and longing for their welfare, does not cease to commend them to God in prayer as well as to plead their cause before men; who speaks comfortably to them and labours by all his words to strengthen their hands in God. He assists them to the uttermost of his power in all things, spiritual and temporal. He is ready ‘to spend and be spent for them’ [cf. 2 Cor. 12:15], yea, ‘to lay down his life for’ their sake [Jn. 15:13]” [III.5].<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Merle Strege (ed.), *Baptism and Church: A Believers’ Church Vision* (Grand Rapids: Sagamore, 1986), 201.

<sup>26</sup>See John Wesley, ed. Albert C. Outler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 91-104.

**9. Faith and Order provides the opportunity for us to become interpreters of other traditions at points where they may be misunderstood.** A personal example of this is Cecil Robeck's information about the traditional pentecostal understanding regarding the distinction between tongues as the initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues. Robeck, professor at Fuller and a representative of the Assemblies of God, taught all of us in that particular discussion that the classical pentecostal position is not, as some non-pentecostals think, that all Spirit-baptized persons have the gift of tongues. Rather, tongues speaking is simply an initial evidence of the baptism. Consequently, a person baptized in the Holy Spirit may initially speak in tongues but never again do so because they do not have the gift.

As a result of that Faith and Order "lecture," I, as a non-pentecostal, have been able to teach others about a pentecostal understanding and to correct a widespread misunderstanding in my own church that pentecostals believe that all should have the gift of tongues. Many among us point to 1 Corinthians 12:30 which asks rhetorically, "Do all speak in tongues?" and has the implied answer that not all do. Why, then, they want to know, can't pentecostal people see the error of their ways? But that is to misunderstand the pentecostal position. Robeck has helped me as a seminary teacher, preacher, and writer to fulfill an important role of clarifying the pentecostal position among my own people, not so that they will become pentecostals, but so that they will relate to others of "like precious faith" on the basis of accurate information instead of misinformation. Christian charity demands no less. In like manner, would it not be helpful to have more people in non-holiness churches *clarifying* for those traditions holiness terminology such as Christian perfection and entire sanctification?

Faith and Order is certainly no panacea for the dividedness of Christ's church, but it is an opportunity for that dividedness to be addressed within the context of a broad spectrum of Christian faith traditions. Many have been the times when I have been thoroughly frustrated in the meetings and by the process. There have been times when I have wondered whether it was worthwhile. But the benefits far outweigh the liabilities.

At Faith and Order meetings (twice a year), I often desire the participation of more of my holiness colleagues in the faith. By participating, a church has much to gain. Not only may it feed into the bloodstream of the

wider Christian community its own treasures of the apostolic faith, but also it can be immeasurably enriched by the treasures of the same faith which others feed into the bloodstream. But of greatest importance is this: Faith and Order is one additional small step toward the fulfillment of our Lord's prayer in John 17:21-22 that we "may all be one," to the end "that the world may believe." It is one additional feeble attempt toward responding positively to Paul's plea in Ephesians 4:1-3 for us "to lead a life worthy of the calling to which [we] . . . have been called . . . making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

# LOCATING THE SCANDAL OF THE EVANGELICAL MIND

by

David Bundy

The volume by Mark Noll entitled *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* is but the latest in a series of reflections and lamentations on the state of Evangelical scholarship.<sup>1</sup> It develops many of the arguments expressed during the 1985 conference planned and hosted by the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals entitled “The Task of Evangelical Higher Education.” The papers from that Conference were published under the title *Making Higher Education Christian*.<sup>2</sup> In this earlier volume, no one focused on the Holiness or Pentecostal traditions of higher education or on the theology which sustains them. Indeed, much of the data provided in this book about institutions of these traditions is incorrect or incomplete. In addition to numerous published essays, Noll also pondered many of these concerns in his remarkable examination of Evangelical scholarship in the area of Biblical studies.<sup>3</sup> This study devoted marginal attention to Holiness, Pentecostal or Dispensationalist scholars.

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<sup>1</sup>Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup>Joel A. Carpenter and Kenneth W. Shipps, *Making Higher Education Christian: The History and Mission of Evangelical Colleges in America* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1987).

<sup>3</sup>Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship and the Bible* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991).

In Noll's *Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, the scholars of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Dispensationalist traditions find themselves part of the central thesis of the volume. It is a dubious distinction. In this work the intellectual structures and spirituality of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Dispensationalist traditions receive the blame for the anti-intellectualism of American Evangelicalism. If this book had not been written by one of the more competent, sensitive, and kindly interpreters of American religious culture, it could be dismissed lightly as just another in the long line of scholarly attacks on the tradition that go back at least as far as the protagonists of Finney.

However, there is much in this present book by Noll that is compelling if one can make it past the vast generalizations, the analyses of Edwards and Wesley, and the occasional *faux pas* with regard to the lives and theology of adherents of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Dispensationalist tradition. The sad reality is that there is a strong current of anti-intellectualism within these traditions (and, it must be noted, others). Most of those who are scholars in religion or other fields in American culture and who wish to remain attached to the community of faith which nurtured that initial interest have experienced at least some anti-intellectualism.

The same is true for the members of the Wesleyan Theological Society, the context in which this current discussion is occurring. In the case of one present, the ramifications were many when a Free Methodist Bishop sitting with him and his spouse in a restaurant in Brussels identified the scholarly aspirations of that individual and those like him as "the central problem" of the denomination. Another Free Methodist Bishop wrote to one budding published scholar saying he was too specialized and academic to be of any use to the church. The father of one of the long-time leaders of the Wesleyan Theological Society was a faculty member at Wesleyan/Holiness institutions all of his professional life. He supplemented his minimal income by working night shifts as a manual laborer at a shipping company to raise his three children—and he still managed to be one of the more productive Holiness scholars of his generation. Yes there is much in Noll's observations and analyses that has been lived by scholars of the traditions.

One the other hand, the generalizations of Noll are too easy and do not take into account much of the historical experience of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Dispensationalist traditions within American culture. There are many things that his study of Evangelical cultural participation



does not explain. Why have the existing educational structures been necessary? Why have generations of Holiness, Pentecostal, and Dispensationalist scholars struggled with significant sacrifice to sustain and develop accredited educational institutions across the country? Why have they continued to march in large numbers into the halls of academia wherever they can gain access? Why have they sought to learn at the feet of the cultured despisers of their values and spirituality? What have been the sustaining forces of the anti-intellectualism in these traditions? The questions raised by Noll strike at the heart of these three traditions. He disparages their theology and spirituality. He discounts both their intellectual viability and their usefulness in the struggle for the mind of American culture. If scholars interested in the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Dispensationalist traditions are able to respond creatively and judiciously to the Noll challenge, he will have done scholars of this tradition a great service.

In responding, it is important to recognize that this generation is not the first to wrestle with these issues. For example, in December, 1965, the General Superintendents of the Pilgrim Holiness Church convened a "Study Conference on Pilgrim Higher Education."<sup>4</sup> The program for the conference, with the U. S. and "Christian" flags on the front, observed:

Life itself was the education of pioneers. . . . but in the highly dynamic social and economic order, the youth is lost who does not have formal schooling, as much and as good as possible. Along with the individual, society also suffers when education of youth is neglected.

At that conference, Walter L. Thomas, Director of Institutional Studies at Spring Arbor College, lamented the paucity of Wesleyan/Holiness scholars able to function at a nationally competitive level in their disciplines. David L. McKenna, then President of Spring Arbor College, insisted that Evangelical colleges had an obligation to prepare people for competitive graduate study. His analysis of the difficulties in assembling scholarly resources, identifying competent scholars committed to the traditions of the institutions, and maintaining relationships with the constituents has a 1990's ring. He also warned that the churches and the

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<sup>4</sup>"General Superintendent's Study Conference on Pilgrim Higher Education." Unpublished Papers and Ephemera, Wesleyan Church Archives, Indianapolis, IN.

Evangelical educational institutions could devour each other by blaming each other for their marginalization within the larger cultural structures.

The participants in this present discussion at the 1996 annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society were selected to represent and/or examine perspectives and issues raised in Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. The presentations by David Bundy, Harold Knight, and William Kostlevy appear elsewhere in this issue of the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*. Knight, Saint Paul School of Theology, discussed the development of the relationship of John Wesley to science, theology, and mission. He argued that adapting Wesley as model does not require a choice between "revivalism" and the life of the mind. Bundy, Christian Theological Seminary, presented an analysis of the alienation and exclusion of Wesleyan/Holiness scholars from the University culture. This essay indicated that the marginalization of Wesleyan/Holiness values and the cultural reaction to intellectual and social trends were major contributors to the impulse for creating parallel educational structures. Suggested were possible avenues for cooperative scholarly enterprise to address the shortcomings of the present system.

William Kostlevy, Asbury Theological Seminary, argued that the role of millennialism in American religious experience is more complex than allowed by Noll's paradigm and suggested that the social analysis of millenarian theology had been underestimated. Kostlevy's presentation was followed by a complementary theological analysis by Steven Land, Church of God School of Theology (Cleveland, Tennessee). He demonstrated that eschatology, holiness, and mission are closely intertwined from the perspective of Wesleyan/Holiness Pentecostalism. The goal of all, he argued, is a world transformed.<sup>5</sup> Donald A. D. Thorsen, Azusa Pacific University, asserted that there is a significant scholarly heritage in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition and that its intellectual structures and piety are not antithetical to the intellectual life. His arguments were restated in his Presidential Address to the Wesleyan Theological Society that was published in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*.<sup>6</sup> The essays of Knight, Bundy and Kostlevy are published together here, an indication of their common purpose.

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<sup>5</sup>Steven J. Land, "How Does One Change the World: Pentecostalism in American Culture." Unpublished lecture.

<sup>6</sup>Donald A. D. Thorsen, "Reuniting the Two So Long Disjoined: Knowledge and Vital Piety," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31:2 (Fall 1996), 192-209.

# **BLAMING THE VICTIM: THE WESLEYAN/HOLINESS MOVEMENT IN AMERICAN CULTURE**

by

**David Bundy**

The Wesleyan/Holiness traditions have always been interested in education and culture. Wesley, Fletcher, Whitefield, and Edwards were learned individuals, interested both in education and religious zeal. However, they did their most creative and successful work by using their learning to expedite the transformation of individual lives and the social context. Finney, Mahan, and the Wesleyan Methodists, excluded from the halls of Princeton and Lane colleges, *inter alia*, established Oberlin, Adrian College, Wesleyan Institute, Royalton Academy, Leoni Literary Institute, Michigan Wesleyan University, and Illinois Institute (Wheaton College).<sup>1</sup> Holiness believers among the Methodists contributed heavily to the staffing and funding of Wesleyan University, Boston University, and, eventually, Drew University. In addition, Holiness and Pentecostal revivalists founded colleges, seminaries, and universities across the American landscape in bewildering numbers. A complete listing of these efforts has not yet been achieved. Most members of the Wesleyan Theological Society were formed in the institutions which survived the vicissitudes of American religious and economic life.

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<sup>1</sup>On early Wesleyan education, see: Willard Garfield Smith, *The History of Church Controlled Colleges in the Wesleyan Methodist Church*, Ph.D. Diss., New York University, 1951; and Charles Winthrop Taylor, *History of the (Higher) Educational Movement in the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America*, Indiana University, 1959.

Given the undisputed enthusiasm for education and reform of culture, how did the Holiness and Pentecostal traditions come to be blamed for *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*?<sup>2</sup> Was it, as Mark Noll and others have suggested, that the theology and spirituality of the Holiness and Pentecostal traditions were inherently anti-intellectual? Was it, as others have suggested, that the developing urbanization of American culture left the “holy rollers” in the dust?<sup>3</sup>

It is argued here that, after the Civil War, Holiness believers became alienated from mainstream cultural values and were unable to gain a public hearing for their religious, intellectual, and social critique of American culture. As they and their populist egalitarian values were expunged from the developing university cultural consensus, the Wesleyan/Holiness movement, and then the Pentecostals, developed parallel educational structures in an effort to preserve their values and traditions. It was part of an effort to help the marginalized find a place in society. To make this argument, this essay will first describe the educational and cultural issues in tension, suggest the parameters of the Wesleyan/Holiness response, and present case studies illustrative of the development of Wesleyan/Holiness educational institutions.

### **Cultural and Educational Issues, 1870-1930**

Considerable attention has been given during the last three decades to the study of the Wesleyan/Holiness movements in American culture during the half century following the Civil War. The picture that is emerging is much more complex than theories ranging from William Warren Sweet to Karl Marx would allow. Perhaps the most significant reexamina-

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<sup>2</sup>Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

<sup>3</sup>Space will not allow here a developed critique of the urbanization thesis as applied to the Holiness and Pentecostal movements. It has been, and generally remains, academic orthodoxy that the Holiness and Pentecostal movements were primarily rural. A thorough examination of the history of the two traditions in Indiana and Indianapolis has called into question this thesis. At present 10% of the population of Indianapolis are active participants in Holiness or Pentecostal churches. It is hoped that other cities will receive similar demographic analysis. On Indianapolis, see my essays, “Holiness Churches” (pps. 696-700) and “Pentecostal Churches” (pps. 1085-1088) in the *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, ed. D. Boddenhamer and R. Barrows (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

tion of the interaction between Evangelicalism and political culture during the decade after the Civil War has been that of Victor B. Howard.<sup>4</sup>

Beginning with the decade leading up to the outbreak of the Civil War, Howard's study focuses on the influence of the church upon the developments which precipitated the war, the course of the war, and the structures of Reconstruction. The emphasis is on the practitioners of radical religion, the Evangelicals, that group of persons who believed that slavery was morally wrong, that society had a responsibility to eradicate slavery, and that African-Americans, who had been held in servitude, should be totally enfranchised. These included Wesleyan Methodists, Evangelical Brethren, Evangelical Lutherans (Franckean pietists), Progressive Friends, Seventh Day Baptists, certain members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and especially the Congregationalists.<sup>5</sup> Free Methodist conference decisions were occasionally mentioned, but since the primary Free Methodist organizational motivation was anti-Masonic, their entrance into the slavery discussion was quite late.<sup>6</sup> Howard argues that "the radical Christians significantly affected the course of the Civil War and Reconstruction and greatly influenced men of principle."<sup>7</sup>

Howard picks up on the story of the interaction between radical religion or revivalism where the work of Timothy Smith<sup>8</sup> left off. The narrative of *Religion and the Radical Republican Movement* introduces dozens of ordinary folk from various churches, social classes and backgrounds,

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<sup>4</sup>Victor B. Howard, *Religion and the Radical Republican Movement, 1860-1870* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990). For a perspective dependent on more mainstream church sources, see Donald A. Jones, *The Sectional Crisis and Northern Methodism: A Study in Piety, Political Ethics and Civil Reconstruction* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1979).

<sup>5</sup>On the development of priorities, see John Hammond, *The Politics of Benevolence: Revival Religion and Voting Behavior* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1979) and Curtis D. Johnson, *Islands of Holiness: Rural Religion in Upstate New York, 1790-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).

<sup>6</sup>Cf. James A. Reinhart, "Personal and Social Factors in the Formation of the Free Methodist Church," Ph.D. Diss., University of Iowa, 1971.

<sup>7</sup>Howard, *Religion and the Radical Republican Movement*, 6.

<sup>8</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (New York: Abingdon, 1957). See also Lucius C. Matlack, *The History of American Slavery and Methodism from 1780-1849* (Heritage Library Collection; New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971; reprint of 1849 original).

albeit heavily northern and lower middle class (small landowners) who were united by their belief that slavery was a sin against God, and that apocalyptic means were required to bring that awful institution to an end and purify the nation to avoid punishment by God—as experienced by the biblical Israel. The political structure with which they case their lot was the Republican party of the period. They also gained control of their denominations and the communication structures (primarily periodicals). Howard suggests that the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) publications were the most effective in the effort.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the war, all major Northern Christian denominations except the Episcopalians and Roman Catholics had, under the influence of the radicals, taken a stand against slavery.

The radicals initially supported Lincoln, but after the election of 1860 they grew increasingly frustrated at his compromises with the conservatives, especially after Lincoln announced acceptance of the repatriation idea and refused to endorse Emancipation. The political, military, and ethical advantages of Emancipation were argued forcefully by evangelical clergymen. When Lincoln undermined the emancipation decree of General John Fremont in Missouri, “radicals” mobilized support for anti-slavery candidates. Their victories in the 1862 election made the Emancipation Proclamation politically expedient and inevitable.<sup>10</sup>

The next stage was to work for the complete abolition of slavery, in the North as well as in the South. Once again, Lincoln’s commitment was less than firm, and so radicals lent early support to the 1864 presidential candidacy of Salmon P. Chase, who withdrew after Lincoln made concessions to the “radicals.” The 1864 election was, Howard argues, a referendum on the war and emancipation, and it was the “radicals” who kept the issues alive and central in the public mind. It was because of the “radical” pressure that the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution was rapidly ratified.<sup>11</sup>

As the military victory became but a matter of time, attention was turned to the nature of post-War Reconstruction. The “radicals” were afraid that the southern state governments would institutionalize discrimination, as had some of the northern states. Let by Methodist Episcopal

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<sup>9</sup>Howard, *Religion and the Radical Republican Movement*, 7-38.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 39-67.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 68-89.

Holiness Bishop Matthew Simpson, who preached both of Lincoln's funerals, they argued for nothing less than a complete restructuring of southern political and social life. The radical American Missionary Association worked to overturn "Black Laws" in Illinois and Ohio and prepared to send missionaries to the south to work with African Americans after the War. Among these missionaries were the Wesleyan Methodists who would found what is now Southern Wesleyan University. The focus of discussion became Black Suffrage, the conferring of which the "radicals" viewed as a moral duty. A "Freedman's Bureau," designed to aid newly freed slaves, was conceptualized, accepted by Congress, and vetoed by President Andrew Johnson. Congress overrode the veto and once again the "radicals" mobilized for the 1866 elections in which "Presidential Reconstruction" was repudiated, and after which Johnson narrowly avoided impeachment.<sup>12</sup>

Out of this election came the call for the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution calling for the total enfranchisement of African Americans. At the point of arguing for civil rights, the radicals came into difficulty with their own denominations and the Republicans lost popular support and elections in the North. The northern populace, both the church and the non-church, were quite happy that the slaves should be freed, but were generally opposed to conferring full civil rights, primarily for fear of possible economic and social consequences. The issues became clearly defined in the struggles over the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The "radicals" wanted a strongly worded guarantee of the rights of all persons, regardless of race. Interestingly, fearing that this would become linked with the then politically deadly enfranchisement of women issue, many "radicals" actually worked against that cause. However, the development of increasingly overt racism in the Northeast and Old Northwest (from eastern Ohio to the Mississippi) and losses in several key elections caused the Republicans to adopt the ambiguously worded statement, which was ratified with difficulty.<sup>13</sup> The fears of the radicals that the

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 90-164. See also Ralph E. Morrow, *Northern Methodism and Reconstruction* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1956).

<sup>13</sup>Howard, *Religion and the Radical Republican Movement*, 165-211. See the suggestions of Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880* (History of Indiana, 3; Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1965).

amendment allowed bases for denying civil rights to African Americans did come true.

The secular political failure was but the first step in the disorganization and eventual disenfranchisement of the radicals. Those who argued for combining radical social reform and radical piety would lose power even in their own denominations. This was most acute during the decade of the 1880's. The shift was most pronounced in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The phenomenon, often called *embourgeoisement*, saw a significant shift in power from the "radicals" to the *nouveau riche* of the urban North who had made their fortunes on the war.<sup>14</sup> This would eventually lead to the Methodist disenfranchisement of both the WCTU and Holiness constituencies. It is against this backdrop that one must understand the development of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness (National Campmeeting Association) and the development of Wesleyan/Holiness and Pentecostal mission theory as exemplified in the experiences of William Taylor<sup>15</sup> and Thomas Ball Barratt.<sup>16</sup> However, the Holiness Methodist Episcopal believers were not the only radicals to lose influence. The same also happened within the Free Methodist Church where B. T. Roberts was prematurely promoted to figurehead and his paper, *The Earnest Christian*, was considered too radical to continue as the denominational paper,<sup>17</sup> and where the Pentecost Bands were forced to choose between submitting to centralized bureaucratic control and rev-

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<sup>14</sup>On this see Carl Oblinger, *Holiness Mimesis: Social Bases for the Holiness Schism in Late Nineteenth Century Methodism* (Monographic Studies, 1; Evanston: Institute for the Study of American Religion, 1973). See the analysis of A. Gregory Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: The Domestication of American Methodism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) and the important work of George M. Thomas, *Revivalism and Cultural Change: Christianity, Nation Building, and the Market in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

<sup>15</sup>David Bundy, "William Taylor and Methodist Mission: A Study in Nineteenth Century Social History," *Methodist History* 27(1989), 198-212; 28(1989), 3-21.

<sup>16</sup>David Bundy, "Thomas Ball Barratt: From Methodist to Pentecostal," *EPTA Bulletin* 13(1994), 19-49.

<sup>17</sup>C. H. Zahniser, "Earnest Christian: Life and Work of Benjamin Titus Roberts," Ph.D. Diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1951.



olutionary evangelism.<sup>18</sup> The Pietist Lutherans were also removed from power and the Franckean tradition died in American Lutheranism.<sup>19</sup>

Howard<sup>20</sup> and others have argued that the influence of the churches on politics was more powerful after the Civil War than before. However, it was a significantly different church, one in which radical religion and radical reform did not have a place. The Prohibition Party, a Wesleyan/Holiness dominated organization, would be marginally successful, but died as a one issue party. Labor Unions and Women's suffrage would draw methods and participation from the Wesleyan/Holiness movements, but in no way can these be considered to have been either dominated or significantly formed by the Wesleyan/Holiness movements.

In addition to the reversal of fortune on the political front, similar experiences were happening in the area of education. Wesleyan University had moved from its relationship with the Methodist Episcopal Church and Vanderbilt had accepted endowment and the secularist vision of the family whose name it now bears. Boston University, sometime haunt of the likes of Daniel Steele, became reluctant to harbor students, much less faculty, who expressed Holiness sentiments. For a while, new universities such as the University of Chicago, University of Cincinnati, and the University of Southern California were open to Holiness and Pentecostal believers. Then these closed as well. An occasional brilliant student would gain admittance, but the intellectual and social structures were stacked against the tradition.<sup>21</sup>

The two central and interrelated issues were evolution and pre-Adamism. Significantly, not until the advent of Fundamentalism did the Wesleyan/Holiness movement, to my knowledge, argue to any significant degree against the idea of evolutionary change. The problem was how the theory was applied in the universities with regard to the human race. William Taylor, for example, argued that evolutionary theory was wrong

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<sup>18</sup>David Bundy, "Wesleyan/Holiness Mission Theory," and Howard Snyder, "The Pentecost Bands," unpublished essays, forthcoming in a volume on Wesleyan/Holiness Mission Theory and History.

<sup>19</sup>Paul P. Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism: The Rejection of an Activist Heritage* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988).

<sup>20</sup>Howard, *Religion and the Radical Republican Movement*, 213.

<sup>21</sup>For a general discussion of recent Evangelical experience, see John Desjarlais, "Graduate Teaching Assistants," *InterVarsity* (Spring 1993), 4-7.

if it allowed the “image of God” to be more fully ascribed to one race than another.<sup>22</sup>

Pre-Adamism, which was most fully developed at the Methodist dominated Universities of Michigan and Syracuse, argued that non-Caucasian races were pre-Adamic animal races that should be kept separate from the supposedly superior White races. It gave scholarly legitimacy to the racism of the northern university establishment.<sup>23</sup> The primary theorist and popularizer of pre-Adamism, which disallowed discussion of issues of racial equality and social justice,<sup>24</sup> was a leading Methodist Episcopal scholar, Alexander Winchell (1824-1891). Winchell was a close friend of Wesleyan/Holiness critic and editor of the Methodist Quarterly Review who gave Winchell’s views prominence in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the related educational institutions. By his national influence, this Syracuse University based scholar was the Carl Sagan of his era.

These theories, together with the critique of traditional moral values within even the church-dominated universities, increased the alienation of the Holiness scholars from the universities.<sup>25</sup> In contrast to the period 1850-1880, the next half century saw few Wesleyan/Holiness graduates from mainline universities. Not unlike the Christians of Eastern Europe under Communism, they had lost the ideological war and were excluded from the centers of respectability and power. They, their reformism, and their beliefs had been found wanting on the evolutionary scale. Certainly, the Wesleyan/Holiness scholars could have framed their arguments better, been more prepared for the advent of the new university culture at the turn

<sup>22</sup>David Bundy, “William Taylor and the African Experience,” unpublished essay; forthcoming in a volume on Wesleyan/Holiness Mission Theory and History.

<sup>23</sup>Richard H. Popkin, “Pre-Adamism in Nineteenth Century American Thought: ‘Speculative Biology’ and Racism,” *Philosophia* 8(1978), 205-235. I was reminded of the importance of this material through the excellent unpublished essay by Philip Harrold, Alexander Winchell and the Evangelical Imagination in Late Nineteenth Century Popular Scientific Discourse, presented at the Free Methodist Graduate Student Theological Seminar, Indianapolis, IN, 24 September, 1994.

<sup>24</sup>David N. Livingstone, “Preadamites: The History of an Idea from Heresy to Orthodoxy,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 40(1987), 41-66.

<sup>25</sup>David N. Livingstone, *Darwin’s Forgotten Defenders: The Encounter Between Evangelical Theology and Evolutionary Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987). See also Jon Roberts, *Darwinism and the Divine in America: Protestant Intellectuals and Organic Evolution* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

of the century, and have reacted with more skill to the evolving scene. However, in many ways, they can be understood as the victims of the racism and economic exploitation of the post-Civil War period, particularly as those influences were manifested in university culture.<sup>26</sup>

### The Holiness Response

The response of the Holiness people to their changed fortunes was to develop structures to preserve their identities and protect their values. Holiness denominations developed throughout North America. Most were regional or local. Only the Salvation Army, Church of God in Christ, and the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene developed any national stature by 1914. Others such as the Church of God (Anderson), Free Methodist Church, Wesleyan Methodist Church, and the newer Pilgrim Holiness Church, remained essentially Northern or at least Northern dominated churches. What has become the largest Holiness Church, the Church of God in Christ, accepted the Pentecostal revival and has found it difficult to maintain educational institutions, although the church has long had a large corpus of scholars in most disciplines except theology. Because of the Wesleyan/Holiness understanding of Wesleyan/Holiness Pentecostalism as more competitor than ally, there has not been, until recently, much cooperation in the academic or cultural spheres. The educational institutions which sprang forth from the Holiness and Pentecostal movements were also regional and fragmented. Each has its own multi-level story which could be the subject of individual studies.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>See the important discussion of the larger context in Robert H. Wiebe, *In Search of Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967) as well as F. M. Szasz, *The Divided Mind of Protestant America, 1880-1930* (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1982).

<sup>27</sup>Among those institutional histories which give access to the founding narratives of other institutions are: Barry L. Callen, *Guide of Soul and Mind: The Story of Anderson University* (Anderson, IN: Anderson University and Warner Press); James R. Cameron, *Eastern Nazarene College: The First Fifty Years, 1900-1950* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1968); William C. Ringenberg, *Taylor University: The First 125 Years* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973); Howard A. Snyder, *One Hundred Years at Spring Arbor College, 1873-1973* (Spring Arbor: Spring Arbor College, 1973); E. Morris Sider, *Messiah College: A History* (Nappanee: Evangel Press, 1984); Ronald E. Kirkemo, *For Zion's Sake: A History of Pasadena/Point Loma College* (San Diego: Point Loma Press, 1992); and Leslie Parrott, *The Olivet Story: An Anecdotal History of Olivet Nazarene University, 1907-1990* (Newberg: Barclay Press, 1993).

Case studies have been chosen to illustrate the trends, focusing on the period 1880-1950. They are Pauline Holiness College [College Mound, MO], Frankfort [IN] Pilgrim College, Wesleyan Methodist Training Institute [Fairmont, IN], Indiana Wesleyan University, and Anderson University.

**Pauline Holiness College.** Pauline Holiness College evolved out of McGee Holiness College in the “prohibition town” of College Mound, located about halfway between St. Louis and Kansas City. It was an independent college, although many of its faculty and supporting churches were influenced by the developing concerns which resulted in the Church of God (Holiness). During the first year of its existence, it attracted 129 students from Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Ohio. The institution understood itself to be in competition with both State and denominationally funded “schools of superior grade—the Normal and the University—while private enterprises and denominational institutions have sprung up in all directions.”<sup>28</sup>

While arguing that its goal of the education was character formation as well as learning for its own sake,<sup>29</sup> the Catalogue presented a curriculum which was divided into classical and scientific tracks. Despite the assertion that “the Bible is the principal Text Book,” the annual series of “lectures on the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures and on Christian Work . . . [was] not compulsory.”<sup>30</sup> Everyone took Latin and mathematics. Graduates would have studied Cicero, Homer, and Livy in the original languages. Psychology, political philosophy, zoology, rhetoric and international law were standard features of both degree tracks. The textbooks listed were standard university texts for the subjects during the period. Remarkably, there was only one required course in religion: “Christian Evidences.” The *Second Annual Catalogue* reported 123 students, but the institution no longer had the services of Professor Henry B. Barnes in Mathematics and Latin.<sup>31</sup> The positions in Natural Science and Instru-

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<sup>28</sup>*Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1883-1884, College Mound, Macon County, Missouri* (College Mound: Good Way Publishing House, 1884), 16.

<sup>29</sup>*Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1883-1884*, 16.

<sup>30</sup>*Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1883-1884*, 11.

<sup>31</sup>*Second Annual Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1884-1885, College Mound, Macon County, Missouri* (College Mound: Good Way Publishing House, 1885), 4-7, 13.

mental Music were not filled on a permanent basis. Holiness faculty in the sciences and arts were apparently difficult to locate in Missouri.

In neither catalogue was there any dichotomy reflected between the life of the mind and the life of the Holiness believer in the context of American culture *outside* the public university. It was asserted: "Education has engaged the best minds of all ages of the world."<sup>32</sup> However, it also warned that mere study was not sufficient: Many of our public institutions are simply hot-beds of . . . infidelity . . . where evolution, monads and mysticism are esteemed more highly than God.<sup>33</sup> The public universities were understood to be the enemies of Holiness values and spirituality. Pauline Holiness College was clearly developed as a safe place for parents to send their children.<sup>34</sup> However, it was still attempting to prepare them to enter the American culture as participants in both classical education and the new scientific knowledge.

**Frankfort Pilgrim College.** Founded in 1927, this institution was located at the site of the Frankfort Camp Meeting, Frankfort, Indiana, one of the largest camp meetings in the nation.<sup>35</sup> By 1945 it had accumulated an interesting faculty which had been graduated from the University of Southern California, Asbury Theological Seminary, Oakland City [IN] College, Bible Holiness Seminary, Wabash College, DePauw University, Kingswood [KY] Holiness College, Illinois State University, Illinois State Normal University, Marion College, and Greensboro College. Its purpose was to:

lead the student to a deeper knowledge of the Word of God, that the life within and the life without may harmonize with the Scriptures; to provide instruction in the sciences, literature, theology, and art, that all may harmonize with this view. . . . The primary objective of Frankfort Pilgrim College is the training of young men and women for the Christian ministry.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>*Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1883-1884*, 16; *Second Annual Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1884-1885*, 16.

<sup>33</sup>*Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1883-1884*, 16; *Second Annual Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1884-1885*, 16.

<sup>34</sup>*Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1883-1884*, 17; *Second Annual Catalogue of Pauline Holiness College, 1884-1885*, 17.

<sup>35</sup>*Frankfort Pilgrim College Bulletin, Catalogue Edition, 1945-1946* (Frankfort, IN: n.p., 1945), 13. This college was affiliated with the Pilgrim Holiness Church.

<sup>36</sup>*Frankfort Pilgrim College Bulletin, Catalogue Edition, 1945-1946*, 15.

The catalogue of 1952-1953 had amended the statement to read training of young men and women for Christian ministry and public service.<sup>37</sup> By the 1962-1963 catalogue, there were thirteen faculty. The library boasted hundreds of volumes.<sup>38</sup> Nowhere in the early catalogues is there evidence of an obligation to be involved in social or religious structures outside the Pilgrim Holiness Church. The curriculum reflected the trends toward the "Liberal Arts," but it was primarily a training center for clergy. By 1970 the institution was renamed Frankfort Wesleyan Bible College as it sought to secure a place for itself in the post-merger Wesleyan Church. Any pretense of the "Liberal Arts" had disappeared in favor of a traditional Bible School curriculum, apparently at the instruction of the new denominational education executive. The school's purpose statement reverted to the original one!<sup>39</sup> The Doctrinal Statement had been expanded in light of Fundamentalist/Modernist issues, but could still not be characterized as purely Fundamentalist.

The College/Bible School, by 1970, was developed and maintained exclusively to provide clergy. Scholarly pursuits were distant from the goals and experiences of the students, and alien to most faculty, the majority of whom no longer had degrees higher than the B.A. The course offerings had devolved to only one year of "College Level" courses (1970-1972). The Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy and the strained relationship with the university culture were clearly in the background of the curriculum. However, the conflict was distant. The central concern was to meet the need of the denomination for clergy and missionaries. Much the same could be said of Beulah Park Bible School in Allentown, PA. It was able to survive longer by developing both its curriculum and the qualifications of its faculty.<sup>40</sup> Beulah Park began with more academic rigor, however. Latin, Greek, and either German or Spanish were required at the high school level. The three-year "Bible Course" reflected the classical nineteenth century theological curriculum except for the course in

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<sup>37</sup>*Frankfort Pilgrim College Bulletin, Catalogue Edition, 1952-1953* (Frankfort, IN: n.p., 1953), 11.

<sup>38</sup>*Frankfort Pilgrim College Bulletin, Catalogue Edition, 1962-1963* (Frankfort, IN: n.p., 1963), 6.

<sup>39</sup>*Frankfort Pilgrim College Bulletin, Catalogue Edition, 1970-1972* (Frankfort, IN: n.p., 1970), 11.

<sup>40</sup>*Annual Bulletin of the Beulah Park Bible School, Seventh Session, 1928-1929* (Allentown: n.p., 1928).

“Bible Illustrating and Black Board Work”—a sort of computer science course for the period. By the early 1930s, however, the languages had become electives.<sup>41</sup> Incidentally, Beulah Park is one of the few Wesleyan/Holiness schools to highlight the centrality of eschatological issues in its mission.

**The Indiana Wesleyan Methodist Institute and Bible Training School of Indiana and Indiana Wesleyan University.** This institution was founded in 1906 and eventually merged into Marion College which is now known as Indiana Wesleyan University. In addition to the expected academic and practical information, the early catalogues contain essays on the nature and purpose of education. W. J. Seekins, President of the Indiana Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, had presented the need of a school for the education of clergy. His analysis and proposal for the school had been adopted unanimously by the Conference in 1906.<sup>42</sup> E. Teter, President of the General Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, contributed a statement.<sup>43</sup> The most extensive essay was provided by A. T. Jennings, editor of the *Wesleyan Methodist*.<sup>44</sup>

Seekins noted that the first generation of clergy had been educated in other churches according to agreed upon standards. The need for a new generation of students to be formed for ministry presented a challenge to the Wesleyan Methodist Church which could not be ignored.<sup>45</sup> Teter congratulated the Indiana Conference for accepting the suggestion of Seekins. He insisted that the educational process cultivate the image of God in humans, provide instruction in hermeneutics, and retain the unity of intellect and spirit.<sup>46</sup> Jennings argued that the gospel has an intellectual side and that it is one of the tricks of the enemy to cheat souls out of their

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<sup>41</sup>*Annual Bulletin of the Beulah Park Bible School, Twelfth Session, 1933-1934* (Allentown: n.p., 1933).

<sup>42</sup>W. J. Seekins, “Extract from the Address Read at the Opening of the Conference,” *The Wesleyan Methodist Institute and Bible Training School of Indiana* (n.p.: n.d., 1906), 14-16.

<sup>43</sup>E. Teter, “From the President of the General Conference,” *The Wesleyan Methodist Institute and Bible Training School of Indiana* (n.p.: n.d., 1906), 12-13.

<sup>44</sup>A. J. Jennings, “Education as a Part of the Equipment of the Minister of the Gospel,” *The Wesleyan Methodist Institute and Bible Training School of Indiana* (n.p.: n.d., 1906), 8-11.

<sup>45</sup>Seekins, “Extract from the Address. . .,” 14-16.

<sup>46</sup>Teter, “From the President. . .,” 12-13.

heritage by keeping them in ignorance as far as possible.”<sup>47</sup> The curriculum contained courses on Wesley’s *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Binney’s *Compend*, Theology (2 terms), Church History, Mental Philosophy, Preaching, History of Reformation (2 terms), Robert’s Rules of Order, Christian Evidences, Natural Theology, Moral Science, Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation, and Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Throughout there is no reference to eschatology. There is also no statement of faith or creed. However, the founders included a lengthy list of ethical regulations. Premillennialism had not yet made its presence known. The earnest desire was to have clergy educated within the tradition of the Wesleyan Methodist Church on a par with those of other denominations.

The second year of the catalogue contained two essays, apparently from the pen of President J. O. Baker, who also taught theology and philosophy. The author argues that clergy must be “called” but that a “call” is no excuse for ignorance; that, just as education is essential for success in legal and other professions, education is a prerequisite for effective long term ministry. For support he reflects on Jesus’ ability to confound the intellectuals of his times and notes that the disciples were far from ignorant. They, he notes, spoke the languages of the target audiences, understood the Scriptures in the original languages, and were able to relate culturally to their audiences. The second thesis of the essay is that the Church, and not just the Wesleyan Methodist Church, is responsible for the continuity and flourishing of the larger culture. Baker argues that earlier civilizations had declined because of the decline of educational structures.<sup>48</sup>

The second essay insists that a call to ministry entails a responsibility to prepare so as to best represent the church and faithfully [direct] souls in the ways of righteousness and peace.<sup>49</sup> Remarkably, this essay does not discuss the responsibility for the larger culture, but insists that a call to the ministry necessitates a separation from secular thought and care.”<sup>50</sup> This apparent contradiction is apparently an *apologia* for the

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<sup>47</sup>Jennings, “Education as a Part. . .,” 10.

<sup>48</sup>J. O. Baker (?), “The Importance of a Christian Education,” *Annual Catalogue, The Wesleyan Institute, Fairmont Indiana, Indiana Conference, Wesleyan Methodist Connection, 1913-1914* (Fairmont: Wesleyan Institute, 1913), 7-11.

<sup>49</sup>J. O. Baker (?), “A Call to Ministry,” *Annual Catalogue, The Wesleyan Institute, Fairmont Indiana, Indiana Conference, Wesleyan Methodist Connection, 1913-1914* (Fairmont: Wesleyan Institute, 1913), 7-12.

<sup>50</sup>J. O. Baker (?), “A Call to Ministry,” 12.



location in Fairmont, Indiana, rather than a retraction of the previous argument! Certainly the location, made necessary by larger economic factors, would render difficult any significant interaction with the larger cultural structures.

Once again, there is no premillennial vision, or any other reference to eschatology. Instead there is a vision for involvement in the larger culture for the long term as part of the Wesleyan Methodist responsibility for the preservation and transmission of culture. There is no reference to antecedent efforts of education in the early catalogues. However, the designers of the curriculum clearly had in mind both the Bible School model *and* the evolving Liberal Arts paradigm. Fairmont merged with Marion College, which later evolved into Indiana Wesleyan University.<sup>51</sup>

**Anderson University.** Anderson University provides yet a different development from Bible School to University.<sup>52</sup> The first catalogue of Anderson Bible Training School (1917) made it clear that the purpose of the institution was the education of missionaries and ministers. The curriculum was designed on the Bible School model, but there was also a projected series of theological lectures. The catalogue intoned: "No attempt at mere intellectual development is intended. . . ."<sup>53</sup> The institution evolved quickly toward a Liberal Arts design, a tendency already evident in the fourth catalogue.<sup>54</sup> By 1925 the curriculum had moved further toward the Liberal Arts and University Model with courses in history, psychology and pedagogy.<sup>55</sup> By 1929 the institution was divided into four academic units: Liberal Arts; Bible School; Theological Seminary; and

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<sup>51</sup>On Fairmont and its merger with Marion, see W. G. Smith, *The History of the Church-Controlled Colleges*, 210-245.

<sup>52</sup>The history of Anderson University has been carefully described by Barry L. Callen, *Guide of Soul and Mind: The Story of Anderson University* (Anderson: Anderson University and Warner Press, 1992). See also the collection of texts published as *Faith, Learning, and Life: Views from the President's Office of Anderson University* compiled and edited by Barry L. Callen with a foreword by Myron S. Augsberger (Anderson: Anderson University and Warner Press, 1991).

<sup>53</sup>*First Annual Catalog of the Anderson Bible Training-school, 1917-1918* (Anderson: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1917), [6].

<sup>54</sup>"Purpose and Scope," *Catalog of the Anderson Bible Training-School, 1920-1921* (Anderson: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1920), 13-14.

<sup>55</sup>*Catalog of the Anderson Bible School and Seminary, 1925-1926* (Anderson: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1925).

School of Music.<sup>56</sup> The topics discussed in the publications included issues of tolerance and the purpose of education.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps nothing reflects the rapid evolution of purpose than that the institution which initially insisted that “No recommendation or diploma should be given any student”<sup>58</sup> was within a decade seeking accreditation by the State of Indiana in order to enable its graduates to function within the larger cultural structures.

## Conclusion

The case studies reveal that the educators of the Wesleyan/Holiness movements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were remarkably consistent in their responses to their marginalization in American society. It was clear that many viewed the public and/or secularized university as an enemy, but education remained a priority. The goals of that education were twofold: (1) to introduce students to the classical curriculum of liberal education so that the graduates could take their place in the middle class as participants in society, but with Wesleyan/Holiness values; and (2) the formation of clergy within contexts sympathetic to the values of the tradition so that these could lead the churches of the tradition and thereby insure its survival and transmission. Models for Wesleyan/Holiness higher education were threefold: (1) the Bible School (Vanguard School; God’s Bible School); (2) the liberal arts college; and (3) the university. On the basis of an examination of the curricula and goals of 78 Wesleyan/Holiness educational institutions, it would appear that the liberal arts model was the most prevalent. Oberlin and Yale served as the primary models in the latter two categories.

However, in no instance has a Wesleyan/Holiness college or university understood its mission to be the formation of an intellectual elite able

<sup>56</sup>*Catalog of the Anderson Bible School and Seminary* 13(April 1929).

<sup>57</sup>A. F. Gray, “The Need for Tolerance,” *The Broadcaster* 1:10(January 1930), 1, 4; John A. Morrison, “The Function of Education,” *The Broadcaster* 1:11(February 1930), 3.

<sup>58</sup>This restriction was by action of the General Ministerial Assembly of the supporting Church of God (Anderson). See the General Ministerial Assembly Minutes, 1918, cited in Barry L. Callen, *Preparing for Service: A History of Higher Education in the Church of God* (Anderson: Warner Press, 1988), 28. See also in Barry L. Callen, *Journeying Together: A Documentary History of the Corporate Life of the Church of God Movement (Anderson)* (Anderson, IN: Leadership Council of the Church of God and Warner Press, 1996), 55.

to compete for the mind of the larger society. This is the case even in theology which has been the central driving force of Wesleyan/Holiness institutions. Individuals who have chosen to enter that competition have generally been forced to do so in mainstream institutions and usually as members of mainstream denominations.

The issue of eschatology is also complex. It has been argued by Melvin Dieter in a forthcoming essay that premillennialism was a determinative force in forming the character of Wesleyan/Holiness educational values and institutions. My study indicates that that was true in some circles, primarily the Christian and Missionary Alliance, God's Bible School, Union Bible Seminary [Westfield, IN], and Beulah Park Bible School. Otherwise, even institutions like Wesleyan Institute, Anderson Bible Training School (Anderson University), Taylor University, Seattle Seminary [Seattle Pacific University], and Asbury College were in education for the long term, and understood their missions as contributory to the development and continuance of the good society.

However, because of the expensive traditions of the scholarly guilds, the unavailability of significant government funds, the lack of financial resources available within the traditions, and with the resultant heavy teaching loads, a Wesleyan/Holiness institution devoted to scholarly pursuits within the tradition seems a distant dream. The answer may be the establishment of institutes related to major intellectual centers as suggested by Marsden,<sup>59</sup> but resources to support any serious scholarly work from any of the Evangelical traditions are rare. More likely will be the development of cooperative institutes which draw personnel and financial resources from a more global context.

Finally, over against Mark Noll's thesis,<sup>60</sup> if this analysis is sustained, the problems and limitations of Holiness and Pentecostal education do not find their origins in the deficiencies of their theology or spirituality, but rather are a result of larger cultural forces and values which marginalized their voices and values in the development of American religious life. It will be unproductive to blame the victim. One of the reasons that the traditions have attracted renewed attention by scholars such as

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<sup>59</sup>George M. Marsden, "Why No Major Evangelical University?: The Loss and Recovery of Evangelical Advanced Scholarship," in J. Carpenter and K. Shipps, *Making Higher Education Christian: The History and Mission of Evangelical Colleges in America* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 301-303.

<sup>60</sup>Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (1994).

Noll is that the Holiness and Pentecostal churches have been growing quickly. This numerical strength brings with it additional cultural responsibilities. The scholars of the tradition must develop and sustain a vision for injecting their values into the larger culture. There is no one way to accomplish this task. Therefore, these scholars must be willing to risk the requisite experiments in that quest.

# JOHN WESLEY: MENTOR FOR AN EVANGELICAL REVIVAL

by

Henry H. Knight III

The issue addressed by Mark Noll in his *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* is that evangelicals no longer know how to think Christianly about science, art, culture, and history. Because evangelical thought is “bereft of self-criticism, intellectual subtlety, or an awareness of complexity,”<sup>1</sup> it eschews careful analysis and deep reflection and lives in the thought world of the shallow and superficial.

The reasons for this, though complex, involve two central factors according to Noll, revivalism and Scottish common sense philosophy. Together these prompted evangelicals to believe tradition was unnecessary, supplant community with individualism and immediatism, and adopt a dangerously naive method of biblical interpretation. The fruit of all this was dispensationalism and the Holiness and Pentecostal movements, who in Noll’s view bear much of the blame for the contemporary intellectual crisis among evangelicals. When looking for historical models of evangelicals who did honor the life of the mind, Noll identifies Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and even Francis Asbury. But, in spite of the intellectual achievements of Edwards and Wesley, they are said to also bear responsibility for the ensuing scandal through their endorsement of revivalism.

In contrast to Noll’s assessment, I argue that Wesley was entirely correct to vigorously support the religious awakening. To attend carefully

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<sup>1</sup>Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 14.

to Wesley's approach to revival could alleviate some of the ambiguity Noll himself feels when he concludes that revivalism

was able to mobilize great numbers for the cause of Christ. But also . . .—with its scorn for tradition, its concentration on individual competence, its distrust of mediated knowledge—American revivalism did much to hamstring the life of the mind.<sup>2</sup>

While Wesley mobilized great numbers for Christ, none of Noll's indictments sound true of Wesley's theology. Could it be, then, that the problem is not so much Wesley's advocacy of revival, but his descendants' failure to heed more carefully his approach to revival?

In response to Noll's critique, the following is a discussion of three aspects of Wesley's approach to theology: (1) how he serves as a mentor for the doing of theology; (2) how he offers a model for revival; and (3) how he engages intellectually with science and culture. I do not intend to be comprehensive, but only lift up those relevant aspects of Wesley which address Noll's concerns and claims.

## **1. Wesley as Mentor for Doing Theology**

It is clear that John Wesley's message and ministry focused on the benefits of Christ—on "pardon, holiness, and heaven," with a special emphasis on holiness. But what must be remembered (and indeed Wesley continually emphasizes) is that this gospel is rooted in the character, activity, and promises of God. Wesley's theology is fundamentally theocentric, not anthropocentric, and theocentric in a distinctively trinitarian manner.

In terms of God's character, Wesley's is preeminently a theology of love. It is God's love which orients and governs all the other attributes of God. Wesley says:

God is often styled holy, righteous, wise; but not holiness, righteousness, or wisdom in the abstract as he is said to be love, intimating that this is . . . his reigning attribute, the attribute that sheds an amiable glory on all his other perfections.<sup>3</sup>

To know that God is love is of the greatest import to humanity and to the future of creation. The character of God has a christological focus: it is

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>3</sup>John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 1 John 4:8.

revealed most fully and ultimately in Jesus Christ. It is what God has done in Christ that defines “God is love.”

As to God’s activity, what God has done in Christ is made a reality in human life through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Wesley’s emphasis on love does not diminish his concern for God’s freedom and initiative—God always takes the initiative, God’s grace is freely given, and it is God who enables a human response through faith.

Wesley’s theology is also a theology of promise, focusing on the grand purpose of God to restore fallen creation, and especially the *imago dei*. It affirms God’s faithfulness without presumption—God is faithful to promises in God’s own time and manner. Thus, Wesley maintains a vision of both God’s faithfulness and freedom as expressions of the character of God who is love.

This affirmation of who God is and what God is intends is at the heart of Wesley’s theology. What orients his theological reflection is not human reason or experience, or even the human need for salvation. It is God and God’s purposes. This explains Wesley’s rootedness in Scripture and concern for faithful interpretation. It also puts him at odds with the more anthropocentric theologies of the nineteenth century which placed an inordinate emphasis on reason or experience.

The very nature of these theological claims required that they be shared, and shared in such a way that people could understand. Of course Wesley sought more than cognitive assent, but a response of the heart as well as of the mind involves clarity in communication. Thus he was, as Albert Outler said, a “folk theologian;” he sought to speak “plain truth to plain people.”<sup>4</sup> In so doing Wesley was sharing theological ideas across lines of class and education. Wesley wanted to make available to the widest popular audience the riches of scripture and tradition.

There was an educative impulse in Wesley’s ministry, as witnessed by his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* and *A Christian Library*. The former was a commentary which drew upon established scholars such as Johannes Bengel. Wesley notes that it was

not principally designed for men of learning, . . . much less for men of long and deep experience in the ways and word of

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<sup>4</sup>Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), iii. See how Randy L. Maddox develops this in his discussion of Wesley as a “practical theologian” in *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 16-18.

God. . . . But I write chiefly for plain, unlettered men, who understand only their mother tongue, and yet reverence and love the word of God, and have a desire to save their souls.<sup>5</sup>

To accomplish this, Wesley endeavors to make the comments “as plain as possible, in pursuance of my main design—to assist the unlearned reader.” He therefore avoids “all use of the learned languages” as well as “such methods of reasoning and modes of expression, as people in common life are unacquainted with. . . .”<sup>6</sup>

His *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament* had a similar goal. While lauding the great commentary of Matthew Henry, Wesley recognizes that “everyone cannot have this exposition. It is too large a purchase. . . .”<sup>7</sup> Nor, because of its great size, does everyone have time to read it.

It is not possible for men who have their daily bread to earn by the sweat of their brows, who generally are confined to their work from six in the morning till six in the evening, to find leisure for reading over six folios, each containing seven or eight hundred pages. . . . As excellent as it is in its kind, it is not for their purpose; seeing they have neither money to make the purchase, nor time to read it over.<sup>8</sup>

Consequently, Wesley proposes to make an abridgment and alteration of Henry’s commentary, with the goal of making it simultaneously “shorter” and “plainer” (and, in places, deeper in exposition).<sup>9</sup>

His *A Christian Library* was in like manner an attempt to make available an inexpensive, clearly written collection of selected devotional and spiritual writings. Including extracts, abridgments, and translations (with, at times, additions or corrections), Wesley sought to put the riches of the Christian tradition into the hands of ordinary people.<sup>10</sup> This is in sharp contrast to the New England clergy who guarded their prerogatives against the common people, and viewed with disdain the upstart Baptist

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<sup>5</sup>*The Works of John Wesley* (third edition), vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978, reprinted from 1872 edition), 235.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 248, 250.

<sup>10</sup>See *ibid.*, 220-223.



and Methodist preachers of the awakenings. Nathan Hatch has shown the populist nature of Christian movements which grew out of the awakenings, including their suspicion of clergy, lawyers, and doctors, whose education was a sign of class privilege.<sup>11</sup>

The tragedy in all of this is that those clergy educated in the Christian tradition sought to use their knowledge as a reason to suppress the uneducated preachers, while the preachers in turn insisted they had no need of that education because they had the Bible. Noll blames revivalism for the resulting bibliolatry; I suggest that the fault lies more with clergy attempting to maintain a position of privilege than with uneducated preachers who refused to stay in their place.

Wesley himself was no populist—he warned of “enthusiasm” and insisted that theological claims be rooted in Scripture. Yet he was no intellectual elitist either—an Oxford or Cambridge education was not the prerequisite for faithful theological reflection. What he did was try to make accessible to common people the resources needed to ground and test their theology in God’s revelation.

## 2. Wesley as Mentor for Evangelical Revival

John Wesley offers insight as well concerning both the practices and the purposes of revival. Central to Wesley’s approach to religious awakening is the linkage of “doctrine” and “discipline.” For Wesley, doctrine was more than concepts; it was the experienced reality of the promises of God, especially justification and sanctification. Discipline was the spiritual disciplines of doing no harm, doing good, and attending to the ordinances of God such as prayer, Scripture, and eucharist which enable one to grow in the knowledge and love of God. Doctrine is then the goal, God’s purpose for human life; discipline is the practical means to that end.<sup>12</sup>

Accountability to Christian discipline was found in the classes and bands. By maintaining this discipline, a believer was enabled to remain in a right relationship with God and with the neighbor, in the face of all that would pull one away. What is striking in this insistence on nurture as well

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<sup>11</sup>Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>12</sup>Discussions of how these disciplines or “means of grace” functioned in the Wesleyan movement can be found in Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992), and in Randy Maddox, chapter 8.

as proclamation is how it avoids the dangers of individualism and immediatism. Persons become participants in communities of faith, and the goal is not simply an experience, but maturity in a relationship.

In addition to a union of proclamation and nurture in the practice of revival, Wesley also helps us rethink the purposes of revival. He does this (in a way much like Edwards) through conceiving of the Christian life in terms of religious affections or “holy tempers.” These affections are both dispositional (they give content and direction to our character) and relational (they exist only when we are in relationship to God and the neighbor).<sup>13</sup> By focusing on the affections, Wesley emphasizes the purpose of revival as a transformed life manifested as fruit of the Spirit. Thus the purpose of revival is not simply to generate “feelings,” nor are “feelings” by themselves an evidence that God is at work. Likewise, Wesleyan revival does not focus on isolated “blessings” apart from a dynamic, ongoing relationship with God.

The affections are also a way of avoiding the Enlightenment disjunction between the heart and the mind, a gulf presupposed by both rationalist critics and enthusiast advocates of revival. What we believe about God is inescapably related to the affections and thereby to the life we live, for our lives are in response to the God we envision. Thus, theology and experience are essentially linked, and the importance of spiritual disciplines, which continually root believers in Scripture and tradition, is underscored.

What we see in both the practices and purposes of revival, according to Wesley, is a strong affirmation of the transforming power of God tied to an aversion to individualistic enthusiasm. Whether and to what extent nineteenth century revivalism may have moved away from Wesley’s pattern of revival are issues yet to be demonstrated, issues separable from the teaching and practice of Wesley himself.

### **3. Wesley as Mentor for the Life of the Mind**

John Wesley was quite clear concerning the priorities of his ministry (which he took to be God’s priorities). They are to reform the nation and spread scriptural holiness across the land. His central motivation was not

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<sup>13</sup>For discussions of the religious affections in Wesley’s theology, with a comparison to Jonathan Edwards, see Gregory S. Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affection* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1989), and Richard B. Steele, “Gracious Affection” and “True Virtue” According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1994). See also R. Maddox, chapter 3 and H. Knight, especially chapter 2.

the scholarly search for truth, but the evangelical imperative to proclaim the truth of the gospel. This passion for the gospel did not foster an anti-intellectualism. Wesley deeply respected the power of reason, even in unbelievers. Without faith they are unable to reason rightly concerning spiritual realities, and might thereby be led into wrong conclusions, even concerning the physical realm. Nonetheless, reason even then remained a powerful tool in understanding the ways of God's creation. In other words, Wesley had a strong sense of what scholarship is for. It is not (as Mark Noll seems to suggest) purely doxological—the worshipping of God with the mind. For Wesley, it is centrally missiological—the serving God and God's purposes with the mind.

With this in mind, we can briefly examine Wesley's attitude to science and medicine. A recent article by J. W. Haas, Jr., provides a careful account of Wesley's relationship with the science of his day.<sup>14</sup> While Wesley was not a participant in scientific research and thus limited in his understanding, he was nonetheless appreciative of science. What Wesley objects to is science which leaves out God—the kind of science more compatible with Deism than orthodox theism. Although he may not have always done so with scientific accuracy, Wesley does model a kind of theological critique of science which at the same time honors the contribution of science.

The missiological and doxological can be seen in Wesley's *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation: Or, A Compendium of Natural Philosophy*, in five volumes. Again, his goal was to produce a work that is accurate, short, and inexpensive. But in addition, he says,

I wished to see this short, full, plain account of the visible creation directed to its right end: Not barely to entertain an idle, barren curiosity; but to display the invisible things of God, his power, wisdom, and goodness.<sup>15</sup>

Such a presentation would not only invite praise to the Creator, but a commendable recognition of our own finite limitations as human beings.<sup>16</sup>

The missiological impulse is made clear in another way in Wesley's *The Disideratum: Or, Electricity Made Plain and Useful*. While “indebted to Mr. Franklin for the speculative part, and to Mr. Lovett for the

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<sup>14</sup>J. W. Haas, Jr., “John Wesley's Views on Science and Christianity: An Examination of the Charge of Antiscience,” *Church History* 63(September, 1994), 378-392.

<sup>15</sup>*The Works of John Wesley* (third edition), vol. 14, 300.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 301-302.

practical,”<sup>17</sup> Wesley is “not greatly concerned for the philosophical part, whether it stand or fall.” He is “much more concerned for the physical part, knowing of how great importance this is; how much sickness and pain may be prevented or removed, and how many lives saved, by this unparalleled remedy.”<sup>18</sup> Enamored, as were many others, with the curative power of electricity, Wesley’s interest was motivated not by the scientific search for truth, but the usefulness of science in endeavoring to love our neighbor.

Wesley’s appropriation of medical knowledge in his *Primitive Physick: Or, an Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases* and in his clinics is well-known.<sup>19</sup> His decision to diagnose and prescribe, in person and in print, in order to provide care for those too poor to pay a physician led him to familiarize himself with medical research. Many of his proposed cures—including those which seem odd today—were standard at the time. He was also the first to espouse in popular print what we now know as mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Here again, preeminence is given to the theological perspective. All healing, whether miraculous or through medicine, is of God. Wesley refuses to allow medicine a pure domain without God, and insightfully notes the linkages between physical, emotional, and spiritual maladies.

We do not have to endorse every conclusion reached by Wesley to appreciate his pattern of engagement with science and medicine. He attempted as best he could to understand the research of his day, neither dismissing out of hand nor blindly endorsing its conclusions. He readily adopted all that seemed helpful for human well-being. Above all, he placed science and medicine in a theological perspective, addressing them from a distinctively Christian standpoint.

The disciplines of science, medicine, and the various social sciences are far better established in our day than in Wesley’s. We perhaps have less excuse than he for shallow analysis or careless misrepresentation. But, beyond a genuine attempt to understand, we share with Wesley the obligation to reflect theologically on these disciplines, examining their conclusions in light of the revelation of God. Such a stance is far from anti-intellectualism.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 241.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 242.

<sup>19</sup>See E. Brooks Holifield, *Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 8-38.

# **THE DISPENSATIONALISTS: EMBARRASSING RELATIVES OR PROPHETS WITHOUT HONOR: REFLECTIONS ON MARK NOLL'S *THE SCANDAL OF THE EVANGELICAL MIND***

by

**William Kostlevy**

There is irony in Mark A. Noll's intriguing critique of the anti-intellectualism of North American Evangelicalism, a critique found in his *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. As a gifted scholar, Noll's own research has played a central role in the growing recognition of the broader significance of Evangelical currents in American history and culture. As such, Noll and his colleagues at the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicalism at Wheaton College have greatly facilitated research in contemporary and historic Evangelicalism. The results have greatly increased our knowledge of the diverse and competing traditions that comprise the so-called Evangelical Movement.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the results have been so stunning that popular Evangelical beliefs and practices are now seriously and, even more remarkably, objectively studied in elite research universities. For example, in 1992 alone important historical research into popular Evangelicalism resulted in the publication of landmark studies of Creationism and millennialism. These studies would have been impossible without the work of Noll and his colleagues.

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<sup>1</sup>On the diversity of the Evangelical traditions, see Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnson, eds., *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

Of course, the irony is that such scholarly research into the popular beliefs of Evangelicals was neither the intent of Noll nor the Pew Charitable Trust which has funded much of the research into contemporary Evangelicalism. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* is, in part, Noll's response to these two remarkable award-winning studies. They are Ronald Number's account of the origins of Creationism in Seventh Day Adventism and its rapid spread among North American Evangelicals and Paul Boyer's story of the origins and spread of popular millennialism among these same Evangelicals.<sup>2</sup> Although moving far afield from these two case studies, Noll convincingly demonstrates that the popular Evangelicalism of Creation Science and prophecy charts bears little resemblance to the scholastic orthodoxy of the Protestant Reformation or the doctrinal ruminations of the New England Puritan divines.

Noll's work is divided into four parts: An introduction of the problem (Evangelical gullibility and anti-intellectualism); a narrative describing the historical roots of anti-intellectualism; several case studies; and a conclusion. Although I share Noll's concern about popular Evangelical anti-intellectualism, I remain unconvinced by his historical reconstruction of the history and emergence of popular Evangelical gullibility.

Noll is, of course, an accomplished historian whose work on the Princeton theological tradition, evangelical Biblical scholarship, and the history of Christianity in America has played a significant role in shaping both the internal understanding of Evangelicalism and the image that Evangelicalism presents to the world. A person with impeccable evangelical credentials, Noll is a graduate of Wheaton College, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Vanderbilt University. In fact, Noll, along with his colleagues Nathan Hatch, George Marsden, Harry Stout, and Joel Carpenter, provide overwhelming evidence that contemporary Evangelicalism has considerable intellectual depth.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists* (New York: Knopf, 1992) and Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup>Biographical material on Noll is available in Maxie Byrd Burch, "Doing History From the Inside: an Examination of Evangelical Historiography" (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 1994), 12-19, 45-58. Closely related to the work of Noll, Hatch, Marsden, and Carpenter is the work of two historians with roots in Pentecostalism, Grant Wacker and Edith Blumhofer. In many ways the irony of Noll's *Scandal* is that it appears just when a record number of evangelicals of various

Given Noll's knowledge and accomplishments, it is ironic that the fundamental flaw in the *Scandal* is rooted in the author's refusal to accept the implications of his own scholarship.<sup>4</sup> Clearly disappointed that popular North American Evangelicalism is not Protestant orthodoxy, Noll roots Evangelicalism in a mythical history of declension. Accepting the logic of the critics of the American perfectionistic-revivalist tradition, especially the Princeton tradition, Noll condemns his villains—the Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism and Dispensationalism, albeit with little evidence, for not being Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, or even Catholicism. Amazingly—and I consider this unforgivable—the author's love of Protestant orthodoxy is so uncritical that he even suggests that the Lutheran doctrine of *simul justus et peccator* encourages toleration for different points of view. As a perfectionistic, chiliastic, Anabaptist, sympathetic to Pietism, to my knowledge Lutheranism, except where diluted by Pietism (which in many areas remains the dominant expression of Lutheranism) has a notorious history of intolerance.

Fundamentally, Noll's book is marred by its basic presupposition that the story of Evangelicalism is the story of the fall of Evangelicalism's "immediate ancestors," the Puritans (40). The author, of course, knows better. Acknowledging that Evangelicalism has always been made of "shifting movements and temporary alliances" (8), and later that Evangelicals are products of the separation of church and state, the Christian-American cultural synthesis created in the wake of the American revolution, revivalism, and fundamentalism (59), Noll repeatedly berates Evangelicals for departing from the purity of Reformation doctrine. Completely neglecting the international and non-English speaking antecedents of American Evangelicalism, especially the crucial role of the Middle Colonies in the revivalist tradition, Noll inaccurately suggests that Puritanism—exemplified by its great son, Jonathan Edwards—is, or at least should be, the normative Evangelical model. Not surprisingly, the work

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stripes are embarking on academic careers and esoteric debates in the evangelical community, on topics such as millennial beliefs and the emergence of creation science, have received serious scholarly consideration. Ironically, even as scholars such as Marsden bemoan the fate of evangelicals in the academy, the evidence suggests that a new generation of women and men rooted in conservative religious traditions are quietly coming of age.

<sup>4</sup>See Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 363-389.

concludes with a sorrowful lament that Evangelicals are very unlike their Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic neighbors (247).

As scholars such as W. R. Ward have convincingly argued, New England Puritanism as shaped by the First Great Awakening is, in fact, perhaps best understood as one expression of a much larger European and North American movement of spiritual renewal. Fundamentally opposed to Protestant Orthodoxy, this Movement of experiential religion, including Methodism, is the primary shaper of American Evangelical piety.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, Noll's glorification of Protestant Orthodoxy, especially in its Lutheran and Reformed variants, entails a fundamental rejection of Evangelicalism. Expressed differently, the pathos, pain, and even anger which emanate from Noll's work are products of a wrenching discovery that the myth propagated by revivalist Protestants—the Moody, Sam Jones, Billy Sunday folks—that they were simply Bible believing purveyors of orthodoxy was their own self-serving creation. Denouncing innovation while honoring the Bible and religious experience, popular evangelists claimed to be preaching the old-time religion. In fact, the Keswick-dispensational formula that has dominated popular preaching since the 1870s was an inventive reconstruction of Christian orthodoxy that in various formulations has united Protestants of many varieties. Noll may be embarrassed by that formula, but the crowds that flocked to Billy Graham's crusades a century later—Lutherans, Reformed, Mennonites, United Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians—were not.

The primary "scandal" of the Evangelical mind, for Noll, is dispensational premillennialism. Embarrassed by Evangelicalism's fascination with eschatological timetables and dubious exegesis, Noll presents an affirmation of the eschatology of the magisterial reformation that flies in the face of one of the most significant developments in Biblical scholarship in the twentieth century, the rediscovery of the centrality of eschatology in the ministry of the historical Jesus. Although quick to condemn the eccentricities of prophecy devotees, Noll sadly expends little energy in attempting to understand one of the most neglected and little understood mass movements in twentieth century Evangelicalism.

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<sup>5</sup>W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Awakening* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 241-295. Unlike Noll, Ward locates the origins of Evangelicalism in revivalism. As a result, the Middle Colonies, not New England, emerge as the fountainhead of the evangelical experience.



Interestingly, Noll's central point that one of Evangelicalism's most prized doctrines—the blessed hope of Jesus' second advent—was a doctrinal innovation would not have surprised Daniel Steele, George Wilson, C. C. Cary, Isaiah Reid, Harmon Baldwin, Nettie Peabody, or a host of lesser-known Holiness folks. Knowing little of the internal history of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, Noll cannot be expected to understand the complex debate over millennialism that raged in colleges, Bible schools and even rescue missions.<sup>6</sup> Rejecting the naive optimism of Progressive-Era America, the holiness rank-and-file, embittered by the depression of the 1890s and the decisive defeat of Populism in the 1896 presidential election, increasingly interpreted salvation as a this-worldly event to be inaugurated by the premillennial advent of Jesus. In fact, far from being participants in an otherworldly retreat from responsible citizenship, the clerks, domestics, housewives and workers who increasingly made up the Holiness Movement in the years after 1890 had few illusions that the temporal social salvation espoused by reformers and elite clergy would significantly alter their status on earth.

Denouncing accumulated wealth and those that possessed it, early Holiness champions of premillennialism, such as Albert Sims, L. L. Pickett, Seth C. Rees and W. B. Godbey, provided a class based social analysis that spoke with power to those disillusioned by the failure of Populism.<sup>7</sup> As L. L. Pickett, one of the earliest Holiness champions of the new eschatology, wrote in 1896: “. . . does he [Jesus] mean anything or nothing when he says ‘sell that ye have and give?’ There is much money locked up in idle land, unneeded cattle, in bank vaults, in vain and gaudy jewelry, in many things and at many places.” Pickett's message that a person with “two houses, needless horses, or extra farms” would have their property confiscated by Jesus was welcome news for many who, while suspicious

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<sup>6</sup>My mother, as a student at the Free Methodist-related Olive Branch Mission Training School in Chicago in the 1940s, was taught that Biblical prophecy had little to do with the millennial speculation disseminated from Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary. Although she refused to accept the postmillennialism of her teacher, Helen I. Root, she knew that much of popular evangelical prophetic speculation was a recent doctrinal innovation.

<sup>7</sup>Early twentieth-century Wesleyan/Holiness interpretations of prophecy are deeply rooted in economic analysis. As Albert Sims wrote, “. . . our whole financial and social system is such that, by processes called legal, the great proportion of the wealth, produced solely by labor, goes into the coffers of the favored few.” See A. Sims, *Behold the Bridegroom Cometh; or Some Remarkable and Incontrovertible Signs Which Herald the Near Approach of the Son of Man* (Kingston, ON: by the author, 1900), 107.

of socialist schemes and labor violence, longed for a redistribution of wealth and the resulting just social order. Insisting that the meek would truly inherit the earth, Pickett wrote in 1903, "[the] wealth and power of the world is very largely in the hands of those who use it for selfish purposes. . . . But in the day of His triumph, the humble-hearth poor of the earth shall be the possessors of the kingdom, the glory, the honor and wealth of the nations."<sup>8</sup>

Many Holiness radicals went far beyond Pickett, Sims, Godbey, and Rees. Building on the example of the apostolic church and the Holiness doctrine of entire consecration, Holiness radicals from Maine to California rejected the very notion of private property. Although outside the scope of this review, Holiness, Pentecostal, and Evangelical experiments in utopian communal living seriously challenged the prevailing social order while profoundly shaping twentieth-century popular Evangelicalism.<sup>9</sup> Premillennialism is, of course, a complex phenomenon. It can and sometimes does breed moral and cultural indifference, along with bad exegesis, bigotry, and numerous other sins. But, in the final analysis, I believe that Christianity when shorn of its millennial impulse largely serves the interests of the elite in church and society.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>L. L. Pickett, *Our King Cometh* (Louisville, KY: Pickett Publishing Co., 1896), 52-58. Several years later Pickett wrote: "Rags and hunger, squalor and want, wretchedness and misery hang over against these massive fortunes and overflowing luxuries of the rich [Rockefeller, Carnegie, Vanderbilt, and Cecil Rhodes], creating a great contrast with the spirit of the holy Christ. He who denied Himself and became poor and homeless and shelterless and pillowless for the salvation of men will judge the covetousness and selfishness which hoards while others hunger, bloats while others beg, and fattens while others starve" (from Pickett, *The Blessed Hope of His Glorious Appearing*, Louisville, KY: Pickett Publishing Co., 1901, 37-38). The second quote is from L. L. Pickett, *The Renewed Earth, or the Coming and Reign of Jesus Christ* (Louisville, KY: Pickett Publishing Co., 1903), 30-31.

<sup>9</sup>On evangelical communal societies, see William Kostlevy, "Neither Silver Nor Gold: The Burning Bush Movement and the Communitarian Holiness Vision," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Notre Dame, 1996).

<sup>10</sup>In recent years much has been made of the fact that Charles G. Finney and the social experiments at Oberlin College were rooted in postmillennialism. Although true, such analysis misses the point that Finney, especially during his most radical phase, was a radical millennialist who believed that the kingdom of God was being established in Ohio. See Donald W. Dayton, "Millennial Views and Social Reform in Nineteenth Century America," in M. Darrol Bryant and Donald W. Dayton, eds., *The Coming Kingdom: Essays in American Millennialism and Eschatology* (New York: New Era Books, 1983), 131-168. The same points are made in Ulrich Gabler, *Auferstehungszeit: Erweckungsprediger des 19. Jahrhunderts, Sechs Portrats* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1991).





**Melvin Easterday Dieter**

**Recipient of the Wesleyan Theological Society's 1996 Award:  
"Lifetime Service to the Wesleyan/Holiness Tradition"**

# TRIBUTE TO MELVIN E. DIETER

by

Paul Merritt Bassett<sup>1</sup>

Let us be a Wesleyan/Holiness class meeting pondering questions put to us by some Kierkegaardian soul who has wandered in and addressed us. In the spirit of the pseudonymous Johannes Climacus, she chooses to make our celebrating difficult.

She has said something like this: “When you Wesleyan/Holiness types speak of a *Lifetime Achievement Award*, whatever can you be talking about, especially on this occasion? First, the recipient is still very much alive. Don’t you really mean a *Life-Achievement-So-Far Award*? Surely you hope for more from him for years to come, for he looks young and hale. Or is it that you believe he is going to backslide one of these days and you had better honor him while you can? I understand that you believe in backsliding. Second, you really seem to mean *Life-Understood-As-Adult-Life-Achievement-So-Far-Award*, in this particular case, *Life-Since-About-1946-Until-Now-Achievement-Award*. True, our recipient showed signs of precocity as a child and youth, but at least twenty years went by before he either wrote or said anything memorable or notable about the Wesleys, Wesleyanism, or the Holiness Movement.

But even deeper than all of this lays a very serious anomaly. It is this: What are you Wesleyan/Holiness people doing handing out awards anyway? Modesty, humility, inconspicuous piety—these are your “thing.”

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<sup>1</sup>This introduction and tribute was delivered by Paul Bassett on the occasion of the Wesleyan Theological Society’s honoring of Melvin E. Dieter with its “Lifetime Service to the Wesleyan/Holiness Tradition” award, November, 1996, Washington, D. C.

It is your tradition that keeps harping to the rest of us about the necessity of “unconditional surrender” and “unconditional love to God and neighbor” as the ultimate goods of the spiritual life, and about how such grace destroys pride. You used to sing, “I’m going through; I’m going through; I’ll take the way with the Lord’s despised few.” Not all that long ago, you folks had few kind words about earthly kudos. You almost convinced some of us that they were the ruination of normal hat sizes. What must it mean for folks like you to give a “Life Achievement Award?”

I should like to thank that perceptive, if a bit bilious child of old S. K. for raising some questions worth considering, for certainly our smiles of approbation, our applause, our bestowal of honors and dignities must be granted in a spirit consonant with our theology and consonant with our spirituality. And we surely would want their granting to conform strictly to our Lord’s admonition that our “yea” be “yea” and our “nay” be “nay,” for anything other than this is from the Enemy, whose name is Deceit and Delusion.

Well, we can let all of that stand as a prelude to the great honor which is ours this evening—the honor of presenting the *Life-Since-About-1946-Until-Now-Achievement Award* to one who truly has exemplified the modesty, humility, and inconspicuous piety that are “our thing” as a spiritual and theological tradition. This one truly has exemplified the servant-leadership, scholarship, and Christian collegiality which is “our thing” as an academic society. It is my honor to say something about him.

A fascinating year for Americans was 1924. Like 1996, it was an election year. President Warren Gamaliel Harding, about whom only his middle name was angelic, had died the previous year, and 1924 was filled with news of scandal after scandal in his administration. His Vice-President, now President Calvin Coolidge, had responded to the scandals with swift justice and took the Republicans into the election that autumn with great optimism. Like us Wesleyan/Holiness folk, Silent Cal wasn’t *charismatic*, but he was *clean*. The Democrats had taken 103 ballots to nominate the stolid and even brilliant, but lackluster John Davis of West Virginia, and went glumly into the campaign. The Progressives noisily followed Wisconsin’s Bob LaFollett. Coolidge won handily in that November seventy-two years ago.

But for us gathered here this evening, the really important event took place a month earlier, on Columbus Day, 1924. Harold and Laura Dieter of Cherryville, Pennsylvania, became parents, and named our honoree

Melvin Easterday. Just south of Cherryville lies the city of Allentown. There, in 1921, the International Holiness Church (descendant of the International Holiness Union and Prayer League) had founded Beulah Park Bible School. Less than two years into the school's existence, the denomination (already the product of a number of mergers, with more to come) became the Pilgrim Holiness Church (1922). In 1932 the school called Harold Dieter, pastor at Cherryville and treasurer of the school, to be its president. He was 28. Within a year, under Harold Dieter's leadership, Beulah Holiness Academy, Shacklefords, Va. (estab. 1908) and Greensboro (N. C.) Bible and Literary School (estab. 1903) merged with Beulah Park and the "new" institution was re-chartered as Allentown Bible Institute. Dieter also led in establishing a zone-type model for supporting the denominational schools.

So, since his eighth year, our honoree, the son of that young, new "first family" of a young, reorganized school in a constantly reorganizing denomination with a fairly new name, has lived and breathed Wesleyan/Holiness higher education in one way or another. We must be careful about drawing straight lines of influence in a biography, but it seems appropriate to say that we find in his early years the roots of our honoree's ability to lead in transitions with both a sense of history and a clear vision of the road ahead. Only during his undergraduate years at Muhlenberg College, his period of graduate study at Lehigh University, and a wartime tour of duty in the U. S. Navy, did our honoree live and breathe in other than the Wesleyan/Holiness environment.

His tour of duty with the Navy bears some attention. For some of that time, Uncle Sam stationed him where you might expect the government to station a sailor—Boulder, Colorado. There he learned a language most useful to an historian of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement—Chinese. Mustering out of the Navy, our honoree entered on the career for which he has surely exhibited the requisite gifts and graces—gifts and graces which, by the grace of God, he has put at the disposal of us all. From 1946 to 1948 he taught and served as high school principal and assistant to the president of Allentown Bible Institute. In 1948, at the very beginning of the school year, that president died in his forty-second year. Harold D. Dieter had literally burnt himself out for Christ and Christ's church through his service to the school and to the Pilgrim Holiness denomination. After a brief interim, Melvin Easterday Dieter was named acting president, then president of the Allentown school. He was now all

of 25 years of age—three years younger than his father had been on assuming the office. And he spoke fluent Chinese, which had to be a “plus” amongst the coal miners and farmers around Allentown.

The Dieters never quite fit the stereotype so often laid unfairly upon Wesleyan/Holiness folk. Harold Dieter hadn’t known Chinese, but he had read widely and well. Sure, Godbey, Carradine, Wood, Seth Rees, and Martin Wells Knapp were in his library, but so was most of the so-called “western canon,” and a lot of theology from across the Protestant spectrum, too. He had brought remarkable stability and constituency support to an institution. He was aiming at a strong liberal arts base for the Bible College student.

His son, Mel, was up to carrying on the job. He had better sense than to believe that love and honor for the father automatically pass on to the son—especially to a son who spoke Chinese, served with the Navy in the Rocky Mountains, and got his college education from the Lutherans. For the next half-decade Mel labored to rework the Bible Institute into an adequately supported liberal arts college. By 1954 it had become Eastern Pilgrim College in name and substantially in fact. But this took great promotional and diplomatic skills, and the instilling of trust in a constituency that was not especially opposed to liberal arts, but was deeply convinced of the need for preachers and teachers of the Word of God.

Our honoree demonstrated these skills over and again, but not with the secularist’s artfulness, nor with the coy piety of a supersalesperson who has learned to blush. These were God’s gifts and graces, and in Mel they were well used, and timely indeed. One who sharply criticized Mel in those days said to me just a month ago, “It became clearer and clearer to folks like me that here was a man whose favorite pronoun was not ‘I.’ ”

In 1965 Mel laid down the presidency of Eastern Pilgrim College to go to Temple University to work on a Ph.D. But others continually remembered those gifts and graces of leadership. They would not allow Mel to immerse himself singularly in studies. And he could not allow it either. Boothwyn, Pa., wanted a piece of him as pastor; and the Pilgrim Holiness Church needed a piece of him as a “major player” as it moved ever closer to merger with the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

In this latter process, Mel’s gifts and graces came to full play as the two very different Wesleyan/Holiness bodies inched toward organic union. This was no picnic. The Pilgrim Holiness Church, since its days of origin in the International Apostolic Holiness Union and Prayer League,



had gone about developing strong leadership. It treasured revivalism and camp meeting-style worship. The Wesleyan Methodists had arisen in rebellion against episcopal Methodism's temporizing regarding slavery. They understood a politically strong episcopacy to be the principal villain. Only after the turn of the century had they begun to develop anything like centralized authority. They loved revivals and camp meetings as much as the Pilgrim Holiness people did; but they could not see them as norms for ordinary congregational worship.

Mel's diplomatic skills—both the skills of compromise and the skills for standing firm without alienating—played no small role in the uniting of the two denominations in 1968. He sat at the center of affairs on a number of important committees and subcommittees, and chaired some of them. After the uniting conference, he was elected General Secretary of the Department of Educational Institutions, a position he would hold for eight years. Mel's major tasks were to instill commitment to a common cause and vision, and to halve (at least) the number of schools (11) brought into the new denomination by the merging bodies. The system of eleven stretched from New Brunswick to South Carolina and out to the middle of Kansas. As you would expect, there are no alumni more loyal than alumni of a school about to be closed. Here and there, even yet, some have strong negative feelings toward the process which eliminated their alma mater, either by merger or extinction. But the real wonder lies in the fact that the new denomination accomplished the task with minimal uproar. Mel led in the reduction of the system from eleven to six schools in four years; and he led in the development of a much healthier, cooperative system.

In the meantime, Mel completed his Ph.D. at Temple University with a dissertation on "Revivalism and Holiness" (1972). His *Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, just now out in a second edition, is a reprise of that research. In it, he more or less takes up the story where his good friend, Timothy Smith, had left it in *Revivalism and Social Reform* (1957). In that work, in the work he edited which is entitled *Five Views on Sanctification*, and in the volume *The Church* which he co-edited with Daniel Berg in Warner Press' "Wesleyan Perspectives" series, Mel clearly demonstrates the kind of diplomacy which we earlier underscored. His is an ecumenical vision, held from a clearly Wesleyan/Holiness standpoint.

This ability to appreciate positively without loss of identity served him well, and in some ways served as the base for his next assignments—

teaching church history and serving as Provost at Asbury Theological Seminary. Clearly, Asbury was moving into a new era—a more ecumenical, but still Wesleyan era. More than a few among the various constituencies feared that the changes would bury the school's traditional identity. Here Mel served for almost two decades, a stabilizing and guiding spirit, and clearly a "holiness man," but never a bureaucrat. It is during his years at Asbury Seminary that Mel served also as an officer in the Wesleyan Theological Society (Vice-President in 1976-77, program committee chair for the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Society, held at Huntington (Indiana) College, and as President of the Society in 1977-78). The two years 1977-1978 were watershed years in the history of the Society.

The program which Mel shaped dealt with the historical and theological development of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement. The place of pneumatology in that development had come to the fore with considerable force. Also on the table was Mildred Bangs Wynkoop's *Theology of Love*, controversial because its advocacy of a "relational view" of entire sanctification took on more "propositional" approaches to the doctrine. Mel presided over the next year's meeting, held at Mount Vernon (Ohio) Nazarene College. Now the exegetical scholars took up the questions ricocheting from the previous meeting from the standpoint of their disciplines, taking them on primarily in terms of Acts 2, the Pentecost account. More theologians and historians got into action with papers and discussion.

Mel's title for his Presidential Address, which was given at that meeting, fit perfectly—fit his own character and fit the occasion. It was simply "Musings." His musings "on the moment" insisted that the Society must be a principal arena for conversation on issues of concern. He was not about to ask it to conform to the canons of public relations or even to give the slightest opening to considerations of self-preservation. Indeed, he said, the Society must explicate the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition to other traditions and to secularism; and to do this, we must listen to and understand each other as well as listening to and understanding those outside our circle. Mel called for the Society's Journal to enlarge its mission along the lines he had suggested. He called for full and free expression at meetings of the Society.

Earlier in his career, Mel had indicated that his own Pilgrim Holiness tradition had perhaps not been sufficiently Trinitarian in its proclamation—that it had emphasized the Person and work of the Spirit at the expense of the other two Persons of the Trinity. Now again, Mel raised

that issue in terms of the Holiness Movement at large. He very thoughtfully and carefully took up both the assets and the liabilities of the tradition's pneumatological language, and called for the development of a truly Wesleyan *via media*. Finally, he called for a re-emphasis on the authority of the Bible as the means by which a true "middle way" could be found—a means for revitalizing both the doctrine and the spiritual life of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement.

Permit me to quote the closing paragraph of Mel's address as a summing up of the person and work of the man himself. He said:

We cannot stand still; the experience of the people of God and the theological explication of that experience must go on—but always under the Spirit and the Word as the authoritative arbiters. In seeking any correction of deficiencies of mis-emphases in our theology or preaching, let us not fall under the apt description which as I recall was given by someone to theologians of the past generation: "In their rush to flee excesses they suddenly found out that they had left all their baggage behind." Let us be better stewards of our biblical, theological and historical tradition than that. After we come to our best definitions and understandings, hopefully we can still worship and testify in sentiments like these.

Mel then went on to quote a Charles Wesley hymn:

An inward baptism of pure fire,  
 Wherewith to be baptiz'd, I have;  
 'Tis all my longing soul's desire;  
 This, only this my soul can save.

Straiten'd I am till this be done;  
 Kindle in me the living flame;  
 Father, in me reveal thy Son;  
 Baptize me into Jesus' name.

Transform my nature into thine;  
 Let all my powers thine impress feel;  
 Let all my soul become divine,  
 And stamp me with thy Spirit's seal.

Love, mighty love, my heart o'erpower:  
 Ah! Why dost thou so long delay!

Cut short the work, bring near the hour,  
And let me see the perfect day.

Honored guests and members of the Wesleyan Theological Society, it is my distinct honor to introduce to you this year's recipient of the Society's award, "Lifetime Service to the Wesleyan/Holiness Tradition," Melvin Easterday Dieter.

# ***CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS*** **OF THE** **WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

[As officially adopted by the WTS, November 8, 1969, at Marion, IN, and subsequently amended. Most recent revision, November, 1995.]

## **ARTICLE I. *Name***

The name of the organization shall be the Wesleyan Theological Society.

## **ARTICLE II. *Purposes and Relationship to CHA***

### **Section 1. Purposes**

- A. To promote theological interchange among Wesleyan/Holiness scholars and other persons interested in this area;
- B. To provide theological leadership to the CHA, including offering a doctrinal seminar at each of its annual conventions;
- C. To stimulate scholarship among younger theologians and pastors;
- D. To publish a *Journal* consisting of significant contributions to Wesleyan/Holiness scholarship.

### **Section 2. Relationship to Christian Holiness Association**

This Society shall be regarded as a Commission of the Christian Holiness Association and, through the Society's President, shall submit a report of its activities to the annual convention of the CHA.

ARTICLE III. *Doctrinal Position*

While WTS members are not required to sign a statement of faith, the Society works within the context of the CHA and its faith/mission statement, namely:

The Christian Holiness Association is a body of churches, organizations, and individuals who accept the inspiration and infallibility of sacred Scripture and evangelical doctrine that pertains to divine revelation, the incarnation, the resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, as affirmed in the historic Christian creeds. The particular concern of this fellowship is the biblical doctrine of sanctification identified in what is known as the Wesleyan position.

The Association believes that personal salvation includes both the new birth and the entire sanctification wrought by God in the heart by faith. Entire sanctification is the crisis experience subsequent to conversion that results in a heart cleansed from all sin and filled with the Holy Spirit. It is maintained by that faith, which expresses itself in constant obedience to God's revealed will and results in a moment-by-moment cleansing.

ARTICLE IV. *Membership*

Section 1. Types and Privileges of Members in the WTS.

- A. Full Members: Full members are those who affirm the purposes of the Society as expressed in Articles II and III above. Full members are entitled to attend all meetings, to vote and to hold office, to present papers, and to receive the Journal upon the payment of annual dues.
- B. Affiliate Members: The Society offers affiliate membership to persons who are interested in the work of the Society but do not wish to become full members. Affiliate members shall be entitled to attend all meetings, to present papers upon recommendation of a full member, and to receive the Journal upon the payment of annual dues, but do not vote or hold office.
- C. Student Members: Members who are currently in undergraduate or graduate studies. Student members shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the Society and to receive the

Journal upon the payment of annual dues. Upon the completion of their formal academic training. Student members must notify the Secretary in writing and elect the type of membership they desire and for which they are qualified.

- D. Honorary Members: Members who were charter members of the WTS, or who have twenty or more years of continuous membership in the Society, and who notify the Secretary in writing, shall be exempted from further payment of dues upon retirement, with full rights and privileges accorded them in the type of membership they maintained immediately before retirement.

## Section 2. Qualifications for Membership

- A. All full members shall be in accord with the purposes of the Society as expressed in Articles II and III of these Bylaws.
- B. Persons who desire membership in the WTS shall complete the membership application form and pay the membership dues for the current calendar year.
- C. Members may change as desired from one type of membership to another at any time by a written request to the Secretary.

## Section 3. Membership Dues

- A. Membership dues shall be based on the calendar year.
- B. Membership dues shall be determined annually on the recommendation of the Executive Committee and by a majority vote of the full members present and voting at a regular business meeting of the Society.
- C. Any member who does not pay dues during a given calendar year will not receive the *Journal* the following year until the dues are paid in full for the current calendar year as well as for the past year.
- D. Members who do not pay their dues for two years or more, up to five years, shall be placed on an inactive list; they may be restored to active membership when dues for the current year and the immediate past year are paid in full, whereupon they shall receive the *Journal* for both years.

- E. After five or more years of inactive membership a person must reapply for membership in the Society.

#### ARTICLE V. *Officers*

Section 1. The officers of this Society shall be a President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, a Secretary-Treasurer, and a Promotion Officer. These officers shall perform the duties as prescribed by these Bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the Society.

Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall nominate candidates for the offices and committee memberships to be filled at the annual meeting of the Society. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a ballot using every reasonable effort to submit at least two names as nominees for each office or committee membership, with additional nominations from the floor permitted before the election.

Section 3. The officers shall be elected by ballot to serve for one year or until their successors are elected, with the exception of the Secretary-Treasurer and Promotion Officer, who shall be elected for three years. The term of the officers shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

Section 4. In case of a vacancy in any office except that of President, the Executive Committee shall appoint an eligible person from the membership to fill the unexpired term and/or until the regular election at the annual meeting. If the office of President becomes vacant, the First Vice-President shall succeed to that office, the Second Vice-President shall become First Vice-President, and the Executive Committee may appoint an eligible person to fill the unexpired term of the Second Vice-President.

#### ARTICLE VI. *Duties of the Officers*

Section 1. The President shall preside at all business meetings, serve as chair of the Executive Committee, present an annual report of the activities of the Society to the Christian Holiness Association at the time of its annual convention, and represent the general interests of the Society whenever possible.



Section 2. The First Vice-President shall serve as chair of the Program and Arrangements Committee to plan and promote the program for the annual meeting which occurs during his or her term of office. He or she shall fulfill the duties of President if the latter is unable to serve, and shall succeed to the office of President when the President's term of office expires, or in case of a vacancy.

Section 3. The Second Vice-President shall serve as the chair of the Program and Arrangement Committee to plan and promote the program for the annual meeting which occurs during his or her term as First Vice-President. He or she shall succeed to the office of First Vice-President when the First Vice-President becomes President, except as provided in ARTICLE V: Officers, Section 4.

Section 4. The Secretary-Treasurer shall maintain the records and properties of the Society; collect dues and disburse its funds, provide for adequate insurance for the properties of the Society in consultation with the Executive Committee, prepare an annual budget and submit it to the Executive Committee for approval before it is presented to the annual business meeting, present a fiscal report to the membership at the annual meeting, submit the financial records to an auditor who is approved by the Executive Committee prior to the presentation of the fiscal report at the annual meeting, and report periodically to the Executive Committee, as deemed necessary, in the interim between annual meetings. Disbursement of funds shall be at the direction of the Executive Committee, except for regular or routine matters.

Section 5. The Promotion Officer shall strive to increase the Society's membership, enlarge the endowment, seek advertising in and subscribers for its Journal, and otherwise promote its general interests.

#### ARTICLE VII. *Meetings*

Section 1. The Society shall meet annually for the prepared program and the business meeting.

Section 2. The fiscal year shall correspond with the annual meeting and the term of officers and committees.

Section 3. The place of the annual meeting shall be determined by the Executive Committee from written invitations submitted by the chief administrators of institutions or other facilities.

Section 4. The active full members of the Society who are present at the annual business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. Regional meetings may be developed as interest in the Society grows.

#### ARTICLE VIII. *The Executive Committee*

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Society and the chairs of the Editorial Committee and Nominating Committee.

Section 2. The Duties and Powers of the Executive Committee shall be:

- A. To act in the interim between the annual meetings of the Society.
- B. To appoint a Nominating Committee as prescribed in Article IX, Section 3.
- C. To serve as the Program and Arrangements Committee, with the First and Second Vice-Presidents as chairs of the respective years when each is First Vice-President;
- D. To determine the place of the annual meeting from the written invitations received from chief administrators of institutions or other facilities;
- E. To direct the disbursement of funds, except for regular and routine matters.
- F. To review and approve the annual budget of the Society prepared by the Secretary-Treasurer, prior to its presentation for adoption by the membership at the annual meeting;
- G. To periodically review the insurance coverage of the Society's properties, with the Secretary-Treasurer;
- H. To annually review and set the price of the *Journal*, to be sold in single copies or in sets to the various publics, and to publicize the same in the *Journal*;
- I. To annually review the amount of the membership dues and to make recommendation to the membership at the annual business meeting;

- J. To provide for an annual honorarium for the Secretary-Treasurer and the Editor of the *Journal* from the funds of the Society;
- K. To work with the Editorial Committee in addressing policy or content issues related to the Society's *Journal* and other publications;
- L. To approve the minutes of the annual business meeting and the minutes of the Executive Committee; and,
- M. To appoint an eligible person from the membership to fill any vacancy which occurs in the offices or committees of the Society in the interim between the annual meetings, except that of President.
- N. To determine the time of the annual meeting.

#### ARTICLE IX. *Committees*

Section 1. A *Program and Arrangements Committee* shall consist of the Executive Committee, with the First and Second Vice-Presidents as chairs in their respective years in the office of First Vice-President. It shall secure personnel and complete all arrangements for annual meetings and for all seminar programs of the Society.

Section 2. An *Editorial Committee* shall consist of the Chair, who shall be elected for three-year terms and who shall serve as the Editor of the *Journal*, in addition to two other persons, each of whom shall serve for terms of three years, with one member elected or re-elected each year. The Committee shall advise the Editor on the selection of materials and preparation of the Society's *Journal* for publication and shall advise, in cooperation with the Editor and Executive Committee, in determining the content of other WTS publications.

Section 3. A *Nominating Committee* shall consist of the five most recent past presidents of the Society. The immediate past president of the Society shall serve as chair. Should any of the five most recent past presidents be unable or ineligible to serve, the next most recent past president, able and eligible, shall serve. Should the immediate past president be unable or ineligible to serve, the committee may elect its own chair. The committee

shall present to the annual meeting of the Society a ballot as prescribed in ARTICLE V, Section 2.

#### ARTICLE X. *Parliamentary Authority*

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Orders Newly Revised* shall govern the Society in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws and any special rules of order the Society may adopt.

#### ARTICLE XI. *Amendment of Bylaws*

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular business meeting of the Society by a two-thirds vote of the active full members present, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing to the members of the Society at least thirty days prior to the annual meeting in which it is to be considered.

### STANDING RULES

#### I. *Relating to Membership*

- A. All new membership applications received at or following the annual meeting and approved shall receive the current issue of the *Journal* as well as the new issue when it is published.
- B. All new members shall be notified in writing of their acceptance by the Secretary-Treasurer, and shall receive a letter of welcome.

#### II. *Relating to Officers, Committees, and Procedures*

- A. The expenses of the officers and committee members shall be paid for everything pertaining to the Wesleyan Theological Society, except for annual meeting expense of travel and entertainment, provided a written, itemized report is presented to the Secretary-Treasurer.
- B. The dates of the expiration of terms of office on the various standing committees shall be carried in the *Journal*, along with the committee and officer listings.
- C. The advertising rate in the *Journal* shall be reviewed periodically by the Executive Committee.
- D. A cumulative index shall be included in the *Journal* at appropriate intervals.
- E. Guidelines for the Nominating Committee (cf. Bylaws, ART. V. Sect. 2).

1. While perceived ability to carry forward the work of the Society in an acceptable manner and spirit should be the primary consideration in making nominations, the Nominating Committee may give consideration also to variety of denominational representation in the leadership of the Society.
2. The Nominating Committee should have its work done thirty days before the annual meeting of the Society. This includes consultation with any candidates to ascertain their availability for service. The Secretary of the Society should be informed as soon as the Committee has decided on a ballot so that it may be prepared for the meeting by the Secretary.

**Announcing the . . .**  
**WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
**ENDOWMENT FUND**

Established by the Society, November, 1995

1. The endowment fund is established in perpetuity on behalf of the Wesleyan Theological Society, which is a Commission of the Christian Holiness Association that operates under the federal tax exempt number 61-0293757.

2. The Executive Committee of the Wesleyan Theological Society oversees the endowment fund, which is managed by the Secretary-Treasurer of the Society.

3. The principal of the endowment fund shall at all times be kept intact. The interest income from the principal is to be disbursed annually as follows: Up to ninety percent of the annual interest income may be used to supplement the general operating budget of the Society; and at least ten percent of the annual interest income is used to increase the principal of the fund.

4. Contributions to the endowment fund must be specifically designated as endowment fund contributions, and they must be a minimum of \$100 per contribution. Receipts will be given.

5. If the Wesleyan Theological Society should be disbanded, the Executive Committee will decide how the remaining endowment fund assets should be disbursed for the purpose of enhancing scholarship among the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions.

*Contributions should be directed to the Society's Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. William Kostlevy, c/o Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky 40390. For further information, call Dr. Kostlevy at 606-858-2235.*

## BOOK REVIEWS

Barry L. Callen. 1996. *God as Loving Grace: The Biblically Revealed Nature and Work of God*. Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House. 356 pages. ISBN 0-916035-65-4.

Reviewed by John B. Cobb, Jr., Emeritus Professor, School of Theology at Claremont.

This is a Wesleyan systematic theology. It does not announce itself as such. Its self-presentation is as an account of the Biblical faith ordered in Trinitarian terms for thoughtful Christians. The book is that also. But Callen recognizes that all theologies approach God from a particular perspective, namely, that of the writer, and Callen is most influenced by John Wesley. The dependence on Wesley is most explicit in the discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Wesley's influence, and that of such recent interpreters as Randy Maddox and Theodore Jennings, are apparent in the index and throughout the book. References and quotations occur at many key points. But a more important expression of the Wesleyan character of the theology is the choice of "loving grace" as the basic characterization of God. This is not only present in the title; it also informs the content of the book throughout.

The perspective is that of a healthy conservatism. The conservatism is affirmed and expressed in many choices. But it is deeply different from much that passes as Christian conservatism on the church scene today. It is open to learning from many sources; it recognizes the complexity and diversity of the Biblical witness; it interacts thoughtfully and sensitively with current issues such as feminism, other religions, and witness to Jews. It opposes legalism and literalism. And its spirit is pervasively irenic. In all these respects, also, it is Wesleyan.

The conservatism is expressed in the primacy of Biblical authority over contemporary concerns and modes of thought. This is primarily an admirable affirmation directed to conservatives and liberals alike who need to avoid being sucked into the values of contemporary secular society. But it also means that, where there are tensions between intellectual concerns and ideas arising in the present world and in the Biblical witness, Callen is committed to reaffirming the latter. This is apparent, for example, in his treatment of the Virgin Birth.

On the other hand, given this conservatism, he is remarkably open to the concerns and knowledge emerging in the contemporary scene. He recognizes that this sometimes provides new and better understanding of the scriptures as well. He sees that those who claim to follow scripture alone often read it through glasses fashioned in earlier epochs, glasses that can be improved by more contemporary insights. His way of appropriating scripture and its authority is clearly expressive of sensitivity to the best offerings of contemporary thought.

Indeed, one impressive feature is the breadth of the sources on which Callen draws. They include both writers in the conservative evangelical camp and those in mainstream academia, some of whom are quite radical. He recognizes differences among them, but his style is to emphasize the positive in what they say and to weave their ideas into a continuous argument of his own.

The breadth of his theology is apparent in his treatment of narrative, on the one hand, and creedal formulation, on the other. He affirms the primacy of narrative, since this is predominant in the Bible. But there is no polemic against creeds, confessions, and systems of the sort to which some narrative theologians have treated us. Callen sees these systematizations as playing a positive and even necessary role. At the same time, the primacy of narrative allows for flexibility and multiplicity in the efforts to capture its meaning in logical formulations.

The limitations of the book are related to this same catholic spirit. Differences in the views of those who are quoted are not always brought forward and systematically analyzed. There are some theological questions, therefore, to which Callen does not provide clear answers. Sometimes his basic thesis gets obscured momentarily by favorable use of the rhetoric and ideas of those whose thought tends to move in a different direction.

I will offer just one example—his extensive use of the word “sovereignty” and of ideas associated with it. The emphasis on God’s “sover-



eignty," simply as a word, is unWesleyan. I do not mean that this or equivalent terms are totally absent from Wesley's writings, but I do mean that they play a minor role, being consistently subordinated to the loving grace that is also Callen's major emphasis. Given this fact, it is disappointing to find that both chapter titles about the first person of the Trinity carry the phrase: "God the Sovereign." Perhaps this is simply to avoid gendered language, and if so, although God the Creator would have done that just as well, it deserves respect. Nevertheless, we Wesleyans need to recognize that the prominence of the term in the theology of the twentieth century is due to the neo-Calvinism of Karl Barth and has been connected with quite unWesleyan doctrines of how God works in and with human beings.

That the problem is not simply the term, however, is shown by Callen's quoting from B. B. Warfield at an important juncture in the text. This quote presents the stringent Calvinist view of God's work in the world against which Wesley polemicized. Callen's comment is that "while this tradition needs certain qualifications, it surely is a good place to begin" (94). By the time he has introduced all the needed qualifications, we are back with Callen in Wesley's camp. But I would be more comfortable as a Wesleyan reader to begin with God's loving grace rather than with Warfield's apparent exclusion of human participation from the whole work of salvation. To be fair, the whole thrust of Callen's work is quite other than Warfield's unWesleyan view.

A central issue for me is the notion of divine power. In fact, Callen's account of the way God exercises power is eminently congenial both to Wesley and to me. He quotes with approval Randy Maddox (*Responsible Grace*, 55) as saying that Wesley rightly understood God's power ". . . fundamentally in terms of *empowerment*, rather than control or *overpowerment*. This is not to weaken God's power, but to determine its character! As Wesley was fond of saying, God works 'strongly and sweetly.' That is, God's grace works powerfully, but not irresistibly, in matters of human life and salvation; thereby empowering our *response-ability*, without overriding our *responsibility*" (80).

Maddox here attributes to Wesley, rightly in my view, just the view of divine power held by process theologians. And at this point, and often elsewhere, Callen agrees. Nevertheless, when process theologians put this view forward today, at one point he describes it as a "significant restriction of power" rather than seeing it as an explanation of the nature of divine power (265). Callen thinks it necessary to affirm that God could act

in ways quite different from those in which God does act. I recognize that our human knowledge is too limited and fallible to warrant definitive statements about what God cannot do! But this limitation seems to me to apply even more strongly to definitive statements about what God can do but chooses not to do. Unless these capabilities of God are clearly revealed, it seems unwise to affirm them.

Callen emphasizes that it is in Jesus that God is fully revealed. He notes that Jesus addresses God as “Abba,” and that this is a term of intimacy addressed to one’s father. But following Laurence Wood he then goes on to say that “God the Father stresses the *ultimacy* of the Divine” and to interpret this ultimacy as “limitless, Ultimate Power” (188). It is, then, this limitless Ultimate Power that Jesus reveals to us as “life-transforming, life-redeeming Energy” (*ibid.*). My question is not about the life-transforming, life-redeeming Energy revealed by Jesus—that is also how I understand God. My question is how we learn first, and apparently independently of the revelation in Jesus, about the limitless Ultimate Power which, if not voluntarily self-restrained, would take from us our response-ability. Would it not be better to begin—and end—with the knowledge of God as loving grace gained from and through Jesus rather than to posit, on other unstated grounds, a different knowledge of God’s nature and power?

The doctrine of voluntary divine self-limitation affirmed by Callen has become commonplace in contemporary theology. I could have raised my objection equally well against many other theologians. That I use this occasion to do so, however, in no way detracts from my appreciation of Callen’s comprehensive and irenic Wesleyan theology.

Michael Lodahl. 1994. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City. 256 pp. ISBN 083-411-4798.

Reviewed by Gilbert W. Stafford, Anderson University School of Theology, Anderson, Indiana.

Michael Lodahl, writing from a Wesleyan perspective, takes a narrative approach to his systematic consideration of the biblical story. Though the main character is God, the story is not simply about God; it is about us. In a narrative theology we the readers are challenged to find ourselves in the story. "To undertake the task of theology seriously is to become involved, to locate oneself in God's story" (p. 15).

Lodahl develops the Christian theological story in what we might call seven scenes having to do first of all with theological method, then with creation, sin, covenant, Christ, the church, and last things. His approach is overtly based on the Wesleyan quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. He weaves together Scriptural texts, the church's reflective thinking, our own reasoned understanding, and the lived-out questions and ramifications of the story in a way that does honor to the Wesleyan mode of doing theology. He even includes a diagram of the quadrilateral to show the proportionate emphasis that he believes should be given to each.

One of the more refreshing features of the book is that instead of being polemical with his Wesleyan orientation, he states it in a direct and simple way, and in so doing addresses with irenic spirit issues that often engender misunderstandings. We see this in his discussion of personal holiness as being relational (not, therefore, as a static, prescriptive state as some misunderstand it to be), as perfection in love (which is not the same as behavioral flawlessness), and as expansive in outlook (not, as some think, being turned in on oneself).

Another example of his gentle approach to controversial issues is his treatment of God's relation to those who have never responded in faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ. He develops an optimistic approach to questions pertaining to religious pluralism and the unconverted. He takes advantage of the Wesleyan emphasis on prevenient grace to stress that "God is lovingly and graciously present and active in every human life, from fervent Christian to adamant atheist to mindful Buddhist" (p. 45). The Holy Spirit's work, while not limited to those who have faith in

Christ Jesus, is, nevertheless, always Christ centered. We are able to identify the Spirit's work in terms of whether it is in accordance with Christ. Everything is to be "sifted and judged" in the light of him (p. 47).

Writing about the fate of the unconverted, Lodahl does not get bogged down in meticulous arguments. Instead, he lifts up the overarching themes regarding the biblical God. In light of God's story we can take leave of our own efforts to figure out what will happen to whom. God is the judge, not we. That is not to say, however, that God's perspective is unknown; it is revealed in Christ. Furthermore, at the final judgment we will be judged in light of *our understanding* of God's will and the gospel. This includes a just judgment for those who, though having heard the Gospel, have not responded in faith because of the stumbling blocks created by historical circumstances, cultural baggage, or the shortcomings of the gospel messengers. Only God knows whether a person has heard the gospel sufficiently enough either to embrace or reject it. For example, "it is likely that God, the just Judge, takes into account the centuries of the church's anti-Judaism and actual persecution of Jews when he measures a modern Jew's rejection of Christ" (p. 231). Judgment will not be on the basis of outward confessions, but on the basis of "the inner heart and motives of a person" (p. 232).

Throughout the book Lodahl distances himself, as a Wesleyan theologian, from biblicism. This is nowhere more apparent than in his quite extensive treatment of the nature of Scripture, especially as it has to do with creation. The Bible is not science, and to treat it as such is to "do violence to its intentions." The creation accounts in Genesis are "poetic theology" declaring to us who creates and why, but not when or how. In his only appendix, "The Doctrine of Creation and Scientific Theory as Reflected Upon in Key Theological Texts of the Wesleyan-Arminian Holiness Tradition," he quotes extensively Nazarene theologians H. Orton Wiley, Roy H. Cantrell, and H. Ray Dunning, showing that their understanding of the biblical passages about creation was not that of "scientific" creationism. It appears that Lodahl, in this instance, may be addressing a hot issue in Nazarene circles at the present time, and is in need of calling on Nazarene theological heavyweights in support of his position. His horizon is larger, however, than the creation issue. Perhaps he focuses on this in order to capture the attention of his readers for the purpose of addressing the bigger issue regarding the blurring of the lines between, on the one hand, conservative evangelicism with its bent toward biblicistic

literalism and dogmatic pronouncements, and, on the other, Wesleyan-Holiness thought with its bent toward relational understandings of Scripture and spiritual development. Throughout the whole book, Lodahl makes a case for the latter.

*The Story of God* is an excellent introduction to theological reflection suitable for college students and serious laypersons (he defines words which, while serving a good purpose in his text, might not be understood by the non-professional). But also, the book contributes helpfully to ongoing discussions in theological circles about such issues as theodicy and life after death. In addition, it serves as a reminder of the special character of the Wesleyan-Holiness way of thinking which need not be swallowed up in popular conservative evangelicalism.

As any good story, so with Lodahl's telling of God's story, the reader is left with questions and mystery. It is not as though he tries to say all that could be said. At many points, one wants him to say more, to answer another question, to grapple with another issue. He whets our theological appetites. That is both a word of commendation and a word of invitation.

Clark H. Pinnock. 1996. *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Downers Grove, ILL.: InterVarsity Press. 280 pp. ISBN 0-8308-1897-0.

Reviewed by Barry L. Callen, Anderson University, Anderson, Indiana.

The theology of John Wesley has been identified as “third article,” referring to the third section of the Apostles’ Creed that focuses on the Spirit of God (D. Lyle Dabney in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 29:1-2, Spring-Fall, 1994). Now Clark Pinnock joins such a focus by passionately calling believers to restore the theologically oft-neglected Spirit to centrality in the life and witness of the church. In *The Openness of God* (InterVarsity, 1994) Pinnock and other writers sought to lay the conceptual foundation for this present work. The task there was identified as allowing biblical teaching to operate more normatively in the face of theological distortions said to be caused by “excessive Hellenization.” Pinnock hoped to do greater justice to “mutuality and relationality in both the triune God and the God-human covenant” (p. 101). God was said to be both transcendent (the Creator who is ontologically other than creation) and immanent, that is, “present to the world, active within history, involved, relational and temporal.” God was pictured as “so stable and secure as to be able to risk suffering and change” (p. 105).

In this more recent work, Pinnock notes that, at the end of his life, Swiss theologian Karl Barth felt the need for a theology of the Spirit more satisfactory than he himself had managed to produce. Recognizing the important work of Jürgen Moltmann (*The Spirit of Life*, Fortress, 1992), in part an attempt to address Barth’s concern, Pinnock now affirms that, in relation to the Spirit, “there are truths to recover and possibilities to explore” (10). Such recovering and exploring, it is argued, are capable of placing a flame of pulsating life into any human heart that relates humbly to the relating God of transforming love.

Both the comprehensiveness of theological range and the competence of the author are obvious in a reading of *Flame of Love*. This volume can be seen as a welcome and much needed bridge between various communities of “Evangelicals” frequently divided over “pentecostal” issues. It is a creative systematic theology whose coherence lies in a fresh viewing of major Christian doctrines within the context of the Spirit’s identity and work. A special concern of the author is the contemporary

relevance of ancient Christian belief. For instance, intending to be faithfully and freshly trinitarian, Pinnock observes: "If Father points to ultimate reality and Son supplies the clue to the divine mystery, Spirit epitomizes the nearness of the power and presence of God" (9).

This is a biblically grounded systematic theology with an ecumenical openness that deserves consideration by the whole church. This openness is keynoted on the book's dedication page by the highlighting of a quote from Pope John XXIII: "Holy Spirit, renew your wonders in our day as by a new Pentecost." This prayer appears to be Pinnock's own as he argues that theology in the West has tended too much toward carefully conceived and intellectualized presentations maintained protectively by institutionalized churches. In fact, "many appear afraid of the Spirit, lest their worlds be shaken and they be swept up into God's sabbath play. So often we set up barriers to the Spirit and stifle the voices that speak to us of openness and celebration" (11). Pinnock's response to such fear is that the work of the Spirit must no longer be subordinated to the mission of the Son—as though the two were somehow to be distinguished as truly different, with the one mandatory and the other optional.

The theology of the Spirit is explored in relation to the Trinity of God, creation, christology, church, union, universality, and truth (one chapter each). Difficult issues are addressed straightforwardly, creatively, and clearly enough that any serious reader can understand (a quality of communication lacking in too many systematic theologies). These issues include the appropriateness of gender-specific language for the Spirit, and the Scripture as ultimate authority conceived in a context where revelation is neither relegated to only fixed information or degraded into a swamp of normless subjectivism, and the universality of God's grace in a world of religious pluralism. Rejecting universalism, Pinnock nevertheless sees himself in the tradition of a John Wesley by affirming that the "Spirit is not confined to the church but is present everywhere, giving life and creating community."

Certainly not in the direct tradition of an Alfred North Whitehead, there nonetheless is a "process" character to this book's pattern of describing God and the Christian life. Pinnock observes that the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement is "the most important event in modern Christianity." While not endorsing any one gift of the Spirit as a special and essential sign of the Spirit's full presence with a believer, the author does highlight the church's need to recover especially the gifts of

prophecy, healing, and exorcism. Obviously sensitive to the spreading fire of experience-oriented revivalism in the Third World, this volume features a non-Calvinistic way of focusing on much more than the absolute sovereignty of God. Here one finds a viewing of Christian theology as an invitation to a celebration. "The Spirit," Pinnock insists, "is the ecstasy that implements God's abundance and triggers the overflow of divine self-giving" (p. 50).

If one is looking for a scholastic theology neatly outlined in a tight propositional framework, this is hardly the place to find it. If, on the other hand, one longs for a fresh articulation of the spontaneity of a living God who desires above all to breathe new life into modern people who seem to know only broken relationships and lost communities, this book would be an excellent place to begin.

Dare one say that there should be a certain "romance" associated with Christian theology, a "flame of love" that should flavor the meaning of Christian "orthodoxy" and keep revealed truth alive, transforming, commissioning? Clark Pinnock responds here with a resounding and stimulating "Yes!"



Ulf Sundblad. 1995. *Från Postilla till Pocket. Den svenska frikyrk-lighetens litteraturhistoria cirka 1830-1980*. Helsingborg: BokHuset. 251 pps. ISBN 91-87228-04-1.

Reviewed by David Bundy, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Normally bibliographers are content to compile bibliographies, but rarely have they made the effort to interpret the trends within a given cultural context. This remarkable and important volume does just that. It is not a bibliography, although it is rich with bibliographic information that is otherwise difficult to find. It is a history of religious publishing within Sweden with a focus on the Free Churches (non-state churches). Thus there are chapters which deal with the Baptist Church, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Svenska Missionsförbundet, the Sunday School Movement and Örebro Mission, the Free Baptists, Svenska Alliance Mission, the Salvation Army, the Swedish Salvation Army, and the Holiness Movement Church. Some attention is given to the Seventh Day Adventist Church as well as the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. It is noted (p. 15) that one particular title by Ellen White [*Vägen till Kristus*] sold over 250,000 copies in Sweden!

The thesis of the volume is that the trends of publication, taken together with other social factors, indicate the relative prosperity and vigor of particular traditions. The arrival of the Free Churches, other than the re-implantation of the Catholic Church, began with the Methodists in the mid-nineteenth century. In their case, George Scotts began a publishing tradition which continues until today. Other traditions, developed as imports or indigenous movements, were often influenced by the publications sent back to Sweden by expatriates in Europe or North America. The periodicals provided a liaison between small congregations spread across the Swedish landscape. The books served audiences, both within and outside the particular tradition, by providing articulations of belief structures and defining the identity and spirituality of the group. The research on which this book is based examined more than 20,000 titles published by adherents of thirteen denominations, of which 7,000 were published by presses not owned by the particular denomination.

The most important section of the volume to the readers of this journal are the sections on the Holiness Movement Church (the Helgelseförbundet) and the two competing branches of the Salvation Army. Essential

to the background of the Holiness Movement Church in Sweden is the work of William Boardman, *I Andens Kraft* (Lundholm, 1881) translated from English by a teacher, Nelly Hall. The success of this volume (and other Holiness volumes published by other groups) made possible the establishment of a periodical publication promoting the theology and values of the incipient Holiness Movement Church. A youth song book edited by Conrad Björkman (1873-1948) sold over 300,000 copies. Other music books by people such as Eric Bergquist also became best sellers. Music made up about 15% of Holiness Movement Church publications during the period.

Works classified as theology had pride of number (about 65%), with biographies, novels, youth books, and “Festschriften” comprising the remainder. The most prolific authors were Emil Gustafson, Stig Abrahamsson, Egon Melin, Hårold Norberg, and Nanny Fredriksson. One writer, Arne Bengtsson, was one of the first, if not the first, of the Swedish Christian writers to discuss the problem of AIDS and to recommend compassionate approaches of ministry for the church. Books published by the Holiness Movement Church continue to do well, although economics and ecumenical efforts have led the Holiness Movement Church and three other denominations to publish cooperatively a common periodical, *Petrus*. The Filadelfia Pentecostal Church is the leading partner in this consortium.

The Salvation Army beginnings were accompanied by translations of writings by various members of the Booth family although the Salvation Army has always maintained an active indigenous publication program. At least 500 titles were published between 1875 and 1980 by the church. Many other important materials, including seminal volumes by Laura Petri, were published by outside general publishers. The Swedish Salvation Army (Svenska Frälsningsarmén) separated from the Salvation Army after conflict with General Booth in 1905. While this small denomination has only published forty volumes, many of these have achieved a wide circulation and thereby an importance beyond what the numbers might indicate.

Sundblad's work is an essential tool for dealing with a number of vexing historical questions. One of these is the role of a minority religious tradition in a new culture. How can one measure the influence of a particular group? It has been especially difficult to ascertain influence in countries where the civil prerogatives of a state church made it difficult if not

impossible for people to join the “new” religious groups. One of the ways to assess influence is simply to count the number of copies of titles sold and to evaluate the uses of that information. When a tradition, which at its apex has numbered but a few thousand members, sells hundreds of thousands of copies of a title, there is certainly influence to study.

Another difficult historiographical issue is the intercultural transfer of religious ideas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In most cases in Sweden, missionaries from abroad were marginally involved—if at all—in the establishment of the Swedish expression of the tradition. One source for understanding the adaptation of foreign influence is the record of translations. However, this is a very fragile enterprise in Europe because concepts, for example Holiness ideals, came to Sweden through a variety of avenues and were published by a variety of presses. As will be demonstrated in an essay still in process, Holiness theology arrived in Sweden from Germany, Norway, England, France, and the United States through a variety of denominations and presses.

One of the problems that still remains to be addressed is what may be designated cross-over publishing. For example Swedish Holiness writers and translations of foreign Holiness authors were published by the presses of the Pentecostal, Baptist, Svenska Alliansmission, Free Baptist, and Örebro Mission presses as well as by a variety of secular publishers. The only definitive solution will have to be based on extensive bibliographical work. The volume of Sundblad gives clues to the parameters of the problem, but not yet sufficient data to analyze the impact on Swedish Free Church thought.

The work of Sundblad is an important work in the historiography of the Wesleyan/Holiness movements. It can perhaps provide a model for analyzing the history and trends of other Wesleyan/Holiness traditions around the world. It is certainly a paradigm that can be applied throughout Europe where the bibliographic control is at a higher level than in the United States or the so-called “Third World.” It is a magnificent achievement also on the level of technique and accuracy. There are very few cases of mistaken identity or of bibliographic error; none have been identified by this reviewer for the Holiness Movement Church or Salvation Armies.

In-Gyeong Kim Lundell. 1995. *Bridging the Gaps: Contextualization among Korean Nazarene Churches in America*. Asian Thought and Culture, 18; New York, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. 155 pps. ISBN 0-8204-2541-9

Reviewed by David Bundy, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The Wesleyan/Holiness tradition has long been a global tradition, although this fact has rarely entered the literature except through the rather arcane genre of missionary literature. This book represents a new reality. The Wesleyan/Holiness churches which have developed outside North America and the ethnic representatives of those traditions in North America no longer accept unquestioningly the attitudes and treatment of the North Americans who are insensitive to their culture and values. The present book began as a personal quest to understand the poor relations between European-American Nazarene churches and Korean-American Nazarene churches in the Los Angeles area. It took initial form at the School of World Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary where it served as a doctoral dissertation.

The method of the book is to apply the findings of “contextualization” and “world-view” to the author’s experience. After a brief introduction to the rise of the Church of the Nazarene in North America (depending heavily on the work of Timothy Smith), the author describes the implications of Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Korean Christianity for the problem at hand. This is followed by a comparison of Korean and American world views, with discussions of space and time, causality, relationships and the sense of self. Here the most interesting material relates to differing understandings of sin, forgiveness, and holiness. These are based on cultural values and supported by a reading of the Scriptures as a document of community rather than a document of individualism. Lundell argues that this divergence is normal, for the Gospel must find its form content in every culture. She also insists that the other churches in North America need to try to understand and value the expression of Christianity found in the rapidly developing Korean churches, including more than 600 Korean congregations in southern California alone.

In addition to the differences of theological expression and emphasis, there are differences of building management style, pastoral leader-

ship, education and spiritual formation of children. Thus far the Church of the Nazarene has been unwilling to address positively the implications of these cultural differences. It is an important question: Can the Wesleyan/Holiness movement be the Wesleyan/Holiness movement in any other than American culture? Millions of Christians outside the U. S. A. have answered this question positively. Can the North Americans? The proposals of Lundell are worth considering.

This is an important book, but there are several avenues of investigation which might have led to a greater understanding of the situation. The volume provides no information about the development of the Korean Nazarene Church in Korea or about the values/history of the mission program of the Church of the Nazarene. None of the standard sources are cited. It is clear from that literature that there is a long and consistent history of viewing "Koreans" as radically other within Nazarene mission history and theory and as objects of mission rather than as fellow believers with a common mission. Class issues also come into play. Most North American Nazarene clergy are from the lower middle classes and have limited positive experience with other ethnic groups. Most Nazarene churches have no significant participation in non European-American culture.

The other corpus of literature which could have been drawn upon examines the experiences of east Asian immigrants to the United States. While much of this literature, like the work of Lundell, is highly anecdotal, it suggests that the unfortunate experiences of Lundell and others are influenced by larger cultural patterns. It is to be hoped that the story of Lundell and others like her will raise the consciousness of the Wesleyan/Holiness churches to the problems posed by the intercultural transmission of ideas and make scholars and mission theorists more hesitant to insist on a "meta-theory" of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. At the very least, any such theory should take into account the present realities of the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions of Asia, Europe, and Latin America. This book suggests that the result of mission may, and should, challenge its sources! The author, now a missionary to Koreans in Japan, is to be thanked for her courage in bringing these issues to the attention of scholars.

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