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EDITOR'S NOTES

On March 6-7, 2015, the fiftieth anniversary meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society took place at Mount Vernon Nazarene University in Mount Vernon, Ohio. In recognition of this milestone, members of the society presented papers on the past, present, and future of Wesleyan-holiness theology. Many of these papers are included in this issue of the Journal, including the two plenary addresses by Doug Strong and Beth Felker Jones, as well as Richard P. Thompson's Presidential address. The conference also featured a panel discussion of John Wesley's influential sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," as the annual meeting coincided with the 250th anniversary of its publication. Three younger scholars engaged Wesley's sermon from the perspective of three different theological disciplines. Lightly edited and revised transcripts of their reflections are included at the end of this issue of the Journal. Finally, the Lifetime Achievement Award was given to David Bundy.

Jason E. Vickers, Editor
Easter, 2016

WIDE AWAKE TO TRUE KNOWLEDGE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS: THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF THE WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, 1965-2015

by

Doug Strong

At this fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Wesleyan Theological Society, I am going to answer two questions—a "what" question and a "how" question. The first question is: What is the Wesleyan/Holiness message? More specifically, what was the Wesleyan/ Holiness message as articulated at the two primary generative points for the tradition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and as that message has been expressed subsequently during the half-century of scholarship in the Wesleyan Theological Society? Once we determine the answer to that first question, then we can proceed to the second question, which is: How is that message to be proclaimed? More particularly, how do we who are educators teach, write about, and live this message faithfully and effectively? In the process of answering these two questions, I will also a) explore the contextual factors that led to the 1960s founding of the society; b) formulate an overarching historiographical interpretation of the past fifty years of WTS scholarship; and c) present descriptions of seven constructive retrievals of the Wesleyan/Holiness message during the last half century.[1]

The Wesleys on "Wakefulness"

But first, let us go back to the eighteenth century, in order to pick up on a particular theme that appeared frequently in the writings of the leading

[1]Appreciation is extended to a number of longtime members of the Society whom I had the privilege of interviewing, either in person or via phone or email, in January, February, and March 2015: Paul Bassett, Kenneth Collins, Donald Dayton, Alex Deasley, Melvin Dieter, Stanley Ingersol, Henry Knight, Douglas Koskela, William Kostlevy, Diane Cunningham LeClerc, Randy Maddox, Thomas Oord, Howard Snyder, Susie Stanley, Donald Thorsen, Jason Vickers, and Robert Wall.

figures of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. John and Charles Wesley frequently employed the image of waking up from slumber, in their sermons, Biblical commentaries, and journal entries. According to the Wesleys, God's prevenient grace prompts individuals to be awakened to an initial awareness of their spiritual need. Preaching at St. Mary's, Oxford, in 1742, Charles Wesley preached on the text Ephesians 5.14: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Charles interpreted this passage as a call for people to emerge out of the "deep sleep of the soul" and to recognize their true state, in which they have no spiritual knowledge. The Wesley brothers sometimes used the idea of awakening in an almost technical way to refer to the specific temporal moment—early in the order of salvation—when a person becomes clear-eyed about one's need for a new birth through the Spirit; however, they also adopted the same wakefulness imagery to talk more generally about a heightened awareness that a person may grasp regarding their current situation and their subsequent desire to move ahead to a new place of spiritual advancement.[2]

In addition to the Ephesians verse just cited, other Pauline passages make use of the image of waking up. The Wesleys' application of such texts took up that image in the broader sense to describe any disquieted soul finding peace. They also used these texts, as was often their custom, to provide a condensed outline of their understanding of the way of salvation. This usage is particularly evident in a revealing passage from 1 Corinthians 15:34, in which Paul, as translated in the King James Version, summons the Corinthian church in a bold utterance: "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God." In his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, John Wesley's comments on this verse entreat his readers in language similarly forceful to Paul's: "Shake off your lethargy! To righteousness—which flows from the true knowledge of God, and implies that your whole soul be broad awake. And sin not. . . . Sin supposes drowsiness of the soul. . . . Some among you have not the knowledge of God—With all their boasted knowledge, they are totally ignorant of what it most concerns them to know."[3]

In this commentary on the Corinthians text, John Wesley associates wakefulness with a comprehension of one's restlessness regarding ungodly

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[2]Charles Wesley, "Awake, Thou That Sleepest," in Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 85-95.

[3]John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, reprint (Salem, OH: Schmul. 1976), 445.

practices or temperaments. But Wesley also associates wakefulness with the reception of knowledge. Further, he makes a distinction between knowledge (as commonly understood) as intellectual achievement and what he calls "true knowledge." While "some among you"—presumably Wesley's learned university colleagues—may have obtained a certain type of "boasted" knowledge, they were ignorant of the "true knowledge of God." Wesley gratefully acknowledged his Oxford education and frequently brought his academic standing to bear when necessary; nonetheless, he also knew full well that too much emphasis on scholarly recognition could lead one disastrously away from a reliance on the Spirit.

Indeed, in other places, the Wesleys identify the *true* knowledge of God with the indwelling of the Spirit: "having that divine consciousness, that witness of God." True (or "spiritual" or "experimental") knowledge goes beyond learning to include the "spiritual sensibility"—the immediacy of God's presence—that comes with the witness of the Spirit. When people's "spiritual senses are not awake; they discern neither spiritual good nor evil."[4] Wakefulness to *true* knowledge, then, implies a spiritual sensibility and a capacity to discern the things of God correctly.

The 1 Corinthians 15 text also relates the concept of the knowledge of God to the concept of righteousness—or more accurately, it relates the opposite, the *lack* of knowledge to *un*righteousness. John Wesley comments that this lack of true knowledge is due to sin, which "supposes drowsiness of the soul." Alternatively (as Wesley commented regarding another Pauline verse—Romans 13:11—that calls Christians "to awake out of sleep"), wakefulness presupposes that the soul is "continually advancing" toward righteousness, for "it is time to rise, to arm, to walk, to work, lest sleep steal upon us again."[5]

Let me summarize the content of John Wesley's understanding of Pauline passages regarding wakefulness, which—as in many instances—becomes for him a kind of shorthand version of the entire *order salutis*.[6] According to his account, men and women are called to be fully attentive ("broad awake") to God's immediate presence through the witness of the

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[4]John Wesley, "The Witness of the Spirit: Discourse II," 394ff.; and "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," 135, 137, in Outler and Heitzenrater. See also, "Awake, Thou that Sleepest," 88, 92, and "The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God," in Outler and Heitzenrater, 186.

[5]Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 445 (regarding 1 Corinthians 15:34) and 399 (regarding Romans 13:11).

[6]This summary of John Wesley's message is meant to be indicative, not exhaustive.

Spirit ("true knowledge") and to holiness as demonstrated by sanctified discernment and action regarding God's purpose for the world ("righteousness"). This brief synopsis of the "what" of Wesley's message can lead us to the "how" question. How did Wesley glean this message from his Anglican (and broader Christian) heritage in ways that allowed it to be proclaimed persuasively? He did so by employing a particular way of drawing out the content of his message from the sources he used. That is, he engaged in a **constructive retrieval** of the received tradition.

What was Wesley's constructive retrieval? Like all preachers and teachers, Wesley filtered his use of scripture and tradition. As illustrated by the collection of theological classics he compiled called the "Christian Library," Wesley recovered the church's heritage by restating it and collating it in ways that suited his specific theological purposes. Similarly, in his application of scripture, Wesley used a hermeneutical rubric called the "rule of faith," in which the biblical story is interpreted in light of Trinitarian and soteriological themes. Even Wesley's practical theology displayed a bent toward a constructive retrieval, for he organized early Methodism in ways that moved beyond his staid Anglican heritage to create a host of new missional structures such as conferences, societies, classes, bands, love feasts, Sunday schools, medical dispensaries, and publishing ventures.

B. T. Roberts on "Wakefulness"

At almost exactly the halfway point between the era of the Wesleys and our own era, Free Methodist founder and Holiness movement leader B. T. Roberts reflected on the same text from 1 Corinthians 15:34 and the image of wakefulness. In an 1884 editorial in "The Earnest Christian," Roberts wrote about those "who are spiritually asleep" even though they are "very zealous for the church." In contrast, Roberts insisted that "the righteousness to which we must be awake . . . is a degree of the divine nature which is imparted to one who truly repents and believes in Christ: it is such love for God as makes one delight above all things else to do his will: it is such love for our fellowmen that . . . makes us quick to discern where the right lies; and it always prompts us to take the side of the right, even against ourselves. It is a supernatural change . . . a supernatural instinct for the right." Such righteousness, Roberts declared, issues in a life full of "integrity," in which "wrong principles and wrong practices must be fully and forever forsaken." People "sin because they are not awake to righteousness. When the conflict comes, they give their own desires, or their own wills, or supposed interests, a preference over the

right." One's experience of assurance must be accompanied by faithful moral action; as Roberts stated: we cannot have "a revival without a reformation." For Roberts, this "reformation" of Christianity included social justice activism that worked against the classism, racism, sexism, and moral laxity of his day.[7]

When we collate the phrases selected by the Wesleys and Roberts to describe the Pauline texts that use the image of wakefulness, we find a combination of themes illustrating both God's immediate presence in our lives through the Spirit and our God-given ability to practice holiness and justice.

Thus, key representative figures of the eighteenth century evangelical revival and the nineteenth century Holiness renewal were of the same mind in determining the content (or "what") of their instruction: that Christians are called to be wide awake to true knowledge via the Spirit and wide awake to righteousness as demonstrated by sanctified living in our current context. John Wesley and B. T. Roberts also agreed on the method (or "how") of effective proclamation: constructive retrieval, or reclaiming the historic Christian message by creatively developing new ways of thinking and organizing.

The Twentieth Century Context that Gave Rise to the WTS

The intellectual and social history of the twentieth century, and especially the increasing predominance of modernity, provided the context for the beginning of the WTS. Modern ideas impinged on both the "what" of the Wesleyan/Holiness message and the "how" of teaching it. The Enlightenment-shaped intellectual world of the eighteenth century caused John Wesley to accept some aspects of the *early modern* worldview, while modifying other aspects. By the time that B. T. Roberts wrote his editorial in 1884, a century and a half beyond Wesley, the theological mindset characteristic of *late modernity* was expressing itself—most evidently in Protestant liberalism. Roberts and other nineteenth century Holiness folks were able to avoid many of the emerging battles between theological liberalism and conservatism; their key conflict was with mainline Methodism's formalism and upward mobility, and its consequent compromises on issues of class, race, gender, evangelistic fervor, and the role of entire sanctification. Their twentieth century Holiness heirs, however, could not seem to keep from being drawn into the ever-widening modernist/fundamentalist religious conflict.

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[7]B. T. Roberts, "Awake!" *The Earnest Christian* 48:2 (August 1884), 37-40.

If, as Barth purportedly said, European theological liberalism died on an August day in 1914, most religious Americans—both those who advocated for a modernist approach to theology and those theological conservatives who detested it—were unaware of liberalism's demise. Consistent with the oft-experienced half-century or so time lag between when the manifestation of European intellectual ideas affect American culture, Protestant liberalism in the U.S. and its institutional counterpart, mainline denominational Christianity, continued to thrive for the fifty years following the first World War, blithely oblivious to the totalitarian takeover and subsequent cultural collapse of liberal European Christendom.

Indeed, American Protestant liberalism after 1925 looked as if it were on a continuous upward trajectory. Most theological educators and those who studied religion at American universities affirmed liberal theology. As a consequence, more conservative Christians felt besieged and acted defensively. Conservatives aggressively asserted the necessity of holding to certain fundamentals of the faith—particularly the inerrancy of scripture, verifiable by reason. Though Reformed groups such as the Presbyterians and Baptists suffered most acutely from the resulting fundamentalist/ modernist controversy, no denomination was left unscathed by the battle, including mainline Methodists. Even Holiness groups could not escape the fundamentalist fervor forever.

Many incidents can be given of what Paul Bassett has termed the "fundamentalist leavening" among Holiness people.[8] But in spite of this trend toward a conservative theology, the mid-twentieth century Holiness movement displayed a less strident and less pugnacious fundamentalism than that exhibited by conservative Reformed groups. Consequently, when young, Calvinist-leaning fundamentalists of the post-World War II generation took steps toward a more generous "neo-evangelicalism" via the establishment of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and other parachurch groups, many younger Holiness people were attracted to these organizations. While Holiness leaders did not have as much fundamentalism to shed as their Reformed counterparts, and even though the Calvinist theological bias of neo-evangelicalism often exasperated them, they nonetheless identified in many ways with the more moderate, but still conservative Christianity that existed alongside, and in opposition to, mainline Christianity of the Eisenhower era. Partially, the draw of neo-evangelicalism was its appeal to intellectual and cultural respectability."[9]

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[8]Paul M. Bassett, "The Fundamentalist Leavening of the Holiness Movement, 1914-1940" *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 13 (Spring 1978): 65-91.

[9]Wallace Thornton in *Counterpoint: Dialogue with Drury on the Holiness Movement*, ed. D. Curtis Hall (Salem, OH: Schmul, 2005).

Similar to their Reformed neo-evangelical friends, many promising young Holiness scholars during the post-war period went off to further education at prestigious institutions of higher learning, thanks to the largess of the GI Bill: Harold Kuhn, George Turner and Timothy Smith received doctorates from Harvard; others got Ph.D.s from a range of leading institutions. These academic aspirations can be seen as Holiness attempts to keep up with the Joneses, whether of the mainline Methodist stripe or the Calvinist evangelical stripe. And although these conservative scholars were admitted to top schools, another similarity between the Holiness doctoral students and their Reformed colleagues became evident when young Holiness academics were not well received by their professors and peers at the more liberal schools—often treated with bare tolerance or even ridicule.

Unfortunately, however, the newly-minted Holiness Ph.D.s were also not given full acknowledgement at meetings of the Evangelical Theological Society (founded in 1949), the one scholarly organization dedicated to support neo-evangelical academic aspirations. This lack of respect and even condescension was due to the Holiness scholars' articulation of entire sanctification and other Wesleyan theological views. Young theologians who believed in Holiness doctrine thus had to put up with a double sense of rejection—from mainline liberals and Calvinist conservatives.

Holiness scholars wanted some intellectual toeholds for themselves. Their first such undertaking was the establishment of *The Asbury Seminarian* in 1946 as an academic journal. *The Asbury Seminarian* viewed itself as a bulwark against modernistic theology.[10] The rise of Asbury and other Holiness seminaries also exemplified the perceived need to provide a scholarly community for likeminded Holiness scholars who still had to operate within the generally anti-intellectual camp-meeting context of the National Holiness Association.[11]

Holiness churches and schools multiplied in the post-War period, but mostly under the radar of the larger academic culture. Meanwhile,

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[10]See the earliest volumes of *The Asbury Seminarian*, from the late 1940s (Vols. 1-3, 1946-48).

[11]Asbury Theological Seminary was growing in enrollment in the late 1940s; also during the immediate post-war period, other Holiness seminaries, such as Nazarene Theological Seminary and the Church of God Seminary, were established. These moves represented an emerging desire for intellectual reputability among previously sectarian denominations that were becoming upwardly mobile, indicating that their congregations were demanding better educated pastors.

mainline Christianity appeared to have increasing clout. Much of that mainline social esteem seems, in retrospect, to have been extremely superficial, such as the prosperity-oriented sermons delivered by many ministers. Buttressed by the continued preaching of such a generically progressive, but often rather insipid message—what President Eisenhower called "faith in faith"—mainline denominations experienced significant growth during the 1940s and '50s, especially through their expansion in the suburbs. The Methodist Church, in particular, gained numerically and in terms of its institutional bureaucracy, even though it represented what church historian Nathan Hatch has termed the "bland, uninspired middle of American society."[12]

Indeed, in spite of the specter of Cold War, American society in the post-World War II period displayed a stubborn optimism. In the early 1960s, for example, President Kennedy's youthfulness and call to embark upon a space race symbolized for many the heyday of modernity, science, and American triumphalism. Even the conditions faced by oppressed African Americans seemed, during the first years of the Kennedy administration, to be pointing positively, as the civil rights movement appeared to be gaining ground. In the wake of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s successful March on Washington in August 1963, for instance, the next (September 1963) issue of *Ebony* magazine envisioned a bright destiny for black Americans. Roy Wilkins, the Executive Secretary of the NAACP, wrote that, because of the civil rights agitation of the previous decade, the future "promises gradually increasing racial progress" and an "unfettered opportunity to achieve genuine equality." "We are on our way," Wilkins opined, "and the new day already looms in sight."[13]

But just eighteen days after the March on Washington, the infamous Birmingham church bombing blew apart liberal idealism. One could argue that the buoyant confidence of American progressivism exploded in that paroxysm, just like its European cousin had a generation before. I believe we can date the breakdown of American progressive optimism, and also its concomitants of mainline Protestantism and theological liberalism, rather precisely to the fall of 1963. During that autumn, MLK's summer dream became the nightmare of four dead Sunday School girls and then, only two months later, the rising hope of Camelot lay bloodied

[12]Nathan O. Hatch, "The Puzzle of American Methodism," *Church History* 63:2 (June 1994): 175-89.

[13]Roy Wilkens, "After Desegregation, What Next? Total Freedom Promises Gradually Increasing Racial Progress," *Ebony* 18:11 (September 1963): 65.

in Dallas—two foreboding examples of spasmodic violence ushering in a decade of assassination, war, agitation, protest, scandal, corruption, sexual revolution, cultural mayhem, and a general sense of social angst and suspicion of institutions that has continued almost without break into the second decade of the twenty-first century. Questioning authorities of all kinds became the norm. Not surprisingly, the mainstream Christianity that had wedded itself to optimistic post-war American culture also began its diminishment from that very moment.[14]

The Beginnings of the Wesleyan Theological Society

It was at that exact historical juncture in the early 1960s that a group of Holiness academics organized themselves. They hoped to find a welcoming space for their scholarship, a community of cognitive resonance, apart from the Reformed dominance of the Evangelical Theological Society and the liberal dominance of the rest of the theological academy. They did not realize that their liberal mainline nemesis was at its apex and on the verge of beginning a steep, unabated decline, soon to lose its supposed cultural influence.

A group of educators from the National Holiness Association decided to provide seminars on Holiness theological attributes at seventeen Holiness colleges and seminaries from 1961 to 1963. This project culminated in a large academic conference at Winona Lake, Indiana, in November 1964. The scholars published three volumes of articles based on the lectures that had been given at the seminars. The first two volumes were given the (really creative!) titles of *Insights into Holiness* and *Further Insights into Holiness*.[15] The most significant of the three volumes, the last one, was more compellingly named *The Word and the Doctrine: Studies in Wesleyan-Arminian Theology*. The thirty-two chapters in *The Word and the Doctrine* presented standard mid-twentieth century Holiness theological perspectives on salvation, sin, grace, the atonement, the witness of the Spirit, entire sanctification, the gifts of the Spirit, world evangelism, Christian ethics, then-current "social tensions," and the appropriate atti-

[14]Not all mainline Protestants in the mid-twentieth century were theologically liberal (indeed, significant portions of each denomination saw themselves as theologically moderate or even conservative), but the leadership, national boards and agencies, publications, and most influential seminaries of the mainline denominations all inclined toward theological liberalism.

[15]Kenneth Geiger, compiler, *Insights into Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1962), "Foreword"; and *Further Insights into Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1963), "Foreword."

tude to take regarding the larger culture. Each topic had one article written about it, except for the topics of sin (five articles), salvation (five articles), and two articles apiece on the atonement, social tensions, Christian ethics, and the Holiness response to American culture.[16]

It is clear from the two assigned articles on each of the social and cultural topics in *The Word and the Doctrine* that there were differences of opinion about what to emphasize. On the one hand, regarding the topic of Christian ethics, Morton Dorsey, a Holiness evangelist, wrote an article with the revealing title of "The Christian—Not of the World." Dorsey's piece expressed typical reactionary anxieties about "conformity" with the "secularist" culture of the 1960s. "It is urgently important," Dorsey wrote, "that we who treasure the distinctive truth of Christian holiness . . . maintain our separateness from the world." Similarly, one of the chapters on "social tensions," by George Failing, spoke about personal change as the only way to bring about social change.[17] In hindsight, the absence of any sustained discussion of racial or gender disparities in American society or other highly discussed social issues of that period has to be one of the most disturbing aspects about the origins of the WTS.[18]

This ignoring or resisting of structural transformation, which represented the perspective of most white religious groups during the 1960s, was addressed directly by Martin Luther King, Jr. King used terminology regarding the need for wakefulness that resembles what I cited previously from Wesley and Roberts. King stated: "One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. Every society has its protectors of the status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through

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[16]Kenneth E. Geiger, compiler, *The Word and the Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), "Preface" and "Contents."

[17]Morton W. Dorsey, "The Christian—Not of the World," in Geiger, *The Word and the Doctrine*, 392-95; George E. Failing, "Holiness and Social Tensions: Part II," in Geiger, *The Word and the Doctrine*, 423-29.

[18]On the occasion of Martin Luther King's birthday in 2015, Free Methodist bishop David Kendall blogged about his denomination's response to the concerns of the 1960s: "One of the most shocking and shameful parts of our history as a church, in my view, is our non-participation (at best) in and our resistance (at worst) to the American Civil Rights Movement." Kendall continued: "Our opting out . . . reflected . . . a failure to live up to our best understanding of holiness." David Kendall, "MLK and the FMC," blog; http://fumcusa.org/davidkendall/2015/01/19/mlk-and-the-fmc/

revolutions. But today our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change."[19]

On the other hand, the other article on "social tensions" that appeared in the collection of chapters in *The Word and the Doctrine* demonstrated a very different perspective regarding what the correct Holiness approach toward culture should be. Indeed, among the sixty-six chapters in all three volumes emanating from the Holiness seminars and conferences that directly preceded the formation of the WTS, this essay on "Holiness and Social Tensions," written by George Turner, leaps out by its uniqueness. In contrast to Failing's similarly-titled article, Turner's article expressed strikingly progressive attitudes on issues such as race relations, segregation, immigration, and capitalistic "monopolies." On other issues, such as prayer in the public schools, the U.S. attitude toward communist China, and advertising for liquor and cigarettes, Turner is more typically conservative, but I would contend that his condemnation of these personal vices was not just pandering to Victorian mores.[20] Like Julia Shelhamer (the mother-in-law of Asbury social ethics professor Gilbert James), who was known for her habit of preaching simultaneously against "segregation and miniskirts," such combining of countercultural attitudes in regard to both social justice and personal morality echoed the kind of "radical" commitments typical of Holiness folk from the previous century.[21]

George Turner's writing on race is particularly noteworthy. In the 1960s, a few Holiness figures who would later become active in the WTS, such as Paul Bassett and Melvin Dieter, took courageous individual actions against racial discrimination but, in that decade, no Holiness author other than Turner *wrote* against racism. His comments were unusually forceful, including a recognition of structural sin and "white privilege," which he names directly. He spoke out against the "illusions of white superiority," which "are so often linked with Christianity." Turner stated emphatically: "Unless our witness to full salvation is matched by a proportionate concern with man's total well-being, especially a concern for the underprivileged of our nation and world, our profession of perfect

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[19]Martin Luther King, "The World House," in *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (Beacon Press, 1967).

[20]George A. Turner, "Holiness and Social Tensions: Part I," in Geiger, *The Word and the Doctrine*, 413-21.

[21]Conversations with Donald W. Dayton and William Kostlevy, February 2015. Gari-Anne Patzwald kindly provided information on Julia Shelhamer.

love is jeopardized and perhaps invalidated." Harkening back to his Free Methodist origins, Turner's outspoken 1965 call for Holiness action against racial segregation and discrimination demonstrated that at least a smidgeon of the nineteenth century evangelical heritage Donald Dayton rediscovered a decade later was still in the memory of Holiness leaders. But Turner's article is most noticeable for its singularity, not only within the three volumes of sixty-six essays, but more generally among almost all post-war Holiness folk. Indeed, Asbury College did not admit African Americans until the 1960s. And in the words of Paul Bassett, some Holiness congregations he pastored in the mid-twentieth century manifested an "ugly, ugly hatred" of African Americans.[22] Though vestiges of the countercultural nature of old Holiness emphases remained,[23] for the most part, issues of social import were neglected in the 1950s and '60s. One wonders if Holiness people in that era understood their own legacy of true knowledge and righteousness, as represented by Wesley's condemnation of slavery and Roberts' attacks on racial and gender inequality.

At the Winona Lake meeting, it became evident to many that there was a need for a new scholarly organization, independent of, but modeled on the Evangelical Theological Society. (Indeed the wording of the WTS charter corresponds directly with that of the ETS charter.) And so, in April 1965—a month after the Bloody Sunday march in Selma and just a couple weeks after the first ground troops landed in Vietnam[24]—"twenty men" organized the WTS at the National Holiness Association meeting in Detroit. This first group of WTS academics—"a tight group of fellows with similar ideas," according to Melvin Dieter—held their inaugural academic conference the following November at Spring Arbor College. Lunch was forty cents and the banquet cost $1.50. Ninety-two scholars and pastors registered as charter members of the Society. Four hundred members joined by 1972.[25]

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[22]Turner, "Holiness and Social Tensions: Part I," 413-21; communications with Paul Bassett and Melvin Dieter, February 2015.

[23]In the 1960s, George Turner and David Seamands participated in a court case that resulted in desegregating public schools in Kentucky. Conversation with Donald W. Dayton, February 2015.

[24]Holiness educators organized their academic society in Detroit during the same month in 1965 when other educators organized the first ever "teach-in" on the war in Vietnam in neighboring Ann Arbor—an interesting (and contrasting) coincidence.

[25]Leo G. Cox, "Wesleyan Theological Society: The First Decade," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 30:1 (1995): 218-19.

The Early WTS Defense of Divine Initiative and Omnipotence in Response to Theological Liberalism

The neo-fundamentalist agenda of leading Holiness scholars—both from the seminars of the 1960s and from the first meetings of the WTS, became noticeable in two doctrinal emphases—Biblical inerrancy and the crisis aspect of entire sanctification. Inerrancy was articulated almost identically to the Evangelical Theological Society's doctrinal statement; indeed, the first WTS folks stressed that, on this issue, they did not differ one bit from the conservatism of their Reformed colleagues. The society's doctrine of an inerrant scripture was formalized in the 1965 WTS Statement of Faith, which for the first years of the organization was required to be adhered to by all full members of the society. In 1969, the term "infallible" was substituted for "inerrant." At that time, a definition of "infallible" from the Random House Dictionary was included in the Statement of Faith, and so the letters "RHD" were added to the end of the definition. After a number of years, some wondered about the identity of this seemingly mysterious theological authority. Since, as Alex Deasley told me, "no evidence was given as to why the Random House definition of 'infallibility' was infallible," in 1979, the initials were removed.[26]

Unlike the doctrine of inerrancy, the doctrine of entire sanctification epitomized a clear difference of the WTS scholars from their conservative Reformed colleagues. Indeed, this was the dividing issue with the Reformed neo-evangelicals and may have been why, for the first decade, the society referred to itself as a "fellowship of Wesleyan Arminian scholars," in order to stress its divergence from Calvinism. The emphasis on entire sanctification also helped keep Holiness scholars from completely negating the subjective aspect of faith, since credence given to a theological concept that was based on one's experience could not be solely cognitive. But the way in which entire sanctification was articulated—as the only logical understanding of Biblical truth, and as an authoritative, divinely-induced crisis event—also revealed an underlying fundamentalism, for it insisted on divine power in a way that kept human agency at bay. According to Paul Bassett,

[26]Cox, 220-21; William Kostlevy, "Wesleyan Theological Society: An Historical Overview," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 30:1 (Spring 1995): 214; Donald W. Dayton, "Wesleyan Theological Society: The Second Decade," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 30:1 (Spring 1995): 223; John G. Merritt, "Fellowship in Ferment: A History of the Wesleyan Theological Society, 1965-1984," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 21 (Spring-Fall 1986): 189-97; conversation with Alex Deasley, February 2015. In 1991, the insistence that WTS membership was dependent on conformity to a doctrinal statement was dropped, as the Society voted to remove any confessional requirement.

Nazarene leader Richard Taylor exemplified this mindset, for his "narrow rationalism" caused him to be "a literalist about entire sanctification."[27] By their stress on inerrancy and entire sanctification, and by their linkage of the two as mutual examples of God's transcendence and absolutist initiative, the scholars who established the WTS were making a conscious effort to hold back the incoming tide of liberal theology (not realizing that—ironically—its force actually was starting to recede).[28]

Thus, the WTS had a somewhat odd beginning as the restatement of nineteenth century theological emphases in a fundamentalist/neo-evangelical mode, appearing at the pivot moment for American modernity, at the apex of influence for liberal mainline Protestantism. Given this beginning point, and given the Society's penchant for ignoring the social issues that dominated the larger cultural discourse, one would think that the society would not have had much impact. Three factors made this inauspicious start less of a problem for the fledgling society. First, as mentioned, mainline Protestantism, and more particularly, mainline Methodism, was about to start its decline, causing Wesleyans of various stripes to look beyond the dominant denomination alone for scholarly expertise in the years to come. Second, unbeknownst to WTS leaders, The Methodist Church (soon to become the United Methodist Church) was just beginning its own mini-renewal of interest in Wesleyana, as Albert Outler, Frank Baker, and others looked anew at the origins of Methodism, mainly as a way to deepen the Methodist contribution to the ecumenical movement.[29] Third, and most important, though heavily influenced by neo-

[27]Conversation with Paul Bassett, February 2015.

[28]Fundamentalism affected the Church of the Nazarene in the twentieth century, as seen in the denomination's debate over inerrancy. The 1928 Articles of Faith in the COTN *Manual* included a statement authored by H. Orton Wiley declaring that the Bible was "inerrantly revealing the will of God." Even though Wiley wrote the statement carefully in order to allow for hermeneutical flexibility, since it still included the word "inerrantly," the statement spawned numerous interpretations, ranging from static fundamentalist literalism to more moderate dynamic readings of Scripture. The Nazarenes who were part of the early WTS leadership represented these various interpretative positions regarding the Bible. Michael Lodahl, *All Things Necessary to Our Salvation: The Hermeneutical and Theological Implications of the Article on the Holy Scriptures in the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* (San Diego: Point Loma Nazarene University, 2004), 29-31.

[29]See Outler's ecumenically-oriented anthology: Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley*, The Library of Protestant Thought (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964). Also important in the renewal of interest in Wesley was the Wesley Works Project, led by Frank Baker at Duke Divinity School, and continuing now under the leadership of Randy Maddox.

fundamentalist propositionalism, there was still a strong dose of Holiness revivalism left among the WTS founders, replete with an emphasis on the inward witness of the Spirit (what Wesley described as "true knowledge"); the need for vibrant worship even at academic meetings; a wariness of worldly refinements of any kind, including intellectual ones; and the importance of giving testimony to God's immanent presence in their lives—all of which kept the WTS members from completely propositionalizing their scholarly work. In addition, the fact that pastors were encouraged to attend WTS meetings and not only scholars insured that the Society's proceedings continued to be couched in a more pietistic, down-to-earth posture.

Indeed, the Society's supporting denominations and academic institutions had an ambivalent relationship with—and a somewhat moderating influence on—the mid-twentieth century neo-evangelical movement. The Free Methodist Church, for instance, was one of six charter member denominations of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942, and Free Methodist Bishop Leslie Marston (the second President of the NAE) argued successfully against using the term "inerrancy" in the NAE Statement of Faith. ("Infallibility" was used instead.) Free Methodists, in particular, wanted to avoid the inerrancy debate. As Donald Thorsen states: "although Reformed Christians may have dominated evangelical dialogue during the latter half of the twentieth century," twentieth century evangelicalism "was not without Holiness Church participation from the very beginning . . . Holiness Churches may not have been central in discussions about what it means to be evangelical, but they saw themselves as part of the evangelical movement, broadly conceived." On the one hand, then, Holiness participation (especially Free Methodism's influence) served to mitigate the fundamentalist ascendancy within neo-evangelicalism; consequently, many WTS members and their institutions embraced the term "evangelical," despite differences in defining it.[30] On the other hand, due to the growing impact of the larger neo-evangelical subculture, some fundamentalist theological views and attitudes (often originating from a more Reformed perspective) effected portions of the mid-century

[30]Conversation with Donald Dayton, February 2015; email communication with Donald Thorsen, March 2015. Wesleyan scholars lingered in their use of the term "evangelical" to describe themselves and continued to be associated with the larger neo-evangelical movement. William Abraham, for example, wrote *The Coming Great Revival: Recovering the Full Evangelical Tradition* (Harper and Row) in 1984, while teaching at Seattle Pacific University. Free Methodist Kevin Mannoia became NAE President in the 1990s.

Holiness movement, especially within the Wesleyan [Methodist] Church and the faculty of Asbury Seminary—both of which provided many of the early leaders of the WTS.[31]

Due to the fundamentalist predilection of the WTS leadership in its beginning years, the Society generally stood fast with the neo-evangelical criticism of modernism. This association of the start of the WTS with a particular cultural and theological moment (in this case, neo-fundamentalism/neo-evangelicalism) is a trait that we will see during the fifty year history of the Society; that is, the WTS, throughout its lifespan, has been most noticeable for its impulse to combine a constructive retrieval of the Wesleyan Holiness message with the theological language and categories of other current modes of discourse. The "what" (the content of Wesleyan theology, which I contend can be encapsulated as true knowledge and righteousness) has been expressed through the "how" (the method of constructive retrieval) in a variety of ways that reflected the specific concerns of each respective time period.

Constructive Retrieval

But what do I mean by a constructive retrieval? By a retrieval, I am referring to the disposition of the members of the Society to acknowledge their allegiance to the story of Israel, the Gospel narrative, and the history of the people of God for the past two thousand years. Members also recognize a particular debt to the preaching and teaching of the Wesley brothers in the eighteenth century and the ways in which their teaching and their praxis became instantiated through the Holiness movement in the mid to late nineteenth century. Attention to this received tradition means that they always have a touchstone for their work and do not create theological teachings *ex nihilo*.

By construction, I'm referring to the penchant of scholars in the Society to want to make theology relevant to the needs and desires of people today. They listen to the voices of those around them and respond to those needs by what they say and write and, therefore, how they live.

In this work of constructive retrieval, some WTS members leaned more on the constructive side and have been less concerned with how they have retrieved the tradition, while others leaned in the opposite

[31]Dayton, "Wesleyan Theological Society: The Second Decade," 222-23. In 1968, the Wesleyan Methodist Church merged with the Pilgrim Holiness Church to become the Wesleyan Church. See the earliest issues of the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (for example, 3:1 (Spring 1968)), for fundamentalist-leaning articles written by scholars from the Wesleyan Church and Asbury Seminary faculty.

direction. Constructive theologians sometimes accuse historians of being stuck in fixed categories of thought or are not willing to make normative claims, while historical theologians and theological interpreters of scripture sometimes feel that constructive theologians play fast and loose with doctrines and practices that have held for centuries. I would contend that the most extensive debates that have taken place in the Society have often involved these mutual suspicions and differences of emphasis.[32]

Given the organizing interpretation of the WTS as a narrative of scholars developing successive constructive retrievals of the Wesleyan-Holiness message in light of current modes of theological discourse, I will now highlight the various ways that we see this propensity toward intersection throughout the first half-century of the Society's history.

1.

As mentioned, **the originating group of WTS scholars in the mid-1960s actualized the initial iteration of this tendency by promulgating a constructive retrieval of Holiness concepts in dialogue with the theological motif of divine initiative**. The early meetings of the Society were dominated by discussions on Holiness doctrinal attributes—a retrieval—but the controversies over these doctrines were framed in the terms of neo-fundamentalist/anti-modernist categories. The founding members would not have admitted, or perhaps even been fully aware, of the degree to which their retrieval disclosed this conglomeration. If asked, the initial WTS generation believed they were simply representing fidelity to Wesley's ideas in their pristine form. But they combined the nineteenth century doctrine of entire sanctification with the language and issues characteristic of mid-twentieth century neo-evangelicalism, especially as expressed in the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. In their articulation of these ideas, they interpreted both the crisis of sanctification and the inspiration of scripture as two static instances of God's powerful action.

2.

Within just a few years of the founding of the Society, a smattering of WTS members introduced a different set of topics for discussion and

[32]I have had the impression for many years that both retrieval and construction are essential to the advancement of a theological community; so, when—as President of the Society in 1999—I first suggested that the WTS establish a book prize, I also suggested that it be named after historical theologian Timothy L. Smith and constructive theologian Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, both of whom represented some of the finest examples of these two dispositions within the Holiness academy.

debate. Developments within American religious culture opened up a dialogue between Holiness notions and a new approach to theological discourse: that is, **some scholars in the 1970s engaged in a constructive retrieval of Wesleyan/Holiness ideas in dialogue with the theological motif of the dynamic life of the Spirit**. This decade, in the period just after the Second Vatican Council and its emphasis on the fresh wind of God, witnessed the rise of the charismatic movement and a greater receptivity to discussion about and experiences with the Holy Spirit. Neo-evangelical ministries and parachurch organizations began to embrace a "big tent" that included Pentecostals and charismatics. Such an expansive understanding of American evangelicalism, growing in influence and enlivened by the power of the Spirit, became an encouragement for Holiness people to identify and fellowship with "born-again Christians" from other backgrounds.

Given this context, it is not surprising that the WTS in the 1970s debated the role of Spirit baptism in relation to entire sanctification. Nineteenth and early twentieth century Holiness exponents had assumed that the experience of entire sanctification was accompanied by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and taught this as a doctrine which they believed had been received directly from John Wesley. However, at society meetings in the 1970s, some paper presenters questioned whether John Wesley actually taught a direct relationship between the baptism of the Spirit and sanctification, suggesting instead that nineteenth century Holiness teachers such as Phoebe Palmer appropriated John Fletcher's punctiliar ideas regarding Spirit baptism and then advanced them. Others, such as Robert Lyon of Asbury, claimed that a connection between the baptism of the Spirit and a "second blessing" is nowhere to be found in the New Testament.[33]

This double blow—averring that neither the Bible nor Wesley affirmed Spirit baptism as a crisis event associated with sanctification, seemed to call into question the quintessential understanding of the Holiness movement. Alex Deasley says that "the WTS had been created primarily to defend this doctrine." Consequently, such assertions were vehemently countered by more traditional Holiness stalwarts, who wanted to view entire sanctification less as a dynamic process and more as a singular

[33]Merritt, 189-99; Donald W. Dayton, "Wesleyan Tug-of-War on Pentecostal Links," *Christian Century* (December 15, 1978): 43; Robert W. Lyon, "Baptism and Spirit-Baptism in the New Testament," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 27:1 (Spring 1979): 14-26.

static event.[34] The renewed stress on the role of the Holy Spirit at the meetings indicated the attitude of the times. Such discussions also caused some WTS members to start asking about the common historical and theological lineage of the Holiness and Pentecostal movements, a linkage that other upwardly mobile Holiness scholars sought to deflect.

Representing a similar pneumatological thread during this decade was the publication of Mildred Wynkoop's *The Theology of Love* in 1972. In her book, Wynkoop wrote that sanctification is primarily relational, not transactional—moving beyond narrow or legalistic understandings of Holiness.[35] As Deasley notes, she "played up the processive aspect of sanctification almost to the exclusion of any identifiable turning point." Entire sanctification is a dynamic actualization of love that never arrives at a completed state. Some saw Wynkoop as a "maverick," whose work was too heavily engaged with theological construction and not enough with retrieval, therefore betraying her Nazarene roots. But Wynkoop had an irenic spirit, and she saw her contribution simply as a faithful reclamation of her tradition by going back to the eighteenth century roots of the movement and not just to the revivalism of the nineteenth. Is the nineteenth century interpretation of Wesley the only one or even the best one, she asked? Indeed, Wynkoop helped to break the sectarian mold among Nazarenes at WTS. Alex Deasley and Randy Maddox both note that Nazarenes in the 1970s appreciated the WTS because it became "a place to present alternatives" at a time when they did not have another venue for theological expression that was not controlled by the church hierarchy.[36]

During the decades of the 1980s and '90s, two different types of constructive retrieval with other modes of discourse became prominent

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[34]Conversation with Alex Deasley, February 2015. Indicative of the high stakes involved in the debate on spirit baptism, when Robert W. Lyon made his claims at the 1978 WTS meeting—according to Deasley—several other Asbury Seminary professors attended specifically in order to take notes so that they could have grounds for a case against Lyon if they decided to dismiss him from the seminary for his "revisionism"—which, in the end, did not occur. Deasley said that, although both he and Lyon presented papers on the topic of spirit baptism, "Bob took most of the fire" during the question and answer period. "People at Asbury had come to make an end of him."

[35]Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972).

[36]Conversation with Alex Deasley; email communication with Randy Maddox, February 2015.

among Society members, both mindful of their heritage, but concentrating on different points in time—one in the nineteenth century and the other in the eighteenth century.

3.

The '80s and '90s first witnessed a constructive retrieval of Wesleyan/Holiness themes in dialogue with the theological motif of God's preferential option for the poor. This specific constructive retrieval is in dialogue with the much larger movement of contextual theologies. Contextual theologies insist that the particular milieu of previously marginalized people groups, such as women, African Americans, the poor, immigrants, and industrial workers must be taken into account, and perhaps even given preference, when proclaiming the Gospel. In the late 1960s and 1970s, liberation theologians, black theologians, feminist theologians, and other contextual theologians practiced and then wrote about these ideas. Historians have demonstrated that very similar liberative themes can be found among nineteenth century Holiness evangelists. B. T. Roberts, for instance, insisted that "special efforts" should be put forth to alter structures that demean the poor and oppressed, who are "the favored ones" that "must be particularly cared for."[37] Timothy L. Smith first unearthed in his Harvard dissertation the alliance between holiness revivalism and social reform, which he then published as a monograph in 1957.[38] As noted, George Turner and other lonely leftover Holiness radicals also spoke up about such issues in the 1960s. Then, a number of Holiness social activists in the 1970s promoted this line of thinking. Donald Dayton encouraged discussion of this subject matter with his important 1976 publication of *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, in which he argued that there is "a great heritage of evangelical social witness."[39]

These early forays into justice topics by forerunners Smith and Dayton resulted in a torrent of scholarship on contextual themes in the 1980s-90s, as a host of WTS members built on this prior work. WTS scholars began to recall social justice aspects of the nineteenth century Holiness heritage that had been largely neglected by the mid-twentieth century

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[37]B. T. Roberts, "Free Churches," *The Earnest Christian* 1:1 (January 1860): 6-10.

[38]Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (New York: Abingdon, 1957).

[39]Paul Hostetler, ed., *Perfect Love and War: A Dialogue on Christian Holiness and Issues of War and Peace* (Evangel Press, 1974); Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976).

Holiness churches and educational institutions. Though contextually-based WTS scholarship did not uncritically accept the economic or social implications of liberationists, it nonetheless did take seriously the need to re-appropriate justice aspects of the Holiness heritage. And a number of us in the Society continue to see the importance of retrieving the "sanctified eccentricity" of this nineteenth-century portion of our tradition.[40]

4.

If, on the one hand, the WTS dialogue with social justice interests derived from contextual theologies concerned the constructive retrieval of the nineteenth century heritage, on the other hand, the second dialogue of the 1980s and '90s concerned the retrieval of the eighteenth century heritage. Along similar lines to the 1960s scholarship of Albert Outler, Colin Williams, and John Deschner among mainline Methodists, this WTS dialogue engaged with the larger ecumenical movement by relating the Wesleys to the broader Christian tradition. Randy Maddox describes the governing insight of this theological endeavor in this way: "Constructive theology is best done in the midst of ecumenical conversations over the long term," and especially "by engaging with our closest tradition first"—which in our case is Methodism. Ecumenically focused Wesleyan scholars understand, in Kenneth Collins' words, "that Methodism, at its very core and in terms of its larger purpose, requires the broader, catholic context of the ecumenical movement for its much-needed witness." "Spreading scriptural holiness finds its proper setting," Collins continues, "beyond any particular tradition of Wesleyanism," since "the various forms ever run the risk of becoming provincial." Given the interest in connecting Wesleyanism to the broader Christian tradition, Collins' scholarship has demonstrated Methodism's reliance on "its vibrant Reformation heritage" regarding justification; Maddox has shown Wesley's soteriological dependence on the Eastern fathers and the larger Orthodox tradition; and Howard Snyder found affiliations between Wesley and the Pietists on matters of church structure. These ecumenically-oriented scholars do not retrieve Wesley for an antiquarian or hagiographic purpose, but rather as a window to help us understand better the entirety of the teachings of the church so that they can be applied currently.[41] When ecclesiology is

[40]See Douglas M. Strong, "Sanctified Eccentricity: Continuing Relevance of the Nineteenth-Century Holiness Paradigm," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 35:1 (Spring 2000): 9-21.

[41]Email communications with Randy Maddox and Kenneth Collins; conversation with Howard Snyder, January/February 2015.

understood through the classic marks of the church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, this ecumenical thrust stresses especially its catholicity, the impulse toward the wholeness of the church's witness. Thus, while not neglecting the marks of unity, holiness, or apostolicity, **this Wesleyan constructive retrieval in light of ecumenism is in particular dialogue with the theological motif of the church catholic**.

Not surprisingly, then, the 1980s and '90s was also the period when the WTS first extended its reach externally in various ways. The society engaged with the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches; Donald Dayton, Paul Bassett, and Donald Thorsen represented the WTS in these ecumenical gatherings, beginning in 1983 and continuing since. Many WTS scholars started attending the Oxford Institutes for Methodist Theological Studies. Friendships between Holiness and Pentecostal scholars, such as Susie Stanley with Cheryl Bridges Johns, resulted in joint meetings between the WTS and the Society for Pentecostal Studies, starting in 1998 and now occurring every five years. Other examples of reaching beyond its previously narrow boundaries were noticeable by the Society's actions to invite speakers from other theological backgrounds (such as John Howard Yoder, Canon Alchin, Albert Outler, Thomas Oden, and many others); by accepting the invitations of mainline United Methodist institutions (Emory, Duke, United, SMU, Wesley) to host annual meetings; and by receiving into the society many United Methodist members not identified with Asbury or other traditionally Holiness institutions. Theodore Runyon, for example, a renowned United Methodist theologian at Candler School of Theology who had Holiness family roots, attended the WTS beginning in 1981.[42]

Regarding United Methodist influence, a 1985 analysis found that faculty from forty-two institutions had contributed articles to the WTJ between 1966 and 1984. Up until the time of that study in the mid-1980s, *none* of the official United Methodist seminaries now highly represented in the society and in the *Journal* were among those forty-two schools.[43] Within just a few years, the situation had altered completely. It is interesting to note how the John Wesley Fellows played a key role in this entree of United Methodism into the WTS. The John Wesley Fellows program of A Foundation for Theological Education began in 1977 as a means to provide funding and camaraderie for evangelically-inclined United Meth-

[42]Conversations with Donald Dayton, Paul Bassett, and Randy Maddox; email communication with Donald Thorsen, February, 2015.

[43]Merritt, 193-94.

odists pursuing doctorates. By the 1990s, many of the young John Wesley Fellows had come of age academically and started to populate the Society, due to its reputation as an inviting place for Wesleyan scholarship.

The decade of the 2000s saw the development of two more streams of WTS scholars, both of which looked at epistemological questions, but in different ways.

5.

The first stream of the millennial decade was an ecclesially-grounded formulation of theology, an approach that was—perhaps obviously—closely related to the previously described emphasis on ecumenism. Just as the 1980s-90s ecclesiological accent was in particular dialogue with the theological motif of the church catholic, so **the ecclesiological Wesleyan constructive retrieval of the 2000s, while not neglecting the marks of oneness, holiness, and catholicity, was in particular dialogue with the theological motif of the church apostolic**, an approach by which scholars draw from the full range of canonical heritages.

There were two instances of this ecclesial stream coming to the fore during the decade following the turn of the millennium. One instance, centered at Southern Methodist University, found specific resonance among United Methodists and Free Methodists who had studied closely with William Abraham. These scholars collaborated on a joint academic project during the decade 2001-10, known as canonical theism. The project culminated in a 2008 book by the same name. Canonical theism emphasizes the prominence of the Holy Spirit in and through the Christian heritage, viewing the Spirit as central to the renewal of the church. The Spirit has generously given various gifts; indeed, the Spirit is free to use any means, but has chosen to use certain ones, and specifically a whole collection of canonical sources such as the canons of scripture, doctrine, the saints, icons, liturgy, and sacraments. All of the canonical sources derive from classical, apostolic Christianity.[44]

Another instance of this ecclesially-grounded approach is the theological interpretation of scripture, which is a broadening of the ecclesial-oriented stream to inform how one studies the Bible, and in the case of WTS Biblical scholarship, how one can develop a distinctively Wesleyan theological interpretation of scripture. Such scholars read scripture

[44]William J. Abraham, Jason E. Vickers, Natalie B. Van Kirk, eds., *Canonical Theism: A Proposal for Theology and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); conversation with Douglas Koskela; email communication with Jason Vickers, February 2015.

through the theological lens of Wesley's "rule of faith" or "analogy of faith," in which the whole Bible, as the church's book, is interpreted in light of the "way to heaven," the central soteriological narrative of God's redemption through Jesus Christ. As illustrated in representative monographs like Joel Green's *Reading the Bible as Wesleyans* and several of Robert Wall's articles and commentaries, the theological interpretation of Scripture scholars use this "rule of faith" as their interpretative trope.[45]

6.

A second, quite different stream during the decade of the 2000s was Open Theism, the constructive retrieval of Wesleyanism in dialogue with the theological motif of God's openness. Building on the work of Clark Pinnock, David Basinger, and other thinkers from neo-evangelical communities who published *The Openness of God* in 1994, this movement, variously termed Open Theism, Relational Theology, or Evangelical Openness, soon became well-accepted among a number of WTS members. Open Theism is derived at least partially from an evangelical understanding of process theology.[46] For open theologians, God's non-coercive love is crucially important. And, since, according to the perspective of Wesleyan Openness theologians, the fundamental Wesleyan intuition is God's love, we are then allowed to be creative regarding other doctrines such as those concerning God's power. Indeed, the most basic point of open theology is "a rejection of the classical view of divine foreknowledge and the insistence that the future is open, even for God." Thomas Oord states that the "Wesleyan tradition forms [his] most basic intuition," and he sees himself as a "constructive Wesleyan theologian, but not slavishly so," which means that he feels free to critique or modify Wesley's views when necessary.[47]

Open Theism has been especially strong among some (but by no means, all) Nazarene theologians, particularly those who studied at Claremont School of Theology. They harken back to Mildred Wynkoop, who

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[45]Joel B. Green, *Reading Scripture as Wesleyans* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010); conversation with Robert W. Wall.

[46]Clark H. Pinnock, *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994). Some openness scholars would see clear differences between their work and process thought, that is, while process thought views God's temporality as a metaphysical necessity, open theists believe that divine temporality is one of God's acts of self-limitation, so that divine agency still holds.

[47]Conversations with Thomas Oord and Randy Maddox, February, 2015.

"became the door for Nazarenes to move through," since she read and reinterpreted Boston Personalists and Process philosophers such as Daniel Day Williams for the Nazarene theological community.[48]

An irony apparent in the WTS of the millennial era is that Nazarenes, who used to be viewed as some of the most conservative, sectarian members of the society, are now interested in an unimpeded theological construction, while United Methodists, often viewed in larger circles beyond the WTS as theologically progressive, are (at least as demonstrated by those UMs most active in the Society) interested in maintaining the doctrinal core of Wesleyanism. Free Methodists and those from the Wesleyan Church often find themselves in the middle of such conversations, perhaps because, according to William Kostlevy, Wesleyan Methodist and Free Methodist origins were grounded in the New England and Northeastern respect for tradition while Nazarene origins came from the less tradition-bound regions of California and Texas, yet—like Nazarenes—the Free Methodist and Wesleyan denominations taken as a whole now all trend toward cultural conservatism.[49] The WTS thus holds together (at least) two types of Wesleyan scholars—more orthodox United Methodists who hail from a larger denominational structure that leans toward a sentimentalistic liberalism and Nazarenes and scholars from other Holiness churches who hail from larger denominational structures that lean toward a generic conservative evangelicalism. The differing challenges internal to their denominations faced by each group of scholars within the society shape their differing approaches to their respective constructive retrievals of Wesleyanism.

7.

A final mode of discourse with which Wesleyan Holiness theology has intersected, especially in the decade since 2010, is the missional theology movement. Wesleyans who have written on missional themes build their work on the earlier scholarship of Lesslie Newbigin and Darrell Guder. **This most recent constructive retrieval of Wesleyanism is therefore in dialogue with the theological motif of the *missio dei***. The *missio Dei* is a theological approach in which God is already at work in the world; as Howard Snyder states, our task is to be aware of it and join in. Building upon the central image used in this address, missional theologians ask us to wake up and participate in what God is and has been doing. In this

[48]Conversations with Alex Deasley and Randy Maddox, February 2015; Wynkoop, 11.

[49]Conversation with William Kostlevy, February, 2015.

vein, some WTS members have demonstrated that the structures of John Wesley's piety provided the undergirding for his missiology, thus pointing out that Wesley's entire theological system was mission-driven, while others have extended the missiological conversation to consider fresh expressions of church, such as new monasticism and missional communities.[50] Given the theological presumptions of missional theology, it is evident that Wesleyans could be even more engaged in this conversation, and it is hoped that such a retrieval will continue, since this school of thought seems (to many) to be a natural fit with Wesleyanism.

Conclusion

Retrospectively, we can look over the past fifty years and see seven ways in which WTS scholars have integrated Wesleyan/Holiness ideas with current theological trends. Like all historiographical categorizations, by narrowing WTS scholarship to seven motifs, I have simplified some subtleties in order to group together the ideas of various scholars. Some will argue, and rightfully so, that there are continuities between and among the motifs and scholars who have mixed and matched several of the motifs together. There are members who would want to say that they stress various parts of every one of the motifs. And clearly these seven streams of thought do not comprehend all WTS scholars; there are minority reports that I am sure I have neglected. The difficulty in naming some scholars' work is that, inevitably, I have left out others.

What are the continuities over these fifty years? What has endured, I would contend, is the inclination of WTS members to affirm and enhance the Wesleyan kerygma of true knowledge and righteousness, which has direct implications for the members' work as teachers and scholars.

For instance, embodying true knowledge today means that, even as educators, one's relationships to God and one another should shape the content one's scholarly pursuits. We are aware of the predilection toward intellectual idolatry, what John Wesley called "boasted knowledge" and what United Seminary's David Watson has called "academic demonic strongholds." My own observation of academic culture over many years—of which I acknowledge I am a part—causes me to worry that there is an unresolvable tension between the values of the academy and the values of the Kingdom. The academy fails, often spectacularly, to be missional. The

[50]Howard A. Snyder, *Salvation Means Creation Healed* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011); Elaine A. Heath and Scott T. Kisker, *Longing for Spring: A New Vision for Wesleyan Community* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2011).

socialization received in doctoral programs, at the American Academy of Religion, and so forth, results in attitudes such as: scholarly one-up-manship; the assumed superiority of faculty over staff; and the felt need to self-promote one's scholarship in order to receive recognition from colleagues and to be advanced by one's institution. Put bluntly, this socialization is not consistent with loving your neighbor as yourself or with the development of holy tempers that lead to sanctification. And I fear that this socialization is being passed along to students. Holiness schools in the late nineteenth century had no problem mixing their classroom education with outbursts of affective, spirit-filled worship and social ministry among the neediest, unafraid of the larger community's perception of their students' abnormal collegiate behavior. Until the late 1960s, just about the time that the WTS was established, Holiness college revivals would last for days and disrupt classes. While particular expressions of such piety may look different today, and while we always want to be challenging our students to be rigorous, thoughtful scholars, are we nonetheless willing for the Spirit's anointing to disrupt our academic routines? In our eagerness to have our scholarship be perceived as equal to that of any other theological tradition, in our insistence that we are not the ones to be blamed for "the scandal of the evangelical mind,"[51] have we inadvertently kept out the Spirit's voice?

Meanwhile, embodying righteousness today means that we will never again allow ourselves to be so unaware, so asleep to the issues of our time that the most important events of our era go unnoticed by the proceedings of our society. We are not allowed, as in the case of our founders, to write and lecture at length about holiness as a spiritual experience but not speak out against systemic unrighteousness, to be concerned about doctrine and personal morality but not also about structural evil. What do Wesleyans have to say about racial inequities in our society today? Will we "stay woke" with African Americans protesting the violence they face from police? Will we wake up regarding the scourge of human trafficking? Will we enter into the fray on issues of sexuality, as difficult as they are to address? In our post-9/11 world, will we engage in interreligious dialogue and interfaith relationships and in addressing religious persecution? And will we also continue to pursue holiness in our personal lives?

In regard to being wide awake to righteousness, we also need to take stock of who we are as an academic society at this historical moment. Our

[51]Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

meetings are lively and well attended. Our journal is well received. We begin our time together each year by worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ. The society continues to provide a welcoming academic space for those still in graduate school to test out their ideas. A broader array of scholars are involved denominationally, not just those from Holiness churches. In these and other respects, William Kostlevy contends that the "WTS has been a great success story."[52] For many of us through the years, WTS meetings have become a cherished annual opportunity for collegiality and fellowship.

But, as another longtime member, Alex Deasley, notes, "the society has changed greatly."[53] Today's WTS, for instance, is comprised mostly of scholars. We have lost the participation of most of our pastors, which further represents the embourgeoisement of the Holiness movement. Their absence makes it imperative that we scholars are vigilant to remember that the academy should serve the church and not the other way around.

One way in which we have not changed, sadly, is that we are still a society predominantly made up of white folks; while we have made some progress regarding greater participation of women,[54] such is not the case with people of color. While I am not trying to shame us, both individual members and the society as a whole must take ownership of the task of diversifying, so that our tradition can more deeply represent the breadth of God's Kingdom. As with B. T. Roberts, we should make "special efforts" by identifying promising students of color at our institutions and then encouraging them to pursue an academic vocation. And we can also make stronger affiliations with Wesleyan Christians from the global South. Holiness and Methodist groups are growing dramatically throughout the majority world. We can and should be engaging emerging scholars from these churches.

What is God doing? What is the future? WTS members whom I interviewed indicate interest in writing on a wide range of topics.[55] In

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[52]Conversation with William Kostlevy, February, 2015.

[53]Conversation with Alex Deasley, February, 2015.

[54]Email communication with Susie Stanley; conversation with Diane Cunningham LeClerc, February, 2015.

[55]Topics on which those WTS members whom I interviewed indicated interest include sacramental theology, Trinitarian theology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, systematic and dogmatic theology, re-visioning sanctification, the relationship between formation and mission, linkages to the greater Anglo-Catholic tradition, and post-Wesley explorations of the Methodist heritage.

each of these scholarly explorations, WTS members will need to engage in a constructive retrieval similar to that accomplished during the previous half-century. We should continue to retrieve both the Biblical tradition and the church historical tradition. And constructive theologizing, embracing the "new thing" in relation to our current reality, must continue or else the movement will deserve to fade away. But here is the tension. Like the first WTS generation, we can err too much on the side of norming a calcified view of the tradition. However, we can also err by being so dependent on contemporary sensibilities that we lose sight of the truth. John Wesley still provides a good model for navigating this tension, for he had a remarkable ability to amalgamate his adherence to the tradition with the concerns of his day.

As Wesleyan scholars, then, we are people called to proclaim true knowledge and righteousness through the work of constructive retrieval. We do this by remaining alert, by being awake—wakeful to what God is doing in the world.

Many of you have read and, like me, enjoyed the novel *Jayber Crow*, by Wendell Berry. Berry describes a fictional small-town barber named Jayber Crow. Jayber Crow embodies a deep Christian faith, and although he is dismayed by the church and unimpressed by most preachers—nonetheless, he puts up with them.

The preachers that Jayber Crow heard at his church, Berry writes "were always young students from the seminary who . . . [unfortunately] were not going to school to learn where they were, let alone the pleasures and pains of being there, or what ought to be said there. . . . They went to school, apparently, to learn to say over and over again, regardless of where they were, what had already been said too often." Jayber Crow's observation of seminarians sounds similar to Wesley's concern (cited earlier from his *Notes* on 1 Corinthians 15:34) that, "with all their boasted knowledge, they are totally ignorant of what it most concerns them to know."

In his novel, Wendell Berry delivers a biting critique of American culture and, along with it, standard seminary education. Theological education, Berry contends, has had the tendency to be removed from one's immediate context and to train ministers who relay religious "power" without "knowledge." By contrast, Berry understands true knowledge to be a kind of wisdom based on humility.

Despite this lack of true knowledge among ministers, Jayber Crow took notice of a few exceptions to his generalized frustration regarding seminary-educated pastors. He says: "a few of those young preachers were bright and could speak—I mean they could sound as if they were awake,

and make you listen—and they were troubled enough in their own hearts to have something to say."[56]

Those who "could sound as if they were awake" had something to say because they were teachable, incarnational, and dependent on and aware of their own need for God's grace. They were interested in making God's active presence known and experienced—a present salvation.

We, too, are called to be those who sound as if we are awake, and we are called to educate others who sound as if they are awake. Awake (as Wesley preached) to the "true knowledge" of the inward witness of the Spirit, God's immediate presence in our lives; awake (as B. T. Roberts editorialized) to righteousness and integrity; awake (as MLK preached) to face the challenges of change in our current society; awake (as our WTS forebears hoped) to retrieve the Holiness message constructively for a new generation; awake (as Wendell Berry wrote) to the present context; awake to what God is doing right now in our world.

[56]Wendell Berry, *Jayber Crow* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2000), 160-62.

THE FUTURE OF WESLEYAN THEOLOGY IS REVIVAL

by

Beth Felker Jones

The church stands, trembling, anxious about the future and tempted to despair. Ephraim Radner, probably the weightiest contemporary theologian working in ecclesiology, suggests that we inhabit a time of judgment on the church.[1] Certainly churches in the Wesleyan family are experiencing fear, worry, and apocalyptic rhetoric.

Does the church have a future? Does the discipline of the theology have something to say in this situation? None of us, certainly, knows the future of Wesleyan theology, but I am committed to exercising the eschatological imagination, so thinking about that future is a daunting but welcome task. Here, I offer some suggestions about the resources and riches of a Wesleyan systematic theology for speaking toward and embodying a church with a future. I take faithful speech and embodiment to be the two primary tasks of theology. To that end, I submit here an exercise in speaking about what it means, theologically, to *have* a future and to do so in a characteristically Wesleyan way.

This raises the question, of course, of what is characteristic of a Wesleyan systematic theology. One can find, in the literature, any number of accounts of what it means to be Wesleyan. There are disparities between those accounts, no doubt, but convergences can also be discerned. My own account is both historical and theological, but it leans toward doctrinal emphases more than it does toward a kind of "what would Wesley do?" theology. It is rooted in the Wesleyan tradition and in those family resemblances that characterize various members of the Wesleyan family. My account affirms a number of doctrinal emphases, which I take to be characteristic of theology done in a Wesleyan style. Among these, I will name, upfront, a kind of confidence in pneumatological power that has been correlated, across the centuries, with conversion and with strong accounts of sanctification. Beyond that, I will let my construal of what is characteristically Wesleyan unfold as I proceed.

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[1] *The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

What follows, then, is an exercise in theology that embraces and works with characteristic features of a Wesleyan systematic theology. My thesis is that such a theology offers hope for the future of the church.

Properly theological hope that the church has a future requires properly theological talk. That is, any talk of hope for a church with a future also has to be God-talk, and our talk of ecclesial futures is inextricably linked to God's future. To speak of the future of theology, then, can only be to speak of eschatology, a task that—in classic theological terms—is rather daunting for a number of reasons. Among those reasons are: 1) a proper theological awareness of the extreme contextual locatedness of Christian eschatologies of the past, 2) the very real dangers of escapist eschatologies, and 3) the fact that the most obviously eschatological biblical texts are extraordinary in their complexity, richness, and diversity, resisting systematization.

I want to be aware of these difficulties, but it is also the case that theology is supposed to be contextual and located, that the contours of specifically Christian eschatology must always press against eschatological escapism, and that rich, mysterious strands in the biblical witness can be received more as gift than as burden. Eschatology, as a doctrine, magnifies some of the difficulties typical of doing theology in general; eschatology is an especially obvious instance of the fact that theological work is done by faith and not by sight and a strong reminder of the limits of all theologizing. This is good to remember, but it leaves me no less committed to the exercise of the eschatological imagination, a commitment that can only make sense within a sanctificationist tradition.

I want to propose—and to hope for—a future for Wesleyan theology that does not shy away from robust dogmatic theology, an imagination of the future that is thus linked tightly to the Father's good intentions for human beings and for all creation, intentions that are made possible through the Son in the Spirit. A theological optimism about sanctification, rooted in grace and in divine power, is one of the deep gifts of the Wesleyan theological tradition, making it possible to do difficult work like eschatology. Because that sanctificationist optimism is so characteristic of Wesleyan thought, the tradition also contains internal resources for disciplining that optimism. Some of those will be worked out below.

I want to make it a discipline to exercise the eschatological imagination in the tensed space between the already and the not yet of God's good future.

We get this right, in my opinion, when—in the United Methodist Church—we ask a candidate for ordination:

Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?

To say "yes" to this preposterous question is to claim the already of the kingdom in the strongest possible terms, terms that are not at all possible outside of supernatural grace. To say "yes" is to say that the kingdom is now. It is to recognize the alreadiness of the kingdom in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling the people of God. To expect to be made perfect in love in this life is to trust oneself to the power of a grace that is bigger than our tendencies to refuse to move forward into God's holy future. To expect to be made perfect in love in this life is to claim the reality of the present kingdom.

And yet, the perfection in love that we expect in this life is not identical to the perfection in love of the not-yet. If we fail to respect that necessary eschatological reservation, we are all too likely to mistake our sinful human projects and our sinful human presence with the holy project of the kingdom, and, of course, our awareness of past mistakes in this regard is one of the factors that demands the exercise of care around projects in eschatology.

All plausible Christian eschatologies lie on a spectrum between emphasis on the already and emphasis on the not-yet, and on that spectrum Wesleyan theology always tends towards the already and is marked by an optimism about the present reality of the kingdom among us. Wesleyans have always leaned into the already, and rightly so, for God's future is ours through the Son in the Spirit. And yet, within that tradition, we have resources for remembering the not-yet of God's future.

For instance, in John Wesley's response to the Maxfield-Bell controversy, we see a correction against the hubris that can attend overly realized eschatologies. The same John Wesley who believed in the possibility of perfection in the already corrected those who believed that they were already living the life of the resurrection, and in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, he laments those who "made abundance of noise . . . and greatly increased both the number and courage of those who opposed Christian perfection."[2] He also notes the lack of fruitfulness attached to this mistake, stating that, for all this, those who forgot the eschatological not-yet "made exceedingly few converts."

Wesleyan theology looks for the future in looking for sanctification, even the revival of entire sanctification, appropriate for this life, in this

[2]John Wesley, *A Plain account of Christian Perfection*, 20, in Works, vol. 13, *Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II*, edited by Paul Wesley Chilcote and Kenneth J. Collins (Nashville: Abingdon, 2013), 179.

life.[3] With a bold hermeneutics of pneumatological optimism, Wesleyan theology tends to claim biblical promises about human holiness, not only for the kingdom to come, but also for the here and now. Such commands, are for the living (Mk 12:27), and any future for the Wesleyan ecclesial family can only stand in continuity with such emphasis on present tense holiness as promised in a text like 1 John 4:17, "Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world." Wesleyan thought is characterized by this confidence that the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit is capable of truly transforming us and making us perfect in love.

But however far we want to push the already of the kingdom, we run against a limit in mortality. The limits of every eschatological already, including speculation about the future of theology, are encountered most clearly and undeniably in death. But in encountering that limit we have already the logic by which we may imagine the future in which God will undo death. In encountering the limit of mortality—both individually but also ecclesially—we are pointed to the logic of resurrection.

The logic of the eschatological imagination—which must lay claim to God's already and God's not-yet—can be nothing other than that of resurrection. And the resurrection which is not-yet has its own already in the church. If that church is struggling, if it is—in any sense—in mortal peril, then it stands in need of new life. It stands in need of the revival that I propose—and hope—is the future of Wesleyan theology. Resurrection and revival are two closely related terms, and the not-yet of resurrection should empower and inform the revival we so desperately need in the already.

The logic of resurrection is the logic of revival. The only power that can grant a future to the church is graced and gracious power, a power that works deep-seated transformation. Simply to invoke the idea of resurrection is already to refer to divine grace, for one of the defining features of resurrection is its impossibility under human power. No merely created power can give life to the dead, meaning that resurrection is, by definition, grace. Resurrection power is also power that works transformation. Resurrection doesn't ignore the old thing—the thing that has died (as though Jesus's body were a matter of no importance). Neither is resurrection reanimation (as if the Jesus the disciples met—risen from the dead—weren't transformed beyond anything they could have imagined as the blood flowed on Good Friday).

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[3]Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 177.

Resurrection works by continuity. The Jesus who died on Friday is the same Jesus who is raised from the dead on Easter Sunday. He still eats fish, and he bears the scars of his crucifixion. And Resurrection works by transformation. The risen Lord is changed. Sometimes his disciples recognize him, and sometimes they don't. He is no longer mortal—someone who could be killed on a cross. He is now the first fruit (1 Cor 15:20) among those God will raise from the dead. He is now already as we will be (but are not-yet): glorious, immortal, imperishable (1 Cor 15:54).

Resurrection picks up the old, dead thing and treasures what was good there. Resurrection also changes the old dead thing, burning away whatever was dross (1 Cor 3:12) and revealing God's good purposes for it. Any future for Wesleyan theology and any hope that theology might be a means of grace for revival must claim this resurrection already and resurrection not-yetness. It must claim both the continuity and the transformation that belong to the logic of the resurrecting Spirit who, though we are dead because of sin, will give life to our mortal bodies (Rom 8:10-11).

If the church has a future—or, indeed, a present—we might expect that future to work revival in the already. If the future of the church and the future of theology work by the logic of resurrection, then we can expect the future to stand in continuity with the past. And we can also expect transformation beyond what we were before, transformation that allows us—in faith—to continue to do theology in ways that speak in particular times and particular places, that—like John and Charles Wesley who saw specific, contextual needs and responded to those needs—may continue to bring revival, to bring resurrection, to bring new life, to a world in need.

This means that the future of Wesleyan theology will stand in continuity with tradition, and the future of the Wesleyan family of churches will stand both with the grand ecumenical tradition of historic orthodox Christianity and with the specifically Wesleyan stream of that tradition. We can expect that resurrection continuity means that the historical reclamation of Wesley we have seen flourish in the scholarship of the last few decades will remain integral to the unfolding of new constructive and contextual Wesleyan theologies, but we also must move past historical reclamation to address the particular time and times, the place and places, in which we stand. Though we see but dimly, we still see, and any seeing we can do is possible only in the grace and the faith in which we are, in Paul's words, "fully known" (1 Cor 13:12).

Having located the future of Wesleyan theology within the logic of resurrection, of revival, I will turn, now, from a general consideration of

the character of theological futures to some of my own specific proposals for ways that Wesleyan theology can work in consonance with such a future.

It is my conviction that the specific character of Wesleyan theology is particularly suited to thinking well about a set of questions current in the discipline of theology. Those questions circle around matters of gender, body, and corporeality, pushing with and also past contextual theologies to think about material particularity.

When I teach Wesley, I sometimes give students a list of reasons that I am gladly Wesleyan. It is not a comprehensive list, but it does point, in my judgment, to real strengths and gifts of the Wesleyan theological tradition.

My list includes the following:

1. The tradition's synthetic power to hold together grace and holiness and so offer a loving account of divine and human freedom.
2. Confidence in scripture and in the Holy Spirit.
3. The Wesleyan marriage of personal and social holiness, in which conversionism and perfectionism form an integral whole.

Attention to and continuity with these aspects of the Wesleyan theological tradition—along with creative and pneumatologically driven transformation of these same aspects—bears promise for a theology that hopes for the church's future. Transformative continuity with these aspects of the tradition will be coherent with the reviving transformation we hope God will work in gracing the church with revival.

The conversion oriented revivalism so central to the Wesleyan tradition has been treated, in recent years, as something of an embarrassment. Teaching Wesley has shaped my thinking about conversion and revival. My bright, articulate, and faithful students often bring uncertain feelings about conversion experiences. Increasingly aware of the limitations of an individualistic, frenetic sort of piety, they have become suspect of conversion stories, even their own stories. At the same time, they recognize the power of the conversionist traditions in which so many of them were nurtured.

I want to propose that a Wesleyan understanding of revival might provide a way for us to stop apologizing for conversionism, might give us a way to claim continuity with our past while seeking the kind of transformation that my students' questions require. In hoping that there is a future for conversion and for revival, I want to forward a tendentious metaphor; that in which conversion and the revival attached to it are understood as something like falling in love. The logic of resurrection is the logic of divine love.

Drawing an analogy between the revival wrought by the love of God and the human experience of love can be useful and beneficial to the church's future theological work. I am also convinced that this metaphor is a fittingly Wesleyan one, highlighting some of the distinctive gifts of the Wesleyan tradition. As much as I am able to argue for the metaphor's appropriateness, I will also be doing theology in a Wesleyan vein and making a case in favor of the Wesleyan theological tradition.

Conversion can be imagined as that life-changing event or process in which human beings fall in love with the divine and thus experience new life: revival. "We human beings," Mark Johnson argues, "are imaginative creatures . . . Consequently, our moral understanding depends in large measure on various structures of imagination, such as images, image schemas, metaphors, narratives, and so forth."[4] The formation of righteous and holy theological imagination is surely part of the process of sanctification for creatures whose imaginations have been crippled by sin need healing. Such creatures need grace to enable them to more faithfully image the God who created them. Metaphor is vital for the theological imagination and for the Christian life. Theology—inasmuch as it must be concerned about truth-telling—needs to have ways of adjudicating between metaphors.

Not only do we need *a* right metaphor (not *the* right metaphor), but we also need ways to get our right metaphor right. I am well aware that my love metaphor is weighed down with all kinds of baggage, and there are very real dangers inherent in using it, but those dangers can be circumvented as we seek to correct false versions of love with an unflinchingly theological portrait of the love of God. God's love converts us away from misbegotten visions of love without dismissing the embodied good of *eros*.

Here, I want to simply name a few reasons theologians ought not ignore human love when we look for metaphors for conversion.[5] First, the idea that there might be a link between human love relationships and the human-divine relationship is a central and dramatic biblical theme. There are, of course, other metaphors for conversion in scripture—birth and death are important here and these, too, are not unconnected to love—but there is much to recommend the idea of humanity as God's beloved as a key metaphor. This idea recurs through the scriptures—in Hosea, the

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[4]Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, date), ix.

[5]I develop this metaphor in greater detail in my forthcoming *Converting Love* (Oxford University Press, expected 2017).

Song of Songs, Ephesians, and Revelation, among other places—and it is an idea that carries with it a transformative, reviving persuasiveness that we ought not ignore.

My second reason for attending to this love metaphor comes from the Christian tradition. The metaphor belongs to the native language of—at least—Western theology from—at least—Augustine through the mystics through Wesley through contemporary evangelicalism. The love metaphor is ours. It is deeply entrenched in our history and our theological traditions, so much so that it may well be unavoidable. The fact that something has been put to bad use does not put it beyond reclamation, and the use of the love metaphor is not all bad. Again, it is a powerful metaphor, a metaphor intertwined with the passions, embodied lives, and transformative narratives. If we are to work with the logic of resurrection, we want a metaphor that can account for radical transformation.

Revival depends on grace, and the fruit of revival is holiness. Revival depends on grace because dead people cannot bring themselves back to life. Even Jesus, the eternal Son, does not raise himself from the dead. It is the Spirit who gives him life. There is no true revival without resultant holiness. Trees that have been made alive again are always fruitful. And here is where Wesleyan theology best recommends itself as revival theology.

I know of no account of the comprehensive biblical witness that can approach the explanatory power of the Wesleyan synthesis of this grace and holiness. Where some theologies would focus on the demands of biblical righteousness—the stringent requirements of holiness—at the expense of grace, Wesleyanism rejects that Pelagian temptation. Where other theologies would insist that the gratuity of grace can only be protected if we take humans out of the picture—perhaps even delighting in human incapacity and corruption—Wesleyanism rejects the antinomian temptation. Wesleyan theology holds grace and holiness together, maintaining the fiercest, most wild, optimism about the possibility of holiness as the fruit of sovereign grace.

False love that would coerce or even destroy is not the love that revives. A fair amount of contemporary anxiety over conversionist revivalism is anxiety, not about real love, but about a deformation of love that falsely identifies coercion and control with love. The enormous problem of abuse in intimate relationships exchanges control, domination, and violence for love, but the exchange often goes unnoticed when we are unable to imagine love rightly. Control is naturalized as a sign of the seriousness of the lover. False lovers are possessive, dictatorial, violent, and

keep the beloved under surveillance, isolating them from the love of friends and family. The same deformation of love is seen in lovers who would manipulate and manage the beloved, hoping to craft the loved one into some shape preferred by the lover. Only false love would deform conversion and hopes for revival by allowing coercion a place in the revivalist tent, but we are sinners, and so are prone to false love. Any melding of conversion with coercion can only be unholy.

The characteristic gifts of the Wesleyan tradition are an aid to correcting such coercion. Here, differences between Wesleyan and Reformed soteriologies are crucial. Even in attending to those differences, though, we need to recognize the shared starting point for both Reformed and Wesleyan treatments of salvation. The two traditions agree about the problem that salvation solves. Salvation is *from* something, and Reformed and Wesleyan theologies both follow in the broadly Augustinian and more narrowly Protestant traditions of understanding the human problem in terms of the crippling effects of original sin. Salvation is from God alone, a gift of grace. Both the Reformed and Wesleyan traditions stand within the Protestant consensus about salvation. Justification is *not based on* sanctification. Grace is not based on holiness. We do not have to perform holiness in order to earn God's forgiveness; indeed, we cannot.

But if we are to reject the false conflation of revival and coercion, Wesleyan soteriology is clearly preferable to Reformed accounts. While both traditions recognize the depth of human need for regeneration, the genius of Wesleyanism is to locate the beginnings of regeneration before conversion. Prevenient grace works the kind of revival that enables real human response. Prevenient grace begins the work of regeneration. Randy Maddox rightly identifies this as the key difference between Reformed and Wesleyan accounts.[6] Where Reformed soteriologies are difficult to read as anything other than coercive because they insist that there can be zero human capacity or freedom prior to justification, Wesley recognizes that grace is free to work before, during, and after—in, under, around, and through—justification.

Grace prevenes and so preserves the preciousness of human freedom without in any way undermining the fact of human need for that grace. Wesley's recognition of the regenerative power of prevenient grace, available to all through the merits of Christ alone, allows him to hold his Protestant assessment of the gravity of original sin together with his

[6]*Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, (Kingswood Books, 1994), 159.

teaching, grounded in pneumatology, that repentance comes before the New Birth and that the same repentance is something in which we humans, as creatures in genuine loving relationship with a loving God, are actual participants.

This teaching is not "works righteousness," for, again in Maddox's words, it "is only through the benefits of this expression of God's gracious provenience that anyone can turn to God in repentance and receive the more extensive renewal that comes from a restored pardoning relationship with God."[7] The doctrine of prevenient grace speaks against the entire Pelagian way of conceiving human capabilities or the possibility of revival. Wesley exhorts us to accept God's abundance and generosity; "The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is free in all, and free for all."[8]

And so the Wesleyan tradition has been unafraid of proclaiming the need for human beings to search after, to thirst for, salvation. While it is unfair to suppose that the Reformed tradition suppresses those needs, it is certainly the case that members of the Wesleyan tradition have seen, in the Wesleyan affirmation of human participation in salvation by grace, a place where some of their Calvinist brethren have failed. Historian Bruce Hindmarsh recounts the testimony of the early Wesleyan Thomas Payne, who believed that:

> Calvinism had led him to irresponsible acquiescence in fate. This even delayed his conversion: [Hindmarsh quoting Payne] "But I was a strong Calvinist, and that kept me from the blessing a long time, waiting for the irresistible call, and thinking it horrid presumption to venture upon Christ, till God compelled me by His almighty arm."[9]

Later, though, along with a Wesleyan understanding of salvation, "Joy broke through, and [Payne] narrated this as his conversion experience, an experience that involved repudiating fatalism and fortifying his will."[10]

Wesley's experience at Aldersgate, in which his heart was strangely warmed and he felt the confidence of the Spirit that he was truly a child of God, is a paradigm for revival in which the human being truly experi-

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[7]*Responsible Grace*, 159.

[8]John Wesley, "Free Grace," in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard C. Heitzenrater, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 50.

[9]*The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England*, (Oxford University Press, 2008), 243.

[10]Ibid.

ences the presence and love of God, not through a frenzy of emotion worked up with great effort, but through divine grace. I have always been impressed by Albert Outler's articulations of the graced nature of what Wesley experienced, commenting that "Wesley understood enough of his tightly reined temperament to add a crucial adverb: a '*strangely* warmed' heart."[11] Again, the "workings of the Spirit of God are more deeply inward than self-consciousness can reach; it is prevenient and objective, beyond manipulation."[12]

In Christ, "we cry, 'Abba! Father!" and "it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:15-16). Revival does not happen without the power of experience, both personal and corporate, and the inner witness of the Spirit, though somewhat out of fashion, must remain important to the future of Wesleyan theology. The authority of experience cannot be the tyranny of individual, personal experience. Especially in our contemporary world, in which we clearly recognize that there are many different viewpoints on any given subject, granting authority to fragmented, subjective, fickle, individual feelings can and does lead to disaster. Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice plead against such an individualistic Christianity which:

> ignores the wounds of the world and proclaims peace where there is no peace (see Jer 8:11). This shallow kind of Christianity does not take local places and their history of trauma, division, and oppression seriously. It abandons the past too quickly and confidently in search of a new future. Reconciliation as evacuation detaches the gospel from social realities and leaves that messy world to social agencies and governments. The result is a dualistic theology and superficial discipleship that separates individual salvation from social transformation.

But the experience Wesley claimed as a theological norm is not reducible to individual experience. It is always pneumatological, the experience of the Holy Spirit in conversion, in giving us assurance that we are children of God, and it leading us, through the means of grace, into sanctification.

If the future of Wesleyan theology is according to the logic of resurrection, of revival, of new life in the Spirit, there can be no doubt that the future of Wesleyan theology is global. In his notes on the New Testament,

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[11]Albert C. Outler, "Spirit and Spirituality," in The Wesleyan Theological Heritage: Essays of Albert C. Outler, ed. Thomas C. Oden and Leicester C. Longden, (Zondervan, 1991), 166.

[12]Outler, "Spirit and Spirituality," 170.

Wesley sees this dynamic in his comment on the Pentecost account; "this family praising God together, with the tongues of all the world was an earnest that the whole world should in due time praise God in their various tongues."[13] The rapid growth of Christianity around the globe is one of the most remarkable religious and sociological trends of our time, and much of this Christianity is connected—theologically, historically, or spiritually—to the Wesleyan movement's revivalist traditions and confident pneumatology. Spirit centered Christianity is growing exponentially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[14] The burgeoning scholarship on global Christianity points to these connections. Historian David Hempton says that the "next Christendom, already under construction in the global south, would not look the same if Methodism had never existed."[15] Lamin Sanneh comments on the strength of Charismatic Christianity in the growth of world Christianity; "Charismatic Christianity has been the driving engine of the Third Awakening, and it is largely responsible for the dramatic shift [away from Europe and the United States] in the religion's center of gravity."[16]

Those of us who do theology from North American locations must be challenged to learn from and with the massive global revivals attached to the Wesleyan family. While it's ridiculous to try to summarize the lessons the global body has to teach us in North America, we can discern themes. Consistently, majority world Christians challenge Western Christians on several fronts. First, from global revival, comes a challenge to racism, nationalism, and ethnocentrism. What are we doing to seek and embrace and learn from the diversity of the global Wesleyan family? Second, global revival challenges the materialism of contemporary North American Christianity, and that materialism needs to be understood in two senses: the first has to do with wealth and possessions, the second with a materialist worldview that would deny the supernatural. Have we even begun to see what it might mean to be set free from idolatry to possessions, from the North American worship of money and success? And have we closed ourselves off to the vital reality of the spiritual world? The global Wesleyan family knows nothing of North American squeamish-

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[13]John Wesley *Notes on the New Testament*, Acts 2:4.

[14]See Allan Heaton Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[15]David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (Yale University Press, 2006), 209.

[16]Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity*, (Oxford University Press, 2007), 275.

ness about spiritual powers. Can we hear the challenge, from a global church, to the kind of bare rationalism that would deny the supernatural? Global revival also challenges the individualism of so much of North American faith. Cultures that stress the communal and are attuned to the interdependence of human beings highlight aspects of scripture that our individualistic culture tends to deny. A final theme from the global Wesleyan family challenges the gnostic tendencies of Western Christianity. From the global church, we hear a reminder that bodies matter, that spirituality cannot be an interior thing, divorced from what we do with our hands and our feet.

And this brings us, finally, back to the affinity between resurrection and revival and back to hope that Wesleyan theology may, in the future, be used by God as has been in the past—to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to a world in need. The most distinctive piece of the logic of resurrection is that resurrection is for the body. Against that gnostic escapism that would take us out of the world, both resurrection and revival place us firmly back in the world, attentive to that fact that theology without a body – theology that has no traction in the body of Christ—is not Christian theology at all, for Christian theology is that of the Spirit by whom we confess "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (1 Jn 4:2).

The fact of global revival and the reminder of the global church that bodies matter to God return us to the logic of resurrection, a logic that insists that what God revives is not the spiritual sheered off from the physical. What God revives is the whole: spiritual and physical in unity, body and soul together. And the Wesleyan tradition is especially equipped to embrace that unity, inasmuch as our tradition has always insisted on the unity of personal and social holiness. The future of Wesleyan theology needs to be able to offer an account of revivalism. These are not embarrassing, accidental features of one subset of the church. They are central, powerful features of the ecclesial lives of the majority of contemporary Christians, and theology must account for the problems attached to them but also for their vitality and power.

The future of Wesleyan theology has to be the future of Ezekiel, where the prophet is brought to the valley full of dry bones and preaches the word from God that we "shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live" (Ezekiel 37:13-14). When Jesus rose from the dead, we saw the first fruits of the Spirit's power of making bones live, and, in Paul's first letter to Corinth, we see the promise that we too will share in a resurrection like Christ's. We see revival and resurrection operating by the same logic.

An eschatology of revival claims Paul's words to the Corinthians; "What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body" (1 Cor 15:42-44). Paul contrasts the body now—in Greek, the *soma psychikon*—with the resurrection body that will be ours in the kingdom of heaven—the *soma pneumatikon*. I love the NRSV, but I am never happy when a biblical translation renders the contrast between death and revival in 1 Corinthians 15 as "physical body" and "spiritual body." Paul's repeated *soma*—the continuity of that *soma*—means that in both the present and future of theology we must always be talking about physical bodies. The distinction between now and the resurrection is not one between materiality and immateriality. Paul's distinction is between two kinds of material bodies: bodies that are guided by our own sinful desires and bodies that are guided by the Spirit. The *soma psychikon* is under the direction of the selfish human psyche, the *soma pneumatikon* under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Christian spiritual life is a life in which we are transformed, body and soul, into the image of the resurrection Christ.

The characteristic Wesleyan understanding of the Spirit's wooing all of humanity animated the great revivals of the past. John Wesley understood those revivals as a great and present work of the Holy Spirit, even as a New Pentecost.[17] God's eschatological power, operating by the logic of resurrection, marked those revivals and must continue to shape the Wesleyan theological tradition today. Without revival that works by the logic of the resurrection, Wesleyan theology will indeed have no future, but any present despair about that future is powerfully counteracted as we witness revival around the world.

[17]Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, 102, 118.

HOLY WORD, HOLY PEOPLE: (RE)PLACING SCRIPTURE IN WESLEYAN-HOLINESS THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

by

Richard P. Thompson

One might think that there would be little question about the role of the Bible in the various ways that those who identify themselves as theological and ecclesial descendants of John Wesley both have read the Bible and have sought to address particular social issues of their own days and times. After all, as we are often reminded, Wesley described himself as *homo unius libri*, "a man of one book"[1]—a rather emphatic declaration about the place and role of the Bible in his thought and life. Yet it is well-known that he really was not a man of "one book" in a literal sense—that, although John Wesley looked to the Bible as his primary source for theological reflection, he had a deep love and appreciation for other sources of knowledge.[2] So one would hope and expect that, for those who have been influenced and shaped by the theological tradition that he birthed, the apples would not have fallen too far from the tree.

What is often discovered, however, is that it is one thing to declare the importance of the Bible or to declare it to be authoritative, but it is quite a different matter to figure out precisely what that declaration means, even for those of us in Wesleyan and Wesleyan-Holiness circles. Many of us have been in conversations in which, before long, someone begins, "Well . . . the *Bible* says . . ." and we know that something is about to be stated that is ultimately to be the functional equivalent of a "theological trump card" to squelch further discussion because that persons is essentially saying, "God said it, I believe it, and that settles it."

Yet the truth is that the short history of our own scholarly endeavors is checkered with its own set of ambiguities as to what we truly think

[1]"Preface" to *Sermons on Several Occasions*, in *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:105.

[2]See, e.g., Randy L. Maddox, "John Wesley—'A Man of One Book,' " in *Wesley, Wesleyans, and Reading Bible as Scripture*, ed. Joel B. Green and David F. Watson (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 3-18.

about the role of the Bible. Often in our history and perhaps even now, we appear to have borrowed ideas from others, including ideas from other theological traditions, sometimes without thinking through their implications within the contexts of our own theological trajectories. For instance, in the first four years of our Society, when the affirmation of the WTS doctrinal position was a requirement of all members, the statement regarding the Bible was not only the first doctrinal statement (yes, even before any doctrinal statement about God!) but also that "we believe that both Old and New Testaments constitute the divinely-inspired Word of God, inerrant in the originals, and the final authority for life and truth."[3] The point here is not to tackle particulars of this original position (as doing do from my position here would be disrespectful of those women and men who had the foresight to found the Society that now nurtures our conversations). I mention this merely to acknowledge our past, which includes positions and even ambiguities that are part of the history of this Society. But we also must acknowledge our present. For we also speak among ourselves about the Bible with synonyms like "the word of God" or that it is "God's revelation" or "God's inspired word," but we do little to unpack precisely what we mean by such labels. And the same holds true with declarations about matters such as biblical authority. N. T. Wright reminds us that such shorthand expressions are like suitcases. He states that such expressions, like suitcases,

> enable us to pick up lots of complicated things and carry them around all together. But we should never forget that the point of doing so, like the point of carrying belongings in a suitcase, is that what has been packed away can then be unpacked and put to use in the new location. Too much debate about scriptural authority has had the form of people hitting one another with locked suitcases. It is time to unpack our shorthand doctrines, to lay them out and inspect them. Long years in a suitcase may have made some of the contents go moldy. They will benefit from fresh air, and perhaps a hot iron.[4]

So the consideration of the place of the Bible, even among us Wesleyans, is no small task. What I am considering here expands on earlier proposals for rethinking not only how we approach the authority of the Bible but

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[3]*Wesleyan Theological Journal* 4 (Spring 1969): inside back cover.

[4]N. T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God How to Read the Bible Today*, rev. ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 23.

even how we view the Bible itself.[5] The contention here is that emphases that focus on the authority of the Bible or view the Bible as holy by associating the Bible with specific qualities or concepts of inspiration that are *limited to the composition of the original biblical texts* have gotten the proverbial cart before the horse. Such views misplace the Bible and its role within the Church by settling for an incomplete understanding that ultimately marginalizes the Bible as well as the authority and activity of God within the Church. The suggestion here is that a more inclusive understanding of inspiration as encompassing not only God's activity in the composition of biblical texts but also in the Church's canonization and in the ongoing reading and engagement of these collected texts provides a better context for perceiving these texts as "holy word" to form and send the Church as God's "holy people."

1. Canonization, the Bible, and God

Let us begin with two basic statements about the Christian canon. *First, the formation of the Christian canon altered the context within which the biblical texts were and are now read and interpreted.* The historical evidence tells us that others before Irenaeus in the second century CE had already received many of the books that now comprise the New Testament as scripture. This includes not only the four canonical Gospels but most of the Pauline letters. And other texts such as *Barnabas*, *1 Clement*, 2 Peter, and 1 Timothy all seem to regard a number of Christian writings as scripture, either referring to them specifically as such or using common phrases for introducing biblical citations such as "it is written."[6] This process continued well beyond the second century. But it is a mistake to assume that the canonical process culminated with the decision to establish and close the Christian canon during the Council of Carthage in the year 397. Thus, this council's decision did not establish the role of these Jewish and Christian texts within the Christian church but simply confirmed the authoritative role that already characterized their use and function within that context. If one accepts William Abraham's initial conclusions in his *Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology*, important within this process is that most texts functioned authoritatively in these

[5]See, e.g., Richard P. Thompson, "Authority Is What Authority Does: Rethinking the Role of the Bible as Scripture," in *The Bible Tells Me So: Reading the Bible as Scripture*, ed. Richard P. Thompson and Thomas Jay Oord (Nampa, ID: SacraSage Press, 2011), 43-56.

[6]Michael J. Kruger, *The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 202-3.

early centuries primarily due to their formative rather than their epistemic role, which the Christian movement embraced long before any official, ecclesiastical decree was made about them.[7] This parallels the Jewish tradition: these early Christians turned to Jewish texts that were originally written for Israel as holding special status by giving witness to God's self-revelation and saving activity that created a people belonging to God. These early Christians understood these texts to have been written for others, but they also read them in continuity with their understanding of the Christ-event, as can be seen throughout the New Testament collection.

That these texts functioned in such formative ways is significant as we consider what it means to view them as "holy scripture" or authoritative. But the adoption of these texts in terms of Christian canon has hermeneutical implications. Any text that is now part of that canon has different literary and interpretive contexts from its original setting—contexts that will contribute to its interpretation. Of course, that does not mean that historical aspects of the text may be completely ignored.[8] Yet this canonical context created by Christian canon does pry the biblical text from the author's grasp and place it not only within new ecclesial contexts but also within new textual surroundings that the different authors may have never imagined, thereby offering new options for intertextual and intracanonical connections that may not have been possible otherwise.[9] Such issues move beyond the realm of traditional, historical-critical interpretation, yet the biblical interpreter must consider the implications of such matters, especially if the exclusive focus of such traditional interpretive approaches (including, I might add, most "composition-based" views of inspiration) falls only on when these texts were originally written and first heard by their intended audiences. In other words, there is an inconsistency in thinking and focusing exclusively on the time of composition for inspiration of meaning, if we are to take Christian canon

[7]William J. Abraham, *Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. 1-56.

[8]See Max Turner, "Historical Criticism and Theological Hermeneutics of the New Testament," in *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max. Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 44-70.

[9]See Richard P. Thompson, "Scripture, Christian Canon, and Community: Rethinking Theological Interpretation Canonically," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 4 no. 2 (2010): 257-61.

seriously. What this suggests is that, with canonization, potential meanings of biblical texts move beyond what may be conceived with the traditional category of inspiration that is *limited only to the composition of the original biblical texts*. Thus, a reliance on such limited perspectives of inspiration and the Bible or even on methods of biblical exegesis that mirror similar limitations are inadequate alone in articulating and describing the authoritative role of the Bible in the Church.

The second basic statement about the Christian canon is this: A theological examination of canon and canonization is incomplete unless it centers on the presence and activity of God. To be sure, many wish to place all their authoritative marbles in the basket of authorial or what I call here "composition-based" inspiration, and their favorite passage that they quote in support is 2 Peter 1:21—"No prophecy came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." This is a helpful text, but its emphasis on inspiration has more to do with the authoritative nature of that prophecy for the time when it was proclaimed, not necessarily its ongoing role. More importantly, that view fails among other things to explain problematic aspects of scriptural texts, including those aspects that may be ascribed to the human frailties associated with these texts. So for such positions, difficulties arise with all sorts of passages. Christian thinkers as early as Origen and Augustine (not to mention John Wesley) recognized how biblical texts sometimes contained factual errors. Yet they still could read and interpret these same texts as sacred scripture. But difficulties also arise with passages that include divine commands to slaughter a city's population as well as materials that are obvious human responses to God. For instance, readers of Psalm 137 may have difficulty reconciling the vindictive call that the Babylonian children receive the same cruel treatment that the Hebrew children received from the hands of their Babylonian captors (137:8-9) merely with divine inspiration of the psalmist. There are other texts with patriarchal views, stances toward slavery, or even perspectives toward the "other" that leave us questioning, because such texts seem to be left with far more dirty human fingerprints than what we might expect or have hoped for in terms of divine inspiration. But here's my point in this: canonization was more than just a process that led to a closed canon or even a decision that decided which texts were to be included and which were not. Among other things, canonization falls within the broader range of what John Webster describes as God's sanctifying activity, thereby "hallowing creaturely processes" or texts so that God may be present to speak

or work through them.[10] An understanding that views a holy God at work to sanctify these canonical texts emphasizes how God set apart *these* texts in the context of the Church to be present, to speak, and to work even through such "creatureliness" or the human forms of these texts. Thus, what is ultimately at issue here is the presence and activity of God working through these texts. For to speak of the authority of the Bible is to speak ultimately of the authority of God. And the reminder from last year's WTS president Jason Vickers helps us here: many have approached the Bible as functional deists because they have failed to recognize God's ongoing relationship with the biblical texts in our present day and, I might add, have relegated God to a compositional role.[11]

2. A Look at 2 Timothy 3:16–17

These brief ideas about canonization, the Bible, and God lead us to the consideration of the important passage of 2 Timothy 3:16–17. John Wesley's comment on this text is instructive. He stated, "The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote it, but continually inspires, supernaturally assists, those that read it with earnest prayer."[12] Whereas the rest of

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[10]John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch*, Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 17-30; see Kenton L. Sparks, *Sacred Word, Broken Word: Biblical Authority and the Dark Side of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 29.

[11]Jason E. Vickers, "The Holiness of Scripture," in *Wesley, Wesleyans, and Reading Bible as Scripture*, ed. Joel B. Green and David F. Watson (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 152.

[12]John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1958), 794. See also the following hymn (number 247) in *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 7:388-89:

> Spirit of Truth, essential God,
> Who didst thy ancient saints inspire,
> Shed in their hearts thy love abroad,
> And touch their hallowed lips with fire;
> Our God from all eternity,
> World without end, we worship thee.
>
> Still we believe, almighty Lord,
> Whose presence fills both earth and heaven,
> The meaning of the written Word
> Is by thy inspiration given;
> Thou only dost thyself explain
> The secret mind of God to man.

his comments on these verses merely restate the basic content, this *one* statement briefly underscores Wesley's understanding of the work of the Spirit, which he understood by the word *theopneustos*, typically translated "inspired" (NRSV, CEB) or "God-breathed" (NIV). This divine activity of the Spirit was not for Wesley an optional element in the task of biblical interpretation. He stressed that readers could only interpret biblical texts through the continuing activity of the Spirit. That is, Wesley insisted that readers, as he put it, "need the same Spirit to understand the Scripture which enabled the holy men of old to write it."[13] According to Wesley, the inspiring work of the Spirit was essential for one to read and understand scripture, and it was unprofitable for one to read or listen to those texts without that work.[14]

Let's look a bit more closely at three specific aspects of the passage. First, it stands within the broader context of instruction to the younger Timothy. The previous two verses (2 Tim 3:14-15) provide context for what is stated here in verse 15 regarding scripture: Timothy has not only known from childhood his teachers of the faith but has also "known the holy scriptures" (CEB) that were for him the source of wisdom. However, also according to verse 15 the role of these scriptures is not to provide wisdom defined as knowledge but for the purpose of "salvation" (*sōtēria*), described earlier as a "way of life" (3:10). In other words, the role of these scriptures was not to provide needed knowledge for becoming or remaining a believer but to form and shape the believer and to enable the believer to become wise in God's ways.[15]

Second, the expression in verse 16, *pasa graphē*, typically translated "all scripture," differs from the earlier expression in verse 15, "holy scrip-

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Come then, divine Interpreter,
The scriptures to our hearts apply;
And taught by Thee we God revere,
Him in Three Persons magnify;
In each the Triune God adore,
Who was, and is for evermore.

[13]Wesley, "A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester," in *Works* (Jackson ed.), 11:509. See also John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*, 3 vols. (Bristol: William Pine, 1765), 1:ix.

[14]Wesley, "The Means of Grace," in *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:382. Cf. Rob L. Staples, "John Wesley's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 21 (Spring-Fall 1986): 99.

[15]Robert W. Wall with Richard B. Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 269.

tures," in a couple of ways. It should be noted that the same Greek phrase used here for "holy scriptures" (*ta hiera grammata*) in the previous verse appears also in the writings of Philo and Josephus in reference to the Septuagint, and most agree that this is the specific reference here, not the Hebrew Scriptures.[16] Thus, the theological and ideological nuances of the Septuagint that come with the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures also seem to be accepted.[17] Additionally, here in verse 16 the expression shifts from a plural form to a singular one. Many have debated whether this expression should be translated and understood as "all scripture" in a collective sense or "every scripture" in a more specific or nuanced sense as a reference to individual scriptural texts or books. Most contemporary translations (including the NRSV, NIV, NASB, ESV, and others) have followed the KJV in rendering the expression "all scripture."[18] However, since the process of canonization of either the Hebrew Bible or the Jewish Scriptures with regard to the Septuagint was not yet formalized, it would not have been possible to describe such a collection as a single anthology by using the singular noun *graphē*.[19] So by using the Greek adjective *pasa* with the anarthrous singular noun to refer to a specific scriptural writing, the author seems to insist that what he claims about the more general "holy scriptures" of Israel in verse 15 applies here in verse 16 to each writing of scripture: that each one of these specific texts or writings also nurtures salvation among those read or hear them.[20]

Third, no main verb exists in the sentence that comprises verses 16 and 17. So the interpreter must determine whether both adjectives at the beginning of the sentence—"inspired" (NRSV, CEB; *theopneustos*) and "useful" (*ōphelimos*)—are predicate adjectives or only the first is. That is, there are two options for translating the first five words in verse 16. Without going into the grammatical details (although I am tempted!), the best

[16]E.g., Philo, *Moses* 2.290; *Spec. Laws* 2.159, 238; Josephus, *Ant.* 10.210; 13.167; 16.165; 20.264. See Gottlob Schrenk, "*graphō ktl*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel et al. 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 1:763-64.

[17]See the excursus "The Septuagint as the Christian Old Testament?" in Wall and Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 271-74.

[18]The Common English Bible (2011) is a notable exception, translating this as "Every scripture. . . ."

[19]Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 423.

[20]Cf. Wall and Steele, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 270.

option (a) recognizes both adjectives as predicate adjectives, (b) connects the two (grammatically equivalent adjectives) by the conjunction *kai* ("and"), and (c) supplies the implied verb "is" to the sentence. Thus, the sentence describes inspiration as divine activity that is linked, grammatically in the sentence and pragmatically in practice, to the usefulness—the beneficial function—of these scriptural texts within the context of the faith community: for "teaching," "reproof," "correction," and "training in righteousness" (3:16 NRSV). Eduard Schweizer, the prominent twentieth-century New Testament scholar who wrote the article in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* covering the term *theopneustos*, which is here translated "inspired," was simply incorrect in identifying its function here in the verse as an attributive adjective. This may be related to his misunderstanding of inspiration as occurring only at the time of writing.[21] By linking these two adjectives together, the author describes the Bible as functioning in such useful or beneficial ways to nurture salvation and to form the people of God through texts that have human and cultural fingerprints all over them, not merely because of a faith or belief of inspiration when they were written but in the belief that God's Spirit is at work in these same texts in the present within that ecclesial setting. Perhaps we need to imagine the word picture here: that the same God who knelt down, breathed life into the *adamah* or dust of the earth, and created *adam* in Genesis 2 must breathe into these ancient texts that the Church has gathered and canonized so that God may speak through them. But we cannot merely equate these dusty words on the page with God's words. Rather, it is the belief that "the historical meaning of any passage does not exhaust its significance" or the ways to which the Spirit of God may use it.[22] And in the end, its purpose is saving in the broadest sense, so that it is beneficial in shaping a people who are set apart and, as the end of the chapter suggests, "equipped for every good work" (3:17).

3. Holy Word, Holy Calling, Holy People

The 2 Timothy 3 passage suggests that the role of scripture extends beyond the provision of spiritual or religious knowledge to matters of response. And many other biblical texts have similar inferences. Consider the statement near the end of John's Gospel in chapter 20, after the recounting the scene of Jesus' empty tomb (20:1-9), his appearance to Mary Magdelene (20:10-18), and his appearance among the disciples including "doubting"

[21]See Eduard Schweizer, "*theopneustos*," in *TDNT* 6:454-55.

[22]Cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 423.

Thomas (20:24-29). The passage begins with the acknowledgment of Jesus having done "many other signs," which may refer either to other things during his ministry or after his resurrection that were not included in this Gospel. On the one hand, this correlates with what we find later in John 21:25—that Jesus did "many other things" (*alla polla*) that this Gospel omits. On the other hand, the characterization of particular actions of Jesus as "signs" (*sēmeia*) is noteworthy, as it suggests not merely a concern to report Jesus' actions but for telling them in a particular way.[23] That is, the term *sēmeion* or "sign" suggests that readers should not look for the significance of selected scenes in this Gospel by finding exact correlation between the narration and what actually happened but by finding out what that scene may depict about Jesus.[24] Nonetheless, in verse 31 the author contrasts "these" (*tauta*) signs that have been written with those that have not, and associated with this contrast is the author's description of this writing through a perfect tense form of the verb *graphō*, a common verb used by New Testament writers to refer to scriptural materials and also the verbal root of the nouns used in 2 Timothy to refer to scriptural texts. More specifically, the author states the desired outcome regarding the ongoing effect of the writing of these particular post-resurrection appearances of Jesus or more generally of this Gospel: "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." Despite the textual difficulties regarding the subjunctive "believe" (i.e., whether it should be aorist tense, "you may come to believe," or present tense, "you may continue to believe"),[25] the important matter here is that this Gospel is not merely a report of what happened regarding Jesus' life and resurrection but a theological rendition of selective materials that invite readers to respond in faithful ways.

What is particularly interesting about this presumed conclusion to John's Gospel (if it really was originally a conclusion or not is a debated issue) is that more materials—another chapter—follows it, with what may be an additional attempt to offer an ending to this Gospel. All extant manuscripts of the Johannine Gospel include chapter 21, yet biblical scholars are rather unanimous—something we all know to be rather remarkable

[23]Cf. George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 2002), 387; and D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 660-61.

[24]See, e.g., Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John,* 2 vols., Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 2:1058-61.

[25]See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 219-20.

in biblical or theological circles—in seeing the final chapter as a later addition, with most believing it to have come from a later redactor. So my point is this: if this chapter was written with the circumstances of the Johannine community in mind, there is a sense in which these materials help those first readers with their response for which the end of chapter 20 calls. For in these scenes, the Gospel readers begin to see something of what it means to believe and to "have life in his name" (20:31), as this involves relationship with the risen Jesus as the Messiah and response as the people of God in particular kinds of faithful and loving ways. And so, among other things, the response of believing that this Gospel calls forth involves a fidelity to Jesus' words in terms of loving one another in the ways that Jesus loved. Yet even Peter's questions about what would happen to the beloved disciple (21:20-23) indicates something about the ongoing struggles that the Church would face in thinking about and responding to this Gospel as a holy people, as the response of disciples is often varied.

There is a sense that all biblical texts are "incomplete" in themselves, apart from the outcome of faithful response. That is, the general expectation behind biblical materials, certainly if we are to engage them as the Church's sacred scriptures, is that there is more to the interpretive task than the mere re-articulation of a possible meaning of some biblical text: the exchange of a fresh set of words for a stale set of biblical words. Rather, when the church engages the biblical texts as sacred scripture, she does not simply talk about what these texts may say or instead actively listens and responds in faithful ways to the God about whom these texts speak and to the God who at the same time speaks to her through them through the Spirit. This means that all the church is—her thought and also her practice—become criteria for the evaluation of biblical and theological interpretation.[26] This is consistent with Wesley's description of "searching the Scriptures" as a "means of grace" by which God "might convey to men preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace."[27]

One way to think about this particular function of scripture in the church is what may be called "performance interpretation."[28] Like a musi-

[26]See Douglas M. Koskela, "A Wesleyan Understanding of the Authority of Scripture," in *Wesley, Wesleyans, and Reading Bible as Scripture*, ed. Joel B. Green and David F. Watson (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), 139-46.

[27]Wesley, "The Means of Grace," in *Works* (Bicentennial ed.), 1:381.

[28]See Shannon Craigo-Snell, "Command Performance: Rethinking Performance Interpretation in the Context of Divine Discourse," *Modern Theology* 16 no. 4 (Oct. 2000): 475-94; and Michael G. Cartwright, "The Practice and Performance of Scripture: Grounding Christian Ethics in a Communal Hermeneutic," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1988): 31-53.

cal score or the script of a play that is not expected only to be studied but to be performed, so also should similar expectations accompany those readings and "listenings" when the Bible is prayerfully opened within the worship of the church . . . and when that people begins to be shaped by what they hear. All three should assume some degree of faithfulness to what has been provided as a guide for the accompanying performance. Some sort of improvisation will contribute an interpretive aspect to each performance.[29] But as Richard Hays notes, that is the "integrative act of the imagination" that occurs as the faith community reflects theologically on God and herself through that imaginative venture of participation within the very different world of the biblical texts themselves.[30] Yet even these activities of performance are not simply the results of interpretation or response but are themselves vital to the interpretive process, as we learn something in the very act of performance. So we perform scripture and embody it. We interpret it anew in the rituals and service of the church, and in her creative embodiment of the love of God within the world.[31]

There is a passage that is quoted over and over about the Bible and its role in the Church . . . quoted by those in the pew, by those in the pulpit, and even by renowned biblical scholars and theologians. That passage is Hebrews 4:12, "Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (NRSV). The typical assumption is that the "word of God"—*logos tou theou*—mentioned in this passage refers specifically to the Bible. Yet it is one of the most frequently misquoted verses in all scripture. Two things stand out as convincing reasons why this is a misreading of the passage. First, the context of this passage suggests this "word of God" to be that

[29]Cf. N. T. Wright, Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 126-28.

[30]Richard B. Hays, The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 6, See also A. K. M. Adam, "Poaching on Zion: Biblical Theology as Signifying Practice," in Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 31.

[31]Cf. Richard B. Hays, Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 191: "No reading of Scripture can be legitimate, then, if it fails to shape the readers into a community that embodies the love of God as shown forth in Christ."

which God has spoken, which the author of the sermon to the Hebrews has declared, and which his audience has heard. As the refrain from Psalm 95:7 echoes a few verses prior in Hebrews 4:7, "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."[32] Second, the term *logos*, from the verb *legō*, usually refers to oral utterances or speech; although translated "word," the inference of orality is almost always present. But contemporary readers, when they come upon this term, tend to think anachronistically of a written or printed word on a page.[33] Throughout the New Testament, the overwhelming sense of the term *logos*, both in its singular and plural forms, is of speech, teaching, or proclamation. For instance, in the Gospels, the usual reference is to Jesus' teachings.[34] In Acts, the expression *ho logos tou theou*—"the word of God"—refers to the proclamation of the gospel message.[35] The evidence indicates that this verse and this expression just do not refer to the Bible.

Although this passage or this expression do not refer specifically to the Bible, this divine presence and activity—which corresponds with God's word in creation (Gen 1:1—2:4a; Ps 33:9; Isa 55:11)—may still accompany its proclamation or even its reading. And that divine activity, along with the context of the Church, makes the difference between reading the Bible and reading the Church's sacred scriptures. But a problem arises in the assumption that there is a simple equation here: that the words on these pages *themselves* are *exactly* the same things as what the author of the Hebrews sermon declares when referring to "the word of God" and describing such as "living and active" (4:12). In ways analogous to the bread and wine of the Eucharist when there is the declaration that the broken bread *is* the body of our Lord and the wine *is* our Lord's shed blood, there is the declaration that this text . . . this canon *is* "the word of God" or "the word of the Lord." And yet at the same time, these are still

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[32]See, e.g., Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 214-16; Harold W. Attridge, The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 133; and William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1998), 133.

[33]John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy, *The Lost World of Scripture: Ancient Literary Culture and Biblical Authority* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 121-28.

[34]E.g., Matt 7:24, 26, 28; 13:19-23; 19:1, 11; 24:35; 26:1; Mark 4:14-20, 33; 7:13; 8:32, 38; 10:24; 13:31; Luke 4:22, 32, 36; 5:1; 6:47; 8:11-15; 9:26, 28, 44; 10:39; 11:28; 20:20; 21:33; 24:44; John 4:41, 50; 5:24; 7:40; 8:31, 55; 14:23; 15:20.

[35]E.g., Acts 4:31; 6:7; 8:14, 21; 11:1; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 46; 18:11.

simple words . . . still resting only on pages of paper, in many ways not much different from other ordinary words. Yes, the Church has canonized them, and God has sanctified them . . . hallowed them and made them God's "Holy Word." Yet for this "Holy Word" to work wholly as in completely, it takes God's presence and work through God's Spirit to make these living words, both in our prayerful reading and also in our faithful performance.[36] The people we become, not the position we take, will reveal the true place of scripture in Wesleyan-Holiness thought and practice. May it be so!

[36]See Richard P. Thompson, "Living Words: Reading the Bible as Scripture," in *Missional Discipleship: Partners in God's Redemptive Mission*, ed. Mark A. Maddix and Jay Richard Akkerman (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2013), 121-30.

HOW TO KNOW THE WORDS ARE "THE WORD"? RE-EVALUATING THE LEGITIMACY OF BIBLICAL INERRANCY AS A WESLEYAN COMMITMENT

by

G. Stephen Blakemore

Holy Scripture as a gift of God to the church has been discussed in articles from the "Wesleyan Theological Journal" (hereafter *WTJ*) over the past decade by scholars who have strong, unwavering commitments to the primacy, authority, and relevance of the Bible. Simultaneously, they eschew with gusto, indirectly critique, or ignore politely a doctrine about the nature of Scripture that was inextricably part of the founding of the Wesleyan Theological Society—biblical inerrancy. The relevant articles claim in some instances and intimate in others that Scripture's God-ordained purpose is undermined, especially in the Wesleyan tradition, by the concept of inerrancy. As an undergirding conceptual framework for contending for the Bible's authority, the relevant authors appear to believe inerrancy is beholden to a suspect epistemology and/or metaphysics of language. Even more egregiously, it detracts from the Wesleyan tradition's full-throated affirmation of scripture as—most essentially—a means of grace, instead diminishing this sacramental role by treating holy writ as *primarily* a source of information for believers.

This paper is a minority report, therefore, and ultimately argues that the rejection of the concept of inerrancy is a wrong move theologically, as well as philosophically and historically unwarranted. Attempting to engage the concerns about the potential failings or maladroit consequences of a narrow view of inerrancy, it will hopefully be read as analogous to an *amicus* brief sent to the Wesleyan Theological Society regarding the relevant articles of the *WTJ*. Hence, below one will find an analysis and critique of the relevant essays in three movements. First, I present the arguments presented by authors in the *WTJ* regarding why *inerrancy* is an unnecessary doctrine of scripture, at best, or suspect and harmful at worst—especially for Wesleyans. Then, the reasons offered by the authors as an explanation of why Scripture has a primary, irreplace-

able, and corrective *authority* in the Church are analyzed appreciatively and critically. In the final section of the paper I argue: (1) that the philosophical and theological assessments of the inadequacy or detrimental effect of "inerrancy" on Christian faith and theology are overwrought; (2) that historical arguments made regarding the relationship between the *regula fidei* and the final shape of the canon are off-target; and (3) I contend that purported claims that the doctrine is un-Wesleyan, quite simply, are wrong. The conclusion I hope to lead readers to consider is that inerrancy is a doctrine of Scripture that can be helpfully restated, re-evaluated and revitalized for the purpose of empowering the church's witness.

Inerrancy as a Suspect, Unhelpful Doctrine

Even though he does not mention the concept of inerrancy in his 2006 article, "*Sola Scriptura* and the Wesleyan Quadrilateral," Don Thorsen's argument is a very good place to start. Noting that conservative evangelical adherents to *sola scriptura* are "concerned for upholding Scripture exclusively, vis-à-vis other potential religious authorities,"[1] Thorsen is careful in his article to acknowledge his agreement: Scripture *is* primary and unparalleled in its role as a determiner of theological fidelity among the other features of the so-called quadrilateral.[2] However, he is concerned that too narrow an understanding of the meaning of *sola scriptura* will result in an unhealthy "kind of biblicism (and bibliolatry) that can be accused of being unsophisticated and narrow in its theological understanding."[3] The concern that prompts his article is that the so-called Wesleyan quadrilateral and the Protestant commitment to *sola scriptura* be allowed to work in theologically faithful, yet contextually and globally adequate ways, to promote biblical and orthodox truth. Nonetheless—or perhaps because of that concern—he would urge us not to allow *sola scriptura* to be captive to a particular kind of hermeneutic, what he has labeled *biblicism* (and bibliolatry). Given that these terms are often per-

[1]Don Thorsen, "Sola Scriptura and the Wesleyan Quadrilateral," *Wesleyan Theological Journal, 4*:2, (Fall 2006): 14.

[2]Thorsen approvingly quotes James White, *The Roman Catholic Controversy*, (Bethany House: Kansas City, 1996). "1. The doctrine of *sola scriptura,* simply stated, is that the Scriptures alone are sufficient to function as the *regula fide*, the infallible rule of faith for the Church . . . 3 . . . there is no necessary belief, doctrine, or dogma absolutely required of a person for entrance into the kingdom of heaven that Is not found in the pages of Scripture . . . 5. All traditions are subject to the higher authority of Scripture . . .," 16.

[3]Thorsen, 15.

ceived to be expressive of the core hermeneutical commitments of those who embrace the doctrine of inerrancy, we might surmise that in Thorsen's view inerrancy, if applied in a particular way, would be unprofitable for Wesleyan theology. Thorsen might, at least, urge Wesleyans to be quite cautious about the form of inerrancy they embrace.

While such a cautionary assessment of the doctrine of inerrancy may be an implication of Thorsen's article, a full-blown, head-on assault is offered by W. Stephen Gunter.[4] His criticisms can be summarized as follows. He rejects the claim of the fundamentalist creators of the doctrine that all scriptural writings work, regardless the various literary genres, as linguistic forms that ultimately can and should be translated (or reduced) to infallible propositional truth claims. Gunter sees this as central—inextricably so, apparently—to the very concept of inerrancy as an inspiration-theory. In this he echoes the cautionary words of Kenneth J. Collins in the *WTJ.* Responding to a view of canonical authority developed by William J. Abraham and others, "Canonical Theism," Collins concurs with Abraham in rejecting the "privileging of a particular epistemology (the propositional rationalism of the fundamentalists)."[5] But, Collins does no more than suggest the inadequacy of this rationalist theory of language (that is associated with inerrancy). Gunter, however, presents a more expanded argument against inerrancy *qua* propositionalism and offers detailed philosophical and theological objections to the idea that the Bible's truth can be translated into rational, infallible propositions—ala the original inerrantist proposal.

Philosophically, Gunter calls on Wesleyans to reject inerrancy because it is based, he argues, upon a faulty "Enlightenment" view of language. By that critique, I presume, Gunter believes that those who hold to such a doctrine have not been informed by insights about the nature of language proffered by philosophers who have pursued the so-called "linguistic turn" in analytic philosophy. Instead, they wrongly understand the function of human language and speech acts as "primarily concerned with stating truth, which in turn is a function of describing reality, representing the world, or recording a series of events or set of data."[6] Gunter is correct to point out that human speech cannot be reduced to propositional assertion, since many of our acts of verbal expression have nothing

[4]W. Stephen Gunter, "Why Inerrancy is not the Issue for Wesleyans," *Wesleyan Theological Journal,* 46 2, (Fall, 2011): 56.

[5]Kenneth J. Collins, "Is Canonical Theism an Option for Wesleyans," *The Wesleyan Theological Journal,* 45:2, (Fall, 2010): 94.

[6]Gunter, 62.

to do with propositional truths. When we promise, or exclaim, or swear, or praise, we are not asserting propositions, and neither can the uniqueness of these acts themselves be translated into propositional assertions. He approvingly relies upon and quotes the work of Kevin Vanhoozer[7] to make his case against propositionalism and, in an ironic application, by extension inerrancy: "Emergent evangelicals are not the only ones to wonder whether this theory of language, meaning, and truth owes more to philosophy that to the Bible."[8] Inerrancy, then, is guilty by association, for Gunter; and as a "metaphysical theory of truth," is an alien and anachronistic imposition upon the collection of writings we call Scripture.

Gunter is, to his credit, concerned that such a move toward treating all the content of scripture "teleologically" as propositional in nature relinquishes too much intellectual and spiritual territory to rationalistic positivism. To treat the "data" of the Bible in such a manner may allow the theologian to pursue his task like a scientist, practicing induction by way of exegesis and translation into propositions and then deducing conclusions, but it is far too limited an understanding of the nature of language and can tend toward a hermeneutic of literalism. He is right to be bothered by the tendency of *propositional*-inerrantists to claim, at the same time, too much dominion in matters outside of the soteriological interests of scripture, namely positing "revealed data" regarding physics, biology, and history over the scientific methods of disciplines given to the study of such things.[9]

Gunter's objections to the depiction of inerrancy he puts forth are also theological and hermeneutical. He contends that for understanding and interpreting Scripture, even if one firmly believes it is the Word of God, inerrancy is of little help: "Simply to assume the Bible's truth is not yet to say what it means."[10] There must be an additional hermeneutical

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[7]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Lost in Translation: Truth, Scripture and Hermeneutics," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society,* 48:1, (March, 2005): 95. Gunter, 63.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Gunter, 61. "To the extent that Hodge understood theology as a science, he based it on his understanding of the inductive method that dominated the natural sciences of that era. The Bible was thought to contain revealed data, not only soteric insight, but scientific, historical, and geographic data as well. This is the case because they are God's words, and they are true because God's words are inextricably intertwined with the real events in the world."

[10]Gunter, 63.

grid whereby one rightly interprets the scripture. Hence, inerrancy gives a false sense of certitude—i.e., these words are the words of God—at the very moment when conviction needs discernment and interpretive aid, because something other than an inspiration theory is required to unearth the very meaning of the text that the inerrantist believes is the Word of God. Beyond this hermeneutical concern, Gunter shows he is convinced of a bold conclusion where he announces: ". . . I do not believe it is possible for one to be, with theological consistency a Fundamentalist and a Wesleyan at the same time."[11] The reasoning he offers is found in what he claims is the true meaning of Wesley's dictum and testimony to being *homo unius libri.* Whereas the proposition-obsessed Fundamentalists look to the Bible "as a source of epistemological certainty and rational authority," Wesley and the movement he birthed, in keeping with his Anglican-informed views, looks to the Bible for something different, and for Gunter more important, namely soteriological insight and salvific sufficiency.

Drawing upon Wesley's commendation of the "Articles of Religion" to the fledgling Methodists in America after the revolution, Gunter argues that our progenitor's embrace of these articles reveals his true understanding of the nature of Scripture. Although other Protestant confessions give first-order place to the affirmation of the Bible *qua* inerrant as the authoritative source for faith and doctrine, the religious articles Wesley endorses do not start with declarations about Scripture. Rather, the Trinity and other doctrines are affirmed before stating any belief about the nature of the Bible. Even when such avowal is given, the claims made are "not about rational authority per se, [contra Reformed thought] for it reads, 'On the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures *for Salvation*.' "[12] Gunter argues that such an arrangement of the Articles and formulation of the statement on "Holy Scriptures" is significant for Wesleyans as an inoculation against the seductive infirmity of Protestant (Fundamentalist) epistemological commitments. The essential malady that inerrancy entails, he believes, is it requires that the seeking soul, in order to enter into the life of redemption God offers, "needs to do more than rationally accept the authority of the Bible"; such a person must "affirm a *specific positivistic conception of truth* and affirm that the Bible reflects this *positivism* . . ."[13] But Wesley charted for us a better course, Gunter contends, and if we

[11]Ibid., 65.
[12]Ibid., 67. My emphasis.
[13]Ibid. My emphasis.

were to follow it we could avoid falling prey to the siren calls of the inerrantists and to the propositionalism they embrace. Failure to avoid this "epistemic-centered emphasis on factual accuracy for all things recorded in Scripture," will make Wesleyans theologically unfaithful to our particular doctrinal heritage; and worse, impede our understanding of the ecclesial context of *sola scriptura* as a theological premise. Most egregiously, however, inerrancy and propositionalism, according to Gunter's reading, misaligns our theological hermeneutics. Rather than being established on what is most central to our faith—the Good News of the "Trinitarian God graciously initiating a saving relationship through Christ, witnessed to by the Holy Spirit" in the life of the church and offered to all[14]—the Bible's reliability or lack of error becomes our ground of being.

As he urges that Wesleyans not to be drawn into the "Bible-battles" over inerrancy and instead commends to the Church the Bible as the salvation-enabling gift of God, Gunter echoes the arguments of others in the *WTJ* such as William J. Abraham, who contends that although we must affirm that the Bible is where God's revelation is "enshrined," the most important aspect of scripture's function in the life of the church is decidedly salvific.

> Our first task in responding to and using Scripture is to use it as an indispensable means of grace . . . as a network of texts designed and inspired by God to mediate justifying and sanctifying grace. Their purpose is to make us wise unto salvation, to bring us to repentance, to teach us the truth of the gospel, to intitiate us in the glorious kingdom of Christ, and to make us fit for heaven. Here I think we can take our stand full-square in the Pietist tradition. . . . At heart we are pietists, and we should own up to this without apology.[15]

Abraham's differentiation between Scripture and revelation and his view that the primary purpose and function of Scripture is soteriological requires us, he argues, to jettison Wesley's "particular epistemic conception of Scripture", and instead broaden our theology of revelation to include the conciliar creeds—especially Nicea's—as fully canonical and "an indispensable identifying marker of the God who saves and in whom

[14]Ibid, 68. In this concern for the salvation-enabling nature of Scripture, Gunter echoes the arguments of others in the *WTJ.*

[15]William J. Abraham, "The Future of Scripture: In Search of a Theology of Scripture," *The Wesleyan Theological Journal,* 46:2 (Fall, 2011): 17.

we put our faith."[16] As a part of his view that Scripture is most elementally a means of grace, Abraham would no doubt agree with Gunter's rejection of the doctrine of inerrancy.[17] While he does not call for such in the article under consideration, his aversion to it is understood in his exhortation in this article that that "we need a clean break from Wesley's particular *epistemic* conception of Scripture."[18] While Abraham does not think Wesley was an inerrantist (in the Fundamentalist sense), the reasons he gives for why this break is required could, just as well, apply to a critique of the doctrine of inerrancy: 1) Wesley wrongly identified Scripture with divine revelation and, therefore, tended to look to it as a criterion of truth "without qualification" which has proven inadequate for future generations of Methodists and led to a convoluted epistemology of theology; and 2) by his convoluted epistemology Wesley's uncritical view of Scripture as *the* epistemic norm suppresses his further strands of argument for the truth of Christian faith, namely fulfillment of divine promises, the repair of our cognitive faculties, varied forms of perception of the divine, *and* divine revelation.[19] By Abraham's lights, we can surmise that inerrancy is a misdirected doctrine that fails to do justice to the complex "epistemology of theology"[20] that the Christian faith requires. At the very least, we can sur-

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[16]Abraham, 18.

[17]William J. Abraham, Jason E. Vickers, Natalie B. Van Kirk, eds, *Canonical Theism: A Proposal for Theology and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 2008. In this work, Abraham makes it clear that he thinks inerrancy is a nigh to impossible bar for Wesleyans and evangelicals to clear.

[18]Abraham, 14, footnote 11. Here he references his "'extended" argument in *Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1998, where he argues against inerrancy. The reason we need this break is elaborated earlier in the essay, on page 13 of his essay in *WTJ*: "Wesley's particular epistemological construal of Scripture is a dead-end . . . This Is not because Wesley is some kind of fundamentalist (that is a much later and historically intelligible development); it is because his particular work is embedded in a wider tradition *that identified Scripture with divine revelation*, that construed the production of and outcome of Scripture as a matter of divine speaking, and that therefore *proceeded to think of Scripture as a criterion of truth without qualification.* He inherited and internalized a vision of Scripture that rendered it *captive to epistemological categories* which paradoxically subverted Scripture and which have led to significant loss of faith within our own ranks across the generations. To put the matter candidly, the classical idea of the authority of Scripture as a technical matter has outlived its usefulness." My emphasis.

[19]Ibid., 13-14.

[20]Abraham, so far as I know, coins this phrase in *Canon and Criterion.*

mise that he thinks inerrancy probably evinces a too facile epistemology and is too limited in its focus upon the Scriptures as the *only* true source of revelation to which all other "sources" are mere secondary commentary and interpretation.

David Watson pushes further than does Abraham. Although he does not allude to propositional rationalism or inerrancy, he argues against *sola scriptura* as the fundament of theological orthodoxy in a three-fold manner.[21] First of all, it is far too simplistic *prima facie,* he maintains, and fails to reflect an adequate understanding of the way that the list of holy writings which we now have as Scripture actually functioned more broadly within the church of the first five centuries. In those times the *regula fidei* was, he argues, even more important as a guide for doctrinal fidelity than holy writings that were in circulation. Second, Watson disputes the claim that is related to the doctrine of *sola scriptura* that scripture is self-authenticating. Since biblical texts necessarily must be interpreted, Watson instructs, the insistence among *sola scriptura* advocates (among which inerrantists are numbered) that holy writ is auto-justifying is, in practice, in the life of the church a useless premise for the asserting authority of the Scripture. In other words, how can *scriptura* really stand *sola,* when there exist many texts with meanings not always clear and Scripture clearly needs something other than an insistence on its primacy and singular adequacy to be understood? Finally, as do all of his fellow "Canonical Theists," Watson contends that *sola scriptura* flips the Body of Christ on its head theologically, obsessing over epistemology rather than giving the proper priority to the ontological reality presented to us in the Christian faith. The problem it presents us with is this: "To argue that one must adopt a particular epistemic position . . . in order properly to have access to core truths of the faith is a mistake. *What* we believe is more important than why we believe it."[22]

Of course, from what has been offered above one would not necessarily need to conclude that Watson is—in principle—against inerrancy, but when he describes his operative assumptions as a teacher of the Bible, we see that he does most likely stand against the concept: "I do not assume [when teaching students] that when biblical texts portray past events they always represent history accurately."[23] Such a pedagogical

[21]David Watson, *The Wesleyan Theological Journal,* 46:2 (Fall, 2011): 39-48.

[22]Watson, 44. Little need is there, in his view, to establish why we believe the Scripture is true.

[23]Ibid., 45. Of course, Watson could embrace a more nuanced view in which he would accept with the inerrantists that the "original autographs" were

commitment clearly raises questions, at the least, about the inerrancy of Scripture. For Watson's not only *sola scripture* but even more so—I would take it—inerrancy is historically unnecessary as doctrine. Because he believes the *rule of faith* is more crucial as a guide for orthodox theology, along with his observation that the view of Scripture as self-authenticating is empirically falsified, Watson seems to believe that *sola scriptura* (and by implication inerrancy) is the intellectual equivalent of bowing the knee to Baal—a falsehood. It makes a quasi-Cartesian obsession with epistemological certitude a first-order concern over the very ontological realities provided in holy writ.

Whence Scripture's Authority?

If inerrancy, in the minds of those discussed above, is inadequate and erroneous as a theory of Scripture's nature as a source of truth, what are some alternative ways of presenting its authority? Kenneth Collins addresses this question.

> As the early church engaged in the process of recognizing what writings were indeed sacred, a clear line of authority arose: Jesus Christ, himself, was placed in the first rank; next in line were those who knew Christ (the Apostles); then those who knew the Apostles (apostolic fathers), etc. Put another way, the Bible was revered in the early church and held to be authoritative precisely because it was believed to communicate nothing less than the distinct voice of Jesus Christ and that of his disciples.[24]

Collins' recitation of the chain of revelation shows us that the question of *auctoritas scripturae* was, in fact, critically important to the ancient church. Implied in his discussion of the unparalleled rule that scripture should have in matters of doctrine, faith, and practice is the conviction that a veridical transmission of truth from Jesus himself and about Jesus through the Apostles must be accepted as present in the words of those writings recognized as canonical. Otherwise, the claim "Scripture was revered in the life of the church because it was so intimately connected to

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inerrant but the texts that have been produced subsequently need not be thought of as meeting that standard. It should be noted here that there is a difference in debating whether or not a passage or book is actually historical or merely allegorical story-telling and not believing that the historical sections of Scripture are recounted accurately. There is always room for debate, even by inerrantists about what is and is not to be seen as historical.

[24]Collins, 92.

God," is only of poetic value.[25] While Collins is convinced that the scriptures are reliable and true, his substantive argument for the authority of Scripture is evangelistic or existential. To demonstrate the uniqueness and authority of the Bible he says: "Indeed, the holiness of scripture, its uncanny power to transform lives in a way that no other literature can or does, points to its very authority."[26] And yet, his conviction of the authority of Scripture is not merely experiential. He further contends that Scripture has to have an epistemic authority and role. While rejecting the "privileging of a particular epistemology," he nevertheless argues that the necessity of affirming "that some questions pertaining to knowledge and epistemology must remain if Scripture is to offer suitable moral and spiritual guidance to the church, especially in terms of *knowing* the will of God."[27] Collins argues that Scripture cannot be less than the primary authority for all of doctrine and spiritual life. Yet, for him, its authority is not instantiated, it would seem, by a theological presumption such as the doctrine of inerrancy (at least in a form of rational propositionalism.) Its alpha and omega role in faith and doctrine is established historically by the life of the church. Quoting the work of Paul Achtemeier approvingly, he indicates the historical foundation of the Bible's unrivaled clout.

> By the middle of the fourth century *canon* was associated with "the collection of sacred writings of the OT . . . and of the NT which had already taken shape from c. 200." Once again, the ideas of norm, standard and measuring rod emerged. Not surprisingly, the content of the sacred Scriptures was viewed as the canon of truth in the Christian sense. In fact, those in the Western church came to equate canon and *biblia*.[28]

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[25]As was indicated above, I believe Collin's unwillingness to use the term inerrancy is related to his belief that it implies an approach to the language of scripture that reduces it to propositional rationalism and requires a particular epistemic theory to be at least quasi-canonized.

[26]Collins, 93.

[27]Ibid., 94.

[28]Ibid., Quotes from Paul J. Achtemeier, *Harper's Bible Dictionary,* 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985). It is important to note that in his article Collins is arguing against "Canonical Theism" and its insistence that the Bible be considered as only one of the many sources of authority in the life of the church, although one of extremely important weight. Hence, the focus of his argument is to show that the Scripture was always considered by the church to be The Canon that other canons relied upon. This is a position that inerrantists who don't embrace "rationalistic propositionalism" can warm to quickly, even if they might want to say more.

Where Collins posits scriptural dominion in the context of the church's historic affirmation of certain books—as well as assert that the Bible's authority is attested in the holy power it shows in the transformation of lives—Gunter presents an experiential and pneumatological framework for realizing Scripture's verity and authority. His view is, perhaps, even fideistic. He exhorts us Wesleyans to see that it is "*soteriological sufficiency* and not *factual inerrancy* that lies at the heart of Scripture's authority."[29] The Holy Spirit's witness within the life of the church in worship and proclamation truly instantiates the authority of Scripture, in his view. Without "the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, without the Living Word testifying to the saving sufficiency of the spoken and written Word, even the written Word may be little more than the dead letter of the law."[30] Gunter, by so anchoring the authority of the Bible and its truthfulness, believes he is returning to true Wesleyanism and correcting the church's obsession with epistemology rather than God in Christ.

What about the Canonical Theists, Abraham and Watson? For them, the Scripture's definitive role is a much more complex issue—and I find some of their arguments theologically fecund. For them, Scripture need not be understood to be "*sola*" in the strong sense. Abraham insists that Scripture is "where revelation is enshrined" and, therefore, should be received as "mediating divine revelation and as a pivotal means of grace given to us in the church."[31] He even believes that we need to practice hermeneutically the principle that scripture interprets scripture and that authorial intent is important. Neither would he have the canonical creeds and/or the early commentaries of the Fathers and theologians serve as absolute norms for interpreting Scripture. He would, it seems, have us allow the holy books to speak for themselves, looking to the creeds' parameters and earlier commentators' insights as discussion partners of special and unique authority. Hence, Scripture "has a future in our midst because it continues to *mediate reliably the revelation of God* and because, *in and of itself*, it operates as a decisive means of grace in the great drama

[29]Gunter, 69.

[30]Ibid., 68. In my view, Gunter, to his credit, wants to draw the focus of theology away from an obsession with words in the Bible and a paltry textualism and point us to the glory of the Triune God, the person of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit as the ontological realities that precede Holy Writ. He would argue that we embrace the order of being over the order of knowing as the way to understand and contend for the authority of the sacred written Word.

[31]Abraham, 19.

of creation, freedom, fall, and redemption."[32] What would be crucial, however, is that we understand that Scripture has its own unique place as revelation, but it needs to be received, read, experienced, and interpreted in concert with other "canonical" sources of truth that "grew up with the canon of Scripture and in part determined the boundaries of the canon of Scripture."[33]

Watson argues even more clearly that the authority of scripture is instantiated by and authenticated by the broad canonical Tradition of early Christianity in the first five centuries. Noting correctly that very early in the life of the church an informal canon of beliefs was understood as the test of the faith once delivered to all the saints, as well as reminding us that the first draft of the Nicene Creed was written before the earliest formally recognized list gave anything approaching canonical recognition to the twenty-seven books of the New Testament in 367 A.D., he concludes that "scripture could not function as the ultimate trump card [in doctrinal matters]."[34] That being the case, Watson asserts the following:

- The rule of faith over scripture was the doctrinal filtering grid.
- Consistency with the orthodoxy embodied in the rule was an informal criterion that determined what writings could be used in worship (as scripture).
- In the Christological controversies a dialogical relationship existed between the rule and writings that were recognized as scripture.
- Tradition helped give shape to scripture, which in turn provided content for theological claims that would become tradition.

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[32]Ibid., 22. My emphasis. The idea of mediation is, in my view, a slippery one in Abraham's Canonical Theism. While he does not want to merely say that Scripture "contains" revelation, neither does he want to say that Scripture is revelation, desiring as he does to avoid an "epistemic" understanding of the Bible. Hence, he falls back on the notion of mediation, which is in and of itself unobjectionable and even has a kind of sacramental feel to it. However, such a concept raises even further questions, not the least of which is how could the written scriptures mediate reliably the revelation of God, if those scriptures themselves could be called into question regarding a fallibility quotient of acceptable errors. What would the "threshold" of accuracy and truthfulness of the original documents need to be in order for Scripture to be such a source of mediation of God's revelation? Such a question and others do not undercut Abraham's use of the term mediation, but they do at least allow us to suggest that the question of epistemology, mediation, and inerrancy might actually have some relation to each other.

[33]Ibid., 18.

[34]Watson, 42.

The writings in our canon, therefore, have authority because they were accepted as authoritative by the church *only to the extent* that they are expressive of the foci and shape of the rule of faith; but have authority they nonetheless do.

The varied, yet similar, arguments of the scholars cited above should be received with appreciation, as the consistent theme among them that Holy Scripture must been received primarily as a means of grace to the church. Furthermore, to focus upon the role of scripture as an instrument of God in the *opera salutis* which contributes distinctly to a transforming relationship with God in Christ in the Church is a welcome emphasis. Mark Maddix and Richard Thompson capture this emphasis beautifully for Wesleyans:

> Thus, the Bible functions as sacred Scripture in various ways that these texts function to transform and reshape the perspectives and lives of those who comprise the church, not simply in the kinds of arguments that someone may appropriate to validate the reliability of the Bible, or in the ways someone may appeal to specific data within the Bible. . . . the criterion for the perception of these biblical texts as authoritative Scripture is not merely what these texts *state* (i.e., in the information of these texts) but what these texts do (i.e., the ways that these texts function to affect their readers) . . . Like a joke that loses some of its effectiveness when explanation is required, Scripture loses its functional [formative and disciple-making] authority when person appropriate it for information alone rather than engaging it in potentially formative and transformative ways."[35]

Whence and Why Inerrancy—Beyond Defensiveness

As appreciative as one might be (and as I am) for an insistence that the purpose of the written Word is to form us into the image of Christ and not simply to supply us intellectual data for our doctrinal formulations, it behooves someone such as myself—who is not troubled over the concept of inerrancy nor its use in Wesleyan circles—to respond and suggest what is, in fact, lacking in the above described arguments for the view that the purpose and authority of Scripture as essentially (even irreducibly) salvific. With full awareness of the potential for projection and painting others

[35]Mark Maddix and Richard Thompson, *The Wesleyan Theological Journal,* 46:2, (Fall 2011): 136-137.

under consideration with too broad a brush, let us begin by focusing attention upon the formulation of Maddix and Thompson, since it is—to a degree—paradigmatic of the suggestions of several of the scholars.

> . . . the canonical process itself suggests that the incorporation of the biblical texts into the Christian canon had more to do with their formative rather that epistemic role. That is, the early church appropriated and turned repeatedly to this particular collection of texts because of the *formative* ways that these texts (and not others) functioned within the Christian community.

By way of critique, let it first be noted that the distinction they draw between "the formative" and the "epistemic" roles is too artificial and arbitrary. Why were *these* texts read in a formative manner, if not for the *epistemic* contribution they made to our understanding of God's nature and will; God's work and God's purposes; God's calling and God's possibilities in our lives? In fact, when they insist at one point in their article that there is "a difference between interpreting the *Bible* and interpreting these same texts as *Scripture,*"[36] there is question begging involved. The insistence that the Bible can be read as Scripture, and that *qua* Scripture the *Bible* is a means of grace to sanctify us and bring us to God, carries the assumption that there is something sacred about the message and insights we encounter when the texts of the Bible are read; and hence, I assume, not others. This demands an explanation as to why those designated books qualify to be interpreted *as* Scripture. What makes them to be "Scripture" as opposed to, say, a resource book to Jewish history and Christian origins? Seeing the Bible in distinct ways—either scripture or a source book—has more to do with the disposition of the reader than the nature of the Bible itself. Certainly these approaches need not be mutually exclusive. But, surely Maddix and Thompson (along with others) do not think that reading the Bible as Scripture is a matter of mere reader-centered disposition. If there is, then, something inherent in the written texts found in the Bible that recommends it to us as Scripture, is this aesthetic, or moral, or historic, or some combination of them all?

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[36]Maddix and Thompson, 135. Such a denotation, it seems to me, to capture much of the focus found in several other scholars discussed above, especially Gunter and Watson. The insistence that the Bible can be considered Scripture, and that *qua* Scripture the Bible is a means of grace to sanctify us and bring us to God carries the assumption that there is something sacred about the message and insights we encounter when it is read.

Even more to the point, is it the *words* of the Bible—the psycho-spiritual power of an imaginative narrative plus moral insights—that have such transformative power when used by the Holy Spirit? Are we logo-centric in our spirituality (note the lower case L)? Or are the historical realities to which scriptural texts point, i.e., the actual mighty workings of God in the history of Israel and the God-man Jesus factual events and hence non-negotiable? Surely it is the case that the Wisdom literature, prophetic books, apocalyptic treatises, and the epistles—all as commentary on and exposition of the acts of God—are foundational to faith because of their subject matter. Thus, as writings they have an irreducible epistemic role to play. It is the subject of these writings that make them to be the Word of God? But, that is what an inerrantist can affirm. Those who would eschew the concept of inerrancy of Scripture owe us a much more robust account of Scripture's ability to transform. If the Bible is not a faithful and true record of God's acts, and thereby points beyond itself to a reality established by God in Christ, we cease to be a Logos-centric people and become people of the *book*, truly (not unlike Islam).

We could ask the very same thing about Scripture's performative task in the work of disciple-making that is asked of Christ's uniqueness: why this and not some other? The role and authority of Scripture in forming us into disciples of Jesus and enabling us to understand what it means to be children of God is defensible only if Scripture is a veridical and absolutely reliable source which allows us to have access to God's *Truth*. How can we speak of the formative role of scripture without indicating how the spiritual power of these texts is grounded in Christ's identity as Son of God, Israel's Messiah, and the world's Savior? This need not imply a necessity for a believer to "affirm a specific positivistic conception of truth and affirm that the Bible reflects this positivism."[37] Rather, this is a completely straightforward declaration that simply enables the seeking soul to believe that the Scripture is rooted in history and reality. How can we show such grounding without a commitment to the belief that the record of historical events in Scripture and the interpretive correctness of the prophets, wisdom literature, apocalyptic writings, and the epistles regarding those events and their implications are all, in some manner, without error? Absent something like the doctrine of inerrancy, we fail to show theologically how the writings found in the Bible function pneumatologically as a gift from God *in Christ*. The approach that wants to speak of the formative power of Scripture as a theory of its authority seems to me,

[37]See Gunter above.

ironically, to privilege Scripture over Christ (the very thing that is criticized).

A *Christocentric* epistemology of theology in relation to the Bible requires us to say why, as a pneumatological concern, the Bible can be "read as sacred Scripture" at all. Surely it can only be read *that way*, because the words themselves present to us Jesus Christ as an historical object of faith, who we can believe in as he is described and interpreted, and then by faith experience him as the subject who saves and transforms. Contrary to my interlocutors in this essay, conceiving of the original writings as an infallible (inerrant) witness to God in Christ is a good place to start in formulating such a theology of Scripture or epistemology of theology.

What about the claim that inerrancy played little role in the formation of the canon of Scripture as compared to the power to transform experienced in the reading? Granting that the books performs a formative role as Maddix and Thompson, Gunter—and even Watson and Abraham arguments would suggest,[38] when one looks at the rationale under which the Fathers recognized certain writings as holy Scripture the role of the affective energy exerted upon the reader is remarkably subdued. Why an ecumenical gathering of orthodox bishops recognized in the twenty-seven texts various qualities that seemed to constitute them as Scripture for our New Testament, along with the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Scriptures as our Old Testament, is the rub.[39] Historically speaking, the issues that made up the constellation of concerns over the canon of New Testament writings had much more to do with (1) how long and how widely the books had been recognized, and therefore (2) how certain the

[38]Maddix and Thompson, 136. ". . . the canonical process itself suggests that the incorporation of the biblical texts into the Christian canon had more to do with their *formative* rather that epistemic role. That is, the early church appropriated and turned repeatedly to this particular collection of texts because of the formative ways that these texts (and not others) functioned within the Christian community." While they do not make mention of the Tradition or the rule of faith, their reliance upon Abraham's work in *Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology* would suggest Maddix and Thompson in some way view the rule of faith as a spiritually formative guide in the worshipping tradition of the church to be a kind of criterion for assessing what writings of the scriptural canon would be included.

[39]I realize, of course, that the so-called apocryphal books were also included in a finally authorized list. However, from earliest times and even among the Jewish commentators theirs was a place of honor something less than the sixty-six books we affirm.

church had been of the Apostolic origin of each, and (3) whether or not they had any perceptible taint of the heresies against which the church had fought.[40] When one realizes and acknowledges the fact that these factors were what drove the discernment process of the Fathers of the church regarding which books to receive as the canon of Scripture, it becomes quite dubious that something as ethereal as the spiritually formative power of the writings they ultimately listed was quite the factor it is claimed. Rather, the extent to which it was important would be more analogous to Wesley's incorporation of "experience" as a feature of theological discernment, i.e., the formation that was experienced was an existential participation in the truth that was narrated, expounded, and applied—with all epistemic detail—in the words of those particular texts. We should be quite suspect, then, of claims that the real way to understand the authority of Scripture in the life of the church that smacks of subjectivist or pietistic emphases. In fact, such a claim is historically suspect and theologically inconsistent with the parameters set for the *regula scripturae* of the early church. Much greater was the concern of the early Fathers (far earlier than Nicea, *et al*) for the objective, apostolic truth of the writings they received. If the Fathers were interested in the reliable truthfulness and Apostolic authorship of the Scripture as the bases upon which books would be allowed, maybe inerrancy—in a non-fundamentalist mode—is not too far afield for us Wesleyans.

What of the arguments, however, that inerrancy is an infelicitous concept, because the overly-determined and alien metaphysics of language that it "presumes" privileges epistemology over ontology in a way that thus reduces the Bible's truths to rationalistic categories? Does the very concept that the Bible in its various writings is inerrant actually entail, as some suggest, a kind of reduction of all the language acts in Scripture to propositional assertions? The Princeton Fundamentalists might have contended for such in their battles against the onslaught of Logical Positivism's legacy and higher criticism, yet when one looks at the text of the more recent and nuanced "Chicago Statement on Inerrancy and Biblical Hermeneutics" as an example there is a clear acknowledgment of the rich variety found in the plethora of language acts. On the kinds of literary forms we have in Scripture we read: "In inspiration, God utilized the culture and conventions of His penman's milieu, a milieu that God controls in His sovereign providence; it is misinterpretation to imagine otherwise. So history must be read as history, poetry as poetry, hyper-

[40]Op cit, Collins.

bole and metaphor as hyperbole and metaphor, generalization and approximation as what they are, and so forth."[41] And each of them is to be interpreted, we are instructed, in the light of the literary genre they inhabit. What more could be asked regarding an understanding of the rich multitude of different speech acts and literary forms in the Bible?

Nowhere in this statement on inerrancy is it even implied that all the language statements of the Bible can be transformed into propositional assertions and on that basis provide the data for theological deduction. Even in the one place in the Chicago documents that we find a mention of "propositional statements," nothing suggests that *all* scriptural linguistic forms in the books of the Bible be placed in propositional form. Rather than suggesting or requiring that all the literature be reduced to rational propositions, the statement reads, "the Bible expresses God's truth in propositional statements, and we declare that biblical truth is both objective and absolute."[42] This merely affirms that within the scope of Scripture we find God's truth expressed in "propositional statements." To dismiss inerrancy, therefore, on the basis that it suggests or promotes and inadequate understanding of the rich variety of language acts or promotes a facile rationalistic propositionalism is not only unwarranted, it allows the critics to ignore the positive contributions this doctrine can make to a theology of Scripture.

Hence, we may dispense with the extravagant and reductionist philosophical commitments of the Princetonians and offer a much richer and more focused understanding of inerrancy. We may claim, simply, that the doctrine of inerrancy expresses a conviction that the Scriptures we have today are products that have been passed down to us from original holy writings that were inspired by God out of love for the church and the world in order to communicate truly and faithfully the "Theo-drama" of God's mighty acts of self-identification and salvation. We may further accept that the totality of the books of Scripture were developed over many centuries in response to God's "processive"[43] revelation and were

[41] *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html.* Found under the heading "Infallibility, Inerrancy, Interpretation," in the section entitled "Exposition."

[42] "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics," Article VI, http://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI_2.pdf.

[43] I use the term processive in the place of progressive as a way to acknowledge that God's activity to self-identify, unveil the depth of human need, and move his Creation toward full redemption is a divine process. In some minds, "progressive revelation" can be divorced from the concept of a divine initiated

superintended by the Holy Spirit that they might be written in human language by human writers without error. "The mechanism of such inspiration and supernatural aid," we may affirm, "being a *musterion* that did not negate their own minds or skills or personalities."[44] How such a view of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God written does not comport with the desire to recover the reality of Scripture as primarily a means of grace, or the insistence that there are other legitimate canonical resources that can be drawn upon for doctrinal fidelity, or the historically correct observation that the *regula fidei* existed and developed in the church of the New Testament, quite frankly, escapes me. We do not need to re-posit the importance of these important claims over against the doctrine of inerrancy as though it is an either-or proposition.

For those who think that inerrancy as an epistemological doctrine will entail a kind of Biblicism in which other sources of Christian orthodoxy found in the creeds, councils, and Tradition—and even with Wesley's openness to the "quadrilateral" approach to Christian dogma—we can simply observe that a theology of inerrancy need not imply Biblicism. It can, in truth, be completely harmonious with an appreciation of the historic import of the *regula fidei*, the Great Tradition of orthodox faith, and the Creeds of the church as authoritative standards. However—and this is critical—those who would posit the rule of faith as something that stood apart from the Scripture make a mistake in their historic assessment. The rule of faith and the written apostolic testimony and teaching, codified in the Gospels and epistles, grew up alongside of each other in the first century Church. Additionally, both the rule and the first century scriptural writings were informed and definitively shaped by the Apostles' and Apostolic Fathers' belief that the writings of the Old Testament were absolutely authoritative and errorless in reporting on God's self-revelation in Israel, for understanding fully the Person of Jesus, and for articulating the full essence of the Gospel. "The Acts of the Apostles" let us know that the *preaching* of the Gospel and Apostolic instruction preceded any of the writings of the New Testament, but it is clear even there that the Old Testament scriptures were foundational for proclaiming and "expounding" Jesus Christ. Not only are the Old Testament narrative and prophets cited in Acts, but when we look at the four gospels, one sees that the Christian

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activity and replaced by a human evolutionary development of understanding. Also, it seems better to me to see revelation as a process of God's self-identifying grace and work, rather than a sense of progress toward an unfolding. The later is too Hegelian.

[44]"The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," Articles IV–X, *www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html.*

kerygma was premised not only upon the life of Jesus—his words and acts, his passion, and resurrection—but also upon the critical conviction that in him the "*scriptures had been fulfilled*." Luke goes so far as to tell us that after his resurrection when Jesus met two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus he "opened their minds to understand the scriptures," which entailed an exegesis of what was written about him "in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms." This no doubt fascinating exposition of Jewish scripture included Jesus' insistence that "it is written that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."[45] Scripture was understood by Jesus as a prophecy of the Messiah and preparation for the coming the Son of God. The Old Testament was not only part of the *kerygma* from the very beginning; but was the proof that Jesus was the gift of God and Lord of all. This suggests that any concept one might hold about the relation between a primary oral tradition of Apostolic proclamation about Jesus that became quasi-codified in the *regula fidei* which fails to recognize the critical epistemic role of the Hebrew writings conceived of as *fully truthful Scripture* in the preaching and teaching of the church is simply wrong. The fundamentally scriptural basis of the Christian *kerygma* and its *didache* should lead us to conclude that the *regula fidei* itself had a *scriptural* foundation; the Old Testament exegeted by a Christocentric hermeneutic.

That being the case, would any of the scholars who contend that belief in the infallibility or inerrancy of Scripture is spiritually unneeded or theologically maladroit seriously question that the Gospel writers, when they provide the commentary "to fulfill what was written," doubted the truthfulness of the acts and history they acknowledged, the prophecies they referenced, and the claims to the nature of God they unpacked? Is it really conceivable that Peter, John, James, and Paul, who looked to the Scripture for verity and context out of which to understand and proclaim Jesus, did not believe that the Scriptures which prophesied his coming were and the historical claims of God's dealings with Israel and other nations were, in fact, without error—that they were infallibly accurate?[46]

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[45]Luke 24:22-47, *Holy Bible: The New Revised Standard Version*, (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers), 2007.

[46]Such belief has to be what prompts Paul to say to Timothy: "But as for you continue in what you have learned and firmly believe, knowing from whom you learned it, *and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness . . .*" (II Timothy 3:14-16, My emphasis.)

Furthermore, as is testified to in the writings that they gave us, or are attributed to their influence historically (such as the gospels and Acts), the first apostles believed that Jesus was the Son of God and the key to understanding all of Israel's history and the world's destiny. We can, therefore, legitimately assume two premises. First, their endeavors to declare in preaching and teaching his words and actions would have been carried out with an unwavering commitment to do so faithfully and accurately.[47] Such a commitment would, no doubt, have influenced the care given as the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were being written. Further, in the church's reception of the Four-fold Gospel we sense a commitment to their apostolicity along with their accuracy, hence their authority in the diversity of witness and their common declaration.[48] In fact, when one considers the Patristic rejection of Tatian's *Diatessaron,* because they saw such a "harmony" of the four gospels as an act of iniquity and sin against the Holy Spirit that rejected the revelation on offer from God in the Four-fold witness, we see that the commitment of the earliest church theologians and leaders to the four gospels—with the variety of their voices—was unwavering and that they most likely viewed these four (no less and no more) as errorless accounts of the life of Christ

[47]The fact that there are discrepancies or differences in accounts regarding certain details (e.g., the explanation of just who heard the voice of God at Jesus' baptism, the number of angles at the tomb, or the exact words of Jesus to Peter on the occasion of the confession of Christ) does not diminish the observable fact of the care given to recount critical historical events. Consider that the traditions of witness regarding his miraculous ministry, his certitude of his death, his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, not to mention his ascension are attested to by all the writers. Even Paul highlights elements of these accounts. The differences in detail and or focus can be amply accounted for in a doctrine of inerrancy, if one does not think that the doctrine entails wooden literalism and does not allow for authorial intent. This is only a problem for the propositional reductionists, in my view.

[48]Irenaeus, in his work Against Heresies, Book III, chapter 11 indicates the existence of a Quadriform Gospel; he even argues in analogous and mystical reference for the rightness of the Gospel being "given under four aspects." His testimony alone would establish that there were only four gospels acknowledged, given by the Word and unified by one Spirit. In his view, to deny any bit of the tetramorphic nature of this Gospel was to sin against God's gift of self-revelation and the Spirit of God. Lyon's bishop explicitly states the names of the four "aspects" of the church's Gospel. There should be no reasonable doubt that the Canon of the Gospel was impassibly established in worship and proclamation of the Patristic Church before he middle of the second century A.D.

that could not be improved upon.[49] While it might be considered anachronistic to call their commitment "inerrancy," it is just as much an anachronism to think of the early church as holding a paleo-Christian comfort with something analogous to higher criticism. Surely with regard to the way that the Chicago Statement treats that doctrine, the Fathers would find agreement on the lack of error in the historical witness of the gospels to Jesus.

Second, in writing epistles to the disciples who had been brought to faith by their proclamation and teaching, would they not have given the greatest care to provide sound interpretive teaching of the theological and moral implications of Jesus' Person, life, and work? Those who believe that the rule of faith was an unofficial, but regulating, summation of apostolic proclamation no doubt think of the *regula* as a witness to the faith of the church and an arbiter of faithful proclamation and teaching which was Spirit-inspired and enabled (cf. John 15-16 and Acts 1 and 2). I know of no one who suggests that the rule of faith was itself in error, so why would we not assume the same thing about the pastoral and doctrinal literature they produced for the purposes of instruction to the faithful about the meaning of Jesus for our lives and the claims that God now has on our lives because of the gift of the Holy Spirit? Given the utilization of Old Testament scriptures in the four gospels and in portions of the book of Acts, it is far from unreasonable to assume that the actual oral *didache* of the Apostles itself reflected a conviction and witness that the in life and person of Jesus Christ was found the fulfillment of God-inspired Scripture from the Hebrew sacred texts. In fact, if we take St. Ireneaus' treatise, "*On the Apostolic Preaching*" as even remotely representative of the actual content of the message of the Apostles, we see that the place of Hebrew Scripture was prominent, even—prioritized, in the declaration of the Good News.[50] This would suggest that the rule of faith—developed by the same first and second century apostles and fathers—was, as well, determined in scope not only by the preaching and events in the life of Christ, but by what had been written in the Scriptures (Old Testament) *and* fulfilled in Jesus.

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[49]Johnson, Edward A., "The First Harmony of the Gospels: Tatian's Diatessaron and Its Theology," http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/14/14-4/14-4-pp227-238_JETS.pdf, 236ff. "Gradually, through its many struggles with heresy, the western church came to see the value of a tradition founded upon a *reputable historical basis*; a Word not truncated by heretical harmonizers." My emphasis.

[50]John Behr, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, (Yonkers, New York: St Vladimirs Seminary Press), 1997.

We would do well, then, to cease juxtaposing the New Testament (along with the Old) and the *regula fidei,* since the rule itself was most likely conceived by the early church to be a guiding set of dogmatic articles that were themselves dependent upon Scripture.[51] Instead, Scripture as revelatory source *and* the rule should be seen as parallel tracks starting from the same origination point (God's revelation in Israel and Jesus) identified by Apostles and Fathers to carry the Church in the direction of God's coming Kingdom on the journey of faith. Those who would try to argue that the rule of faith has some kind of primacy over Scripture must not understand the heavy dependence that the Apostolic preaching had upon Old Testament Scripture *qua* inspired authoritative source. Regarding the New Testament writings, as a gift of God to the church, they are best conceived as the written expression of the Apostles proclamation and teaching (moral and doctrinal). Hence, the Four-fold Gospel and the epistles along with the *regula fidae* should be conceived of as dual modes of the same authority in the church—the Apostolic witness to Jesus Christ as foretold *in Scripture* (Old Testament). To make the point clear, let us summarize: since the rule of faith is dependent upon both the Old Testament and the proclamation of Christ (narrated and explicated in New Testament scripture), it seems a modest conclusion to say Scripture not only has a priority, but is of irreplaceable epistemic import in its declaration of God's mighty acts and merciful will. Hence, one can be forgiven

[51]John Behr is extremely helpful on this point. In his translation of and commentary on St. Irenaeus' *On the Apostolic Preaching*, he indicates what the Bishop's understanding of the nature of the rule of faith was. Quoting from Irenaeus' *Against Heresies,* Behr gives voice to Lyons' great saint and then offers his comments: " '. . . anyone who keeps unchangeable in himself the rule of truth received through baptism will recognize the names and saying and parables from the Scriptures' (*AH* 1:9:4). Irenaeus then goes on to give a comprehensive description of 'the rule of truth received in baptism,' of which the three key articles are the true faith received from the apostles in the one God and Father, the one crucified and risen Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit (*AH* 1:10:1). . . . However, rather than being a detached system of doctrinal beliefs, these three articles, the kernel of truth, are inextricably connected, for Irenaeus, with 'the order ( ) and the connection of the Scriptures' (*AH* 1:8:1)." When one further considers that Irenaeus was the first patristic writer to incorporate the apostolic writings *as Scripture* into an explication and defense of the faith, and given that it is from him that we learn of the *regula fide,* we can better appreciate that even the New Testament must be received as an infallible witness to the truth of God revealed in history through his Son, since Irenaeus would have understood not only the Old Testament Scripture but the Apostolic writings as comprising the "order and connection of the Scriptures" to which the rule of faith and truth was "inextricably bound."

for suggesting that the question of its lack of error (in original transmission, at least) is critical.

In response to the contention that the doctrine of inerrancy is un-Wesleyan, because the progenitor of Methodism was willing to depend upon other sources of theological authority—most especially Tradition as an arbiter of truth—we may simply note, first of all, that Wesley considered not only that the Bible is without error or falsehood, but that to believe otherwise was to hold a view that could not be squared with the claim that it was "from the God of Truth."[52] This was important to him precisely because he really did believe that the writings of Scripture revealed as actual historical facts the mighty acts of God within our spatio-temporal existence itself to redeem his fallen human creatures along with the rest of Creation, to grant the New Birth by the Spirit, to sanctify our lives entirely so that we might be gloriously transformed into the image of Christ, and in the end glorify us eternally in his presence. In this light, then, we understand why he so vigorously declared that the Bible revealed the way to Heaven: "God Himself has condescended to teach the way: *for this very end He came down from heaven*" (surely a reference to the historic reality of the Incarnation).[53] Wesley valued the Scripture as a testimony of God's work and his promises, an exegesis of God's wisdom, and an exposition of God's will and purpose. For him, Scripture was given by inspiration from the very same God whose work, promises, wisdom, will, and purpose had been revealed in Israel's history and in Jesus' life, as well as the Spirit-empowered teaching of the apostles.[54] Because ours is a *historic* faith

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[52]*Works of John Wesley*, Vol. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing), 1978, IV, 83 (Journal) July 24, 1776. (Hereafter *WJW*) We do well to remember that in Wesley's day the deism that sprung forth from the Enlightenment was perfectly content to allow *some* truthfulness and factual accuracy to Scripture, but the particularity of Christ and the philosophically unsophisticated nature of its texts was a stumbling block for them. Hence, Wesley's claim of Scripture's errorlessness was quite a counter-cultural comment. But, cf Abraham . . . for an argument that Wesley was inconsistent.

[53]Preface to Sermons.

[54]See his declaration in the sermon, "Salvation by Faith," *WJW,* V where he lays out historical events in the life of Christ as the basis for the theological claims he is making. The faith that saves, he argues, "acknowledges the necessity and merit of His death, and the power of His resurrection. It acknowledges His death as the only sufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal, and His resurrection as the restoration of us all to life and immortality; inasmuch as He 'was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Christian faith is . . . a trust in the merits of His life, death, and resurrection, a recumbency upon Him as our atonement and our life, *as given for us* and *living in us*" It is perhaps

in a *historic* Christ who promised the apostles that they would be guided into all truth in the *historic* contexts of their service to him, the Scriptures must, in Wesley's view, not only be believed, but believed to be without falsehood or error.[55] The term inerrancy, as it is used in the context of the Chicago Statement, harmonizes well with such belief.

Wesley himself, in addition to establishing Scripture as the singularly unique authoritative source of revelation, affirmed the perspicuity of Scripture in his insistence that we must always seek to interpret Scripture in the first instance via Scripture. And yet, far from being a Biblicist who argues you need nothing but the Bible, he also tells us that there are other important, profitable, and in some sense necessary sources to draw upon in comprehending the scripture. Among these and of special import are writings of past teachers of the faith. "If any doubt still remains [as to the meaning of Scripture after purely exegetical exercises], I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; *and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak.* And what I thus learn, that I teach."[56] In other words, Wesley gladly turned to what Abraham has described as "canonical" sources for doctrinal and theological formation;[57] and that he did,

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not too obvious to point out that the death of Christ is the reality Wesley points to as the basis for redeeming man from eternal death, for justification before God, in other words atonement. And his resurrection is the basis for restoration of us all to life and to immortality, and his living in us.

[55]*WJW*, IV, 83 (Journal) July 24, 1776. "I read Mr. Jenyn's admired tract, undoubtedly a fine writer; but whether he is a Christian, Deist, or Atheist, I cannot tell. If he is a Christian, he betrays his own cause by averring, that 'all Scripture is not given by inspiration of God; but the writers of it were sometimes left to themselves, and consequently made some mistakes.' Nay, if here be any mistakes in the Bible, here may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth."

[56]Preface to Sermons, *WJW,* V. My emphasis.

[57]Cf. Thomas Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 47–51. Here Oden explicates Wesley's Trinitarian theological commitments, the substance, the process he employed, and the pastoral application. "Wesley affirmed the specific triune language of the tree creeds: Apostles' Nicene, and Athanasian, but did not wish to promote a particular interpretation of them, or to be locked into some specific language considered necessary for their explication. . . . [He] urged that no belabored insistence be made regarding particular words in the classical formulations, such as *ousia* and *hupostasis.* . . . Wesley did not want sincere questioners or doubters to be unnecessarily troubled or disabled or precipitously cast out of the circle of faith by excessive fondness for some specific reading of the New Testament text. . . . Wesley urged neither silence nor detailed explication, but simple affirmation of the biblical texts *and the ecumenical creeds*." My emphasis.

even with his "epistemic view of Scripture" as a criterion. Therefore, the arguments that inerrancy is either unhelpful or irrelevant since Scripture is not prima facie clear and must be interpreted is, at the very least, not a concern that should sway Wesleyans.

As a matter of doctrinal formulation, how can we best assure the Church that the words of Scripture are *the Word of God*, that we have access to God's truthful revelation in the twenty-first century. In the struggle to articulate a faithful theology of the nature of God and the essence and importance of being human; to declare the calling of God upon our lives and the vocational identity of the Body of Christ; to proclaim the work of God in Christ and the extent of his grace (in justification and sanctification); and to have an *apologia* for the promises of God toward Creation and our eschatological hope we need a theology of the Scripture that dares to believe and declare God's Word is without error. The same God who is revealed in the Scripture to be trustworthy and the source of all truth, who has shown himself to desire that all flesh understand his glory and grace and that his people know his nature and character, should be assumed, as a matter of doctrinal commitment, to have given to his people a Scripture that is Spirit-inspired, unerring revelation. Such a move does not, contra some objections, privilege epistemology over ontology, as though what troubles those who hold to inerrancy is a fear of Cartesian-inspired, Humean-style methodological skepticism regarding truth. Rather, it shows how firmly we embrace the revealed ontological truth about God in Jesus Christ as the starting point of the Christian theological task.[58]

And that brings us to the final point. When treating Scripture as inerrant, we are not playing textual games, or merely engaging in an exercise in metaphysics of language. Rather, we are indicating that we take

[58]Cf. The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hemeneutics. "The authority of Holy Scripture is bound up with the authority of Jesus Christ, whose recorded words express the principle that the teaching of Israel's Scriptures (our Old Testament), together with his own teaching and the witness of the apostles (our New Testament), constitute his appointed rule of faith and conduct for his followers. He did not criticize his Bible, though he criticized misinterpretations of it; on the contrary, he affirmed its binding authority over him and all his disciples (cf. Matt. 5:17-19). To separate the authority of Christ from that of Scripture and to oppose the one to the other are thus mistakes. To oppose the authority of one apostle to that of another or the teaching of an apostle at one time to that of his teaching at another time are mistakes also. [http://ac21doj.org/contents/ICBI-InerrancyHermeneuticsApplication.pdf]

seriously the apologetic task of pointing to what God has done in history in Israel's life and the man Jesus of Nazareth. We show that we take seriously the ontological claim of the tradition that he was and is the God-Man—a claim about which the reliability, even infallibility and inerrancy, of the historical record of his life is critical. We reveal that we believe that the apostle-dependent nature of the epistles is utterly critical, because apart from such a reality we have no direct connection between those writings and the person of Christ. Finally, when we testify that we believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, we must accept as historically infallible and theologically inerrant the writings of the only Bible Jesus knew—our Old Testament—which gave shape to his understanding as the son of Mary to the nature of the One True God of Israel, which writings he said he had not come to supplant. Inerrancy, therefore, is far from a doctrine that privileges epistemology. Rather, it gives the honorific place to the historical reality that the One True God has made Himself known ontologically in the incarnate life of his Son, Jesus. Viewing the Scripture as inerrant is a way of taking history seriously as the arena of God's revelation. Scripture, also, points us to testimony of an unparalleled insight into the nature of the Divine One, the grace of our God, our human essence and need, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Inerrancy reclaimed and more adequately defined is a doctrine much needed in a postmodern world of subjectivist and perspectival pretense for a church that is losing courage and becoming mute about the Glad Tidings.

SAVING DIFFERENCE: TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF THEOLOGICAL DISAGREEMENT[1]

by

Chris E. W. Green

No doubt there have to be differences among you . . .
1 Cor. 11.19

Ideology resists criticism, whereas tradition invites it.
David Burrell

Introduction

Alasdair MacIntyre (famously) has said that what keeps a tradition alive is the character of its arguments.[2] Herbert McCabe, more spiritedly, has quipped that "the one sure way of killing off a tradition is to identify it with what seems to you plainly true and then to unchurch those who see things differently. . . ."[3] If MacIntyre and McCabe are right, then we are in trouble, because many if not most of us in the Wesleyan, holiness traditions—including, of course, the Pentecostal branches—are not very good at theological disagreement. To speak only of my own tribe for the moment, for much of our history, Pentecostals in North America have been more concerned with indoctrination than with genuine theological formation, often maintaining a trivial agreement in the name of upholding "distinctives." If a decade or two into the movement's history Pentecostal theology had begun to rigidify into a fundamentalist cast, then the rise of the "Church growth movement" basically squelched any remaining concern for doctrinal soundness.[4] Now, in too many of our churches and

[1]Thanks to Pamela Holmes, Rickie Moore, and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen for their insightful, critical comments on the original draft of this paper.

[2]In his *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* ([Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984], p. 222), MacIntyre defines a living tradition as a "socially embodied argument . . . about the goods which constitute that tradition."

[3]Herbert McCabe, *God Still Matters* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 211.

[4]For exploration of how the church growth movement affected Evangelicalism, see Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), pp. 91-107.

schools, theological disagreement is often brushed aside as an unnecessary distraction from seeking "deeper experiences" and/or the truly important work of "practical ministry."

Of course, something more important than the survival of our traditions is at stake. We belong to the Church catholic, and are therefore bound to bear witness in holiness to the gospel, bodying forth as one the truth to God and to others. And, to state the obvious, we cannot fulfill this ecclesial calling if we do not know how to disagree faithfully, both within our communities and traditions and in engagement (ecumenically and inter-religiously) with other communities and their traditions. Bearing that concern in mind, I want, first, to offer a few initial, tentative, and probing reflections on the nature of theological disagreement; then, to explore why and how our disagreements matter; and, finally, to propose some constructive alternatives for learning to disagree—and to think about that disagreement—more faithfully.

What Is Theological Disagreement?

Before we can grasp what theological disagreement is and why it matters, we have to have some sense of what theology is and what kind of (dis)agreement it calls for.[5] To that end, we have to distinguish between those teachings that have been "formally acknowledged as normative" for the Church because "constitutive for its identity"[6]—that is, *dogma*—and all other teachings (which we call *theologoumena*).[7] The Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian definition belong in the first category; Augustine's view of original sin and Anselm's understanding of the atonement belong in the latter.

As Paul Griffiths explains, "it is incumbent upon theologians to get as clear as they can about the difference between Church doctrine, on the one hand, and speculative proposals about and elaborations of doctrine, on the other hand."[8] For Catholic theologians, Griffiths argues, this differ-

[5]Here, I am following the lead of Paul Griffiths, "Theological Disagreement: What It Is and How To Do It"; available online: http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2014/08/26/4074627.htm; accessed: 15 January 2015.

[6]A. N. Williams, *The Architecture of Theology*: *Structure, System, and Ratio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 116.

[7]Dumitru Staniloae (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology Vol. 1: The Experience of God* [Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998], pp. 84-85) suggests that dogma have an "obligatory and permanent character" because they have been judged to be good for everyone, everywhere, and always, while other teachings, although not necessarily untrue or unfaithful, belong only to a particular time and place.

[8]Griffiths, "Theological Disagreement," n.p.

ence is kept clear by the fact that they do not have the power to establish Church doctrine. Making doctrine, Griffiths says, "requires an authority theologians lack: the authority to pronounce, performatively, on the question of what it is that the Church teaches about this or that, and in the act of pronouncing to make it so." Whether any elements of a particular theologian's work are or are not incorporated into official Church doctrine "is a decision made by the teaching Church over time, with the college of bishops playing an essential role in arriving at that decision." More often than not, by the time the Church arrives at that decision, the theologian is "safely dead and (perhaps) enjoying a preliminary version of the beatific vision."[9]

Griffiths holds that because *Catholic* theologians know they are not responsible for making Church doctrine, they are "relieved of anxiety about [their] own rightness and [their] own influence." But he insists that "the picture is very different for *Protestant* theologians, on whose shoulders a heavy weight is placed, one that cannot be borne and that hampers and constrains the properly speculative aspect of theological work."[10] As I see it, Griffiths exaggerates the difference between Catholic and Protestant theology. Protestants, no less than Catholics, can offer their work in trust that the Church, under the Spirit's guidance, will discern the truth. And, as he would no doubt admit, Catholics do not always disagree faithfully. That said, he is certainly right that theologians, in order to do their work well, need their ecclesial communities to afford them room for thinking freely. And in many communities—Catholic as well as Protestant—such room is decidedly *not* afforded.[11]

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We might be tempted to say that dogma call for our agreement, while theologoumena allow for disagreement. But that is not quite right. All Christians are bound, I believe, to agree in confessing that Christ is fully human and fully divine—one person in two natures. But that does not mean we cannot (or should not) disagree about what exactly that confession means. As George Hunsinger points out,

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[9]Griffiths, "Theological Disagreement," n.p.

[10]Griffiths, "Theological Disagreement," n.p.

[11]As I sometimes point out to my students, even though Pentecostal denominations do not claim infallibility for their statements of faith, they tend to expect a kind of agreement that stifles critical reflection and constructive speculation. I suspect something like that is true for a few Wesleyan and holiness communities as well.

> It has not always been appreciated just how minimalist the historic Chalcedonian Definition really is. . . . Chalcedonian Christology does not isolate a point on a line that one either occupies or not. It demarcates a region in which there is more than one place to take up residence.[12]

The same holds true for all dogmatic teaching. There is, so to speak, room for disagreement *within* our shared agreement. In fact, our shared agreement by God's wisdom both demands and generates disagreements, as we try to work out how to speak the gospel most faithfully in the concrete peculiarities of our time and place. So, in order to fulfill our ecclesial purpose, theologians have to work through presumed and superficial agreement into the complexities of the disagreements that, rightly engaged, give rise to truer agreement. In this sense, as Griffiths says, disagreement is "the lifeblood" of theology.[13] If theology is going to serve the Church well, then theologians need to seek out conversations (within and without their tradition) that place their thinking "under pressure by intense and deep-going disagreements."[14]

All that brings me to the heart of what is perhaps my most basic claim: God does not intend for us to agree in ways that terminate critical reflection and discerning interpretation. Or, to say the same thing another way, God is not going to save us *from* theological disagreement but *through* it.[15] And even when our disagreements finally have been overcome (in the End), real theological differences can and should remain. As T. F. Torrance reminds us,

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[12]George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl* Barth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 132-33.

[13]Griffiths, "Theological Disagreement," n.p.

[14]Griffiths offers the following examples: "Augustine arguing with Jerome about the proper interpretation of Galatians 2, Augustine arguing with Julian about the proper understanding of human sexuality, Pascal arguing with the Jesuits about moral theology and the right understanding of human action. . . ."

[15]It is not without significance, I think, that the Book of Acts is rife with theological disagreement, with disputes and contention happening right alongside accounts of Spirit baptism, miracles, and en masse conversions. Jaroslav Pelikan (*Acts* [Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible; Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2013), p. 170) notices it, too. "In virtually every chapter of the book of Acts there is evidence of ongoing theological disagreement, at the surface or hovering just beneath it." He observes that "in its own way, this disagreement is a measure of the seriousness with which the apostolic generation took questions of theology and principle." But not only the seriousness of the apostles—also the purposes of the Spirit surely are at play.

> . . . the very nature of theology as perpetual inquiry and perpetual prayer, and the very nature of the object of inquiry, the Word of God, which is infinitely full of the riches of God's grace and wisdom, [can] only call forth from all saints a correspondingly rich and manifold understanding, developing differences which [are] not contradictions but rather complementary aspects of the truth ministering to the unity and fullness of the Church's understanding of God.[16]

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We call that process of working out how best to speak the gospel "theology." In Robert Jenson's idiom, theology is "the maintenance of a particular message, called 'the gospel.' "[17] And that "maintenance" requires us to speak *to* the Church (in critique) as well as *for* it (in confirmation and development),[18] allowing our theological disagreements—whatever their cause[19]—to upset and destabilize our unfaithful agreements so that we can be led toward the kind of spacious harmony that saves disagreement.[20]

Theology, obviously, takes different forms. Perhaps less obviously, each form draws on agreement and disagreement differently. To make the point, let me use Rowan Williams' three-fold theological schema as a model.[21] Williams argues that *celebratory* theology, which is embodied primarily in sermons and prayers and songs,[22] takes up the Church's dog-

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[16]T. F. Torrance, *Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology* (London: T. & T. Clark, 1962), pp. 197-98.

[17]Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology Vol. 1: The Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 4.

[18]See also Rupert Shortt, *Rowan Williams: An Introduction* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2003), pp. 6-7.

[19]We trust that even when we are wrong (and/or wrongly motivated), the Spirit uses disagreement for our good. Hence, it is important to distinguish bad/false teaching from heresy.

[20]Since I have mentioned Chalcedon, let me use Robert Jenson's work as an example. Jenson's commitment to "draw out the full ontological implications of what we might call the gospel's 'Nicene-narrative grammar,' to say what must be true of God if indeed the story of *Jesus* is the story of *God with us,*" moves him to criticize the West's reception of Chalcedon. The problem, in his judgment, is that the Definition, at least when interpreted via Leo's *Tome*, loses sight of *who* it is incarnate for us, concerned instead only with questions of *how* that incarnation is possible given *what* we supposedly already know about the divine and human natures.

[21]Rowan Williams, *On Doing Theology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), pp. xiii-xiv.

[22]For examples, Williams cites the poetry of Ephrem Syrus and the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar.

matic confessions in hopes of showing their glory, bringing to light "the fullest possible range of significance in the language used."[23] *Communicative* theology, emerging primarily in evangelism, apologetics, and catechesis,[24] finds that familiar ways of speaking the gospel are not quite working in a new context, and so "experiment[s] with the rhetoric of its uncommitted environment."[25] Sooner or later, however, these communicative forays into the unknown provoke theological crises, and at this point *critical* theology emerges,[26] concerning itself with the difficulties inherent in the reception of Church teaching. By "nagging at fundamental meanings," this mode of theology seeks to answer the awkward and painful questions forced on us by our efforts both to believe and to understand what we in hope are believing so we are moved into deeper celebration of the faith that claims us.[27]

As I said, each of these styles calls for different kinds of agreement and disagreement, and each bears its own inherent risks. For example, celebratory theology, when it is goes wrong, lapses into theological narcissism, its language "seal[ing] in on itself."[28] In this diseased, fundamentalist form, it demands absolute agreement and damns all dissent. In the same way, diseased critical theology is reduced to reactionary and antagonistic ideological systems, demanding absolute *dis*agreement with the "orthodoxy" it seeks to expose as false and oppressive. At their best, however, these different modes of theology help us both to agree and to disagree toward truer, wiser faithfulness. Communicative theology, for example, not only makes possible "fruitful conversation with the current environment," but also discovers in the "unfamiliar idiom" new dimensions and aspects of the *depositum fidei*.[29] And critical theology, having put to death what we once held as true, makes possible the resurrection of our imaginations into "the mind of Christ." In a word, then, when we do theology well, holding all of these modes together, we learn how to agree and disagree together so that we are moved together toward the fullness of agreement promised in the End that the risen Christ opens for us.

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[23]Williams, *On Doing Theology*, p. xiii.

[24]Williams appeals to Origen's use of Greek philosophical sources and Sarah Coakley's reading of contemporary feminist theory as examples.

[25]Williams, *On Doing Theology*, p. xiv.

[26]Williams gives Pseudo-Dionysius and the so-called Yale School theologians (Lindbeck, Frei, Kelsey) as examples.

[27]Williams, *On Doing Theology*, p. xv.

[28]Williams, *On Doing Theology*, p. xiv.

[29]Williams, *On Doing Theology*, p. xiv.

Why Does It Matter If/How We Disagree?

Life as the Church is possible only as we become convinced down to our bones that God is at work in our disagreements, that conflict, rightly engaged, can be good for us. But, of course, not all theological disagreements are good. We must not glamorize our struggles or romanticize disunity. And we have to resist settling for bad disagreements just as fiercely as we insist on the need for good ones. Peace, not conflict, is what we are made for.[30] And many, perhaps almost all, of our disagreements develop from and are carried along by our ignorance, poor character, or bad faith. Lonergan suggests that real theological disagreements arise either from poor work on the theologian's part—that is, by the failure to observe what Lonergan identifies as the "transcendental precepts"—or from a lack of true conversion.[31] I have no doubt that his account tells part of the story. But it certainly does not capture the *whole* story.Truth be told, what seem to be theological disagreements very often arise from and are borne along by other conflicts rooted deeply in hidden personal and interpersonal anxieties and ambitions.[32] But at least some of our theological disagreements, I want to insist, are in fact the upshot of the Spirit's transforming work taking shape in our as-yet unperfected lives, moving us toward the "fullness of Christ" (Eph. 1.23) in which we find shalom. And I want to say more: good theological disagreements not only free us for fuller, more faithful agreement; they just so also become a form of our witness to the

[30]On this point, I am in cautious agreement with John Webster (*Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason* [London: T. & T. Clark, 2012, p. 151), who holds that in "[i]n order to speak about conflict . . . theology must first speak about peace, because peace, not conflict, is the condition of creatures in both their original and their final states." But this line of thought, because it starts with Adam and not with Christ, risks idealizing a peace that is made without conflict, and in the process fails to do justice not only to the glories of the End, which are "exceeding abundantly beyond" the glories of the Beginning, but also the possibilities of redemptive, sanctifying conflict in the present.

[31]In this scheme, merely *superficial* disagreements emerge due to differences in language and/or conceptual frameworks; see Elizabeth Maclaren, "Theological Disagreement and Functional Specialties" in Patrick Corcoran (ed.), *Looking at Lonergan's Method* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), pp. 73-87 (75).

[32]It is crucial for us always to be discerning whether or not our disagreements really are about theology. And, as a rule, *how* we are engaging those with whom we disagree probably tells the tale: if we cannot engage peaceably, in good spirits, then the disagreement is not about theology, but about our personal needs and interests.

world.[33] Chad Pecknold observes that so much modern theological disagreement, in contrast with medieval scholastic debates, only deepen the wounds of the Church, "enforcing the habits of ecclesial division."[34] But it need not be so. In fact, good theological conflict is precisely what is needed if we are going to move toward the genuine and sanctifying unity promised to us as Christ's Body and the Spirit's Temple.

The problem is, such thinking often cuts against our grain. Wesleyans and Pentecostals, by and large, are pietistic evangelicals,[35] and pietism, in its diseased forms, trains us to apprehend the world through the lens of a hyper-individualist, institutional, consumerist, and utilitarian frame of reference that "undermines the ontological truth of the Church," separating "practical piety" from the truth of dogma and the mystery of the sacraments.[36] As Christos Yannaras explains,

> When piety ceases to be an ecclesial event and turns into an individual moral attainment, then a heretic or even a non-Christian can be just as virtuous as a "Christian." Piety loses its connection with truth and its ontological content; it ceases to be related to man's full, bodily participation in the life of God—to the resurrection of the body, the change of matter into "word," and the transfiguration of time and space into the immediacy of communion. Piety is transformed into an entirely uniform manner of being religious which inevitably makes differences of "confession" or tradition relative, or even assimilates the different traditions, since they all end in the same result—the moral "improvement" of human life.[37]

We obviously should not accept Yannaras' account uncritically. But he is right, I think, as it relates to our movements and traditions at their weak-

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[33]But only if, as Webster says (*Domain of the Word*, p. 169), we engage in theological controversy "in a way which displays and magnifies the truth of the gospel whose author and content is peace."

[34]Chad Pecknold, "Ecclesial Theology in the University" in Tom Greggs, Rachel Muers, and Simeon Zahl (eds.) *The Vocation of Theology Today: A Festschrift for David Ford* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013), pp. 314-329 (315).

[35]See Donald Dayton, "The Use of Scripture in the Wesleyan Tradition" in Robert K. Johnston, *The Use of the Bible in Theology: Evangelical Options* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), pp. 121-136.

[36]Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), p. 127.

[37]Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, p. 126.

est. Diseased forms of pietism not only generate bad theological disagreement (thus widening the Church's divisions) but also make good theological disagreement (for the sake of the healing and strengthening of Christ's body) incredibly difficult, if not impossible.[38]

How Can We Disagree Faithfully?

So, what are we to do? How can our communities develop the character necessary to sustain good theological disagreement? First, our understanding of what it means to be the Church has to undergo a conversion. We have to recognize and submit to the primacy of the Church's *communal* share in the divine life, rediscovering an understanding of "full gospel" salvation as corporate intercessory participation in God's mission for the sake of the world.

Second, we must reimagine the nature and purpose of orthodoxy. Instead of conceiving of it as a wholly-realized, already-perfected system of thought, we need to recognize it as a fullness of meaning toward which we strive, knowing full well we cannot master it even when in the End we know as we are known.[39] Because the Church's integrity is gift, not achievement, we can never know in advance "what will be drawn out of us by the pressure of Christ's reality, what the full shape of a future orthodoxy might be."[40] Williams has it right, I believe:

> Orthodoxy is not a system first and foremost of things you've got to believe, things you've got to tick off, but is a fullness, a richness of understanding. Orthodox is less an attempt just to make sure everybody thinks the same, and more like an attempt to keep Christian language as rich, as comprehensive as possible. Not comprehensive in the sense of getting everything in somehow, but comprehensive in the sense of keeping a vision of the whole universe in God's purpose and action together.[41]

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[38]Perhaps this because these forms of pietism cannot separate differences of opinion from differences of will, to use Webster's idiom (see Webster, *Domain of the Word*, p. 169).

[39]As Herbert McCabe (*God Still Matters*, p. 211) has it, we cannot identify for certain the "central trends of tradition" until the Last Judgment makes them clear to us.

[40]Rowan Williams, *Why Study the Past*, p. 58.

[41]Rowan Williams, "What is Heresy Today?" n.p. available online: http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/568/archbishops-lecture-what-is-heresy-today; accessed: 17 January 2015.

To be sure, "not every spirit is of Christ, [and] not every way of speaking and acting is capable of being transparent to Christ."[42] And so our traditions bear the responsibility to hold us accountable for our claims about God and the gospel. But instead of using doctrine ideologically—that is, as a gatekeeping device—we need to use it formatively, expecting and allowing for the confession, proclamation, and teaching of Christian doctrine over time to sanctify our imaginations.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, we need to ground our thinking of agreement and disagreement in the character of God's own life. Of course, some are sure to say that such a grounding is impossible. If, as the dogmatic tradition has said, there is one divine will, then God does not and cannot disagree with God. God is not in any way in conflict with God. There are no intra-Trinitarian controversies. But if God cannot disagree with God, then how can *our* disagreements, conflicts, and controversies be godly? We can, I think, start to develop an answer by building on Jenson's ground-breaking insight: while it is true that God does not *disagree* with God, God can and does *surprise* God.[43] I am convinced that this hope of divine surprise promises to cast our disagreements in a better light, making it possible for us to imagine how we might disagree savingly.

Simply put, a living, loving God is necessarily a God capable of surprising—not only us, but himself as well.[44] And therein lies our hope: because we have been filled with the Spirit of the living God whose delighted and delighting love has been "shed abroad in our hearts," we can and should engage passionately in our disagreements, confident that God is at work in and through them for God's own delight and for our good, always in ways we cannot anticipate, gauge, or control. In fact, that may prove to be the best way for us to discern the Spirit's leading in any given situation. Mid-argument, we can and should stop to ask ourselves how God is using our disagreement to work in and through us a wonder not otherwise possible.

Conclusion

Needless to say, until the End we are going to continue to disagree.[45] The only question is, are our theological disagreements going to be good or

[42]Williams, "What Is Heresy Today?" n.p.

[43]See Robert W. Jenson, "The Hidden and Triune God" in Steven J. Wright (ed.), *Theology as Revisionary Metaphysics: Essays on God and Creation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), pp. 69-77 (76).

[44]Jenson, *Systematic Theology Vol. 1*, p. 198.

[45]See Webster, *Domain of the Word*, p. 170.

bad for us? But we need not lose heart. Through it all, we can trust ourselves to God and to one another because we know that in the Father's wisdom and through the Spirit's creativity we are together being formed into the likeness of Christ, the one who in himself reconciles all things. And in the End, knowing and being known, we are sure to discover that some of our disagreements—at least aspects of them—were born of God's own spiritedness enlivening us for gospel-true living under the conditions of a fallen world. And we can also be sure that the life we share in the End, because it is a life in and with the triune God, will be a life of infinite love and therefore an eternity of surprise.

FIFTY YEARS OF HOLINESS THEOLOGY IN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE: PATTERNS, TRANSITIONS, AND BLIND SPOTS IN THE *WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL*

by

Chad Clark with Jason Vickers

Introduction

The *Wesleyan Theological Journal* is a testament to the rich theological tradition of the Church of the Nazarene. For fifty years, Nazarene scholars have used the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* to engage and learn from one another. Across the years, they have addressed the doctrine of God, Christology, and Peumatology, as well as a host of other topics, including prayer, speaking in tongues, the authority of Scripture, and Open Theism. Of course, some might question whether this work has had any significant impact on the theological identity of the Church of the Nazarene as a whole, which is to say, on the theological dispositions of Nazarene clergy and laity. If it has not, then some might further inquire as to the value of this work. At the second presidential address of the *Wesleyan Theological Society*, Richard Taylor addressed these concerns directly, reminding us of the importance of having people who apply themselves to books and writing. "Sooner or later," he says, "what is taught in the class room and written in textbooks finds its way into the kitchen and the shop."[1]

Holiness has consistently been the most popular, and even significant, topic for Nazarenes in the *Journal*. Over the last fifty years, thirty-six articles have directly tackled the topic of holiness. In this paper, we will be drawing on this material to develop a case study concerning the ways in which Nazarene scholars have conceived of holiness in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century. We will begin by identifying the biblical and traditional sources that Nazarene scholars have drawn upon in their work on holiness. Next, we will examine the ways in which Nazarenes have conceptualized of holiness as represented in the *Journal*. Finally, we

[1]Richard Taylor, "The Abiding Relevance of Divine Love," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 2, no. 1 (1967): 3.

will conclude by making a few suggestions about how Nazarenes might further enhance their understanding of holiness in the future.

Sources

Biblical Sources

In a recent essay on Wesley as biblical interpreter, Rob Wall raised the question, what biblical texts most deeply shaped John Wesley's view of Christian Perfection?[2] A similar question can be asked in the present case: what biblical texts have most deeply influenced Nazarene scholars' view of holiness as represented by the thirty-six holiness articles in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*?

The first thing that must be noted is that Nazarenes have given considerable weight to the New Testament. For example, among the thirty-six articles are a small handful of case studies on holiness in Scripture. In 1995, George Lyons argues that in 1 Thessalonians Paul's intention is to develop an ethical ethos derived from holiness that serves as an alternative to pagan life for the new converts at Thessalonica.[3] Most recently, Dean Flemming has written a case study on 1 Peter that connects holiness with the church's missional identity.[4]

These case studies notwithstanding, most Nazarenes who incorporate Scripture tend to cherry-pick verses from all over the Scripture to make their points, with much more attention given to the New Testament. William Greathouse, Alex Deasley, and John A. Knight saturate their articles with biblical material. Their extensive use of Scripture is impressive to say the least. Yet, they represent a common trend among a number of scholars in the *Journal* who regularly incorporate Scripture into their work, namely, that in view of a given theological topic they move intertextually without clear nuance between sources. Perhaps what is more revealing than how Scripture is used in many Nazarene articles is how Scripture is rarely used. Very little interaction with Scripture is formed by a higher critical reading of the text. Very little recognition is given to the basic differences, for example, between holiness in the priestly literature and deuteronomistic literature, or between the Gospel

[2]Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 116-122.

[3]George Lyons, "Modeling the Holiness Ethos: A Study Based on First Thessalonians," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*30, no. 1 (1995): 187-211.

[4]Dean Flemming, "'Won Over Without a Word': Holiness and the Church's Missional Identity in 1 Peter," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 49, no. 1 (2014): 50-66.

of Mark and Paul. Most notably, there is very limited appeal to, and use of, texts derived from the Hebrew Bible.

Among the articles surveyed for this presentation, only one Nazarene gave significant attention to the Old Testament. In an essay on holiness and purity, H. Ray Dunning argued that the introduction of the concept of purity in the Nazarene "holiness classics" was misconstrued when taken out of its priestly-cultic context. Dunning noted that the priestly literature makes a distinction between moral and ritual purity, and he maintained that the sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart," refers to ritual and not moral purity. We will discuss Dunning's argument in greater detail in a moment. For now, the important thing to note is that, apart from Dunning, Nazarene scholars' work on holiness, as represented in the *Journal*, is significantly underfunded by the Old Testament. Even Dunning's work focuses primarily on the priestly tradition. We will return to this issue in our concluding suggestions.

Traditional Sources

Just as Wesleyan theologians have inquired about John Wesley's use of Scripture, they have also frequently discussed Wesley's relationship to the Christian theological tradition. For instance, Randy Maddox contends that Wesley's theology has strong affinities with the Christian East, whereas Tom Noble has urged that Wesley stands squarely in the tradition of the West that emanates from Augustine.[5] A similar inquiry can be made of Nazarene scholars. What sources within the Christian theological tradition have Nazarene scholars drawn upon in their work on holiness?

Of the thirty-six Nazarene articles on holiness in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, only two never make explicit reference to John Wesley. Wesley is consistently used as the primary traditional source and is often used to critique later developments in the holiness movement. For example, Paul Bassett argues that the later Wesleyan-holiness tradition has, at different times, construed holiness in different ethical ways. He critiques these ethical views of holiness, in part, by appealing to Wesley's view of sanctification, which he claims is at its core "the love of God 'shed abroad in our hearts.' "[6] For better or worse, Wesley has become the litmus test

[5]Thomas A. Noble, "East and West in the Theology of John Wesley." In *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol. 85, no. 2 and 3 (Goulbourne Street, Keighley: Fretwell Print and Design Ltd, 2003), 359-372.

[6]Paul Merritt Bassett, "Culture and Concupiscence: The Changing Definition of Sanctity in the Wesleyan Holiness Movement," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 28, (1993): 64.

for almost all controversies in the Wesleyan theological tradition. Of course, our strong affinities to Wesley are, in many ways, the bread and butter of our Wesleyan theological tradition; yet, not even Wesley can fix all our problems. Appeals to other theological sources outside of the tradition emanating from Wesley can be a sign of humility and theological maturity.

Nazarenes have also drawn from other sources within their Wesleyan theological tradition and broader evangelical heritage. For example, Timothy Smith wrote a series of articles on holiness in Charles Finney, John Fletcher, and George Whitefield.[7] Appeals to Phoebe Palmer are much more infrequent than John Wesley, but like Wesley, she is usually a voice of critique to later Wesleyanism. Nazarenes also make extensive use of holiness material from within the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*. Diane Leclerc is a good example of this. In just one of her articles, she references four other Nazarene holiness articles, which were written by Mildred Wynkoop, Al Truesdale, and Paul Bassett.[8] In fact, the *Journal* has itself been a robust place through which Nazarene scholars have continued to engage in rigorous theological debate.

Appeals to sources outside of the Wesleyan theological tradition and boarder evangelical heritage are somewhat sparse. Nazarenes have not made extensive use of the Christian East in their work on holiness. Steve McCormick's essay on *Theosis in Chrysostom and Wesley* is the exception that proves the rule. Nazarenes have been more inclined to interact with Augustine. For instance, Diane Leclerc critiques Augustine's view of concupiscence while Henry Spaulding II incorporates Augustine's view of language.[9] In addition to Augustine, Nazarene scholars have appealed to a few other Western sources, including Thomas Aquinas,[10] Karl Barth, and

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[7]See Timothy Smith, "The Doctrine of the Sanctifying Spirit: Charles G. Finney's Synthesis of Wesleyan and Covenant Theology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*13, (1978): 92-113; Timothy Smith, "How John Fletcher Became the Theologian of Wesleyan Perfectionism 1770-1776," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*15, no. 1 (1980): 68-87; Timothy Smith, "George Whitefield and Wesleyan Perfectionism," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19, no. 1 (1984): 63-85.

[8]Diane Leclerc, "Gendered Sin? Gendered Holiness? Historical Considerations and Homiletically Implications," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 1 (2004): 54-73.

[9]See Diane, 57-59; Henry W. Spaulding II, " 'To Slew The Fly the Way out of the Fly-Bottle': A Reconstruction of the Wesleyan Understanding if Christian Perfection," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33, no. 2 (1998): 152.

[10]H. Ray Dunning, "Christian Perfection: Toward a New Paradigm," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*33, no. 1 (1998): 158.

Rudolf Otto.[11] Gerard Reed has written an article on Thomas Merton's concept of sanctification.[12] On balance, however, we would have to say that appeals to patristic, medieval, and early modern sources, whether of the East or the West, are infrequent by comparison to appeals to Wesley and to contemporary sources in the Wesleyan tradition. The danger here is that, at times, Nazarene theological conversation about holiness seems to be taking place in an echo chamber. Critical and extended engagement with sources external to the Wesleyan-holiness tradition has been limited at best.

Conceptualizing Holiness

We will now turn our attention to the ways Nazarene's have conceptualized holiness within the *Journal*. What follows is a typological analysis of holiness. Nazarenes have conceived of holiness in at least four primary modes: theological, soteriological, moral, and cultic. These categories rarely enjoy clean breaks from each other, but they do help illustrate a healthy range in which holiness has been conceived within the tradition. In the theological mode, holiness is connected with any of the traditional theological loci. As a whole, Nazarene scholars have engaged holiness in the doctrine of God, creation, Christology, Pneumatology, and ecclesiology. Even when holiness is conceived within these grand theological categories, there is generally an impulse to stay rooted in everyday human experience. In the soteriological mode, holiness becomes focused on the human. How does the human experience holiness? How does it affect the human? In the moral mode, holiness propels a significant movement towards moral living, but it is never confused with morality. That is, while holiness is not synonymous with morality, holiness does have moral implications and stimulates positive moral actions. Finally, one Nazarene scholar (Dunning) has explored holiness in the cultic mode by drawing a distinction between holiness and purity that offers an entryway into both moral and ritual purity. The cultic mode has especially rich implications for sacramental holiness. Let us take a closer look at some of the work that Nazarene scholars have done on holiness in each of these modes.

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[11]See Richard S. Taylor, "The Balance in Christian Holiness Between Likeness and Unlikeness to God," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 8, no. 1 (1973): 33-37.

[12]Gerard Reed, "Thomas Merton's Concept of Sanctification," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 18, no. 2 (1983): 90-98.

Theological

Most discussions on holiness in the theological mode can be found in the first ten years of the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* and are less common to find in subsequent years. Richard Taylor gives the only full Trinitarian view of holiness. William Greathouse primarily focuses on Christology, and specifically on the atonement as a response to human sin. Mildred Wynkoop, of course, has made significant contributions to holiness with regard to the Holy Spirit. H. Ray Dunning explores holiness in connection with theological anthropology by focusing on the restoration of the image of God. More recently, Dean Blevins has does some work on ecclesial holiness. Let us take a closer look.

For Richard Taylor, holiness properly begins within the doctrine of God. Divine holiness, Taylor insists, is unlike human holiness. Divine holiness is that of the creator and sovereign, while human holiness is that of the creature and servant. He says, "An indefinite difference will forever prevail between the holiness of God and the holiest saint."[13] But what is the precise nature of the difference between divine and human holiness? Taylor suggests that, while holiness is intrinsic to God, it can only be acquired in the human world through relation to God; that is, holiness is never intrinsic to humans. Holiness must invade humans. If God's holiness relates to humans as sovereign, then human holiness is fidelity to the sovereignty of God. Taylor frames this point in its reverse: ". . . the very essence of unholiness in [humanity] is a secret resentment of God's sovereignty."[14]

For Taylor, the doctrine of God establishes the sovereign/servant relationship between God and humanity while Jesus reveals what this relationship looks like. Not only does Jesus reveal the divine holiness, but He also reveals human holiness. Jesus is the "exemplar of holiness" who models what it means to subordinate oneself to the sovereign God.[15] In support of this, Taylor quotes passages of Scripture that show Jesus' self-subjugation, such as John 5:30, which says, "I can of mine own self do nothing."[16] Preaching Christ as human is preaching the holiness of human beings.

The Holy Spirit introduces a paradox in Taylor's view of holiness. While Jesus reveals a human holiness that is obedient, humble, and rever-

[13]Richard S. Taylor, "The Balance in Christian Holiness Between Likeness and Unlikeness to God," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 8, no. 1 (1973): 35.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., 36.

[16]Ibid.

ent, the Holy Spirit nurtures a relationship of intimacy between the divine and human. Thus Taylor concludes, "God by His Spirit will then commune with us, and engender a suitable intimacy which is spiritually satisfying, and at the same time enable us to love in return as a submissive worshiper, never as an equal."[17] Human holiness, as it is unlike God, is rooted in the inequality that is inherent to the Creator/creature relationship. Yet, while this uncrossable gulf maintains a sense of human nothingness, the language of holiness, holiness does not preclude a movement of intimacy from the Holy Spirit towards us.

Richard Taylor is not the only Nazarene to think of holiness Christologically and Peumatologically. William Greathouse uses Gustaf Aulen's Christus Victor motif to argue that Christ has overcome the power of sin to make entire sanctification possible for humans. While Taylor primarily thinks of holiness in Christ as obedience, humility, and reverence, Greathouse primarily views holiness through Christ as victory over sin that is "reproduced in us" through communion with the Holy Spirit.[18] That is, Greathouse's view of holiness is built on its juxtaposition to sin, and positively in Jesus' living out of a life not beguiled by sin.

Mildred Wynkoop does the most extensive work on holiness and the Holy Spirit. Similar to Greathouse, Wynkoop thinks that the Holy Spirit generates the kind of life that Jesus lived, one that overcomes sin. The benefits of Christ's priestly work are made manifest by communion with the Holy Spirit in intensely personal and, subsequently, collective ways. Through communion with the Holy Spirit a person, and community, is reoriented to be ethically responsible. The primary role of the Holy Spirit is to produce "moral freedom and responsibility" in the holy person. It is the Holy Spirit's function to "keep holiness ethically structured" in the individual and among the community of believers.[19] At the most basic level, Wynkoop sees holiness as relationship with God in love. The Holy Spirit works to remove all moral barriers to that relationship.

H. Ray Dunning shifts our focus from Trinitarian models to creation. He argues that holiness is the restoration of the image of God given in creation. The image of God involves "(1) Freedom for God; (2) Freedom for the Other; (3) Freedom from the Earth . . . and (4) Freedom

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[17]Ibid., 37.

[18]William M. Greathouse, "Sanctification and the Christus Victor Motif in Wesleyan Theology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 7, no. 1 (1972): 47-59.

[19]Mildred Wynkoop, "The Communion of the Holy Spirit," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 3, no. 1 (1968): 65.

from Self domination."[20] Dunning focuses most of his argument on the relation of technology and creation. The broken relationship between humanity and God allowed for, and even caused, creation to revolt against humanity. Technology is the means through which humanity attempts to subdue and exploit creation; and ultimately we fail in every attempt. Creation becomes a "witness to the fact that [humanity] is really not 'god' " because it resists even the most ingenious ways for humanity to retake dominion of creation.[21] Creation is a witness to human nothingness. Only God can maintain control of creation. The restoration of the image of God, or holiness, begins by restoring the divine/human relationship. Creation spurs the reversal of this broken relationship by reminding us that God is Lord of everything and we are Lord of nothing. Human holiness includes freedom from creation, such that creation becomes rightly ordered under God's control and the human, subsequently, is freed from creation's fury. The essence of human unholiness, in relation to creation, is the subversion of God's authority over creation. As Richard Taylor said more broadly, "unholiness is a secret resentment of God's sovereignty."[22]

Dean Blevins shifts our view of holiness towards the church and personal testament. He argues that the story of the saints model and embody ecclesial holiness. Persons embody all their relationships within their personal world. By remembering and retelling the stories of the saints, we are participating in the ongoing memory of ecclesial holiness.[23] Ecclesial holiness, for Blevins, mirrors personal holiness and vice-versa. By remembering the stories of the saints, we are describing what it means for the church to be holy.

Soteriological

Holiness in the soteriological mode focuses on how holiness is experienced in the Christian life. We typically use a number of categories to describe how holiness works to bring about the salvation of human persons (i.e., justification, regeneration, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, etc.). Holiness in this mode focuses on the content and structure of holi-

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[20]H. Ray Dunning, "Holiness, Technology and Personhood," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 21, (1986): 176-184.

[21]Ibid., 182.

[22]Taylor, *A Balance in Christian Holiness,* 35.

[23]Dean G. Blevins, "'Holy Church, Holy People': A Wesleyan Exploration in Congregational Holiness and personal Testament," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 2 (2004): 54-73.

ness as it is experienced in the human life. In many ways, human salvation is the underlying impetus behind the exploration of holiness in other modes.

The purest example of holiness in the soteriological mode is Rob Staples' attempt to give a phenomenological analysis of sanctification. He does this by " 'bracketing out' all that is 'transcendent' in the Wesleyan understanding of sanctification and looking simply at that which is experienced subjectively."[24] He critiques later Wesleyans for obscuring the difference between the content and structure of salvation and uses Wesley to reestablish the difference between the two.[25] For Wesley, love is the content of sanctification.[26] The structure of sanctification could be described in a number of ways, such as, the states of humanity, the stages of the Christian life, and the gradual degrees in which God works in the soul.[27] Staples argues that Wesley's primary authority for the content of sanctification was Scripture, while his primary authority for the structure of sanctification was human experience.[28] It is therefore appropriate for Wesleyans to use human subjectivity as the primary authority for understanding the structure of sanctification.

Staples says that personality development contains two "supreme moments in the journey towards selfhood."[29] The first is personal identity in which persons differentiate themselves from the other and discover who they are. Adolescence is an essential time for the first moment of personality development. The second supreme moment is interpersonal responsibility. A person cannot sustain interpersonal relationship without first discovering their self-identity. Conversely, self-identity becomes stale when it is not invested in the other. The first supreme moment is freedom as self and the second is love for the other. While Wesley was not a phe-

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[24]Rob L. Staples, "Sanctification and Selfhood: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Wesleyan Message," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 7, no. 1 (1972): 3.

[25]Mildred Wynkoop warns the holiness preacher against "stressing methodology until the moral, personal and life relevance is almost totally obscured." See Mildred Wynkoop, "A Wesleyan View on Preaching Holiness," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*4, no. 1 (1969), 16-26.

[26]It is interesting to note that Staples published his article with the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* in the same year that Mildred Wynkoop published her groundbreaking book, *A Theology of Love: the Dynamic of Wesleyanism, Second Edition*, 2nd ed. (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2015).

[27]Staples, 5.

[28]Ibid., 6-8.

[29]Ibid., 9.

nomenologist, Staples argues that this phenomenological analysis of personality development supports what Wesley perceived as the common holiness experience of others.[30] That is, Wesley noticed a trend in the way holiness was generally experienced that has later been supported by studies in personality development.

Al Truesdale echoes Rob Staples' point regarding the role of experience in forming the structure of sanctification in the Wesleyan tradition. Truesdale argues that Wesleyanism has shifted from viewing the experience of sanctification as "existentially faithful and diverse" to the tendency to make that experience solidified in one common form. He illustrates this tendency by identifying five prominent examples where Wesleyan theologians have tended to reify the experience of sanctification. Truesdale says that Wesley's method of sanctification was based on how he perceived it being experienced in the majority of those he encountered, but did not intend on discounting experiences contrary to that majority.

Phoebe Palmer has often been uncritically used to support the reification of experience, but Truesdale points out that Phoebe Palmer's "Altar theology" was developed as a response to her own frustrations with being unable to experience sanctification as it had been solidified in her time. As such, she imposes a "theological formula that minimized (if not negated) experience and could not fail to deliver certainty."[31]

Moral

Nazarene scholars in the *Journal* are generally careful not to confuse holiness with morality. Holiness leads to moral living, but a person cannot make themselves holy by doing good. Earlier we explained the ways in which Richard Taylor thinks divine and human holiness are not like each other. He also describes how human holiness is like divine holiness. Human holiness that is like God is that which "issues in right conduct."[32] The ultimate end of holiness is renewed fellowship with God and morality is simply the crude enterprise of restoring that fellowship. If holiness that is unlike God is the "indefinite difference" between God and the holiest saint, then holiness that is like God is that which gives rise to moral goodness. The movement is very important. When holiness invades the human, they are made aware of their creatureliness, nothingness, and

[30]Ibid., 9-10.

[31]Al Truesdale, "Reification of the Experience of Entire Sanctification in the American Holiness Movement," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31, no. 2 (1996): 95-119.

[32]Taylor, *A Balance in Christian Holiness,* 34.

humility in the face of almighty God. From this emptying, the human is then enabled towards right conduct that restores fellowship with God.

Mildred Wynkoop also maintains this unidirectional movement. She argues that the Holy Spirit keeps holiness ethically structured. Holiness is union with God, which for Wynkoop is not a statement at all disconnected from the reality of life. Immoral living can hinder our union with God; it is a "barrier" to divine/human relationship.[33] Moral living is the way that holiness is played out in the human world.

Yet, some scholars have pointed out that there have been cases in our past in which the unidirectional movement from holiness to morality has been confused. Paul Bassett surveys holiness in the Holiness Movement from 1867-1920. He argues that the dominate view of holiness shifted three times because the dominate view of inherited depravity shifted. From the 1860s-1870s the dominate view of inherited sin was "worldliness" and so the dominate view of sanctity became "Christlikeness." By the 1880s, the dominate view of sin was pride so the dominate view of sanctity became submission or obedience. Around the 1900s, the dominate view of sin was lust so the dominate view of sanctity became sexual purity.[34] Bassett's analysis illuminates something very interesting: holiness and morality have often been confused with one another in the Holiness Movement despite the fact that the Nazarene scholars represented in the *Journal* have maintained their distinction.

In the last ten years of the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, a number of Nazarenes have begun to think about holiness in relation to social issues. Diane Leclerc engages holiness with feminism and disability. Leclerc critiques Augustine's view of inherited sin as pride, saying, "In Augustine's texts, the definition of sin as pride cemented women to domestic social rules by demanding a 'virtuous' passivity and willing submission to present 'God-ordained' social stratification."[35] Even Bassett comments on how viewing inherited sin as worldliness, pride, and sexual purity "practically destroyed the commitment of the earlier Wesleyan/Holiness movement to full equality and full rights."[36] Leclerc suggests that idolatry is a better way to view inherited sin. This means that holiness is "entire devo-

[33]Wynkoop, *Communion*, 65.

[34]Bassett, 60-61.

[35]Diane Leclerc, "Gendered Sin? Gendered Holiness? Historical Considerations and Homiletically Implications," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 1 (2004): 72.

[36]Bassett, 61.

tion to God . . . even if it [goes] against social norms or protocols."[37] Holiness does not merely reverse whatever is the prevailing view of moral failings; it is a devotion to God that can reorient prevailing moral views.

By taking a closer look at disability, Leclerc critiques what she calls the ability model of holiness. She says that some disabled people have a "diminished capacity for the kind of holiness we have long espoused."[38] In regard to holiness as relationship, for instance, she says that those with severe autism may not have the same potential for holiness. Severe autism can cause a person to recoil into isolation, not move towards relationship. If holiness is, at its core, relationship with the divine, then some people may inherently be at a disadvantage. Leclerc suggests a different view of holiness. Instead of operating out of an ability model of holiness, she says that holiness is "God's kenotic love for us even in our weakness." Holiness is God's movement towards us. As God moves, we become increasingly aware of our inability, not ability, to be holy.

Cultic

H. Ray Dunning is the only Nazarene in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* that gives substantive attention to holiness in the cultic mode. He critiques a group of Nazarene scholars for misappropriating cultic language in their articulations of holiness. Associating words and phrases like "purity of heart" and "cleansing" to entire sanctification suggests a substantive view of sin that needs to be eradicated. This leaves open the interpretation that Wesleyans believe in " 'Ademic' or 'sinless' perfection."[39]

Dunning suggests that it is not appropriate to confuse purity with holiness. Cultic holiness recognizes two degrees of separation between God and humanity. The first is the separation between the sacred and the profane. Impurity introduces the second degree of separation within the profane world; between purity and impurity. The sacred cannot share the same space with impurity, which means that nothing can be made holy unless it is first made clean, both morally and ritually. "Purity," Dunning claims, "is the prerequisite for sanctification, which is the consecration of whatever or whoever is 'cleansed' by the establishing of a convenient relation with God (which includes the forgiveness of sins [moral impurity]), thus becoming part of the 'community of faith' through 'baptism' (viewed

[37]Leclerc, "Gendered Sin," 64.

[38]Ibid., 68.

[39]H. Ray Dunning, "Sanctification and Purity," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 44, no. 1 (2013): 44.

as a rite of purification)."[40] Entire consecration, therefore, refers to being made pure, both morally and ritually, while sanctification is the making of a holy person, which is a "*status* resulting from a relation to the holy God."[41] Because "the normal state of earthly things is purity, it requires a special act of God to make a thing or person holy."[42] Dunning reiterates the point that we have seen repeatedly: human beings cannot make themselves holy through moral living.

Looking Forward

We've spent the bulk of this presentation surveying Nazarene scholars' views of holiness as represented by their work in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* over the last fifty years. On the whole, this work reflects a rich theological tradition. It may even be an unrivaled tradition! Where else can one find such a sustained conversation about holiness? Through the vehicle of the *Journal*, Nazarene scholars have been articulating a theological vision that is a gift to the Wesleyan tradition as a whole and to the worldwide ecumenical church.

As we have already noted, however, this vision does have a few blind spots. In conclusion, we want to review these blind spots not so that we might diminish the great work that has been done but as a way of making some suggestions about where the conversation might go from here.

The first major blind spot is the relative lack of attentiveness to holiness in the Old Testament. On balance, Nazarene scholars give considerably more weight to the New Testament in their work on holiness. We would like to encourage Nazarene scholars more fully to retrieve and deploy the vision of holiness that is available in the priestly, prophetic, and wisdom traditions of the Old Testament. Among these three traditions, our suspicion is that the Nazarene vision of holiness represents the prophetic tradition that emanates from Deuteronomy with its emphasis on the invading word of God that purifies the people of God and leads to a protectionist ethic, which is to say, an ethic that aims above all to avoid contamination by an impure world. If we are right about this, then the Nazarene vision of holiness can be made even more dynamic by a patient attending to the priestly and wisdom traditions. On the one hand, the priestly tradition can help Nazarenes to develop their vision of holiness in

[40]Ibid., 55.

[41]Ibid., 57. His emphasis.

[42]Dunning, 58, quoting Philip Peter Jenson, *Graded Holiness: a Key to the Priestly Conception of the World (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies)*(Sheffield: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 1992), 48.

its cultic modality. On the other hand, the wisdom tradition will help Nazarenes to wrestle with difficult and troubling aspects of holiness in its theological modality, most notably, the painful and disorienting realities of divine hiddenness and divine silence.

A second blind spot has to do with what we believe are discernible patterns of engagement with the Christian tradition. On balance, Nazarene scholars have tended to privilege Augustine, Wesley, and a few contemporary theologians in the Wesleyan tradition. We believe that the Nazarene vision of holiness can be enhanced by a more patient attending to the early Eastern Orthodox sources and to the medieval tradition in the West. Taken together with a patient attending to the priestly tradition in the Old Testament, a more thorough engagement with these sources should bolster the Nazarene vision of holiness in its cultic modality. Are you seeing a theme here?

Finally, we believe that Nazarenes need further to develop their vision of holiness in connection with the church and sacraments. In our minds, this would flow quite naturally from a patient attending to the priestly tradition in the OT and to early Eastern and medieval Catholic sources. The good news here is that scholars like Brannon Hancock and Brent Peterson are already moving in this direction. Hence, we expect great things in the next fifty years of Nazarene reflection on holiness in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*.

GOD'S PRESENCE ON EARTH AND CHRISTIAN HOLINESS: A READING OF LUKE'S TEMPLE THEOLOGY IN LUKE 3.1—4.13

by

Keith Jagger

In Luke 3.1—4.13 we find three intriguing connections between God's corporeal presence on earth and human holiness. First, Luke extends the Isaiah 40 quote to include the second half of Isaiah 40.5: "all flesh will see the salvation of God." Second, Luke includes unique John the Baptist material, which connects the impending Day of Judgment with fruits worthy of repentance (Luke 3.10-14). These fruits include acts of social holiness (sharing excess goods, contentment with wages, and harmonious social relationships). Third, Luke specifies that, at some point after Jesus's baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in "bodily form" (swmatikw/| ei;dei) (Luke 3.22). Jesus, having seen God's presence corporeally, is equipped by this Holy Spirit to recapitulate Israel's wilderness experience. He proves to be faithful where his ancestors were not. We might say that Jesus, fresh with awareness of God's nearness, was deeply holy in these experiences. One is left wondering what connection, if any, Luke is making between God's corporeal presence (and activity) among his people and human holiness.

It is fairly clear from Jewish and early Christian literature that the ability to be near to God, or to see God, was dependent upon some form of personal or communal holiness.[1] But did the logic work the other way around as well? Does learning to see God, and perceive God rightly, significantly increase the possibility for humans to be holy? If so then what can be said for a correct belief about God's presence among his people? Does believing that God is close—and learning to expect to perceive this closeness—impact the ability for a devotee to be holy? Is Luke suggesting this? This brings up the inverted form of the question as well: does failing to perceive, or to expect to perceive, God's nearness limit one's ability to be holy? Can a wrong symbolic universe that does not account for God's nearness greatly impede holiness?

[1]See e.g. Psalms 15 and 24 and Hebrews 12.14.

Because Luke is utilizing a Jewish-based worldview to offer a depiction of correct belief and behavior, and because Jews made the specific connection between holiness and a proper symbolic universe (marked by remembering God's immanence), this article suggests that, in Luke 3.1–4.13 with its emphases on God's corporeal presence among his people, Luke may be suggesting that there is some direct connection between Christian holiness and believing that God is near. If this is Luke's point, are we then justified in suggesting that a lack of holiness and purity in the Christian community relates somehow with the struggle to remember that God is near (a challenge made more difficult by the continuing influence of the Enlightenment)?

This article will explore these rich connections between human holiness and remembering God's presence by (1) briefly exploring the nature of symbolic universes, then (2) investigating relevant aspects of a Jewish-based temple theology, and (3) finally outlining specific aspects of Luke's narrative in Luke 3.1–4.13 that point to his emphasis on temple, holiness and a sanctioned view of God's presence on earth.

Symbolic Universes

A significant product of human society includes sanctioned depictions of reality. These depictions are contested and include an intertwined web of beliefs and behaviors. Luke seems to be engaging at some level in this social process. He seems to be providing a legitimated structure of belief and behavior for Theophilus.[2] But all claims to map these symbolic universes, that is, to show Luke's exact social intentions, are limited by complexities of human motivation. We cannot know exactly what Luke's motives were in narrating particular portions of his narrative. But we can explore the ways in which he articulates his mindset, including the assumptions embedded in his storyline, answers to basic teleological questions (who are we, where are we, what is wrong with the world and what is the solution, and what time is it?), his suggested praxis and his governing set of symbols.[3] By doing so we can make an educated guess at what his aims and intentions may have been, while ruling out motivations

[2]See Philip Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1987) and Keith M. Jagger, "Worldview and Metamorphosis in Luke 3.1–4.13" (PhD diss., St Mary's College, University of St Andrews, 2016), 45-55.

[3]See N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) xix, 535, p. 47-80 and N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 63-68.

and beliefs that appear to strike a dissonant chord with his larger, imprinted mindset.

In his stand-alone work, *The Sacred Canopy*, Peter Berger describes in greater depth the dialectical process of the creation of society and its maintenance. He discusses in detail the important concept of legitimation. In light of human self-interest, conflicting interests or limitations, socialization safeguards the longevity of any culture's credibility.[4] With a strong emphasis on the nature of reality, legitimation maintains the socially-constructed world and "serves to explain and justify the social order."[5] Legitimation consists of a host of social activities employed at a variety of levels of society in response to emerging discrepancies, dissatisfaction with teleological questions, and anomie, specifically in the face of marginal situations such as dreams, ecstasies, and most powerfully death.[6]

The complementary work of David Horrell and Philip Elser brings these insights into the examination of biblical texts. For Esler, legitimation explains a good deal of Luke's agenda: "Much of what is unique in the theology of Luke-Acts should be attributed to Luke's desire to explain and justify Christianity to his Christian contemporaries; in other words, that his main objective is one of 'legitimation.' "[7] This is especially true in the situation where converts required confidence that their resolution to join the followers of Jesus was well founded.[8] Horrell agrees (in his study of Paul) that the concept of legitimation and symbolic universe (though he prefers the phrase "symbolic order") can helpfully describe a good deal of the textual energies spent by early Christians. For Horrell, the concepts of Berger and Luckmann helpfully validate the constructed nature of any world, enlighten the community-establishing and boundary-making force of such worlds, and provide a structure of seeing belief and behavior in interconnected interplay. As Horrell notes: "Once the whole body of material is seen as a community-forming, meaning-giving, and praxis-shaping 'symbolic universe' then such distinctions become somewhat (though not entirely) artificial."[9]

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[4]Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990, 1967), 27.

[5]Berger, 27.

[6]Berger, 31; 42.

[7]Esler, 16.

[8]Esler, 16.

[9]David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), 84. For the more recent uses and critiques of Berger's concepts, see E. Doyle Mccarthy, *Knowledge as Culture: The New Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1996) and Peter L. Berger et al., *Peter Berger and the Study of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2001).

This point features prominently in N.T. Wright's methodology and resonates with one of Wayne Meeks's important remarks about the corpus of early Christian writings: "Almost without exception, the documents that eventually became the New Testament . . . are concerned with the way converts to the movement ought to behave."[10] This is also true for Luke, and we should therefore approach significant texts like Luke 3.1–4.13 ready to discover a concern for the behavior of Christians in them. In the case of this inquiry, we are examining the specific link between Luke's sanctioned belief in a God who is near and the resulting challenge for followers of Jesus to be holy.

Jewish-Based Temple Theology

In order to understand Luke's emphasis on this point in Luke 3.1–4.13 more clearly, we should see how his projected mindset is (in part) rooted in Jewish-based temple theology. This theology originally made the rich connections between holiness and believing that God is near. If we agree that Luke was adopting and adapting a Jewish-based symbolic universe, it is important to recognize that a Jewish-based temple theology included a major emphasis on God's presence and holiness. In particular, this included the two-way interaction between remembering God and the ability for humans to be holy. We find this connection exposed most significantly in narratives that evoke Jewish purity in light of remembering God.

Recent scholarship on the place of the Jerusalem temple in the symbolic world of Second Temple Judaism paints an illuminating picture of a central Jewish belief that emerges out of a set of Jewish assumptions about reality. This belief included the distinct expectation of perceiving the Most High God corporally in the temple, the Jewish religious and cultural centerpiece.[11] As the geographical and economic barycenter of a whole

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[10]See N.T. Wright, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 245-246. Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 1993), 5. See Meeks's relevant remarks on Matthew in Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (London: SPCK, 1987, 1986), 136: "In the case of Matthew" . . . it is even more evident that the book was composed to reinforce and modify the beliefs and commitment of Christians."

[11]Luke's worldview embraces the national Jewish symbols of Torah and Land as well. While it would be fruitful to study Luke's theology of Torah and Land as central symbol, I am focusing my attention on temple here, signalled in his narrative by a host of language, especially of cult: see Luke 1.5-25, 2.21-51, 4.9, 5.14, 6.4, 10.31, 11.51, 17.14, 19.28–21.38, 22.52, 23.45, 24.53; Acts 3.1–4.31, 5.12-42, 6.1–8.3, 22.17, 23.31-11, 24.6, 24.18, 25.8.

way of life, the temple, as many have suggested, was seen as the actual corporeal intersection between the two halves of God's good creation: heaven and earth. While heaven was understood as God's throne and earth as his footstool (echoing the metonymical language from Is. 66.1), God chose to intensify his presence corporeally in a mountainous locality.

Recent scholarship on this point has been collected and advanced by N. T. Wright in the fourth volume of his Christian Origins and the Question of God series, and I will affirm and adopt this reading here in order to show its relevance for interpreting Luke-Acts.[12] This reading will particularly focus on whether or not Jews in the first century expected any longer to see God in the temple corporeally, or whether they expected to encounter the presence of God with the mind's eye only, or some combination of both. Undergirding this question is a second: if Jews in Luke's era imagined that it was possible to see God corporeally in the temple, did they think that their inability to see God corporeally at present was a signal that God functioned differently in their era? Or was it that God's corporeal presence had yet to return? Above and beyond the apocalyptic literature of the era that included visions of a heavenly throne room (Daniel 7, Enoch 23, Revelation 4) we discover that indeed many first-century Jews did conceive of Mt. Moriah (Zion) and the Jerusalem temple as the geographical locale where heaven and earth met, even if their sin had driven God away, even if their eyes were marred by idolatry, and even if God's corporeal presence had yet to return.

For Wright, the Jerusalem temple in the worldviews of many Second Temple Jews served as the geographical intersection between heaven (the often unseen part of creation) and earth (the visible):

> The point of the Temple—this is where I want to develop considerably further what was said in the earlier volumes—is that it was where heaven and earth met. It was the place where Israel's God, YHWH, had long ago promised to put his name, to make his glory present. . . . It is the place above all where the twin halves of the good creation intersected. When you went up to the Temple, it was not *as though* you were "in heaven." You were actually there.[13]

This articulation of Jewish presupposition expresses what can sometimes remain implicit in statements by other scholars. For example, in a recent chapter by Lawrence H. Schiffman, we find a similar assertion about the

[12]Wright, 96-108.
[13]Wright, 97.

temple: "Even though God is transcendent, there is a place where God is deemed even more available—the Jerusalem Temple."[14] But then in assessing perspectives that he attributes to Qumran, Schiffman can say: "God's presence is not really located in the Temple. . . . Rather, this is the place where God is available to the human being."[15] Or similarly James Palmer quotes Sarna: "The sanctuary is not meant to be understood literally as God's abode . . . rather it functions to make perceptible and tangible the conception of God's immanence, that is, the indwelling of the Divine Presence in the camp of Israel, to which the people may orient their hearts and minds."[16]

This view of Sarna adopts a Philo-like insistence that God can only be perceived by some internal faculty and is challenged by Palmer on two fronts. First, suggests Palmer, it is not clear how the distinction between a "literal" and "non-literal" presence clarifies anything about a Jewish viewpoint, and second, the four-fold warning not to touch the tabernacle in the Exodus material suggests that the author in question did not simply see the tabernacle as merely a sign pointing to some truth that only the mind might perceive. As Palmer suggests: "It is perhaps better to ask in what way a non-material being can dwell in material, spatial-temporal world."[17] This points us in the right direction. And yet Palmer cannot finish his paragraph without engaging in what might appear to be an equivocation: "It therefore seems acceptable to speak of God 'living' in the Tabernacle as long as it is understood that this is metaphorical and does not imply a simplistic understanding of what it might mean to say that God is present."[18] It is true that no Second-Temple Jew thought they might ever perceive an enrobed divine personality sitting in the Holy of Holies. But the belief that God's presence, though often unseen, actually dwelt in the temple, and that upon God's entry to this temple he had produced smoke and thick cloud, was rooted in the conviction that God's presence had intensified here, on Zion, the actual geographical intersection between heaven and earth. As Wright argues: "The Jewish people had

[14]Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Importance of the Temple for Ancient Jews," in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus and the Temple: Textual and Archeological Explorations* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 76.

[15]Schiffman, 77.

[16]Sarna 1996, 158, quoted in James Palmer, "From Tent of Meeting to Temple," in T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (eds.), *Heaven on Earth* (Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 2004), ibid., 14.

[17]Palmer, 14.

[18]Palmer, 14.

believed, throughout the millennium prior to Jesus, that the Jerusalem Temple was the place and the means *par excellence* for this strange and powerful mystery."[19]

Wright bases this claim convincingly upon three related elements of a Second-Temple worldview: (1) the content of the controlling Jewish metanarrative, (2) the substance of Jewish prayer-psalms, and (3) the underlying assumption about creation, found throughout ancient Jewish literature, which couples heaven and earth. He furthermore locates this understanding of the temple within Jewish texts in the confluence of three related motifs: (1) Temple and Cosmos, (2) Temple and King, and (3) Temple and Return. It appears that with the combination of the creation account in Genesis 2 and 3, which includes not just a garden but a temple grove where God walked in the cool of the day, Jacob's enigmatic vision in Genesis 28, the corporeal arrival of God's glory to Solomon's temple with smoke, the removal of this presence in Ezekiel, and the unfulfilled promises of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, Wright finds in the worldview of Second Temple Jews a belief that the temple was meant to epitomize the presence of God in the Jerusalem temple as the corporeal intersection between heaven and earth.[20]

A major strand of belief in this theology includes the challenge for Israel to remember God's nearness and so, in proper fear and trembling, to be holy. In her recent monograph *Memory and Covenant: The Role of Israel's and God's Memory in Sustaining the Deuteronomic and Priestly Covenants,* Barat Ellman argues that the main traditions that undergird the Pentateuch recognize a distinct relationship between memory, worldview, and covenantal faithfulness. The Pentateuch "offers a way of life to restore as closely as possible the primeval ideal, a way of life in which memory is essential."[21] Ellman utilizes a concept of memory that goes beyond a simply fondness about an age gone by. For her, memory legitimates current and future socio-cultural realities:

> Both the deuteronomic and priestly traditions situate memory's covenantal importance in terms of a divinely authorized world-

[19]Wright, 97.

[20]For a more detailed discussion of the primary source evidence, see Wright, 90-108 and Keith M. Jagger, "Worldview and Metamorphosis in Luke 3.1–4.13" (PhD diss., St. Mary's College, University of St Andrews, 2016), 45-55.

[21]Barat Ellman, *Memory and Covenant: The Role of Israel's and God's Memory in Sustaining the Deuteronomic and Priestly Covenants* (Emerging Scholars; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 6.

> view. . . . Put differently, how each tradition understands Israel's covenant with God and how each conceptualizes memory undergirds the religious programs imagined by D and P.[22]

Thus Ellman argues that the Pentateuch presents the remembrance of God's activity on earth as the "most instrumental guarantee of covenantal fidelity."[23] Remembering God and therefore what this God has done will directly impact holiness, because a belief in what this same God can do is the present legitimates the call to holiness. I am taking Ellman's point and suggesting that a significant element of this call to remember God's activity includes believing that God is near and therefore living as if He were.

Ellman utilizes the two creation narratives to illustrate her point. She shows how each tradition (D and P, respectively) articulates a different role of memory for covenant faithfulness.[24] She also outlines the mnemonic praxis envisaged by each tradition, which makes connections between memory, worldview, and holiness.[25] The priestly tradition's creation story, Genesis 1.1–2.4 and chapters 6–9, claim Ellman, offers a sanctioned view of reality that emphasizes creation and re-creation, culminating in a rainbow that keeps God mindful of His covenant. The deuteronomic tradition of Genesis 2.5–3.24 emphasizes rather the corporeal presence of God: "He walked with them in the cool of the day" followed by the entrance of death to the world by the temptation and corruption of Israel's knowledge.

Further explaining these differences, Ellman argues that the priestly tradition and the post-exilic holiness school strove to remind God of his covenant through cultic purity. But the priestly tradition also emphasized Israel's memory:

> Israel's memory is also activated by the senses, but what is to be remembered is singular experience [Passover, Sinai, and Israel's failure in the Wilderness] or specific duty [circumcision and Sabbath]. Memory . . . motivates or constrains certain behavior in the moment.[26]

The priestly writer's main motivation seems to be to warn against Israel's poor memory, which made them long for their former life in Israel: "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt

[22]Ellman, 6.
[23]Ellman, 4.
[24]Ellman, 41, 46.
[25]Ellman, 30.
[26]Ellman, 123.

for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons . . ." (Numbers 11.4-5). This longing was a lapse in memory of God's presence among them and of His provision for them. They forgot and were tempted to be unfaithful to God. The institution of the Passover festival (Exodus 12) was meant to ward off this type of faithlessness: "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you . . . for on this very day I brought your companies out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12.14, 17). Inherent in this festival is the stress that Israel must remember that God was once near to them and is still near in the present day. Israel should therefore be holy. Circumcision and Sabbath serviced similar goals, especially when the priestly ordinances ceased during exile.[27]

The deuteronomic tradition, on the other hand, stressed the importance of remembering God, suggests Ellman, in a different way. In light of the temptation in Eden, Israel is to learn to safeguard their knowledge: "If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or daughter or the wife of your bosom . . . entices you . . . saying, 'Let us go after and serve other gods. . . . Do not listen to him or look softly upon him . . ." (Deut. 13.4, 9).[28] Moses's initial speech solidifies this program of memory that services holiness,

> So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe. . . . For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? (Deut. 4.1, 7).

D's ensuing religious program insists on the recitation of the law and the practice of festivals of remembrance. As Ellman suggests: "What is true for Moses' audience is true for the exiles from Judah and for the audience of this book, including present-day readers. All parties are brought into the covenant and made responsible for its maintenance through the exercise of memory."[29] Thus the priestly and deuteronomic traditions stress remembering not only the holiness required to see God, but also the role of remembering God for the sake of holiness and fidelity. This includes remembering that God was not only near to Jewish ancients, but also is close to God's sanctified people, among whom He may choose to dwell.

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[27]Ellman, 147-50.
[28]Ellman, 78.
[29]Ellman, 104.

A Jewish-based temple theology stresses the two-way interaction between heaven and earth, and locates God's presence among a people who are meant to reflect God's holiness. It is no wonder that some Jewish traditions stress the importance of remembering God's corporeal presence and activity among His people. The priestly tradition seems to stress the importance of remembering God's presence throughout the Exodus. The Deuteronomic tradition stresses the importance of safeguarding Israel's knowledge and therefore preventing the temptation for worshipping the wrong God. Influences from both of these traditions, set within a first-century Jewish-based temple theology seem to suggest that remembering the nearness of God has something to Israel's ability to be a sanctified people who can uphold the covenant.

Luke 3.1–4.13

This temple tradition of expecting God's nearness and remembering his activity among his people in ages past, feeds directly into Luke's own temple ideology, which can be found in Luke 3.1–4.13. We find that Jesus's own initiation experiences, especially his desert temptation, recapitulate Israel's exodus and wilderness experience, framed in light of God's nearness to his people.

Throughout Luke-Acts, Luke utilizes a marked temple theology. He wants his readers and hearers to perceive and behave in accordance with God's corporeal presence on earth in the same way as the Jewish ancients had, though Luke believes that this divine presence now is intensified in the Christian community.[30] Implicit in this theology is the insistence that God is near to his people and cares significantly about their covenantal holiness. Given the apparent meeting of heaven and earth in Luke 3.21-22, and given Luke's introduction to this section, with the Jerusalem priesthood set in Tiberius's empire and Jesus final temptation on the pinnacle of the temple, can it be that this narrative in Luke 3.1–4.13 operates upon Luke's temple theme as well? If so, what reasons present themselves? The most substantial reason includes the distinct presence of the triple temple motifs of cosmos, kingship, and return.

The basic reason to see a foundational temple theme emerging here includes the combined and evocative use of the cosmos, kingship, and eschatology. The whole scene takes place near or within the wilderness and the Jordan River: "The word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness" (Luke 3.2) and stresses God's creative activity (Luke 3.38).

[30]For a detailed analysis of Luke's temple ideology, see Jagger 2016.

Jesus, contends Luke, was also temped in the wilderness for forty days (Luke 4.1). This setting makes a distinct connection with the elements of Exodus, a significant point in the long story that undergirds a Jewish based temple theology: Exodus, tabernacle, kingship, and temple. If the construction of the first temple in the reign of Solomon remains the most concrete symbol of God's glory dwelling among his people (see Stephen's speech in Acts 7, for example), the more foundational narrative of God's presence within the Jewish nation is preserved in the stories of the wilderness tabernacle. After spending forty days and forty nights upon a clouded mountain, which concealed God's glory (suggests the author of Exodus) God instructed Moses to lead the Israelites in a sacrificial offering and to "have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them."[31] The Israelites do so, and God's glory descends upon them: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle . . . For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, before the eyes of all the house of Israel at each stage of their journey" (Exodus 40.34-38). Jesus's forty days in the desert in 4.1-13 and John's ministry in the wilderness and creation, therefore, evoke the Exodus narrative and, in great part, God's direct corporeal presence dwelling in the tabernacle among the people of Israel.

Luke also places an emphasis on Jesus as David's son. From the eighth century BCE until Jesus's time, the temple had been bound up with kingship, and not least with the Herodians. We should pay close attention therefore to the link between Herod Antipas and the people wondering if John "was the Christ." Jesus arrives on the scene, and as Luke contends in his genealogy, this Jewish Son of God is David's heir (Luke 3.31). Even the satan acknowledges Jesus as such (Luke 4.3, 9). All of this is set in the reign of the false king, Tiberius (Luke 3.2). The sonship theme in this section contributes to the overall awareness that Luke is utilizing a Jewish-based temple theology, which places a major stress on God's corporeal presence among His people.

Finally, Luke's extension of the Isaiah 40 quote and other predictions of God's return reveal an interest in the eschaton. Luke emphasizes God's corporeal presence among the Christian community, drawn out by his lengthening of the Isaiah 40 quote in order to highlight God's corporeal

[31]Exodus 25.8 Cf. Deut. 8.3. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke 1-9* (Anchor Bible; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1981), 512 and Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 192 for similar connections between the narrative in 3.1–4.13 and the Exodus story.

activity on earth: "And all flesh will see the salvation of God" (Isaiah 40.5; Luke 3.6).[32] God's activity is therefore corporeal both in Isaiah's and Luke's mind. All flesh will see it. Luke wants his readers and hearers to perceive God's salvific activity on earth corporeally. It appears odd to this line of thought that Luke does not transmit Isaiah's emphasis on God's corporeal presence on earth as well as God's activity. Why in extending his quote did Luke skip over the more direct phrase: "All will see the glory of the Lord" (Isaiah 40.5)?[33] The transfiguration served as the fulfilment of Isaiah 40.5, with light and smoke on a mountain, and God blessing his Son. God's glory had already appeared to shepherds (2.1-20) and God's spirit inspired Zechariah and then Simon in the temple precincts (2.27). These mentions of God's glory and the Holy Spirit here represent early articulations of Luke's temple theology to be fully exposed in the narrative later (especially in Acts 2). What we have here is a delay in Luke's narrative. Luke would persuade his readers to understand Jesus as the one who ushered in God's glory *more* fully in his transfiguration and passion in Jerusalem and, then, in his continued presence in the community in Acts. This progressive unveiling of his temple motif makes best sense of such an obvious omission in light of the striking statements about God's glory appearing elsewhere in his narrative (especially in Luke's statements in the triumphal entry and at the start of Acts). Moreover, if we pair Luke's use of Isaiah 40 with similar statements made by the Qumran community, with its central polemic against the Jerusalem temple,[34] we can confirm that temple theology is present and active in these verses. If temple theology has any significance for Luke, it is about God's corporeal presence on earth. Cosmos, Jewish royalty, and eschatology work together here to demonstrate clearly Luke's Jewish-based temple theology at work.

This present article explores the central connections made between God's presence among his people and human holiness, rooted in Luke's temple theology. It has already been established that Luke is utilizing his temple theology here, but what is he saying about believing that God is near and human holiness? Is he suggesting at all that remembering God's nearness aids holiness? When we get to Luke 3.1–4.13, the logic seems to claim that God is coming back for judgment, and his new creation is

[32]Mark and Matthew do not extend the quote to this phrase.

[33]François Bovon, *Luke, 1. A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50*, trans. Christine M. Thomas (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 119, suggests that "the reason for which Luke omits the words kai. vfqh,setai h` do,xa kuri,ou ("and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed") from Isaiah 40.5 is a riddle."

[34]See Temple Scroll, 1QS 8.13 and 4Q259 3:4.

about to begin. Therefore the injunction is to prepare your hearts, and straighten out your lives. This God will require his followers to be holy, and Jesus becomes the example *par excellence*. But is Luke using this section to legitimate Christianity by suggesting as well that the holiness that God wants for his people is aided by remembering His nearness?

By extending the Isaiah 40 quote to include, "all flesh will see the salvation of God," Luke may be making an important statement. Not only must people be holy in order to see God's salvation, but remembering God's great acts—and the implicit awareness that he is near to his people —will aid in social holiness. That the word of God comes to John in the desert who is the voice calling in the desert, puts us into a narrative setting (within the Isaianic framework) that recalls Israel's idolatrous forgetfulness, *and* God's merciful return. The synoptics present John's eschatological preaching with a quote from Isaiah, which itself stresses God's imminent return when all flesh, made holy, will finally see what had been hitherto invisible: the salvation of God. What is important here is that his call to repentance represents his stress on holiness aided by remembering that God is currently present and expects his people to be holy. Of what does this repentance consist? First, in response to the crowds, the Baptist suggests that if one has excess clothing or food, they should give it to one who lacks basic necessities. Second, tax collectors should not collect more than what they are supposed to. Finally, soldiers should not intimidate people or abuse their power to the disadvantage of others.[35] Holiness in this light, aided by remembering God's presence among his people, includes responding to the needs of others.[36] The axe lying at the root of the trees (Luke 3.8), a metaphorical reference to the coming of God's judgment, awakens those who came to be baptized by John to God's presence, which will arrive within a short time (13 verses later). John acknowledges that those who came to him had forgotten God and invites them to remember Him, evidenced by a holy reverence for others. While John does not make the connection explicit, the underlying assumption may be that, by remembering that God is near, holiness is aided.

This assertion is strengthened when we see how Luke stresses Jesus as the faithful Israelite in the wilderness. Luke seems to be casting Jesus as the one who does not grumble when hungry (Numbers 11), who is not tempted to worship other Gods (Deut. 8), and who will not test God

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[35]See Bovon, 125. C.f. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994)n313: "John commands the soldiers not to use strong-arm tactics to gain financial advantage."

[36]See Bock 1994, 309. Cf. Green, 178.

(Deut. 6). But, by ordering his account with Jesus's culminating temptation at the temple, Luke once again places an emphasis on his temple ideology. After John warns of God's impending arrival, Luke stresses that His presence is already near. God's spirit descends upon Jesus corporeally, that is visibly (Luke 3.22).[37] It is no coincidence that Luke precedes by placing the genealogy here and listing ancestors all the way back to the first human who walked with God in the cool of the day. Read in light of the final temptation, with Jesus at the temple, Luke gives us a Jesus who is in touch with the presence of the Father, whose temptations culminate in the place of God's dwelling, a faithful heir to the long line of people who were challenged to remember God.

Luke's narrative about Jesus's temptation, coupled with the baptism scene, naturally evokes the Exodus narrative. In this version, Luke gives us an empowered Jesus, fresh off from a corporeal experience with God. He is now ready to complete the desert trials in a demonstration of personal holiness. As Green argues: "Luke seems deliberately to draw together a repertoire of elements from scriptural narration of and reflection on Israel's wilderness wanderings."[38] Special emphasis should therefore be placed on the deuteronomic echoes, particularly the central command to remember God: "Take care that you do not forget the LORD your God, by failing to keep his commandments" (Deut. 8.11). The difference seems to be that Jesus remembers God's presence and succeeds where the forgetful Israelites failed.

Confidence in God's nearness results in the ability to remain devoted purely to God and not God's simply to God's provisions. Awareness of God's presence deflects the temptation to exercise personal power tactics and engage in unfaithfulness. Remembering God's closeness relaxes the adherent into trust in God even when God may not seem present. A holy devotee will not test God when God's ways are strange or when one's devotion comes under ridicule. Here Luke portrays a personal holiness marked by faithfulness and steadfastness. The empowerment of Jesus represents, among other things, Jesus's faithful remembrance of God's presence and the effectiveness of a clarified mindset in the process of obedience. In this case, Luke portrays this holiness as both an active reverence for other humans (based in the contents of John's preaching) and faithfulness to God and God's ways even in spite of ridicule (based in the contents of the temptation narrative).

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[37]For a fuller discussion on the unique language of corporeality in Luke's rendition of Jesus's baptism scene, see Jagger 2016.

[38]Green, 192.

When asked what they should do about God's impending arrival, John told those seeking baptism to straighten out their lives. When Jesus shows humanity how to resist the powers of evil and death, he evidences a profound faithfulness. But how is this social and personal holiness achieved? How is a believer inspired to live out this life of sharing goods, contentment, and relational peace in the face of temptations to self-sufficiency, abuse of power, and demands to prove oneself to the world? Luke seems to suggest, along with the writers of the Pentateuch, that one must remember God. Remember that God was near to his people in ancient times, and remember that God is near now.

Do not be like those who forget that God is near as the Psalmist illustrates: "In the pride of their countenance the wicked say, 'God will not seek it out'; all their thoughts are, 'There is no God' . . . They think in their heart, 'God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it' " (Psalm 10.4, 10-11).

Conclusion

This article has explored the rich connections between God's presence on earth and Christian holiness. In particular, I have pondered whether any lack of holiness and purity in the Christian community relates significantly with the struggle to remember that God is near (a challenge exasperated by the ongoing impact of the Enlightenment). By exploring the nature of God's presence at Jesus's baptism and temptation in Luke 3.1–4.13, I have suggested that, when we understand this section of Luke's gospel as contextualized articulations of Jewish-based temple theology, we will recover both (1) Luke's theology of God's presence on earth as well as (2) a greater appreciation of how God's nearness impacts the Christian life. We see that John the Baptist's ethical teachings against greed and the misuse of power and money, then, more carefully connect with Jesus's threefold temptation. Jesus was sacrificial and humble, content and faithful, and meek and obedient during his Spirit-led wilderness testing. We might say that Jesus was deeply holy in these experiences.

When we embrace Luke's theology of God's presence on earth, we see afresh the sacredness of life around us, that is, God's presence that is ever near. Themes of inspiration, empowerment, divine delight, obedience, and righteousness rush together here where God reveled His presence corporeally to Jesus, the lodestar of Christian holiness. Embracing God's nearness may help us to live more receptive to the Holy Spirit, as if the ethical requirements of the Christian life and the gospel inhabit our very core. This is not to say that remembering the nearness of God pro-

duces holiness. If this were the case, then the primal couple surely would not have sinned against a God who walked with them in the cool of the garden's daytime. If remembering or experiencing God's nearness produced holiness automatically, the wilderness generation would never have grumbled, and certainly Peter, James, and John would not have defected as they did in the end of Jesus's ministry, having had been within him on the mount of transfiguration. Remembering God's nearness does not automatically produce people who walk blamelessly, speak truth from their hearts, do no evil to their friends, take reproach against a neighbor, despise the wicked, stand by their oath even when it hurts, do not lend at interest, take no bribe against the innocent, have clean hands and a pure heart, lift up their souls to what is false, or swear deceitfully.[39] But remembering God and his nearness seems to be important in the process of sanctification. Remembering the presence of God, the reality to which the Jerusalem temple points and participates in, does not produce holiness *de facto*. This should be fairly self-evident. But those who base their life upon the nearness of God will find it instrumental in the journey towards holiness to God and others. Luke seems to agree.

[39]See Psalms 15 and 24.

A SENT AND SANCTIFIED COMMUNITY: MISSIONAL HOLINESS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

by

Dean Flemming

The Wesleyan-holiness tradition has sometimes wrestled with an uneasy relationship between holiness and mission. At times, in our passion to be separate *from* the world, we have stunted our mission *to* the world. On a practical level, this could involve withdrawing from the world into a safe house of individual piety, or even justifying our lack of a missional presence ("We're small, but we're holy!"). It is also possible to become so caught up in debating the fine points of our Wesleyan doctrine that we neglect Wesley's passion to bring people out of darkness into the light of the gospel.

At other times, in an effort to be missional, we have sacrificed our theological identity. Many Wesleyan-holiness pastors and leaders, for example, became uncritically enamored with "church growth" thinking in the 1970s and '80s. As part of that emphasis, the "homogeneous unit principle" advocated planting congregations comprised essentially of a single cultural, socio-economic, or ethnic group. Seeking to become missionally successful, we ignored the social implications of our holiness theology. More recently, some Christians, in the name of being "missional," have bent over so far in their attempts to identify with non-Christian people that they are in danger of blurring any lines of contrast between the church and the world.

This paper contends that the Gospel of John offers a rich resource for exploring the relationship between holiness and mission. Although the strict language of holiness is not abundant in John, the *notion* courses through the Gospel's veins. I argue first that mission in John is anchored in the sending love of the Triune God. I then explore how the connection between holiness and mission in Jesus' own ministry shapes the mission of the church. Third, I examine John's approach to the tension inherent in a holy church's relationship to an unsympathetic world. I conclude with some reflections on missional holiness from John for the Wesleyan-holiness tradition.[1]

[1]This paper draws significantly from a chapter entitled, "Sent into the World: Mission in John," in Dean Flemming, *Why Mission?* (Nashville: Abingdon, forthcoming).

The Sending Love of God

Embodying the divine mission. The Gospel of John pictures God as a missionary God. Like the motion of breathing out and breathing in, God sends his Son in love to the world and, in turn, draws people back to himself. John gives us a thumbnail sketch of the mission of God in the celebrated statement in chapter 3: (e.g., Jn 3:17, 34; 4:34; 5:23-24, 30, 36-38).[2] Jesus' mission is totally dependent on the loving, sending Father and the Son refracts all glory to the one who sent him. Jesus does the Father's will, completes the Father's work, speaks the Father's words and reveals the Father's heart.

Jesus, then, comes into the world as the incarnate presence of the loving, seeking God. At one point, Jesus shouts to a largely skeptical audience, In John's Gospel, Jesus doesn't simply *proclaim* a message; he *is* the message.[3] "*I am* the way, the truth and the life," Jesus declares. "No one comes to the Father except through me. If you have really known me, you will also know the Father" (Jn 14:6-7a, italics added). Mission in John is therefore profoundly christological. Jesus himself *is* the mission of God.

At the same time, John's understanding of mission is Trinitarian. The Spirit, the *Paraclete*, has a mission, just as do the Father and the Son.[4] We see this most clearly in Jesus' Farewell Discourse in the second half of the Gospel. Here the Father sends the Advocate in Jesus' name to teach believers, to remind them of Jesus' words (Jn 14:26), and to guide them into all truth (16:13), particularly the truth of what God has done in Jesus (14:6). As a result, the Paraclete brings glory, not to himself, but to Jesus (16:12-15).

The Spirit's ministry of guidance and teaching, however, is not merely for the sake of the Christian community. Part of the Spirit's role in the world is to bear witness to Jesus and to empower Jesus' followers for witness: The Father, in love, sends the Son, and the Son sends the Spirit from the Father to bear witness to Jesus through his followers (15:26-27; cf. 14:26). "Sending" is inherent to the life of the Trinity.

Sending Love. If John were asked, "What motivates the mission of God that is embodied in Jesus?" his answer would surely be: *divine love.*

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[2]See Craig S. Keener, "Sent Like Jesus: Johannine Missiology (John 20:21-22)," *Asian Pentecostal Journal of Theology* 12 (2009): 22-24.

[3]See Jose Comblin, *Sent from the Father: Meditations on the Fourth Gospel*, trans. Carl Kabat (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979), 2-3.

[4]See Mortimer Arias and Alan Johnston, *The Great Commission: Biblical Models for Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 84.

"For God so loved the world" (Jn 3:16) he sent the Son to redeem it. John pictures divine love as both the motive and the character of Jesus' mission.[5] That mission is rooted in the relationship of love and intimacy that the Father shares with the Son. Jesus makes reference to that mutual love in his prayer for his followers: "Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me *because you loved me before the foundation of the world*" (Jn 17:24; italics added).

In his incarnation, Jesus gives the loving heart of the Father skin, blood, and bones. In the first half of the Gospel, that love touches a varied cast of characters and a whole range of human needs. Jesus cares for the lowly and the great, insiders like religious leaders and royal officials, and, especially, outsiders like despised Samaritans, scorned sinners, low status women, hungry crowds, excluded Gentiles, and the physically disabled—the lame and the blind. His love reaches across barriers of social status, gender, ethnicity, belief, and moral reputation.[6]

Jesus' approach to people was one of invitation, never coercion. Two phrases sum up that attitude: "Come and see," and "Follow me." At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, two disciples of John the Baptist, attracted by what John testified about him, and no doubt rather curious, begin to follow Jesus. When they ask Jesus where he is staying, he invites them to "Come and see" for themselves (Jn 1:39). They stay with him the rest of the day, and as a result of that relational encounter, become convinced he is the Messiah (1:41). In turn, they bring others to Jesus (1:42).

It is noteworthy that the second phrase appears both at the beginning and end of the Gospel, like a pair of bookends. In chapter one, Jesus seeks out Philip and invites him, "Follow me" (Jn 1:43). Then, in the Gospel's epilogue, Jesus twice tells Peter to follow him (21:19, 22). This comes hard on the heels of Jesus' restoration of Peter, the "serial denier," who forsook Jesus when it mattered most. In John, "Follow me" serves as an invitation to remain with Jesus in a long-term, intimate, loving relationship (see 15:1-17).

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[5]Contrary to some interpretations, John uses the two Greek verbs *agapao* and *phileo* interchangeably to express the Father's love for Jesus, Jesus' love for the Father, Jesus love for people, etc., as most recent commenters agree. See, e.g., Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 517-18.

[6]Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 334.

John's portrait of God's missional love embodied in Jesus reaches a climax in the second half of the Gospel, chapters 13-21. With the cross looming before him, Jesus turns his focus to his own disciple community, whom he loves "to the end" (Jn 13:1). Jesus displays that love in a kind of "acted parable" in chapter 13 (13:4-17). Discarding his robes, he gets down on the floor like a lowly slave and washes his disciples' filthy feet, giving them an example to follow (13:14-16). Yet it is only in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross that we see a wide-screen picture of what "loving to the end" entails.[7] John interprets the meaning of Jesus' death as an act of self-giving love. Jesus is the good shepherd who knows his flock intimately and voluntarily lays down his life for them (10:11-18). There is no greater love, Jesus insists, "than to give up one's life for one's friends" (15:13). Craig Keener reflects that, as sinful people "pounded the nails in the hands of God's own Son, he was crying, 'I love you! I love you! I love you!' "[8] For John, mission is cruciform. The cross proclaims that God accomplishes his purpose for the world through seeking, self-sacrificing love.

Yet although Jesus loves his disciples "to the end" in the cross (Jn 13:1), what happens at Golgotha does not *end* Jesus' loving mission. Following his resurrection, Jesus continues to extend love to those in need. He offers words of comfort to a distraught Mary (20:11-17), peace and empowerment for disciples locked behind doors of fear (20:19-21), and full restoration in response to Peter's shameful denial (21:15-19).[9]

Divine love, then, is the hallmark of the *missio Dei* in the fourth Gospel. As I summarized elsewhere,

> Jesus' whole mission is a concrete expression of the loving character of God. For John, Jesus' words and works, his witness and his acts of service, his dwelling among us and his dying for us, are all seamlessly woven together as manifestations of divine love.[10]

That same self-giving love defines the mission of *God's people* in John. It is to that mission we now turn.

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[7]The language of "to the end" (*eis telos*) in Jn 13:1 appears once again in verbal form in Jesus' cry from the cross in 19:30, "It is finished" (*tetelestai*). This forms an inclusion, which linguistically binds Jesus' acted parable in the upper room to his act of dying for others on the cross.

[8]Keener, "Sent Like Jesus," 26.

[9]See Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 304.

[10]Dean Flemming, *Recovering the Full Mission of God: A Biblical Perspective on Being, Doing and Telling* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 118.

Participating in God's Loving Mission

Anchored in the Trinity. Both holiness and mission in the Fourth Gospel flow out of the relationship of mutuality, love and unity within the Triune God. Jesus makes this abundantly clear in his prayer of consecration for his followers in John 17. Jesus asks the "Holy Father" to protect his followers "so that they may be one as we are one" (Jn 17:11; cf. 17:22). He draws the church into the same loving fellowship shared within the Trinity: "I made your name known to them and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them" (17:26).

But the love relationship in the Trinity is not inwardly focused; instead, it leans outward.[11] In a remarkable passage, Jesus prays for all believers to come (see Jn 17:20),

> that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, *so that the world may believe that you have sent me*. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, s*o that the world may know that you have sent me* and have loved them even as you have loved me. (Jn 17:21-23, italics added)

Here Jesus includes the church in the very loving communion that exists between the Father and the Son. It is out of the community's union with Christ, who is in the Father, that its oneness flows. *Why* does Jesus ask that the church might be one? So that the world may recognize the loving, sending heart of God, now embodied in his followers. The goal of the church's oneness is mission. In the midst of a fragmented, alienated, and divided world (See Jn 7:43; 9:16), the unity of Christ's church offers a compelling witness to the healing, reconciling love of God in Christ, a love that is concretely visible in the way God's people treat one another.[12]

Loving as Jesus Loves. In John, missional unity is married to missional love. In the discourse that precedes Jesus' prayer of consecration in John 17, Jesus urges his disciples to love one another in the same way that he has loved them (Jn 13:34). What is truly new about this "new commandment" is surely that the disciples' mutual love is to be patterned after Jesus' own love for them and flows out of it. Within the narrative, Jesus'

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[11]Kent Brower, *Holiness in the Gospels* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 2005), 79-80.

[12]See J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 153.

companions have just witnessed an earthy and unforgettable demonstration of that love in Jesus' act of washing his disciples' grimy feet (13:3-17). But that act foreshadows something even greater, Jesus ultimate expression of self-giving love on the cross. Jesus likewise challenges his followers to live out their love for one another by laying down their lives for others (15:12-13).

The community's mutual love, however, is not an end in itself. Jesus declares: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). The same love that Jesus will soon demonstrate through his nailed-pierced hands and feet, when shared among Christ's followers, "becomes the trademark and credential of the missionary community."[13] Then and now, such cruciform love causes a self-absorbed world to sit up and take notice. As Richard A. Burridge observes, love for others "has remained the acid test, whether it is said admiringly about Christian caring in practice, or sarcastically in frustration at the church's inner wranglings."[14]

The community's life of love and unity, suggests Ross Hastings, offers "the New Testament's most neglected evangelistic strategy."[15] The church is missional when, and only when, it truly *is* the church, a church indwelt by the Father, Son, and Spirit, a church whose oneness and uncommon love visibly demonstrates the embracing love of God before a watching world. The church's mutual love, above all else, showcases the reality and the character of God's mission in Jesus. Drawing on John's language, Craig Keener concludes, "The God of grace and truth, the God who revealed his glory in the cross, makes that message believable to the world when they see the church believing and living the heart of God."[16]

Sharing Jesus' Mission. John's understanding of mission reaches a climax in the post-resurrection narrative:

> When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the

[13]Arias and Johnston, *Great Commission*, 93.

[14]Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 328.

[15]Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-evangelizing the West* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 284-85.

[16]Keener, "Sent Like Jesus," 44.

> Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (Jn 20:19-23)

In their narrative setting, these words address a frightened band of disciples cowering inside a locked chamber. But from John's perspective, Jesus speaks as the risen Lord of the church.[17] For our purposes, three implications for the church's participation in God's mission stand out.[18]

First, we again see the church's mission flowing out of the life and character of God in Trinity. Jesus, who was sent by the Father, now becomes the sender. And as the crucified and risen one, still bearing the wounds of the cross (Jn 20:20), he imparts the Holy Spirit to them (Jn 20:22). In this passage, the gift of the Spirit remains the key element of continuity between Jesus' commission and the church's mission of forgiving and retaining sins.

Crucially, Jesus bestows the Spirit by *breathing* on his disciples. This act recalls God's initial breath of life into humanity in creation (Gen 2:7). "Now," explains N. T. Wright, "in the new creation, the restoring life of God is breathed out through Jesus, making new people of the disciples, and, through them, offering this new life to the world."[19] The church, then, endowed with the Spirit, participates in the life-giving mission of the Triune God.

Second, the mission of God's people is defined above all by who they *are* in relation to Jesus, more so than by what they do or say. The mission of Jesus and that of his followers are sewn together: "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you" (Jn 20:21). John's Gospel lacks any account of Jesus sending out his disciples to preach and heal on their own, such as we find in the Synoptics (see Mt 10:1-42; Mk 6:1-6; Lk 9:1-6). For John, the church's "sent-ness" is a sharing in and continuation of *Jesus*' sentness.[20] Disciples who share Jesus' life, abiding in him, also share his mis-

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[17]In John, Jesus' disciples frequently fulfill a paradigmatic role, representing the church to come. More explicitly than the other Gospels, John shows interest in those who will believe in Jesus through their message (Jn 17:20). Consequently, although their functions may not be identical, any attempt to separate the mission of Jesus' original disciples and that of his disciples to follow would amount to an artificial distinction.

[18]For an excellent reflection on the implications of John 20:19-23 for Christian mission, see Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church.*

[19]N. T. Wright, *John for Everyone, Part 2* (London: SPCK, 2002), 150.

[20]Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, 276.

sion of bearing fruit (Jn 15:1-8). In John 17:18, which parallels John 20:21, Jesus makes it explicit that he sends his followers into the *world,* just as he was sent into the world. As Andreas Kōstenberger wisely comments, for John, the church not only *represents* Jesus in the world; it *represents* him; Christ is present in the church's mission by the Spirit.[21]

This does not mean that the church's mission is identical to that of Jesus. Jesus is uniquely the Word made flesh, who comes into the world to take away its sin (Jn 1:14, 29). There are aspects of Jesus redemptive mission that we cannot imitate; we can only bear witness to them. Nevertheless, God's people do, in a real sense, participate in Jesus' own mission by virtue of their relationship with him. The Fourth Gospel thereby invites the church "to see itself more consciously in relation to the mission of Jesus."[22] From John's perspective, if the church is rightly related to Jesus, it will *be* missional. Mission, in all of its varied and concrete forms, flows out of *relationship*.

Third, Jesus twice "passes the peace" to his frightened followers (Jn 20:19, 21; cf. 14:27; 16:33). Here "peace" means more than a conventional greeting or merely a calm state of mind. It represents God's comprehensive *shalom*, which, in the context, signifies forgiveness of their failures, a restored relationship, and freedom from fear of the hostility of others. Ultimately, it signals the wholeness and the harmony associated with God's coming kingdom. Jesus' followers, however, not only *experience* God's *shalom*; they also give it away. Jesus' second bestowal of peace introduces his commission to participate in his own sending mission (Jn 20:21). What is more, he promises that, by the Spirit, they will extend the *shalom* of forgiveness to others (20:23). In other words, Jesus calls them to live as both a reconciled and a reconciling community; to share the wholeness and restoration they have received.[23]

Being Sanctified for Mission. We return to Jesus' magnificent prayer for his followers in John 17. On the cusp of the cross, Jesus prays,

> Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. (Jn 17:17-19)

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[21]Andreas J. Kōstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and His Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 191.

[22]Andreas J. Kōstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 224.

[23]Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, 26.

If the disciples are to continue Jesus' mission (Jn 17:18), they must be sanctified in continuity with Jesus (17:17, 19). Being sanctified (*hagiazō*), in the first place, involves being "set apart" or "consecrated" for God's purposes and God's mission (cf. Jn 10:36). Jesus consecrates himself to his loving, saving mission, above all, by his sacrificial death "for their sakes" (17:19). And that redeeming act makes possible—indeed, has as its *goal*—the disciples' consecration to the same saving mission for which Jesus has been sent into the world (17:18). As D. Moody Smith observes, like Jesus, they are "set apart from the world and for the sake of the world."[24] In John's Gospel, holiness is inseparable from mission.

In addition, the notion of ethical holiness is not foreign to Jesus prayer that his followers might be "sanctified" (see CEB "so that they also would be made holy" Jn 17:19). If Jesus' disciples are to be set apart from the world and its sin (Jn 17:14-16; cf. 15:22-25), if they are to be wholly dedicated to God and his mission in the world, then this surely involves a moral cleansing from sin and lives lived in obedience to what pleases a holy God. What's more, if Jesus' own sanctification includes laying down his life in self-giving love for others, then for us to partake in his loving mission implies the need for inner transformation and a sharing in his own love and holiness. As Ross Hastings reflects, "The mission of God's people is wrapped up in their embodied possession and progress in holiness."[25]

This sanctified mission all takes place "in the truth" (Jn 17:17, 19). In John, "truth" is profoundly *personal*. It is manifested, above all, in God's revelation in Jesus, who not only bears witness to the truth (see 18:37), but who is both the Word (1:1-2, 14) and the truth (14:6; cf. 17:17 "your word is truth"). The sanctification of God's people, then, is anchored in Jesus himself, who embodies the truth. It flows out of his self-giving death on the cross, and it thrusts them into the world to continue Jesus' own mission. That's "missional holiness."

Mission in the World

Jesus' prayer of intercession for his followers spotlights the arena in which mission happens. They are sanctified for mission in *the world*. "As you sent me into the world," Jesus affirms, "so I have sent them into the world" (Jn 17:18). In the Fourth Gospel, the "world" (*kosmos*) is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it often represents a domain of spiritual blind-

[24]D. Moody Smith Jr., *John* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 316.
[25]Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church*, 284.

ness and of open hostility toward God and his people (see 7:7; 8:23; 12:31; 15:18-20). The world hates them, even as it hated Jesus (15:18; 17:14). The world, Jesus warns his followers, can be a place of inky darkness. On the other hand, the world—especially the people in it—remains the object of God's seeking love (3:16-17; 10:36). Jesus "came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (12:47). As Geoffrey Harris memorably puts it, " 'The world' is a mission field for the disciples, but it is also a minefield for the Christian community."[26]

Consequently, Jesus' followers carry out their mission in the midst of this arresting tension; they don't *belong* to the world, but they are sent *into* the world (Jn 17:16, 18). They engage the world as people who are unmistakably separate (17:17, 19), but they never isolate or insulate themselves from it. John, then, draws bold boundaries between the Christian community and the world, while at the same time presenting the world as precisely the realm in which the church continues Jesus' mission. Jesus calls people *out of* the world, forming a faith community, so that he can send them *into* the world, in order to call others to faith in Jesus.[27] In John's missional vision, the church is *both* a holy, contrast community *and* God's loving presence in an unfriendly world.

Does John's "world" include non-Jews? In chapter 4, a crowd of Samaritans recognize Jesus as "savior of the world" (4:42). This amounts to a confession of Jesus' universal salvation, embracing not only Jews and Samaritans, who are culturally on the fringes of Judaism, but, by implication, Gentiles, as well. Indeed, some Roman emperors also used the title "savior of the world" to claim their sovereignty over all peoples.[28] Elsewhere in John, Jesus speaks of "other sheep that do not belong to this fold" (10:16); Greeks come to "see Jesus" (12:20-21; cf. 7:35), and John takes pains to point out that the inscription on Jesus' cross is written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (19:20). Keener's conclusion therefore seems justified: "John's mention of the 'world' . . . is as much a summons to reach all peoples as Matthew's or Luke's call to the 'nations.' Isaiah's light to the nations (Is 42:6; 49:6; cf. 60:2-3) is in John the 'light of the world' (Jn 8:12; 9:5; 11:9; 12:46)."[29]

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[26]Geoffrey Harris, *Mission in the Gospels* (London: Epworth Press, 2004), 175.

[27]Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 209.

[28]Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, 181.

[29]Keener, "Sent Like Jesus," 30.

Conclusion

What does the Gospel of John say to Wesleyan-holiness communities that continue to wrestle with what it means to live *in the world*, without being *of the world*? Let me offer several reflections on how the Fourth Gospel might help to shape a missional holiness identity for the present and the future.[30]

First, the Gospel of John teaches us that holiness and mission are fully integrated, not in competition. Churches continue to struggle over *how* to engage their cultures, particularly in the increasingly polarized, pluralistic, and post-Christian context of the West. For John, the answer is not to belittle the beliefs and lifestyles of others, treating them as our adversaries. Nor is it to retreat into a cocoon of "holy irrelevance." Nor can we buy into an eschatology that causes us to cluck our tongues over a world that becomes ever more evil, even as we comfort ourselves with the assurance that we will soon escape it. Instead, we are called to engage our world by embodying Jesus' mission of holy love. As Jesus' prayer for the church makes clear, we are sanctified to serve. It is only as consecrated and cleansed people that we are ready to participate in the mission of God. We are called to both missional holiness and sanctified mission.

Second, from John's perspective, mission is above all about who we *are*, rather than simply what we *say* or *do*. Our mission is anchored in the loving character of the Triune God. Too often, we have viewed "mission(s)" as simply one among a variety of assigned tasks carried on by the church. Or we have squeezed our notion of mission into an activity that certain specially called and abnormally sacrificial Christians engage in across a body of salt water. But if God is a seeking, sending God, then God's people share a missional *identity*. Mission "is not a certain set of activities but a way of life that has God at the center."[31]

This also means that spiritual formation cannot be separated from mission. Holistic mission arises from a community that is being formed in the attitudes and habits of Christ's self-giving love. And mission has as its goal the restoration of whole persons in relation to God, others and God's creation.[32]

Third, it follows that mission for a Wesleyan-holiness people flows out of our *relationship* with the Triune God. It is not the *church's* mission;

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[30]For this section, see Flemming, *Recovering the Full Mission of God*, 128-31.

[31]Hastings, *Missional God, Missional People*, 262.

[32]Ibid., 302.

it is *God's* mission. John's version of Jesus' post-resurrection commission to his followers (Jn 20:19-23) is strikingly short on specific activities, such as preaching, teaching, baptizing or making disciples. John is more concerned about our connection with Jesus: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (20:21). Jesus—poured out, crucified, risen—is both the source and the pattern of our mission in the world. Even more, we *embody* his loving mission through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Our mission strategies, structures and methods will vary, according to our circumstances. They *must* vary. But whatever form they take, they will only bear fruit if we remain embedded in the vine.

Fourth, self-giving love remains both the character and the motivation of our mission. In John, God's sending love "goes public" in Jesus' holistic ministry to a parade of needy persons, in his acts of humble service, and, ultimately, in his sacrificial death for others. Likewise, *our* mission is motivated by that same love and branded by humble service. *How* we engage in mission must be consistent with the message we proclaim. We must resist any form of pressure or manipulation. In addition, our mission must be clothed in authenticity. Those outside the church will detect what is disingenuous like a sniffer dog spots illegal substances at an airport. Taking our lead from Jesus' own ministry, love must be soldered to truth.

Fifth, John's Gospel spotlights the missional impact of the shared life of the Christian community. When the church reflects a unity like that of the Father and the Son, when God's people love one another in the same way that Jesus has loved them, the watching world will pay attention. And many will be magnetically attracted to such a loving community. They will discern in those relationships the presence and love of a sending God. This is particularly true when we demonstrate love for those who are not like us, people we are not *expected* to love. At the same time, bickering among believers will block others from seeing the *shalom* of God in Christ. Missional holiness recognizes that our witness cannot consist of verbal proclamation alone. Our love and our lives *speak*.

Sixth, in John, Jesus calls us to receive the peace and wholeness of God's *shalom* and sends us by the power of the Spirit to live as a reconciling, restoring, forgiving, peace-making community in the world (Jn 20:19-23). As a holy people, we must proclaim a gospel of peace and live as instruments of peace, even when that stance swims against the stream.

In short, the Gospel of John continues to call us to a holiness that is inherently missional and a mission that is caught up in the cascade of God's sending love.

THE TRUE NATURE OF VIRTUE: A HOLINESS ETHIC FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

by

Christopher P. Momany

I have chosen the word order in the title of this paper with extreme intentionality. If you enter the phrase, "the true nature of virtue," into most search engines, you will find yourself re-directed to sites about "the nature of true virtue." Language of my choosing will automatically "default" to the 1765 classic written by Jonathan Edwards. This tells us something about prevailing assumptions both on and off line. I intend to confront this dynamic in several ways. I mean to address the *true* nature of virtue, and I mean to do so from both a philosophical and Wesleyan/Arminian perspective. I also mean to suggest a twenty-first century trajectory for Holiness moral theology.

Revisiting Reigning Assumptions in Ethics

One of the least adequate responses to a particular theoretical approach often sounds something like this: "No one does that anymore." Reigning interpreters of the tradition seem obsessed with proving their authenticity by knowing what is hot and what is not. Guild-driven studies operate within assumed parameters. Yet what if dismissal of certain constructs betrays its own kind of lethargy? Such is often the case in conversations regarding Christian ethical theory.

This dynamic has informed (some might say "deformed") scholarly judgment. Wesleyan/Holiness reflection on Christian ethics is no exception. For example, there is a standard narrative regarding philosophical principle and moral reasoning since the Enlightenment. According to decontextualized lore, philosophical ethics both within and outside the church was dominated by the competition between deontological and teleological theories. The first derived its principles from Kant and a variety of Scottish intuitionists, holding that right and wrong are inherent qualities of action. Even a desired end could not redeem immoral behavior. The opposing view argued that consequences of value determined the ethical quality of action. Of course, this teleological perspective came in many forms, from relatively nuanced concerns for "benevolence" to

rather blunt calculations of benefit found in some utilitarianism. Ethicists often date the formal codification of this contrast to C. D. Broad's *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (1930), but the tension was common in early American moral reflection. Some championed "right" for its own sake, while others were committed to "utility."[1]

Like most conceptual frameworks, the contrast between deontology and teleology was embedded in moral debate for over a century before receiving official definition as an axiological conflict. It is one thing to argue from the assumptions of these clashing values. It is something else entirely to step back and describe the opposing positions from an analytical, typological perspective. By the 1960s, many philosophical ethicists were tired of the impasse between deontological and teleological approaches. H. R. Niebuhr's posthumous piece, *The Responsible Self*, pointed beyond the conflict. After all, there is nothing like the horns of a dilemma to stimulate search for a "third way."[2]

However it was not until the embrace of "virtue" as a focus for contemporary ethics that philosophers and theologians alike appeared to shake binary thinking.[3] In fact, one who explores Christian ethics today with reference to deontological and teleological principles runs the risk of being ridiculed for examining obviously superannuated constructs. Yet virtue's third way has now been around for a long time and has left its own intellectual problems.

For starters, those of us drawn to the history of Christian ethics in America might note that "virtue" was a concern of thinkers and writers from colonial times. It may not have been the kind of virtue imported directly from Aristotle that dominated late-twentieth century ethics, but

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[1]C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1930). The early American contrast was given particular energy after 1785. That year Immanuel Kant published his classic defense of what came to be known as deontology: *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. A noted English translation was released by J. W. Semple in 1836: *The Metaphysic of Ethics*, trans. J. W. Semple (Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, 1836). The teleological school received a boost from William Paley in 1785: *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (London, 1785), in *The Works of William Paley, D.D.* (Philadelphia, 1831), 21-165.

[2]H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963).

[3]Space precludes citing the encyclopedic range of literature devoted to this movement. I am, though, referring to the general contours of that approach often identified with Alasdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, and many others.

it was something named "virtue," nonetheless. I simply mention the iconic essay by Edwards (*The Nature of True Virtue*, 1765) and a more obscure rebuttal from Holiness advocate (and deontologist) Asa Mahan, *The Doctrine of the Will*, 1845. Mahan's response to the Calvinism of Edwards includes a lengthy discussion on "the nature of virtue."[4] Today Edwards is considered a progenitor of teleological thinking in ethics.[5] Mahan is remembered as one of many deontological critics. Both embraced the terminology of "virtue" within their philosophical reflection. It would appear that the stereotyped contrast between teleology and deontology and more recent claims about a rediscovery of virtue are exceedingly oversimplified.

This is not really all that surprising. Interpretive trends vary, but they share a status that comes with being the latest thing. Once an approach emerges as the dominant lens, it is hard to suggest anything else. Some scholars overcome resistance and delight in asking "new" questions of established answers, but in the process they end up part of the next establishment. When teleological thinking eclipsed deontological approaches during the later nineteenth century those Christian bodies seeking social respectability began to calculate morality in terms of measurable growth. Once the contrast between these two modern principles fell out of favor, those who wished to remain relevant moved on. The early twenty-first century offers an array of compelling approaches to Christian ethics. Perhaps those of us in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition ought to revisit the past with an independent spirit before making assumptions about the future.

Combining Contrasts: Calvinism/Arminianism and Deontology/ Teleology

One reason why it makes sense to tarry among the deontological/ teleological conflict for a moment relates to the way that shopworn contrast has been understood over the trajectory of Wesleyan history. Different eras and different locations of the movement placed themselves squarely within one or the other of these philosophical perspectives. The twentieth century alone presented varied evaluation.

Writing from England in the early 1940s, W. E. Sangster probed Wesley's focus on Christian Perfection and appreciated the role of the

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[4]Asa Mahan, *Doctrine of the Will* (New York: Mark H. Newman, 1845), 156-168.

[5]See William K. Frankena's introduction in Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960).

will. At one point he even made explicit reference to the moral philosophy of Kant: "Our examination of Wesley's idea of sin has shown us that, for him, sin lay essentially in volition. Had he known the epoch-making works of his younger contemporary, Immanuel Kant, he might have reversed the famous opening sentence of the *Metaphysic of Ethics* and said, 'Nothing . . . can be called bad without qualification but a bad will.' "[6] This claim may say more about Sangster and his context than it does about Wesley. It may say even less about the nineteenth century American followers of Wesley, but it also reveals the way some Wesleyans have worked within Kantian categories to understand sin and holiness. This does not prove that ethics in the holiness tradition ought to reflect deontological emphases, but it does suggest that some have viewed Christian Perfection this way.

Following World War II a different appraisal appeared. For instance, writing in the late 1960s, H. Ray Dunning argued that certain Holiness groups did identify with deontological traditions more than teleological ones but that this was an unfortunate departure from John Wesley.[7] Later, Dunning cited Albert Outler's comment from 1975: "Now, it is generally agreed, in the history of ethics and moral theory, that deontology and Christian perfection do not mix readily."[8] Outler made this remark while acknowledging Wesley's proclivity for rules, but he concluded that Methodism's founder possessed a greater appreciation for the goal of human happiness than most admit.

None of this is to say that Wesleyans should understand their founder in either exclusively deontological or teleological terms. Rather, we should note that instructive observations have been made over the years by those who have interpreted the moral philosophy of this movement through these contrasting principles. Ultimately, when considering the tradition in America, it may be that the interaction of ethical principles *and* Protestant theological positions regarding the will is most important.

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[6]W. E. Sangster, *The Path to Perfection: An Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1943), 115.

[7]H. Ray Dunning, "Nazarene Ethics As Seen in a Theological, Historical and Sociological Context" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1969). See also H. Ray Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image: Christian Ethics in Wesleyan Perspective* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 33-37.

[8]Quoted in H. Ray Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image*, 35. See Albert C. Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1975), 81.

The philosophical contrast is that between deontology and teleology. The theological contrast referred to is that between Calvinism and Arminianism. Charting the way these two sets of competing ideas informed social witness is fascinating, and the way these principles were employed in the debate over slavery is especially instructive.

Right and Rationalization in Antebellum America

The prominence of Reformed theology in America's earliest religious culture is clear. Yet at least since the days when Jonathan Edwards defined the good as "benevolence to being in general" teleological principles were at play.[9] The lineage of Edwardsean successors gave an even more pragmatic emphasis to "benevolence" as the yardstick of Christian virtue. For instance, the almost-utilitarian tone of Samuel Hopkins is evident among the following statement: "Disinterested benevolence is pleased with the public interest, the greatest good and happiness of the whole."[10] Hopkins employed this commitment to admirable effect in fighting slavery around Newport, Rhode Island, but later teleologists were less inspiring.[11]

Reformed theology may have embraced teleological ethics in New England, but this was not the case in other regions. Old School Calvinists, particularly those at Princeton, combined their theology with deontological ethical conviction. Theirs was not a deontology indebted to Kant; it was one influenced by the Scottish philosophy of Common Sense. Archibald Alexander paved the way for a Calvinism that was ironclad regarding issues of inability and committed to a definition of moral obligation that stressed right for its own sake.[12] As late as the early twentieth century, Princeton's B. B. Warfield would describe teleological approaches as "no morality at all."[13] Before the Civil War, these "conservative" expressions of deontological reasoning were united with a reprehensible defense of slav-

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[9]Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue*, 3.

[10]Samuel Hopkins, *The System of Doctrines* 2 vols. (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, 1793), 1:547.

[11]Joseph A. Conforti charts the antislavery advocacy of Hopkins in *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England Between the Great Awakenings* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1981), 125-141.

[12]D. H. Meyer, *The Instructed Conscience: The Shaping of the American National Ethic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 160.

[13]Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Studies in Perfectionism*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1958), 125.

ery, but this should not lead us to conclude that teleological approaches promised a protection of human rights.[14] Developments in New England (in general) and Yale (in particular) invite serious examination.

The New England of Samuel Hopkins was not long in becoming that of Timothy Dwight, a college president, preacher, and writer of both teleological and revivalist sentiment. Dwight's sermons argued that "utility" was the foundation of virtue. The aim of a moral life is to exemplify "voluntary usefulness."[15] Such a benevolent end hardly seems worthy of suspicion, but it was not without problems. Ezra Stiles brought William Paley's theological utilitarianism to Yale by 1791, and even though later New Haven thinkers sought distance from this controversial ethic, their theories never managed much of a separation.[16] Following Dwight, Nathaniel William Taylor (Professor of Didactic Theology) made Yale synonymous with a liberalized analysis of the will. This quasi-Arminianism (really a support for natural ability) was wedded to an ambitious moral theory that stressed results. The uniting of agency and measurement by outcomes fueled an intense revivalist culture that burned westward. It also did so under the banner of benevolence. What could be wrong with such a phenomenon?

Taylor owed his theological and ethical identity to Timothy Dwight. As a student at Yale, Taylor had explored moral theory in an essay titled, "Is Virtue Founded in Utility?"[17] President Dwight affirmed young Taylor's analysis and offered robust encouragement for further work. There was much good to be done, and Nathaniel William Taylor is remembered

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[14]Perhaps the best known defense of slavery coming out of Princeton was Charles Hodge's contribution to the collection edited by E. N. Elliott, *Cotton Is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments* (Augusta, GA: Pritchard, Abbott & Loomis, 1860). Timothy L. Smith's durable study interpreted this pro-slavery apology as stating that certain people are chosen to be masters and others servants, much like the theology of predestination. See Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 186.

[15]Timothy Dwight, *Theology Explained and Defended in a Series of Sermons*, vol. 3, 12th ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1846): 150-162.

[16]Wilson Smith, *Professors and Public Ethics: Studies of Northern Moral Philosophers before the Civil War* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1956), 47.

[17]Recollection of this experience is found in a letter Nathaniel William Taylor wrote to William B. Sprague, February 20, 1844. Substantial parts of the letter are quoted in John T. Wayland, *The Theological Department in Yale College, 1822–1858* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987), 81-82.

as a "Connecticut Liberal." However, this does not mean that his views on social issues were automatically enlightened—even for that day.[18] Among other matters, Taylor's zeal for free will and the greatest good overlooked the way those with power retained the prerogative to judge right and wrong. For instance, while Samuel Hopkins is remembered as an opponent of Atlantic slavery, those who followed him often employed the teleological ethic to excuse human bondage as a necessary evil.[19]

This was perhaps demonstrated most forcefully when Nathaniel William Taylor presided over the "Rhetorical Society" of Yale's divinity school. In 1842 and during subsequent years, students debated the question: "Does the greatest good of the greatest number justify the further continuance of slavery at the South?"[20] At first the students were reticent about affirming this notion. Yet it is clear that their advisor, Taylor, supported the rationalization. By 1848, Taylor's "logic" prevailed, and the students voted to sustain him in asserting that slavery was some kind of regrettable but acceptable evil.

Recent scholars have documented the way eastern colleges protected slavery-based economies and benefitted from those systems.[21] However we should note the particular arguments employed to apologize for this injustice. Often, utilitarian language provided rationale for leaving slavery in place. Theorists conceded that someone had to pay the price for American prosperity. Of course, privileged intellectuals were seldom made to bear the burden.

Moreover, Nathaniel William Taylor's moral flexibility was not that unusual. Those who followed his interpretation of the will sometimes accepted the less admirable parts of his teleological ethic. Among those often associated with the early Holiness Movement, the community at Oberlin stands out. The Oberlin Theology varied among exponents. Some embraced a more Wesleyan/Arminian emphasis on gracious ability. Others reflected the teachings regarding free will emanating from New Eng-

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[18]See the classic study by Sidney Mead: Sidney Earl Mead, *Nathaniel William Taylor, 1786–1858: A Connecticut Liberal* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1942).

[19]This legacy at Yale is examined in Antony Dugdale, J. J. Fueser, and J. Celso de Castro Alves, *Yale, Slavery and Abolition* (New Haven: The Amistad Committee, Inc., 2001).

[20]Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives, Rhetorical Society, Yale College, Records, RU 448, Box Number 1, Folder Number 3.

[21]See especially Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony & Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013).

land. All expressed a commitment to agency and some sort of ability. If Oberlin was basically united for the cause of the will's freedom, it was not so monolithic regarding moral principle. Some at Oberlin were strict deontologists. Others were teleologists of the New Haven stamp.

This contrast in ethics became public when controversy erupted during the late 1840s between Oberlin President Asa Mahan and Professor Charles G. Finney. Mahan tied his understanding of the will's freedom to a deontological ethic. Finney connected his stress on ability to a teleological ethic.[22] Both Mahan and Finney were noted for their social concern: a care for the poor, support for women's rights, and opposition to slavery. Finney has even been lauded by more recent, socially-conscious evangelicals because of his generally progressive views.[23] However a closer look reveals that Mahan was much more unyielding when it came to justice. The teleological ethic of outcomes, even at Oberlin, led to compromise and rationalization.

For instance, Finney waffled around issues of race and gender, and he did so from a decidedly teleological framework. He opposed slavery but tolerated segregation in his churches.[24] Some years ago, Lewis Drummond said it well: ". . . Finney was a pragmatist; a moral utilitarian. He firmly believed that integration, if coupled with abolition, would undercut the whole anti-slavery movement."[25] This kind of reasoning was not simply a matter of personal timidity. There was a theory behind the behavior. When fulminating against "rightarianism" (deontology) Finney even suggested that there may be circumstances in which slavery is justified! He wrote: "All holding men [sic] in bondage for selfish motives is

[22]The most comprehensive analysis of this debate between Finney and Mahan is found in James E. Hamilton, "A Comparison of the Moral Theories of Charles Finney and Asa Mahan" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 1972).

[23]See for example, Donald W. Dayton and Douglas M. Strong, *Rediscovering an Evangelical Heritage: A Tradition and Trajectory of Integrating Piety and Justice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014). A less affirming analysis of Finney's social witness can be found in Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 32-33.

[24]The heated exchange between Finney and more ardent abolitionists, especially Arthur and Lewis Tappan, over integration is instructive. See Charles G. Finney, *Papers*, Microfilm of manuscripts, 9 Reels (Cleveland, Ohio: Recordak Corporation, 1958), Reel 3.

[25]Lewis A. Drummond, *Charles Grandison Finney and the Birth of Modern Evangelism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), 204.

wrong in itself, but holding men [sic] in bondage in obedience to the law of benevolence is not wrong but right."[26] Mahan, on the other hand, maintained a remarkable, even courageous, consistency. He insisted that "if, on the ground of accidental circumstances and relations, we consent to a sacrifice of the rights and interests of a solitary individual . . . humanity is thereby degraded in ourselves."[27] Why the difference? Was it simply a matter of temperament between two Oberlin evangelicals? I think not. The unique combination of Arminianism and deontology gave Asa Mahan's witness an energy and integrity lacking among other representatives of the early Holiness Movement.

Agency and Axiology

The combination of the will's freedom and deontological principles was not exclusive to Asa Mahan, but the uniting of these emphases in his theology offers an intriguing test case for historians of evangelical social concern. On one level, this combination is a philosophical legacy with social ramifications. On another level, this integration arises from the unique way Mahan expressed his Arminian theology.

For instance, Mahan's personal notebook of sermon outlines and lectures demonstrates his adaptation of the Wesleyan/Arminian position regarding the atonement. The Oberlin president was firmly in the camp of those who supported the notion of a universal atonement (not a "universalism"). He stated that the atonement of Christ "is designed for every individual of the race."[28] This comprehensive description may not seem like anything different than the Wesleyan response to limited atonement, but there is something more precise lurking in Mahan's language.

His groundbreaking 1839 text, *Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection*, provides nuanced articulation. Here Mahan argued that there are actually three positions available to Christians regarding the nature and extent of Christ's atonement. First, there is that position commonly called "*limited* redemption or atonement." Second, there is the position known as "*general* atonement or redemption." Mahan claimed that this second approach amounted to saying Christ died for no one in particular but for all in general. Finally, the Oberlin president stressed his support for a third

[26]Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Systematic Theology* (Oberlin: James M. Fitch, 1846), 142.

[27]Asa Mahan, "Certain Fundamental Principles, Together with their Applications," *Oberlin Quarterly Review*, Article 35 (November 1846): 229-230.

[28]Asa Mahan, "Manuscript Writings, Miscellaneous," Archives, Shipman Library, Adrian College.

position, that of "*special* atonement or redemption."[29] This rather unusual emphasis on something beyond or distinct from general atonement is striking. What did he mean by "special" atonement or redemption?

As Mahan explained his position, he did so in reference to Hebrews 2:9 and its assertion that Christ tasted death for every person. In contrast to a generalized belief that Jesus died for no one in particular, this third perspective underscored the way God in Christ died for everyone in particular: "The redemption of Christ had as special a regard to each individual, as if that one individual was alone concerned in it."[30] This is, essentially, a variation on the Wesleyan/Arminian understanding of general or universal atonement but a variation with quite radical implications.[31] In short, it united the Arminian emphasis on freedom of the will with a regard for each and every person. This was no crass individualism, but it did prohibit disregarding the particular value of persons when calculating some general good. In other words, Asa Mahan's very theology of the atonement integrated Arminian initiative and deontological moral principle. The acting subject for whom Christ died is united to the intrinsic value of every person. Agency is inextricable from an axiology that recognizes the worth of all people, and we might suggest that the value of all others is expressed through their own agency.

Contrary to the tradition set in motion by Jonathan Edwards, virtue is not necessarily defined as aiming for benevolent outcomes, and contrary to late-twentieth century thinkers, virtue does not necessarily require dismissal of modern constructs. After all, trendy indictments of Enlightenment moral theory often stereotype deontology and teleology more than they engage in serious consideration of principle.

People like Asa Mahan offer a different approach entirely. This may not be a flawless legacy, but it is certainly something to consider. Those of us mining the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition for faithful guidance today have been given a model that calls us to action (agency) and that respects the value of every person with whom we interact (axiology). Living consistently among this rhythm is what I would term the *true* nature of virtue. It also may be a way to begin constructing a Wesleyan/Holiness ethic for the twenty-first century.

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[29]Asa Mahan, *Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection: With Other Kindred Subjects, Illustrated and Confirmed in a Series of Discourses Designed to Throw Light on the Way of Holiness* (Boston: D.S. King, 1839), 153-154.

[30]Ibid., 154.

[31]This comprehensive *and* particular affirmation of people that takes place through the atonement is addressed in my essay: "In Defense of Atonement Theology: Affirmation of Being," *Christian Century*, February 5, 2014, Vol. 131, No. 3, 25-27.

CAN ETHICS BE WESLEYAN?: MORAL THEOLOGY AND HOLINESS IDENTITY

by

Timothy R. Gaines

Among the effort that Wesleyans have exerted in the enterprise of articulating a uniquely Wesleyan approach to speaking of God is lodged in a moral question: Do the ways in which Wesleyans speak of God carry any moral import? Do the claims that Wesleyans make about God as love, for example, present any correlations to understanding moral goodness? Taking a diminutive amount of literature which regards a distinctly Wesleyan moral theology, I seek here to make some modest proposals for the incorporation of some resources into the conversation on Wesleyan moral theology. I argue that the Wesleyan tradition's emphasis upon the *ordo salutis* presents a take on the moral life that does not collapse into moralism, but opens to us according to a Trinitarian pattern of God's kenotic pattern of redemption. Such a take does well to critically appropriate Christological, pneumatological, and trinitarian themes, guiding the incorporation of the *ordo* into moral theology according to the contours of Christian confession. Each of these themes plays a vital role in sketching the contours of a Wesleyan moral theology insofar as they are the theological content of the *ordo salutis*. My hope, then, is that these observations and offerings will contribute in some small ways to the fledgling conversation regarding whether or not Wesleyans can have a distinctive ethics, and how that ethics is to be understood.

As we begin, we must acknowledge a relative dearth of literature on the formation of a distinctively Wesleyan moral theology. H. Ray Dunning's 1998 treatise, *Reflecting the Divine Image: Christian Ethics in Wesleyan Perspective*, remains the most substantial and systematic treatment of Wesleyan ethics.[1] As Kevin Lowery has written, "Attempts to articulate a system of Wesleyan ethics have been few," leaving Wesleyan ethics a "relatively open field."[2] Whereas Dunning has chosen John Wesley's oper-

[1]H. Ray Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image: Christian Ethics in Wesleyan Perspective* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1998).

[2]Kevin Twain Lowery, "Empiricism and Wesleyan Ethics" in *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Vol. 46, No. 1), 150.

ative theological concept of renewal in the image of God, Lowery has opted to bolster what he understands to be the empirical sources underlying a Wesleyan ethics. The juxtaposition here is a testament to the "open field" that characterizes attempts to forge a distinctively Wesleyan ethics.

Against this backdrop, I argue with Dunning that renewal in God's image is a vital and viable concept out of which to grow a Wesleyan ethics. By locating the starting point of a Wesleyan moral theology in a soteriological motif, Dunning has developed a sketch of Wesleyan ethics that is consistent with the central themes of Wesley's own theology. To take the next step in such a development, I suggest that the soteriological emphasis of the *ordo salutis* in Wesley's theology provides an advantageous succor in developing an ethical framework upon the foundation of his thought. Though Lowery has argued convincingly that the Enlightenment heralding of empiricism influenced John Wesley's thought, I am not as optimistic about the adoption of empiricism as a foundational concept out of which to develop an ethical vision that is consistent with Wesley's most noteworthy theological themes, primarily because of the way empiricism as a concept is measured against the incarnation of a Person who Christians understand to be the way, the truth, and the life.

Ordo Salutis as Guide

A year before Dunning published *Reflecting the Divine Image*, the Tenth Oxford Institute for Methodist Theological Studies was convened to consider matters related to politics in a global context. As Theodore Weber recounts, the Institute quickly realized that Wesleyans had little in the way of "common symbols of discourse deriving from their own theological tradition" by which to engage political thought.[3] While there was not overtly Wesleyan political language at the disposal of the Institute, there was a theological language, readily available and easily detectable throughout Wesley's works, and it was the distinctly soteriological language that provided the source material for developing a Wesleyan approach to political theology. "It is the *ordo salutis*," Weber writes, "the order of salvation—God's prevenient, justifying, sanctifying grace."[4] In the same way that political theology was a "relatively open field" to Wesleyans in the last decade, ethics is an analogously "open field" to us now, calling for a distinctively Wesleyan language out of which to operate. In

[3]Theodore R. Weber, *Politics in the Order of Salvation: Transforming Wesleyan Political Ethics* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2001), 17.

[4]Weber, *Politics in the Order of Salvation*, 33.

appealing to the distinctively Wesleyan *ordo salutis,* Weber has opened a passage to understanding the distinctive characteristics to a Wesleyan moral theology. Weber's formulation is useful and applicable here: "Any specifically *Wesleyan* theological reformulation . . . must either proceed from this language or at least be integrated with it."[5]

Appropriating the *ordo salutis* is helpful to the project that Dunning began in at least three ways. First, while Dunning is correct in his assertion that "Few concepts, if any, appear more frequently in [Wesley's] published sermons [than restoration in the image of God]," the concept of the order of salvation is more widely rooted in the whole of Wesley's corpus of written works.[6] Indeed, Dunning goes on to argue, "Every aspect of the redemptive activity of God in human life is at some time referred to in this way, including *regeneration*, *entire sanctification* and *growth in grace*."[7] While we would be right to say that each occurrence of these concepts in Wesley's works could be easily linked to the restoration of the divine image, not every occurrence is termed this way. And while Wesley's use of the term 'order of salvation' was far more infrequent, we are on stronger conceptual grounds to establish the general thrust of Wesley's theology within the order of salvation, rather than under the semantic category of one phrase. This point is not only semantic, however. It speaks to the soteriological bent of all of Wesley's theology; the general manner of his theology is never purely conceptual nor theoretical, but employs speculation only as an aid to the applied experience of practical divinity.

The second way in which the *ordo salutis* advances the conversation surrounding the development of a Wesleyan ethics is in the way it functions teleologically. Dunning clearly understands moral theology, in a Wesleyan mode, to be teleological.[8] The clue to a proper understanding of the Christian life, Dunning argues, is "the divine activity of renewing human persons in the image of God."[9] Dunning goes on to highlight the difficulties introduced to a Wesleyan moral vision as the American Holiness movement moved away from teleology in favor of deontology. That shift toward deontology, according to Dunning, is also one toward legalism, relegating moral reasoning to the maintenance of a rote set of mores. At the same time, Dunning is suspicious of ethical systems which dismiss the need for rules altogether. "Some suggest that we don't need rules or a

[5]Weber, *Politics in the Order of Salvation*, 33.
[6]Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image*, 43.
[7]Ibid. Emphasis original.
[8]Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image*, 35.
[9]Ibid.

system of ethics," he writes. "All we must do is follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. While this sounds pious enough and is not to be gainsaid, something more is needed, as experience will verify."[10]

Throughout *Reflecting the Divine Image*, then, Dunning appeals to the establishment of moral principles. Namely, the love of God becomes the operative principle for establishing the renewal of the divine image as an ethical system for Dunning. The love of God is realized in obedience to God, Dunning argues, qualifying obedience as "unconditional obedience . . . in adoration."[11] Dunning is to be lauded for the work he has done in drawing together an ethical system which is not locate moral goodness in the performance of particular acts which align with mores, but formulates a theologically minded moral principle that does not abandon the moral enterprise to antinomianism wholesale.

Still, we are left to consider the ways in which such a system potentially closes in upon itself, returning us to the same deontology it is attempting to out-narrate. If the love of God is treated as a moral principle, it runs the risk of becoming one principle among other principles, a conceptual possibility, rather than a reality embodied in particular ways. Even as the highest moral principle, the love of God as principle could now be treated as the norm par excellance, elevated to a universal category as a pious redressing of Kant's imperative. A further question now surfaces: If the love of God is a universalized moral principle, can Wesleyan ethics be anything more than the Kantian system writ piously, relegating the system itself to become inextricably locked into a system of deontology, destined to operate within the strictures of legalism? Consider Dunning's opening remarks in setting up his project: "Unfortunately," he writes, "the hedonistic tendency of contemporary society has too often influenced the church. Standards of behavior that have traditionally characterized Christian lifestyles are not as readily apparent among churched people as was once the case."[12] He quotes William Barclay with approval: "Thirty years ago no one ever doubted that divorce was disgraceful; that illegitimate babies were a disaster; that chastity was a good thing; that an honest day's work was part of the duty of any respectable and responsible man; that honesty ought to be part of life. But today, for the first time in history, the whole Christian ethic is under attack."[13] My purpose here is not to argue the moral goodness (or lack

[10]Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image*, 17.
[11]Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image*, 79.
[12]Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image*, 12.
[13]Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image*, 12.

thereof) of issues like divorce or chastity, but to speak to the point of the logical placement of mores within a Wesleyan moral system. Have things like "the duty of any respectable and responsible man" placed the proverbial cart before the horse by establishing particular acts, norms, and mores as the moral barometer of goodness? To speak more to the point, have particular behaviors begun to function as the measure of what we think the love of God ought to look like? If so, we must come to terms with the logical issues presented by a love of God unto the duty of responsible persons; deontology is overcoming our teleological hopes.

D. Stephen Long has taken account of this problem in his own treatment of Wesley's moral theology. "For Kant," he writes, "morality is grounded primarily in freedom, not in the good or God."[14] Long goes on to argue that Wesley's own thought on this issue is not entirely clear; Enlightenment influences upon Wesley apparently obscured the philosophical problems created by subsuming God under a category of goodness.[15] The question we face here is whether or not a distinctively Wesleyan approach to moral theology is capable of speaking in a way that does not instruentalize God in service to a propositional concept of the good, rooted in legalism. Even if we are appealing to the love of God as the operative ethical principle, can such an appeal go far enough to allow renewal of the divine image to do what it needs to do, or will it be locked into a deontological cycle, complete with a preconceived notion of what renewal in the divine image ought to look like? Positioning an approach to moral theology in this way presents the very real possibility of a set of mores being mistaken for goodness itself, creating a situation ripe for abuse.

The Logic of Empiricism

While Long has argued that Wesley was a relatively unwitting recipient of the empirical ethos of his day, Kevin Lowery has argued to a greater degree that Wesley embraced this influence and should be considered an empiricist.[16] While Long argues that Wesley was also formed by other influences, which are helpful in coherently articulating a moral theology, Lowery argues that a Wesleyan ethics becomes more viable precisely as we Wesleyans embrace the Lockean influences upon our namesake. In

[14]D. Stephen Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2005), 75.

[15]Long, *John Wesley's Moral Theology*, 77.

[16]See Kevin Twain Lowery, *Salvaging Wesley's Agenda: A New Paradigm for Wesleyan Virtue Ethics* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008).

attempting to augment the case for Wesley's empirical stimuli, Lowery argues for a form of Wesleyan ethics which provides a corrective to Wesley's own inattention to evaluating good outcomes of particular actions. Wesley's "epistemic commitment to empiricism," Lowery argues, provides the impetus for framing a Wesleyan ethics upon empirical grounds, precisely because empiricism, as Lowery has it, is "consistent with Wesley's principle intellectual commitments."[17]

Lowery rightly dismantles the assertion that Wesley's moral reasoning was overtly aligned with Kant's moral reasoning, though he does so by arguing that Wesleyan ethics are better served by the establishment of "a more flexible hermeneutic" than universal ethical principles will allow.[18] Because Wesley embraced personal feelings and a Lockean trust in sensory perception, Lowery argues, Wesleyan ethics ought to be formed upon the empirical observation of the outcomes of moral action. We ought to be able to take account of the good or evil of particular actions through objective and empirical observation, goes the argument, and in so doing, establish a new kind of virtue ethics which emphasizes the love of God and neighbor.

To be sure, deliberative analysis of the outcome of moral action does not present a problem to establishing a Wesleyan ethics *per se*. The problem arises when we attempt to establish an understanding of the good upon empirical observation alone. While Wesley's own social action was readily taking into account the outcome of action, Wesley did not employ a sheerly empirical approach to understand such action as good on the basis of the observation of outcomes. Anticipating a critique of this type, Lowery goes on to argue that an empirical approach to ethics does not require the application of scientific naturalism, but simply acknowledges the epistemic limitations of human attempts to appeal to the divine. "God's existence exceeds our epistemic limits," he argues, "so any perception we have of God is interpreted through the lens of empirical experience."[19]

Our purpose here is not to debate the validity of such claims upon empirical or hermeneutical grounds, but to suggest that the establishment of a Wesleyan moral theology cannot stop at such assertions, precisely because such an approach is not consistent with Wesley's own moral theology. Wesley's moral theology demonstrates not a philosophical commitment to empiricism as a "principle intellectual commitment," but as a

[17]Lowery, "Empiricism and Wesleyan Ethics," 151-2.
[18]Lowery, "Empiricism and Wesleyan Ethics," 159.
[19]Lowery, "Empiricism and Wesleyan Ethics," 161.

christologically confessional and theologically vigorous application of "goodness" categorically. That is, Wesley was not guided primarily by intellectual commitments as much as he was guided by the cruciform way of Jesus Christ and the enlivening and redemptive presence of the Holy Spirit.

Wesley's corpus of written works is replete with examples, most of which exceed our current limitations of space. One example we cannot ignore, however, is Wesley's 1790 sermon, "On Living Without God." In that sermon, Wesley takes on the empirical question of how "practical atheists" may become aware of God and live in response to the grace being offered them. "But the moment the Spirit of the Almighty strikes the heart of him that was till then without God in the world," Wesley writes, "it breaks the hardness of his heart, and creates all things new."[20] Wesley goes on to describe the restoration of empirical senses: ". . . he that before had ears but heard not is now made capable of hearing . . . He is enabled to taste, as well as to see how gracious the Lord is . . . He feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost."[21] Wesley's account of the restoration of senses, however, contains two distinct characteristics: 1) It is soteriologically grounded in a trinitarian confession and 2) it carries immediate moral ramifications. "At the same time he receives other spiritual senses," Wesley writes of this restoration, "*capable of discerning spiritual good and evil.*"[22] Further, Wesley's account of this restoration is thoroughly trinitarian; all three persons of the Trinity are active in his account of the restoration of the senses which concomitantly allow discernment between good and evil.

The point here is that even human senses themselves are in need of redemption, according to Wesley, such that any hints of empiricism unto ethics must be qualified by the uniquely trinitarian approach to redemption which Wesley employs. Outside of the activity of the triune God, there is no restoration of the senses, nor is there an ability on the human's part to determine the difference between good and evil. Any empiricism to be found in Wesley's approach to moral discernment is shot through with a specifically trinitarian qualification which does not abandon empiricism to a nebulous concept of "good" except that which is formed by and founded upon a trinitarian Christian faith. "Good" is not left to

[20]John Wesley, "On Living Without God" in Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 570.

[21]Wesley, "On Living Without God," 570.

[22]Wesley, "On Living Without God," 570. Emphasis added.

unredeemed humans senses, or even the carefully calculated logic of a philosophical analysis of the good. Good is theological. It is Christological. It is trinitarian.

Christological Destablization

At this point, we stand between two roughly-sketched alternatives of a Wesleyan approach to ethics. On the one hand we have an empirically informed analytical approach, taking careful account of outcomes of specific actions and measuring those outcomes against some concept of "good." So far, we have seen that, for Wesley, the concept of good has everything to do with a specifically trinitarian vision of divine redemption. On the other hand, we have a vision of Wesleyan ethics which tends toward moralism, a vestige of Kant's categorical imperative in Wesleyan dress. We must now deal with this latter vision of Wesley's ethics, and specifically, any version of his ethics which seeks to establish "holiness of heart and life" according to a specific set of mores. While we are on good ground to establish Wesleyan ethics upon his soteriological drive toward holiness, we must be careful to not confine holiness to specific actions as a matter of logic. By its nature, Wesleyan ethics cannot be reduced to a prescriptive set of behaviors or even a set of universals. As the outcome of God's triune, redemptive activity, the wine of Wesleyan ethics is prone to burst the wineskins of the categorical imperative.

It is the Christolgical moorings of Wesley's ministry, then, which offer a "destabilizing eruption" in the face of an ethics in the mode of a fixed moral code. The cross of Christ is the realization of destabilization in the face of convention. It is the eruption of God's kingdom in the midst of kingdoms of convention. In the way of a crucified God, the cross is not only the result of the breaking of convention, but also the inbreaking of a vision of "good" which is not lifted up as a universal, but scandalously and humiliatingly particular. The cross of Christ is a critique of the stable convention of moralism, but in a redemptive way, calling those who would follow in the way of Jesus into a life of repentance.

"The Law Established through Faith (Discourse I)," a sermon Wesley published in 1750, outlines Wesley's ethical approach to convention, particularly demonstrating the ways in which his Christology has influenced his moral vision. While the law has not been dismantled or dismissed, according to Wesley, it has been reappropriated in Christ; it is no longer the sole content of a moral principle. In this discourse, Wesley is concerned with those who "make void the law through faith," in such a way

that "the *living* as if faith was designed to excuse us from holiness."[23] Antinomianism, however, is not necessarily a result of a person's willful decision to act outside of the law. Rather, it is lawful persons themselves who motivate others toward antinomianism, Wesley contends. "Generally speaking," he writes, "they are the Pharisees who make the antinomians."[24] Thus, an ethics in the pattern of moralism is certainly not an option Wesley brings to the table.

At the same time, Wesley is wary of a faith in the absence of concrete moral action. "If good works do not follow our faith, even all inward and outward holiness, it is plain our faith is nothing worth;" Wesley writes, "we are still in our sins."[25] For Wesley, concrete moral action *follows* faith in a crucified God who has radically destabilized the moralism of the Pharisees. Faith in the God of the cross is the primary moral motivation for Wesley, the way of Jesus Christ becoming the objective goodness against which moral action can be measured. So while Wesley is clearly not an antinomian, his appeal to a moral principle beyond the baldness of the law is the primary category though which Wesley establishes ethical good. The good act follows faith in the God of goodness.

As Wesleyan theologians wrestle with the way in which a moral theology ought to be formed, we would do well to invite a sustained reflection upon the Christological aspects of the Christian tradition to inform the ways in which Wesleyan ethics have sometimes tended toward a holiness of moralism. Specifically, the cross of Christ represents a saving departure from convention, opening the door to an ethics reimagined. In that such an appeal is indeed saving, an approach to Wesleyan ethics established upon the *ordo salutis* is in order. As we are being saved in the cross of Christ, so too must we take our ethical cues from the cross of Christ.

Often, the cross of Christ stands in critique of the propositional forms of ethics toward which we Wesleyans are drawn. This is not to say that the cross provides the grounds for antinomianism. Indeed, the incarnated particularity of crucifixion challenges any assumption that Christian ethics do not have a concrete application to and for embodied persons. But the cross does stand as that which ruptured the ethical considerations of both the political and religious establishments, a standing alternative to the conventions and a radical call to an ethics that may

[23]Wesley, "The Law Established through Faith (Discourse 1)," 274.
[24]Wesley, "The Law Established through Faith (Discourse 1)," 273.
[25]Ibid.

often present itself as foolishness. The way of Jesus Christ, crucified in response to his entanglement with convention and the rupture of his resurrection are the measure of the good act. Any temptation to establish a set of practices as universal norms, even under the descriptive characterizations as "the love of God," must take account of the cross and be measured in light of Christ's resurrection. The cross of Christ destabilizes Kant's category and offers to Christian disciples an ethics of humility, surrendered to the way of Jesus.

Pneumatological Enlivening

Lest the Christological impetus of Wesleyan ethics be interpreted solely in light of a *theologica crucis*, we must also remember our pneumatological heritage. Wesley's affinity for the language of Romans 8 comes as no surprise to students of his theology, and ought to be adopted into a Wesleyan formulation of ethics. If we are to take a Christologically formed ethics to heart in the Wesleyan tradition, we must also take seriously the Spirit's enlivening and enabling presence toward that Christological end. It is here that Wesley's approach to moral life can rightly be classified as a moral theology, rather than simply as an ethical approach. Ascribing the title "moral theology" to a Wesleyan ethical approach acknowledges the pneumatological enabling which is the basis of moral action in Wesley's thought. It is by the means of the Spirit's witness, Wesley argues, that we are not only made alive to God's grace and made aware of God's operations. "By the same means," he writes in "The Witness of the Spirit, I," "you cannot perceive if you love, rejoice, and delight in God. By the same you must be directly assured if you love your neighbour as yourself; if you are kindly affectioned to all mankind, and full of gentleness and longsuffering."[26] It is only by the witness of the Spirit, Wesley goes on to reason, that we can participate in morally good acts. The "outward fruits" of the Spirit's presence and work, he writes, "are the doing good to all men, the doing no evil to any, and the walking in the light—a zealous, uniform obedience to all the commandments of God."[27] Not only does the Spirit enable a restoration of empirical knowledge of the good act, but also the energizing motivation to perform the good act.

Further, Wesley's pneumatological affirmation provides further evidence that his moral theology depends upon the Spirit's witness to know the difference between the good and evil act. Notice that Wesley's moral

[26]Wesley, "The Witness of the Spirit, I," 148.
[27]Wesley, "The Witness of the Spirit, I," 154.

appeal in the sermon we have just quoted provides little specificity in terms of what "doing good" and "doing no evil" actually looks like. When Wesley does speak with specificity on moral issues, such as institutional slavery in his "Thoughts Upon Slavery," his convictions are founded upon a pneumatological base. The underlying evil is primarily a sin against the Holy Spirit, which translates morally into the enslavement of fellow human beings. While addressing specific moral problems, Wesley understands an underlying problem, which is usually a theological deficiency. The presence of the Holy Spirit, the witness which not only illuminates our understanding of good and evil but also enables participation in good actions, is that which Wesley adopts into his 'moral system' as the enlivening motivating force toward good action, measured according to the cross of Christ. To be sure, "love shed abroad in the heart" is at the core of Wesley's ethics, but the source of that love is the enlivening presence of the Holy Spirit.

Trinitarian Considerations

In one final consideration of the adoption of the *ordo salutis* in a Wesleyan moral theology, we must acknowledge the place of sanctification in any attempt to sketch a Wesleyan moral theology. Dunning has rightly associated sanctification as the very spirit of Wesleyan ethics. The shape of the moral life in a Wesleyan sense is sanctification. In sketching a moral theology in the Wesleyan tradition, however, we cannot discount the link between the redemptive activity of sanctification in the *ordo salutis* and the operations of the Trinity, a theme that is not entirely developed in *Reflecting the Divine Image*.

The shape of sanctification, however, is trinitarian. To state it briefly, as it is located within the *ordo salutis*, sanctification is dependent upon the whole of God's soteriological activity; the whole Trinity is required to make sense of what happens in sanctification. We are sanctified in the power of the Spirit, through the Son to the glory of the Father. If we were to remove any of those trinitarian aspects, the doctrine begins to immediately falter.

Further, though, are the implications for a Wesleyan identity in a moral sense. Rather than envisioning the Trinity as a closed reality, the Wesleyan tradition contains resources which allow us to consider the Trinity, especially in light of the Incarnation of Jesus, as a redemptive reality which has now been opened to us for the sake of our salvation. The soteriological emphasis of Wesleyan theology is adapted to speak of the Trinity in soteriological terms, rather than making a discussion of the

Trinity solely metaphysical. While Wesleyans are comfortable speaking of who God *is* as Trinity, we are prone to speak just as fervently about what God *does* as Trinity, so that our reflections and investigations of the doctrine of the Trinity are every bit as much "practical divinity" as Wesley's sermons.

In that spirit, the formation of Wesleyan ethics takes the doctrine of the Trinity as a rich resource out of which to grow a doctrine of sanctification, which is the shape of the moral life. As a reality opened to us in the sending of the Son and the Spirit, the Trinity is the relational place in which we are taken into the divine life of God, and the source of our redemption. Though John Wesley's own offerings on the doctrine of the Trinity are sparing, being limited to one sermon exclusively dedicated to the doctrine of the Trinity itself, a study of his sermons as a whole, as well as Charles' collection of Trinity hymns, demonstrates that a Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification cannot be rightly developed in the absence of the doctrine of the Trinity.[28] In short, Wesley's soteriological account of the Trinity opens the possibility for us to consider sanctification as that stage of the *ordo salutis* which takes place as human persons respond to the graceful invitation in the sending of the Son and the Spirit, to live within the rhythms of divine love and be redeemed by those rhythms. As the Son and Spirit are sent, they are also gathering creation into the rhythms of the divine life; the Trinity opens to creation in an act of *kenosis*, and sanctification of human persons is the result. Holiness is thoroughly trinitarian.

If we are to say, then, that sanctification is the shape of the moral life in a distinctly Wesleyan ethics, we must also be prepared to affirm the trinitarian dynamics underlying the soteriologic of sanctification. The doctrine of the Trinity, while not having always played a central role in the development of Wesleyan theology, is nonetheless a helpful resource within the Christian tradition that Wesleyans would do well to adopt in the development of a Wesleyan moral theology.

Conclusion

I have offered a brief set of suggestions for the development of a moral theology in the Wesleyan tradition which takes seriously the doctrine of sanctification as a tenet of Wesleyan identity. Though not all of these sug-

[28]For the results of such a study, see Timothy R. Gaines, *An Ethics of Participation: The Economy of the Trinity and the Shape of the Christian Moral Life* (Ph.D. diss., Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2014).

gestions stem directly from John Wesley's writings, none of them are out of step with his theological trajectory. If the conversation regarding the development of a Wesleyan moral theology continues, I contend that the *ordo salutis* would be a worthwhile guide for further discussion. Further, the establishment of measuring a good act, not on sheerly empirical grounds, but according to an epistemic humility born out of our confrontation with Christ's cross, would be well at home within a Wesleyan moral theology. The pneumatological resources within our tradition provide the necessary resources to answer the question of how we can come to a place of such humility, while the trinitarian resources, which have been sparingly applied until this point, provide the theological grounding for arguing that sanctification is the shape of the moral life.

LATIN PENTECOSTALISM AND THE REBIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY IN LATIN AMERICA

by

William P. Payne

Why have the Pentecostals and Catholic Charismatics sustained rapid numerical growth in Latin America in recent decades? Doubtless, many factors have contributed to the exponential growth.[1] Amidst the cluster of nuanced explanations, contextualization theory suggests that Pentecostalism and the Roman Catholic Charismatic Movement have experienced exponential growth because they are indigenous faith systems that mesh with Hispanic culture and provide Latinos with functionally equivalent alternatives to the syncretistic[2] practices associated with folk religion.

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[1]E. A. Wilson reviews social science explanations for the phenomenon of Pentecostal growth in Brazil and Latin America. See "Brazil," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley Burgess and Eduard Van Der Mass, Rev Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 35-42. Also, Samuel Escobar carefully examines sociological factors for the growth of Protestantism in Latin America in *Changing Tides: Latin America & World Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 77-87. The recent Pew Report offers the following perspective: "Pentecostalism's compatibility with indigenous religions enhanced its appeal among Latin Americans. By emphasizing personal contact with the divine through faith healing, speaking in tongues and prophesying, Pentecostalism attracts those who share an affinity with indigenous religions that traditionally incorporate beliefs and practices associated with direct communication with the 'spirit world.'" See Pew Research Center, "The Spirit World," in *Religion in Latin America: Widespread Change in a Historically Catholic Region* (November 2014) at http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/chapter-8-the-spirit-world/ (accessed March 3, 2015). The print copy is 309 pages long and includes copious research data in the appendices.

[2]Many social scientists reject the use of the term "syncretism" because it has negative connotations and assumes that two systems of religion are being blended. In its place, they use "religious creolization." The latter phrase assumes that a new system of belief has been formed. It is an independent category and not a mere blending of two dominant systems. In relationship to Latino folk Catholicism, religious creolization is "a new system of belief, indeed a new Christianity, that is neither fully European nor fully indigenous, but is rather an

Religiosity Indicators of American Hispanics

A 2014 report from the Pew Research Center[3] shows that an overwhelming percentage of American Hispanics identify with the Christian tradition. Only three percent self-identify as agnostic or atheist. At the same time, a large percentage of American Hispanics holds to beliefs and engages in practices that are associated with folk religion; that is, seeking help from folk healers with special powers (e.g., a *curandero*, *herbalista, bruja*, or *espiritista*), participating in spiritual cleansing services that use incense or herbs, and making offerings to spiritual beings other than God.

Interestingly, an American Latino writer who investigates folk phenomenon has suggested that the religious soul of Latin America is more spiritistic than Roman Catholic.[4] Due to the frequency of folk practices and the undergirding belief system associated with them, the Pew Report opines that Hispanics live their everyday lives with a strong sense of the spirit world. This aspect of the American Hispanic experience sharply contrasts with the secular worldview that dominates aspects of the Anglo-American population.

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inextricable mixture of the two; a system that is altogether different from the lingering pre-Hispanic beliefs, carefully hidden from religious authorities, that centuries of Christian contact never fully snuffed out. . . . [They] include elements of animism and the worship of sacred geography. . . . [They] run parallel to Catholicism but do not necessarily compete with it." Virginia Garrard-Burnett, "Catholicism: Catholicism and Folk Catholicism in Latin America," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World*, ed. Peter N. Stearns (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 75. Jesuits since the time of the Rites Controversy have struggled with the issue of syncretism. Many have argued that the term confuses the larger issue. They prefer to use the term "inculturation" and assume that syncretism may be a necessary accommodation to the cultural context. See Peter Schineller, S. J., "Inculturation and Syncretism: What is the Real Issue?" *International bulletin of Missionary Research* 16.2 (April, 1992): 50-54. This paper employs the term syncretism because it is the word that evangelical missiology uses to describe the blending of faith systems when practitioners maintain an official relationship to Christianity.

[3]Pew Research Center, "Overview," http://www.pewforum.org/2014/11/13/religion-in-latin-america/ and "The Spirit World," http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/chapter-8-the-spirit-world/ (accessed March 3, 2015).

[4]Arturo Vasquez "Latin American Spiritism in Context," https://arturovasquez.wordpress.com/2011/02/14/latin-american-spiritism-in-context/#more-7546 (accessed March 3, 2015).

The Pew Report also reveals that a large sampling of American Hispanics from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, and El Salvador practices folk religion with a similar frequency.[5] Furthermore, the Pew data shows that Latin American nations have similar religious dynamics and that they have responded to similar religious impulses.[6] For example, the Pentecostal surge has affected all of Latin America to some extent. To a lesser extent, the no-religious-preference group is also growing. Since 1970, Hispanic Protestantism has grown from four to 19 percent and the unaffiliated category has grown from one to eight percent. In many cases, the countries that have experienced the strongest Protestant growth have also showed the largest growth with the unaffiliated.

Because of the ubiquitous nature of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America, the pervasive incidence of folk religion, a holistic worldview, a surging Pentecostalism, a cultural heritage that points back to the Iberian Peninsula, a common experience with colonialism, and a popular mass media that transcends national boundaries, Latin Americans share many cultural characteristics. As such, this paper affirms a pan-ethnic category called Latino spirituality while acknowledging that Latin America is not culturally monolithic.[7]

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[5]Because of their liminal existence, one would expect that new Hispanic immigrants to the United States would be more prone than established Hispanics to engage in folk religious practices. Likewise, since established Hispanics are separated from their native lands, lands in which folk religion is sewn into the fabric of the culture; one might assume that their incidence of folk practices would diminish over time; i.e., to the extent that they have assimilated into the dominant culture in the United States. However, the Pew report does not support either assumption. It shows that second and third generation American Hispanics practiced folk religion with the same intensity as recent immigrants.

[6]Pew Research Center, "Religious Commitment and Practice," http://www.pewforum.org/2014/11/13/chapter-2-religious-commitment-and-practice/ (Accessed March 24, 2015).

[7]Many have suggested that the term "Latin America" represents an artificial construct that minimizes cultural diversity and assumes a homogeneity that does not exist. This paper will not explore the massive literature on this topic. However, it will note that the phrase *"la Raza Hispánica"* (the Spanish race) is a popular way for Hispanic leaders and artisans to describe their common identity. Without a doubt, a cultural unity within ethnic diversity exists in Latin America. Still, it should be noted that most Hispanics prefer to self-identify by country of origin. Also, more people in South America speak Portuguese than Spanish. Over 15 million speak indigenous languages.

A Lesson from a Roman Catholic Priest in Peru

For ten weeks in the summer of 2007, I worked with a Roman Catholic priest in Peru.[8] On weekends he ministered to a large population of displaced people on the outskirts of Lima. His church was situated toward the top of a large outcropping of rock. The squatters who made the mountain their home had come from rural areas with the hope of finding a job in the city. Despite the fact that they were dispossessed of material belongings, they held tightly to their popular religion.

Curiously, even though the priest did not practice popular religion as such, happily he accommodated it by blessing ritual items and by encouraging the native syncretism in other ways. Since he was a devout priest with whom I had developed a positive rapport, I asked him why he did not lead the people away from folk religion and into a more pure form of Roman Catholicism. I did not expect his response.

He contended that all Christianity was inherently syncretistic and that "pure" Catholicism did not exist. Whenever the apostolic faith interacts with people who lived in a particular culture, it accommodates the culture of the people. In fact, he said that Roman Catholicism has blended with and embraced the native spirituality of diverse populations. Furthermore, the European faith that imposed itself on the Americas had already mixed itself with the pagan religions of Europe long before it came to the Americas.[9]

Emphatically, he stated that European Catholicism did not fit the spiritual context of the majority population in Latin America and that it needed to be modified before the common people could embrace it as their own faith. He opined that as long as the people acknowledged Christ and participated in the sacramental community, their popular piety was not a problem. To the contrary, it met felt needs, helped them to satisfy

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[8]The priest is the Rev. Roberto Moncada Palacios. P Roberto Moncada Palacios. Born: 15 Nov. 1949. Ordained: 27 April 1998. Tlf: 9-647-0487 romopa@hotmail.com. See http://directoriocallao.es.tripod.com/3parroquias.htm (accessed March 25, 2015).

[9]An excellent text on this topic is Stephen Benko's *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishing, 2003).

spiritual impulses, and it enabled them to own the church by adapting it to their worldview context.[10]

The Pope's Apostolic Exhortation to the Americas

To help me better understand what he was saying, my priest friend gave me a print copy of Pope John Paul II's *Apostolic Exhortation to the Church in the Americas*.[11] Under the category of "popular piety,"[12] the Pope states

[10]Much has been written on the topic on contextualization as it relates to the missionary task. Other terms include indigenization, accommodation, inculturation, enculturation, and translatability of the gospel. Timothy Tennent offers a helpful review of the terms and their history *in Invitation to World Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 323-353. Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994) describes the various terms and offers a history of the concept. Under, "Mission as Contextualization," David Bosch also explores the terms and their development. See *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 420-432. I recommend Paul Hiebert's work on critical contextualization and beyond contextualization in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 75-106. He distinguishes between good contextualization and problematic syncretism. Serious students should read the many articles on contextualization in Ralph Winters' and Steven Hawthorne's *Perspectives on World Christian Movement*. 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008). The following statement represents a global evangelical perspective. It comes from the Lausanne Covenant at http://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant (accessed March 24, 2015). "The development of strategies for world evangelization calls for imaginative pioneering methods. Under God, the result will be the rise of churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture. Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because men and women are God's creatures, some of their culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because they are fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic. The gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture. Missions have all too frequently exported with the gospel an alien culture and churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to Scripture. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others, and churches must seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God."

[11]*Iglesia en América: Exhortación Apostólica Postsinodal del Santo Padre Juan Pablo II* (*Church in America: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father John Paul II*), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, (1999). http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_22011999_ecclesia-in-america.html (accessed March 4, 2015).

[12]Ibid. "Popular Piety," paragraph 16. In the Roman Catholic Church, popular piety is a technical term that refers to the various forms of prayer and worship that are inspired by their culture rather than by the official liturgy.

that folk practices are an indication of the inculturation of the Catholic faith. Moreover, they are a means by which the faithful may encounter the living Christ even if the practices are not intricately connected to the doctrines of the church. Additionally, the Pope notes that the Synod Fathers have stressed the urgency of discovering in the manifestations of popular religiosity true spiritual values in order to enrich them with elements of genuine Catholic doctrine.

Ultimately, the Pope averred that the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America should make the most of the evangelizing possibilities of popular religiosity.[13] Such an endeavor will stave off secularism and a surging Pentecostal movement that is siphoning away large numbers of Roman Catholic faithful. The new emphasis is required because the official church has focused too exclusively on meeting physical needs and has neglected the deeper spiritual needs that make the faithful vulnerable to the proselytizing activities of the sects and new religious movements. The last comment was directed at liberationist priests who want to focus the church on social reform issues.

In sum, the Peruvian priest interpreted Pope John Paul II's message in a way that allowed him to facilitate folk practices because he did not want his parishioners to turn to other faith systems to meet the spiritual needs that the official Roman Catholic Church did not sufficiently engage. Additionally, he believed that the folk practices were compatible with the Roman Catholic faith and that they could be a means by which the people could encounter God. Furthermore, he maintained that syncretism was a necessary accommodation to the pre-Christian worldview that permeated parts of Latin America.[14] Obviously, this priest did not represent all priests. However, his example shows how the Roman Catholic Church leadership was attempting to work in tandem with folk religion.

Approaching Popular Religiosity: an Example from Cost Rica

For six weeks in 2015, I lived with a large family in a small house in Costa Rica. Afterward, I spent an additional five weeks working at a seminary in

[13]Ibid. "The Challenge of the Sects," paragraph 73.

[14]Robert Schreiter, C.PP.S, an eminent Roman Catholic scholar and missiologist, carefully dissects issues associated with folk Catholicism and syncretism in *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 122-159. Steven Beven, SVD, also explores these issues in *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992). A classic Roman Catholic text on this topic is Louis Luzbetak's *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 292-373.

Medellin, Colombia. During this time I interviewed Pentecostals, Roman Catholics, and charismatics about their spirituality. Some of the conversations were intensely personal and very emotional. Underneath the veneer of everyday life, I discovered spiritually aware people who were very articulate about their experiences with God and the supernatural. I also observed an entrenched religiosity that was buoyed by a generalized openness to folk religion. Based on my interview data and personal encounters, I will attempt to explicate the deeper spiritual needs to which the Pope was speaking and uncover some of the evangelistic opportunities associated with popular religiosity.

The father of the home in which I lived in Costa Rica practiced Pentecostalism. He left the Roman Catholic Church in 2008 because he needed spiritual discipline and spiritual power to change his life. Before becoming a Pentecostal, he drank 32 bottles of beer every day. His brothers, sister, and mother all became ardent Pentecostals at the same time.[15] They read the bible, pray often, listen to praise music, attend mid-week prayer services, desire spiritual empowerment, embrace aspects of the prosperity gospel, and tithe. Home conversations often revolved around religious themes. Their Pentecostal faith influences all aspects of their lives to include their social interactions with non-Pentecostals.

The mother of the home where I lived staunchly held to her Roman Catholic faith. She respected the Pentecostal church and fully supported her husband's participation in it. She also listened to praise music and loved to pepper me with questions about God, the bible, and spiritual gifts. She even requested prayer for healing. However, she still practiced a form of folk Catholicism because she feared that something bad would happen to the family if she became Pentecostal.[16]

The stores in the town sold a mixture of indigenous and Roman Catholic religious items. The items included herbs for traditional healing, blessed trinkets for good luck, objects to protect people from the evil eye, and material to ward off malignant spirits. Many items invoked the power of the seven archangels. Saint paraphernalia to include small statues usually had a dual meaning that the people understood. Locals referred to

[15]Donald McGravran observed the same phenomenon in India. He referred to it as a people movement.

[16]Also, the legalistic teaching on tithing greatly annoyed her. Often she reminded me that the Roman Catholic Church received an offering and did not require people to pay a tithe. I heard a similar critique from a host of other people. Curiously, one nominal Catholic that I interviewed desperately desired to attend an evangelical church. He asked me to pray for God to bless his business because he could not afford to pay the tithe.

the items collectively as *brujería* (witchery and magic). The various shops that sold the paraphernalia did a brisk business.

The people with whom I spoke distinguished between folk healers, shamans, and witches. They knew of imagined witches but they did not know their names. Supposedly, they congregated on a local mountain. They were more common in past times. They said that people did not openly visit a witch in daylight hours. Witches were chaotic and untrustworthy. They could cause harm to people.[17]

On the other hand, the people in this town held the folk healers in high regard. The *curanderos* protected and/or heal people from the effects of witchcraft, spells, evil spirits, and disease.[18] They used a combination of herbs, divination, channeling, prayers, ritual items, and spells to manipulate the supernatural in order to help people who had spiritual, physical, financial, emotional, or mental problems. In short, they maintained an equilibrium between the spiritual and natural worlds.

People eagerly recounted anecdotal stories that extolled the spiritual prowess of *curanderos*. One *curandero* told a woman that she would encounter two snakes on the path down from the mountain but neither would hurt her. It happened just like he foretold. A Roman Catholic woman in Colombia told me that a folk healer caused a little rodent to crawl over her body. Then, he killed it, dissected it, and divined her problem.[19] Afterward, he performed a ritual to fix her problem. The folk healer made the right diagnosis and cured her.

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[17]In *Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern Puerto Rico* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), Raquel Romberg describes the life of a *bruja*. She is portrayed as part magician, part priestess, and part social worker. She helps people by channeling the benevolent forces of her spirit guides.

[18]For a very insightful understanding of *curandero*, see the following interview with curandero Charles Garcia at http://bearmedicineherbals.com/doc.html (accessed March 23, 2015).

[19]See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF-SWv31380 (accessed March 5, 2015).The video link shows a folk healer using an egg to discern if a person suffers from the evil eye. A variety of random people speak about the practice. Many sound like testimonials in favor of folk healing. In America, 40 percent of Latinos believe in the evil eye (see Pew Research Center, "The Spirit World," http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/chapter-8-the-spirit-world/). The percentage is much higher in Latin America. In a separate video a woman tells people how to determine if they have been victimized by the evil eye. First, pour water into a bowl. Afterward, with your index finger, drip three drops of cooking oil in the water. If the drops expand, you have a positive result. To fix the problem, throw the water in the toilet and recite the Hail Mary three times. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lBpNNs_MP0s (accessed March 4, 2015).

Many of the people who attended the local Roman Catholic Church openly boasted that they also visited the local healers, bought merchandise from the stores that sold *brujería*, and used rituals associated with the pre-Christian native religion. In fact, they told me that members of the local evangelical/Pentecostal churches also used the *curanderos* when no one was watching even though they publically disavowed them.[20]

The Flaw of the Excluded Middle[21]

At this point, it would be helpful to review what anthropologist Paul Hiebert terms the "excluded middle." In short, Hiebert shows that the traditional worldview of European Christianity divides reality between high religion and the natural world. High religion is the domain of the institutional church. It focuses on professional clergy, right doctrine, ethics, worship services, sacraments, church buildings, and the like. Clergy maintain the tradition and encourage conformity. They perform rites of passage, offer comfort, give encouragement, dispense sage advice, and provide pastoral services. Although they talk about the spiritual world, most of what they do focuses on the natural world.

Even though the typical Western Christian acknowledges God via prayer and other spiritual activities, most do not live with a God consciousness that invades every aspect of their daily lives. This leads to a dualistic existence in which the average western Christian spends the vast majority of his or her life living as a practical atheist. In fact, the mainline churches of the West do not deal with issues associated with demonization, inner healing, curses, misfortune, or the evil eye. Furthermore, they do not have an operating category for the everyday supernatural to include angels, demons, ancestors, and witchcraft.

Instead, the dominant forces of science, reason, and the worldview of naturalism mitigate an emphasis on everyday supernaturalism. For

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[20]I should note that Roman Catholic Charismatics distinguished themselves from Pentecostals by virtue of their devotion to Mary and the saints. Even though they love to worship Jesus and make good use of the spiritual gifts, they also spoke of Marian visions and prophecies. All used saint paraphernalia. My various interviews included conversations about visions, dreams, demons, angels, dead black hens, invisible dogs, and spirit guides. Some spoke of supernatural abilities. Strangely, many were very attracted to Padre Pio of Pietrelcina. He had the stigmata and suffered greatly. In some way, he serves as a folk hero to many.

[21]Paul Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," in *Missiology: An International Review* 10.1 (January 1982): 35-47. Available at http://mis.sagepub.com/content/10/1/35.full.pdf (accessed March 4, 2015).

example, when one gets sick, the person will go to a medical clinic. Clergy will comfort the sick and offer prayers for emotional and spiritual wellbeing instead of providing a direct spiritual intervention. In fact, the medical care providers are the healers of the body and the clergy are the caretakers of the soul. In light of this body/spirit dualism, few specialists have the training or standing to integrate holistic healing. Furthermore, the "professionals" look upon those who attempt to implement holistic therapies that integrate body and spirit with suspicion.

On the other hand, folk religionists in Latin America focus on the area between high religion and the natural world. They address the "middle zone" in practical ways. Typically, the religious specialists belong to the dominant faith but are not recognized as clergy or medical professionals. They are folk healers with spiritual powers, secret knowledge, and great wisdom. They interact with personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces that have power over human affairs.

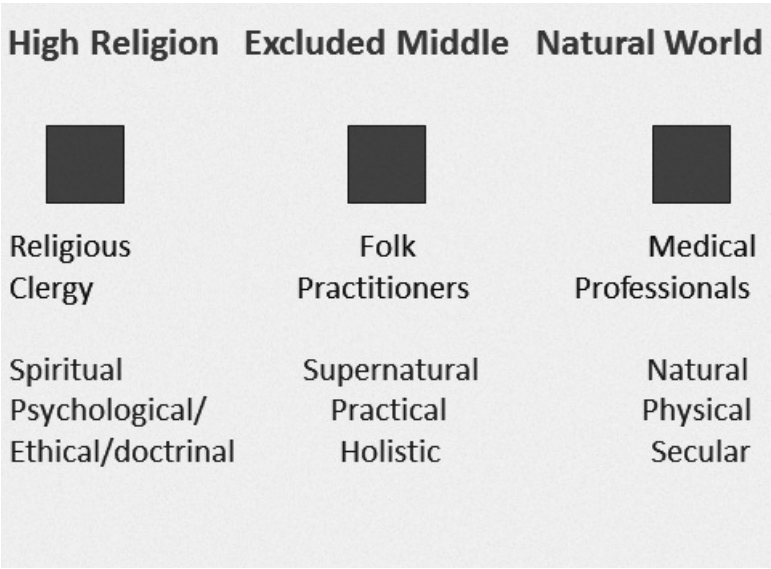

Figure 1: Continuum between High Religion and Natural World

Conquest, Imposition, and Evangelism

Before the arrival of the European powers, the indigenous peoples of Latin America operated under an animistic worldview. They blended high religion, the middle zone, and the natural world into a seamless way of life. Religious specialists treated the body and the soul. They also served

as mediators between the natural and the spiritual. They could divine causes for misfortune and could lead the people in rituals for wellbeing. Everyday spirituality focused on the maintenance of a harmonious relationship with the spirit world and often consisted of worshiping lesser spirits. The high god or the great creator was often distant and irrelevant to everyday life. There was no separation between the sacred and the profane (i.e., a natural/supernatural dualism). Everything was integrated.

The European conquerors established Roman Catholicism and required the people to convert to it. For example, the 1513 *Requerimiento* was read to native peoples. It demanded that they accept Spanish rule and allow the missionaries to preach to them to the end that they convert to Christianity. Those who did not submit and convert would be forced to obey both the church and the state under threat of war and slavery.[22] In 1529, a Franciscan missionary wrote "I and the brother who was with me baptized in this province of Mexico upwards pf 200,000 persons—so many in fact that I cannot give an accurate estimate of the number. Often we baptize in a single day 14,000 people."[23] Unfortunately, the friars did not fully evangelize the new converts by making them Christ disciples or by wholly engaging their worldview with the gospel in word and deed. In fact, most were "annexed" into the church instead of converted to Christ.

Because of this, some indigenous peoples maintained dual religious systems in which they moved between Roman Catholicism and the native faiths without attempting to integrate the two. However, in most cases, Roman Catholicism and the native faiths were syncretized. In so doing, the people maintained native spiritual categories in the guise of Roman Catholic symbols like the Virgin Mary and the saints.

It should be noted that Mary apparitions enabled the early Catholic mission to Latin America to have great evangelistic success.[24] In fact,

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[22]See "Spanish Government in the Americas" in *American Eras* (1997). http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-2536600095.html (March 26, 2015).

[23]Quoted in John Vidmar, OP, *The Catholic Church through the Ages: A History* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), 244.

[24]"How can we fail to emphasize the role which belongs to the Virgin Mary in relation to the pilgrim Church in America journeying towards its encounter with the Lord? Indeed, the Most Blessed Virgin 'is linked in a special way to the birth of the Church in the history of the peoples of America; through Mary they came to encounter the Lord.' Throughout the continent, from the time of the first evangelization, the presence of the Mother of God has been strongly felt, thanks to the efforts of the missionaries. In their preaching, 'the Gospel was proclaimed by presenting the Virgin Mary as its highest realization. From the beginning—

most Latin American countries have their own Virgin visitation stories and shrines that date to the early time of evangelization. Often, Mary provided a religious and cultural bridge between the European colonizers and the native peoples. The bridge allowed for the mixing of Roman Catholicism with local traditions. The apparitions and subsequent blending are a main reason why the Christian faith was accepted and modified by the native peoples.[25] It should be noted that Marian visions still occur with great frequency throughout Latin America.[26]

Philip Jenkins, a celebrated historian of religion, shows the relationship between the emergence of folk Catholicism and the successful evangelization of Latin America. Despite the fact that some missionary orders heroically advocated on behalf of the native peoples, he argues that the Roman Catholic mission strategy to the Americas established churches that largely disregarded and disrespected the indigenous people. This led to religious blending. Surprisingly, the resultant syncretism enabled long-term success. By the time that the church adapted the liturgy and the sacraments to the native context via inculturation, the native peoples had already created their own religious synthesis that focused on syncretistic

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invoked as Our Lady of Guadalupe—Mary, by her motherly and merciful figure, was a great sign of the closeness of the Father and of Jesus Christ, with whom she invites us to enter into communion.' The appearance of Mary to the native Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac in 1531 had a decisive effect on evangelization. This influence goes beyond the boundaries of Mexico, spreading to the whole continent. America, which historically has been and is a melting pot of peoples, has recognized 'in the mestiza face of the Virgin of Tepeyac, in Blessed Mary of Guadalupe, a great example of perfectly inculturated evangelization.' Therefore, not only in Central and South, but also in North America as well, the Virgin of Guadalupe is venerated as Queen of all America." Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in América*, "Through Mary We Encounter Jesus," paragraph 11.

[25]See Mary O'Connor, "The Virgin of Guadalupe and the Economics of Symbolic Behavior" in *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28.2 (1989) 105-119 and Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

[26]One woman with whom I spoke in Costa Rica described a Marian visitation that was witnessed by thousands of people in 1996. According to her, the visitation was preceded by prophetic messages. On the first Tuesday of every month, the faithful traveled to Sara Piqui in Costa Rica to witness the appearance in the sky. On one occasion, the Virgin stopped the sun. Gold glitter often manifested on the people. *Marian Apparitions of the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries* contains a chronological list of Mary apparitions from 1900-2011 http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/resources/aprtable.html (accessed March 26, 2015).

devotion to saints and the Virgin Mary. Such activities did not require official clergy and allowed the people to connect Catholicism to their native faith systems. Through this unintentional blending, the Roman Catholic Church's accommodation to the culture of the people ensured its establishment throughout Latin America.[27]

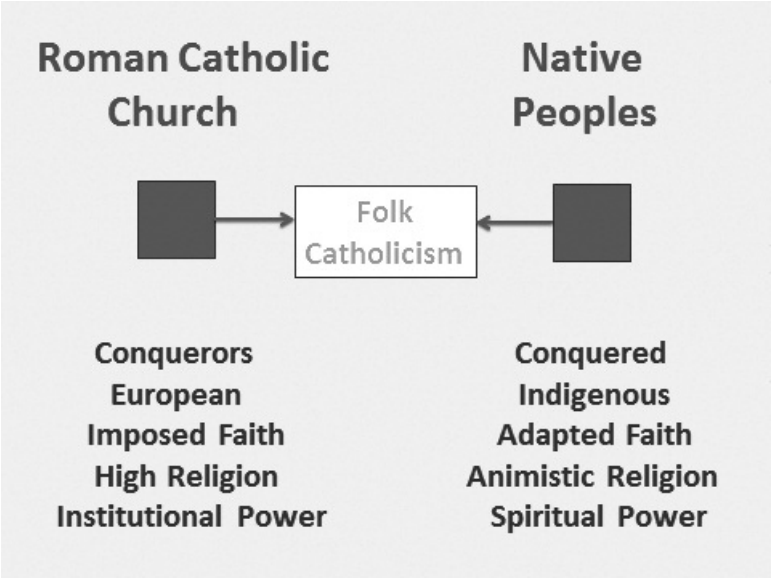

Figure 2: The Genesis of Folk Catholicism

An Example: Santería and Roman Catholicism

Anthropologist Jacob Loewen served in Latin America for 30 years as a missionary and bible translator. He observed that the Latino populations with which he worked syncretized the Christian faith to their context in the same way that European Christians had syncretized the faith to the Greco-Roman religious context. In reference to folk Catholicism, he states that in Latin America many local specialized deities of the pre-Christian era were saved from oblivion by being rebaptized with the name of a Catholic saint.[28] Santería is an example of a Latino syncretistic folk reli-

[27]Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 38-39.

[28]Jacob Loewn, "Which God Do Missionaries Preach?" in *Missiology* 14 (January 1986): 9. Other classic articles on this topic are William Madsen,

gion that combines elements of traditional Roman Catholicism with the native religions of the subjugated people.[29]

While working as the pastor for a large Cuban refugee camp in Panama from 1994-1995, I observed Santería on a daily basis. For example, after celebrating their Christmas Eve service, a band took the stage and sang songs in a language that I did not understand. When I inquired, the people told me that it was Yoruba. For 300 hundred years, specialists within the Cuban society had maintained the language and religion of their African ancestors. Likewise, many of the same people who attended Mass also employed the services of the *santero* or shamanistic priest. On many occasions, the *santeros* attempted to sacrifice chickens in the camp. The practiced was banned for sanitary reasons.[30] Additionally, I observed men who dressed up like San Lázaro on December 17. San Lázaro is a poor trickster god and a Roman Catholic saint. He is one of the many god/saints in the popular religion of Cuba. While working with a Cuban newspaper[31] in Florida from 1978-1981, I also observed Santería altars and folk practices with established immigrants in the USA. The faith has staying power because it resonates with the Cuban worldview, captures the essence of the Cuban personality, and has been integrated into the Cuban social order.

The following chart shows how the Yoruba gods and the Roman Catholic saints have been combined in Santería. The chart also shows the attributes of each god/saint. Similar charts could be constructed for Guatemala and other and other Latino locations.

"Christo-Paganism: A Study of Mexican Religious Syncretism" Middle American Research Institute 19 (1957): 108-180 and Melvin Herskovitz, "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Religious Belief," in *American Anthropologist* 39.4 (October 1937), 635-643.

[29]For more information on Caribbean syncretism, see Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert. *Creole Religions of the Caribbean: An Introduction from Vodou and Santería to Obeah and Espiritismo* (New York University Press, 2011).

[30]For a sociological interpretation of the liminal aspects of this refugee camp, see William Payne. "Religious Community in a Cuban Refugee Camp: Bringing Order out of Chaos" in *Missiology* 25 (April 1997): 133-154.

[31]See El Noticiero at http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99026940/ (accessed March 23, 2015).

Yoruba Gods and Roman Catholic Saints

Orisha or Yoruba God	Roman Catholic Saint	Ascribed Attribute
Agayu	San Cristóbal	Fatherhood
Babaluaye	San Lázaro	Sickness
Eleggua	San Antonio de Padua	Removing spells
Ibeji	San Cosme y San Damián	Children
Inle	San Rafael	Medicine
Obatalá	Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes	Clarity
Orgún	San Pedro	Iron
Olokún	Nuestra Señora de la Regla	Profundity
Orula	San Francisco	Wisdom and Fate
Osanyin	San José	Herbs
Oshosi	San Norberto	Hunting and Protection
Oshún	Nuestra Señora de la Caridad	Erotic Love
Oya	Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria	Death
Shangó	Santa Bárbara	Force
Yemayá	Nuestra Señora de Regla	Motherhood[32]

Source: ¿La santería es un ritual católico? (Is Santeria a Catholic Ritual). http://www.mscperu.org/biblioteca/1esoterismo/santeria.htm (accessed March 3, 2015)

The Priority to Contextualization

Of course, religious syncretism and dual religious systems are not unique to the Roman Catholic tradition. In fact, whenever Christianity is forced on a population or is adopted as a foreign faith, folk religion in the form of syncretism emerges. That is why it is absolutely essential that missionaries avoid the temptation to use positions of power, economic influence, or other non-spiritual incentives to achieve quick results. This also points to a more important theological fact. Non-Christian peoples have to be evangelized in ways that engage their existing worldview categories to include those areas that deal with the spirit world.

Even though the missionaries make the faith accessible through evangelism, church planting, leadership training, and by translating the gospel message into the language and culture of the people, they cannot contextu-

[32]This article was written by a chaplain at the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity (Oshún) in Miami for five years.

alize the faith. Those being evangelized have to do that. For that reason, they must be the leaders in their own evangelization. Transplanted Christianity and forced conversions lead to compromised Christianity.

Anthropologist Charles Kraft from Fuller Theological Seminary has written extensively on the problem of syncretism and "dual allegiance" in world Christianity. He argues that folk religion is the biggest problem in the global Church. Speaking of Roman Catholic, Protestant, and non-aligned traditions, he says that believers continue to go to the shamans and diviners because the Christian faith they received fails to deal with the excluded middle. For Kraft, the solution to folk Christianity, dual religious systems, and an encroaching secularism is "Christianity with power."[33] In fact, Latino Pentecostalism is Christianity with power.[34]

In a brilliantly written piece, Kraft argues that Latin American christopaganism (folk Catholicism/animism) has many parallels to the Pentecostal worldview and practice. After defining and describing animism and its practices, he opines that Pentecostalism does not deny the reality of the spirit world. Rather, it distinguishes itself and its practices from folk religion because it focuses exclusively on Jesus as the one who delivers the faithful from bondage to the spirit world.[35]

New Trends in Religious Demographics in Latin America

This leads to my penultimate point. In Latin America, folk Catholicism is an indigenous faith that has been thoroughly contextualized by the Hispanic peoples. It is owned by them and it is expressed in terms of their cultural categories. Because of this, it answers all the questions that a religion should answer and it properly orients the people to the natural and spiritual realms. In fact, it is embedded in the core culture. From that perspective it functions as an ordering device for the society.

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[33]"It is unfortunate that Christians all over the world are practicing a Christianity devoid of the ability to deal with the spirit world. They are practicing the powerless Christianity the missionaries brought them. . . . Thus, largely because of deficiencies in the worldviews of the missionaries who helped them come to faith but rendered their faith powerless, the Christianity practiced in much of the world is animistic." Charles Kraft, *The Evangelical's Guide to Spiritual Warfare* (Bloomington, MN: Chosen Books, 2015), 50-51.

[34]William Payne, "Discerning an Integral Latino Pentecostal Theology of Liberation" in *Ashland Theological Journal* (Fall, 2013): 87-106. In particular, see the sections on "Characteristics of Latino Pentecostalism" (92-94) and "The Exodus Story," (94-96) which shows how the Latino Pentecostal hermeneutic is applied to a text.

[35]Charles Kraft, *The Evangelical's Guide*, 116-131.

Up until 1909, when the Methodist Episcopal Church mission in Valparaiso Chile experienced a spontaneous Pentecostal revival, folk Catholicism had no Christian rivals in Latin America. However, since the Pentecostal seed was planted in Chile, it has grown to become a massive movement that has dramatically reshaped the religious landscape of the region.[36]

According to a 2014 Pew Report, at least 90 percent of Latin America's population was Roman Catholic through the 1960s. Today, only 69 percent of adults identify as Catholic. Throughout the entire region, the membership of the Roman Catholic Church continues to decline as growing numbers of Latinos affiliate with evangelical churches.

The Center for the Study of Global Christianity, agrees with the Pew Report.

> The majority of those who leave [the Roman Catholic Church] are joining Protestant or Pentecostal churches. . . . Renewalists[37] [e.g., Pentecostals] in Latin America have experienced astounding growth, from 12.8 million in 1970 to 181.3 million in 2010 and an expected 203.0 million by 2020. . . . Evangelicals are also

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[36]For more information on the Pentecostal revival in Chile, see Willis Collins Hoover and Mario G. Hoover, *History of the Pentecostal Revival in Chile* (Santiago, Chile: Imprenta Eben-Ezer, 2000). See also a Spanish language version of the founding at http://www.iglesiamaipu.cl/index.php?tipo=pagina&pagina_codigo=7 (accessed March 23, 2015). Juan Sepúlveda offers a detailed analysis of how Latino Pentecostalism differs from American Pentecostalism. He also describes the primary characteristics of Latino Pentecostalism. He is from Chile and writes on the sociology of religion and the Chilean Pentecostal Methodist Church. See "Theological Characteristics of an Indigenous Pentecostalism: Chile," in *The Power of the Spirit: The Pentecostal Challenge to Historic Churches in Latin America*, eds. Dennis Smith and B. F. Gutierrez (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church USA, 1996), chapter 2. Also, "Indigenous Pentecostalism and the Chilean Experience," in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, eds. Allan Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 111-34.

[37]"Renewalist practices—such as receiving divine healings or direct revelations, witnessing the devil or evil spirits being driven out of a person, or speaking or praying in tongues—are particularly common among Pentecostal Protestants. Roughly two-thirds of Latino Pentecostals say they have received a divine healing of an illness or injury (64%) or a direct revelation from God (64%). About six-in-ten say they have witnessed an exorcism (59%) and about half say they have spoken or prayed in tongues (49%)." The Pew Research Center, "Renewalism and Hispanic Christianity," http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/chapter-7-renewalism-and-hispanic-christianity/ (accessed March 24, 2015).

> making gains in Latin America, growing from 9.2 million in 1970 to 47.2 million in 2010, with projected growth to 59.6 million by 2020.[38]

The trend away from Roman Catholicism is most striking in Central America. In Honduras there are more self-identified Protestants than Roman Catholics! Additionally, the vast majority of Protestants is Pentecostal (70 percent) or attends churches that feature Pentecostal style worship services.[39]

More surprisingly, large numbers of Latino Roman Catholics have self-identified as Charismatic. According to Edward Cleary's, *The Rise of Charismatic Catholicism in Latin America*,[40] the Charismatic Movement is the dominant force in Latin American Catholicism. Over 60 percent (45 million) of Roman Catholics in Brazil identify as Charismatic.[41] In Panama, over 70 percent of Roman Catholics call themselves Charismatic. The Charismatic Movement is increasing in every Latin American country.

In the United States, 52 percent of Hispanic Roman Catholics can be described as Charismatic. Thirty-one percent of them say they have received a direct revelation from God. Fifteen percent have witnessed the devil or evil spirits being driven out of a person. Seventy-one percent say that the worship services that they attend include people displaying signs

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[38]Center for the Study of Global Christianity. *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970–2020 Society, Religion, and Mission* (South Hamilton, MA: Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, 2013), 54.

[39]Cliff Holland, the director of the Latin American Socio-Religious Studies Program (http://www.prolades.com/) told me that 75 percent of Latino Pentecostals do not speak in tongues. That percentage also includes Pentecostal pastors. He suggested that one becomes Pentecostal in Latin America when one attends a Pentecostal church. While preaching in various Pentecostal Holiness churches in Costa Rica, I asked the people in the various congregations if they had been baptized with the Holy Spirit or spoke in tongues. Most responded in the negative. Additionally, many of the Pentecostal students at the Biblical Seminary of Colombia in Medellin also affirmed that they did not speak in tongues. Other non-Pentecostal students quietly affirmed that they did speak in tongues. The actual distinction between a person who self-identifies as Pentecostal and one who attends a non-Pentecostal church may be minimal.

[40]Edward Cleary, *The Rise of Charismatic Catholicism in Latin America*, (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2011).

[41]"How the Charismatic Movement Conquered Brazil" in T*he Catholic Herald* (2014) http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/features/2013/07/26/how-the-charismatic-movement-conquered-brazil/ (accessed March 4, 2015)

of excitement and enthusiasm, such as clapping or jumping. Fifty-nine percent of churchgoing charismatic Catholics say the services include speaking in tongues, prophesying or praying for deliverance or healing.[42]

When one combines the numbers of Latinos who have become Protestant or Charismatic, it is clear that folk Catholicism no longer holds sway over the region. This represents a major religious demographic sea change of massive proportions. The statistical data requires an explanation.

Pentecostalism and the Rebirth of Christianity in Latin America

I suggest that Pentecostalism and the Catholic Charismatic Movement have grown large because they function as an indigenous religion that allows practitioners to engage all aspects of the Latino culture to include its worldview and its aesthetic heart. Pentecostalism gives believers a close and personal relationship with God in worship and connects them to a charismatic body of believers through which the spiritual gifts operate. By means of the spiritual gifts, the church enables the believers to engage Hiebert's "excluded middle." In a satisfactory and alluring way, Pentecostalism appeals to the temperament, soul, and life orientation of the Latino populations.

Even though Latino Pentecostals reject folk Catholicism, they do not reject the dominant worldview that undergirds it. Like folk Catholicism, Pentecostalism has proliferated in Latin America because it answers cultural needs and has adapted to cultural forms. In one sense, it has allowed Latinos to reclaim a native cultural identity while reasserting their right to do theology independent from dominant ecclesial structures. Because of this, it serves as a force for Christian renewal throughout Latin America.[43]

In sum, Latino Pentecostalism is growing because it is fully Christian, has spiritual power, connects practitioners to God in a personal way, delivers people from sin, frees people from spiritual bondages, provides an alternative community, speaks the language of the culture, lessens the

[42]See Pew Research Center, "Renewalism and Hispanic Christianity," http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/chapter-7-renewalism-and-hispanic-christianity/ (accessed March 24, 2015).

[43]"Nativistic movements like Latino Pentecostalism seek to reclaim a cultural identity that has been lost or denied. They begin to blossom in the final stages of colonialism. Oftentimes, they restate the faith in such a way as to bring it into line with cultural ideals. In the restating of the faith, the believers separate themselves from the 'landlords' and take responsibility for their own religion." Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1993), 13.

gap between the clergy and the laity, and functions as an indigenous religion.

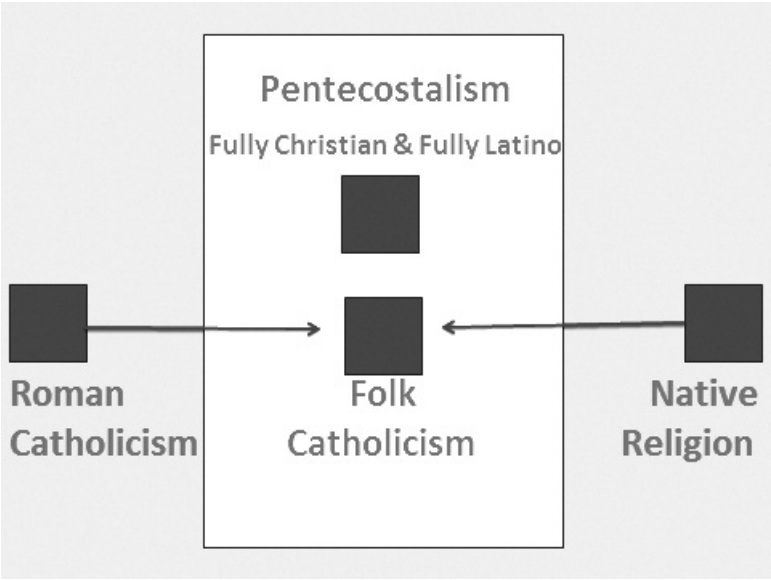

Figure 3: Indigenous Christianity in Latin America

Conclusion

Today, there are two forms of indigenous Christianity in Latin America. One is folk Catholicism. The other is represented by Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement. Folk Catholicism is syncretistic. Pentecostalism may seem syncretistic to the western outsider because it is a native religion that engages all aspects of the Latino worldview. In this regard, it functions at the level of a popular religion and could be described as "folk Christianity." Ultimately, it is a renewal movement that has the potential to evangelize the unchurched masses and liberate Latino Christianity from syncretistic practices associated with popular religiosity. Only time will tell. However, if the current trends continue, the world may witness the rebirth of Christianity in Latin America in this generation.

DANGEROUS LIAISONS: WESLEYAN-HOLINESS ENCOUNTERS WITH POPULAR CULTURE

by

Brannon Hancock

Introduction

Let me begin where I feel like I must always begin: I am a Nazarene pastor's kid. This means I was brought up in a home and religious context that was generally wary of "popular culture." The Church of the Nazarene's position on what our most recent *Manual* refers to as "entertainments subversive of the Christian ethic" (par. 29.1) and "music, literature and entertainments that dishonor God" (par. 21.2.8) has evolved a little bit over my lifetime, but the spirit of the law has remained more or less the same: *Danger: Enter At Your Own Risk*.[1] I never saw the inside of a movie theater until the spring of my senior year of high school when the *Star Wars* trilogy was reissued around the time of my eighteenth birthday. It was quite an event for me (and my friends!) to "lose my movie virginity" at a screening of *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Now, it's not that I was completely sheltered from secular music, movies, TV shows, magazines, novels, and the like. But discernment and

[1]The first *Manuals* of the Church of the Nazarene (I have looked back as early as 1898, so this language exists even prior to the official founding of the denomination in 1908) state, under the section "Church Membership and General Rules" that members of the Church of the Nazarene are expected to "earnestly desire to be saved from all sin, and that they will evidence this desire, First: by avoiding every kind of evil, such as: . . . (7) Such songs, literature and entertainments as are not to the glory of God; the theater, the ballroom, the circus, and like places; also, lotteries and games of chance; looseness and impropriety of conduct." In 1911, "membership in or fellowship with oathbound, secret orders or fraternities" is added to the list of proscribed activities. In the 1915 *Manual*, the following scriptural justification for this position is added: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4). Historically, and in good Wesleyan fashion (no pun intended) the *Manual* has also forbid "popular cultural" expressions such as "indulgence of pride in dress," gambling and lotteries, avoiding shopping or reading the newspaper on Sundays, and of course, use of alcohol and tobacco products.

discrimination were the name of the game (perhaps rightly so), and any popular culture that was consumed gave my parents a potential springboard for conversation of a spiritual nature: *what are their lyrics like? why do you want to watch this show? does this have any swearing? or sex scenes? or "implied sex scenes"?* I remember the buzz surrounding the *Shawshank Redemption* in 1994 when I was a freshman in high school. Many of my friends had seen the film, and were discussing it, and I wanted to be able to engage in those conversations, but I had to wait until the movie came out on video. My dad rented it, and we watched it together, and afterwards had a conversation about the film's theme, including the objectionable content. This experience was formative for me in at least one way that stands out from the rest: my dad was communicating to me that such popular culture (even an R-rated film) was not something to fear, but something to be handled with care, and entered into with a mind engaged; that it can serve as an opportunity to think and reflect, and to undertake such work in community with others; as an opportunity to learn and to grow, not merely to be entertained. I don't recall whether or not we discussed the obvious themes of redemption and resurrection in the film— hadn't yet learned to play "spot-the-Christ-figure," much less the sacramental / baptismal imagery in scenes like this one—but even in our discussion of the moral content and profuse profanity in the film, my dad was conveying to me that God cares about not just *what* bits of popular culture we consume, but also—and perhaps more importantly—*how* we consume it. While the somewhat-"forbidden-fruit" of (secular!) popular culture was made more alluring and attractive to me precisely because it was considered illicit, I was at the same time given a sense that such "entertainments"—the words and emotions of songs, or the fictional worlds on the page or the screen–should be taken quite seriously. I gained a sense that popular and secular culture *could* indeed be dangerous, or even damaging, even to one's soul, and therefore should be handled with discretion, care, and even prayer.

This paper is an attempt to sketch out a framework for engaging popular culture in Wesleyan-Holiness ways—that is to say, in ways that are anchored to some extent in the life, ministry, and *ethos* of John and Charles Wesley, and are consistent with the Wesleyan-Arminian theological tradition.[2] I confess that when I began this work, I had no idea whether

[2]At this stage, I am limiting myself to the Wesleys and their historical-cultural context, although of course there is further work to be done regarding the evolution of the broader Wesleyan tradition; but at this stage, I am only looking for some glimpses into the Wesleys posture toward culture and how that might enrich a Wesleyan Holiness approach to popular culture today. In subsequent steps of this research, I may seek to fill in the gaps between their day and ours.

or not this would be possible. I had a vague hunch that the guy who preached in the fields to sooty coal miners and regarded the world as his parish might provide at least some indirect guidance for how we might engage popular culture, but for all I knew, I could just as easily come up empty. But I began with the assumption that Christians should not hold culture, or popular culture in particular, at arms' length, but rather, should engage it with eyes of faith, seeking where God might want to be made known through a particular artifact, as well as some of the ways pop culture might be employed to direct attention to the Kingdom of God.

I begin with this assumption not simply because I want it to be true, but because I see it in scripture, in the life and ministry of Jesus. In short, we find Jesus right in the mix of the culture of his day; he's neither an outside observer nor one to be assimilated by the dominant culture, but a sanctified engager of culture. We find Jesus looking to the world around him, drawing upon symbols and metaphors from everyday life—items like seeds and soil, fathers and sons, sums of money, lost coins and lost sheep, lamps and oil, servants and their masters—and in his teaching, reframing or re-contextualizing those things so that they point toward the Kingdom of God. This is not simply good pedagogy (though it is!) or evangelism strategy (though it is!), but is part of what "incarnation" is all about: God becoming man in a particular time a place, as a participant, consumer, and shaper of a particular cultural context.[3] Indeed, Jesus creates scandal in his own religious context precisely because of his willingness to violate the purity laws: to eat with sinners and outcasts and touch the untouchable. Nowhere does Jesus appear to be concerned that unclean things may contaminate him; he doesn't avoid touching that which is unclean for the sake of preserving his holiness, but rather, his healing touch makes unclean things clean. This, it seems to me, must be the starting point for any Christian engagement with popular culture.

Popular Culture and other problematic terms

Before going any further, a clarification of terms is in order. First, by *popular culture*, in the contemporary context, I mean more accurately some-

[3]We find another example of this in Acts 17, when in Athens at Mars Hill (Areopagus), St. Paul latches onto the altar "to an Unknown God" and proceeds to redeem and re-narrate this to point to the Creator God, the God who has created us "search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'" (17:27-28a). Interestingly, Paul never once mentions Jesus, although he does proclaim the resurrection.

thing like *mass culture*—the meaning-filled "texts" (in the broadest sense, i.e., artifacts, rituals, practices, etc.) that comprise everyday life. The "high" and "low" culture distinctions that have been drawn in the past by cultural studies discourses fall short in a day when people at both ends of the socio-economic spectrum tend to watch the same movies and television shows, carry the same iPhones, attend or watch the same sporting events (although probably from different seats), are exposed to the same onslaught of advertising, listen to the same music on the same radio stations, and read many of the same books. Rather than "lower" or "baser" forms of culture, I simply mean the culture consumed by "the masses."[4] And while one may still, today, draw a distinction between the popular arts and the "fine arts," even this has lost much of its socio-economic basis, as middle- and lower-classes are, in theory, as likely (or at least as welcome) as anyone else to visit a museum or art gallery or watch a documentary or foreign art film on Netflix as anyone else. The fine arts are not totally beyond the scope of our interest, but for the purposes of this paper, I will set them aside.

It is also important to acknowledge the differences between our day and the eighteenth century of the Wesleys, where socio-economic distinctions were much more rigid and impermeable than they are for us today. As John Brewer has observed, "in the late seventeenth century high culture moved out of the narrow confines of the court and into diverse spaces in London. It slipped out of palaces and into coffee houses, reading societies, debating clubs, assembly rooms, galleries and concert halls; ceasing to be the handmaiden of royal politics, it became the partner of commerce."[5] Hence, as Peter Burke has pointed out, "in the early modern period, popular culture was everyone's culture."[6] So when we think of pop culture in the day of the Wesleys, we should probably think more along the lines of *folk* culture. Popular culture as it is conceived today had yet to be "invented" in

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[4]In contemporary Western society, many of the artifacts that we are interested in (film, TV, advertising, magazines, music, radio, etc) are produced by the small handful of multinational corporations that control the mass media.

[5]John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997), chapter 1 online at http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/b/brewer-imagination.html, accessed 3/3/15.

[6]Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (3rd revised edition; Farnham UK: Ashgate, 2009), p. 28. Cited in Hadfield, Dimmock and Shinn, eds. (2014), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England* (Farnham UK: Ashgate), p. 1.

the Wesleys' day, because pop culture is closely linked to the middle class, which was only beginning to be invented in the eighteenth century. The Industrial Revolution played a major role in "creating" the middle class, and afforded the working classes for the first time both the leisure time and economic resources to engage in such entertainments.

Further, it is important to note that many culture artifacts that today we associate with loftier forms of culture—classic literature, for instance; Dante's *Inferno*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the plays and poems of Shakespeare, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* the poetry of Anglican cleric George Herbert—*were* the popular culture of their day. For us, they are part of the canon of Western Literature, the kinds of things read only by English majors or people with too much time on their hands. But in the early modern period, they were absolutely part of popular culture. Further, the ecclesial culture and the language of the church's liturgy in the form of *Book of Common Prayer* had a defining and unifying effect on English society,[7] and so the church should be regarded as an integral part of pop culture. So while we think of popular culture as TV, movies, music, novels, advertising, magazines, sports, fashion, video games, social media, and so on, in the early modern period, we must consider things like festivals, books, religion, myths and legends, food and drink, games, popular medicine, politics, superstition, and witchcraft.

John Wesley and the Sermons

My first thought in this project was to look to Wesley's sermons for explicit references to pop culture. At a glance, it seems the Wesleyan Holiness attitude I was raised with is fairly consistent with John's spirit, in particular, toward popular culture. The emphasis, for instance, "On Redeeming the Time,"[8] echoed throughout his body of literature, would give us the impression that Christians simply cannot be bothered with worldly distractions. The time is short, we have souls to save, and evangelism is of utmost importance. Further, if we take the few places where he does explicitly address topics that we might correlate to popular culture—consider his sermon "On Dress" for instance—the attitude is decidedly pious and conservative toward "worldliness." Fancy adornments, as an expression of culture, are for Wesley a potential source of pride and vanity, a source of enflaming lust and anger, and a waste of money, amongst other

[7]Hadfield, Dimmock and Shinn, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England* (Farnham UK: Ashgate, 2014), p. 1-2.

[8]John Wesley, Sermon 93, "On Redeeming the Time." Online. http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-93-on-redeeming-the-time, accessed 3/6/15.

things.[9] This sentiment about use of resources appears in many places in Wesley's corpus as well. In short, Christians are to embody godliness holistically, including how they dress, how they spend their time, and what they do with their money. We are left with the sense that Wesley may have been in full favor of our Nazarene statements against "songs, literature and entertainments as are not to the glory of God; the theater, the ballroom, the circus, and like places; also, lotteries and games of chance; looseness and impropriety of conduct"[10] that have been in place from our earliest days. And yet, interestingly, in this same sermon, Wesley twice quotes from popular poets of the day, from George Herbert (a couplet that he either botches or deliberately edits)[11] and Abraham Crowley, as

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[9]John Wesley, Sermon 88 "On Dress." Online. http://www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/Sermon-88-On-Dress#sthash.VOQc2FCu.dpuf, accessed 2/23/14.

[10]*The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* (1898). By comparison, more recent *Manuals* include a much lengthier statement in the "Covenant of Christian Conduct" (formerly the "Special Rules") that may be summarized thus: the three principles that should govern our engagements with "entertainments which are subversive of the Christian ethic" are 1) "stewardship of leisure time"; 2) protection of the home against encroaching moral evil; and 3) "obligation to witness against whatever trivializes or blasphemes God, as well as such social evils as violence, sensuality, pornography, profanity, and the occult. . . ." It is noteworthy, however, that the most recent *Manual* adds the following statement, which shows a healthier posture towards culture and the arts: "we hold that entertainment that endorses and encourages holy living, that affirms scriptural values, and that supports the sacredness of the marriage vow and the exclusivity of the marriage covenant, should be affirmed and encouraged. We especially encourage our young people to use their gifts in media and the arts to influence positively this pervasive part of culture" (see par. 29.1). Further, the most recent *Manual* adds an admonition to "leaders and pastors to give strong emphasis in our periodicals and from our pulpits to such fundamental truths as will develop the principle of discrimination between the evil and good to be found in these media." This appears to shift the posture from outright prohibition to an emphasis on personal responsibility and discernment. The recent edition of the *Manual* also draws upon "the standard given to John Wesley by his mother, namely, 'whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of your body over mind, that thing for you is sin,'" and that this should "form the basis for this teaching of discrimination."

[11]George Herbert (d. 1633), "The Church-Porch" (*The Temple: Sacred Poems and Other Ejaculations*); Wesley writes: "Let thy mind's sweetness have it's operation / upon thy person, clothes and habitation"; Herbert's original is "let thy mindes sweetnesse have his operation / upon thy body, clothes and habitation."

well as from Horace, the Roman lyric poet from the first c. BC—a reflection of the revival classicism in the eighteenth century. Are these not nods to popular culture?

Nevertheless, from what I have found thus far, John's published sermons contain only the occasional reference to popular culture, primarily literary and poetic allusions. However, we must bear in mind that, as Henry Rack points out, "Wesley's printed sermons clearly represent only the solid skeleton of discourses. . . . In practice, Wesley preached extempore for an hour or more and the indications are that, like most preachers, he filled out and varied the basic material with anecdotes and illustrations, sometimes adapted to circumstances or incidents occurring during preaching."[12] Even Wesley's preaching in the "plain style . . . which had been developing since the later seventeenth century," might be seen as an appropriation of a popular cultural form of public oratory.

Charles Wesley and "The True Use of Musick"

Another clear "anchor point" that we might look to is the use of music in early Methodism, particularly Charles's hymns. Without citing the debunked myth, or more properly misnomer, about the Wesleys composing sacred lyrics to "bar tunes" (a misunderstanding of what the "bar tune" or "bar form" actually means in musical nomenclature),[13] Charles did, for instance, enlist J. F. Lampe (1703-1751), a German-born composer and friend of G. F. Handel, to write a couple dozen tunes that accompanied his poetry, which may have been a bid to appeal to audiences of a higher social strata.[14] To describe them as "the Chris Tomlins of their day" may give too much credit to Chris Tomlin, but the point is

[12]Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (3rd ed.; London: Epworth Press, 2002), p. 343-44. I am indebted to my colleague Colleen Derr for directing me to this resource.

[13]See Dean McIntyre, "Did The Wesleys Really Use Drinking Songs Tunes For Their Hymns?" (GBOD online) http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/did-the-wesleys-really-use-drinking-song-tunes-for-their-hymns, accessed 3/6/15; and Dean McIntyre, "Debunking the Wesley Tavern Song Myth" (GBOD online) http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/debunking-the-wesley-tavern-song-myth, accessed 3/6/15.

[14]These appear in Charles Wesley, *Hymns on the Great Festivals* (London: M. Cooper, 1746); 2nd edition (London: Cox, 1753). See the online edition, made available through the website of The Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, Duke Divinity School, with a helpful editorial introduction: https://divinity.duke.edu/sites/divinity.duke.edu/files/documents/cswt/38_Festival_Hymns_%281746%29.pdf, accessed 3/11/15.

well taken. As Patrick Eby pointed out to me, at this time only the metrical psalms would have been sung in public worship in the Church of England, so the early Methodists would have attended mass at their local Anglican parish (as was expected of them) and sung the psalms, and then gathered in the society meetings where they would sing Charles's new, "contemporary" worship songs. In composing lyrics in a great many different poetic meters, but without "set" hymn tunes, Charles also allowed for the localization of the music that would accompany his texts. Notably, many of the suggested hymn tunes of the time bear the names of their place of origin (e.g., Bristol, Leeds, Cambridge, etc.).

Now, again, while the "bar tune" misnomer is just that, according to John Tyson, there was one instance where Charles did something like what we have all often heard about the Wesleys composing new lyrics to "drinking songs," which may lend some credence to the mindset behind the myth. Once when Charles was preaching on the Portsmouth docks, a passing crowd of inebriated sailors howling a dance-hall ditty about the bawdy exploits of a certain "Nancy Dawson" interrupted Charles's sermon. He went out to confront the mob, declaring that he liked their tune, if not their crass lyrics, and challenged them to return later when he would present a new sacred text set to their tune. The result was a hymn published as "On the True Use of Musick":

> Listed into the Cause of Sin / Why should a Good be Evil?
> Musick alas! too long has been / Prest to obey the Devil . . .
> Who on the Part of GOD will rise / Innocent Sound recover
> Fly on the Prey, and take the Prize / Plunder the Carnal Lover
> Strip him of every moving Strain / Every melting Measure,
> Musick in Virtue's Cause retain / Rescue the Noble Pleasure![15]

So, two and a quarter centuries before Larry Norman, Charles was essentially asking the question "why should the Devil have all the good music?"[16]

John Wesley the Publisher

For another anchor point for this project, let us briefly turn to Wesley's work as a publisher not only of his own sermons and treatises, but also of

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[15]John R. Tyson, *Assist Me To Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 268-69. See also, John R. Tyson, ed., *Charles Wesley: A Reader* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1989), p. 221-22.

[16]Larry Norman, "Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?" (musical recording; 1972).

religious texts (such as the 30 volume *Christian Library*) as well as classic literature like Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the 1744 *Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems*. In this, Wesley demonstrates an appreciation for popular literature, albeit (in this case) literature with clear religious themes, allegories, and moral significance. It is important to remember that the most expensive commodity of the printing process in this era was the paper itself, which meant that shorter works were significantly more affordable than longer works. And so, amongst other works intended for popular consumption, we find Wesley publishing penny tracts, uniquely accessible to the poor.[17] Rack calls attention to an unlikely passing reference in one of John's pamphlets to Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, an irreverent novel from the mid-1700s.[18] His efforts with *The Arminian Magazine*, beginning in 1778, are an even better example, as Henry Rack describes:

> occasionally there were more or less secular poems. . . . condensations of travel books and accounts of marvels; oddities of science and anecdotes of 'providences' as well as accounts of supernatural phenomena and apparitions and witchcraft. It is a mistake to dismiss this as peripheral to Wesley's teaching and mission. It is fully in line with his general outlook . . .: to show God's presence and action in the world to sceptics.[19]

As is clear, Wesley wasn't withdrawn from the culture or from the market; Rack describes Wesley as "a religious and cultural mediator from above to below."[20] He was in the mix of things, willing to contribute to and draw upon all aspects of culture as he saw fit, in particular for the benefit of those to whom he felt called to minister.

The Methodist "Associations"

So we begin to see that, as David Hempton has observed, "Methodism was neither at war with all aspects of popular beliefs and customs nor did it tamely adapt to conventional societal norms."[21] Indeed, the societies,

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[17]Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 350.

[18]Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 353; cf. John Wesley, "Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs" (1768), in *Works XI,* p. 31.

[19]Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 350.

[20]Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, p. 352.

[21]David N. Hempton, "Wesley in Context," in Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge UP, 2010), p. 67.

classes, and bands of Methodism can themselves be regarded as an appropriation of a popular cultural form. Historian Peter Clark has characterized Britain in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries as an "associational world."[22] In short, clubs and societies were all the rage in Britain in the day of the Wesleys, and had been for some time. According to Clark, "clubs and societies became one the most distinctive social and cultural institutions in Georgian Britain."[23] People found something meaningful about the way that membership in an association gave them community and identity. However, these were a "primarily urban phenomena" and "nearly always restricted to men,"[24] often catering primarily to the well-to-do. By contrast, early Methodism offered something that was both gender inclusive and targeted toward ordinary people, especially the poor, and as not restricted to urban centers—indeed, as Wesley's influence spreads across the ocean to America, it was not even restricted to Great Britain. So when, beginning in the late 1730s and building on existing societies like the SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), the Wesleys began their effort to revive and renew the Church of England from within by introducing their societies, classes, and bands, they were responding to a felt need within their cultural context and offering a cultural *form* that was quite popular in their day.[25] In this sense, early Methodism may be seen as both a reflection of and a contribution to this associational world.

A Modest Proposal for a Wesleyan Model of Cultural Engagement

It should be clear by now that there is indeed a precedent for popular cultural engagement to be found in the Wesleys and early Methodism, and that we might glean a kind of Wesleyan *ethos* that would guide our engagements with popular culture. Amongst other possibilities, this ethos would always seek to appropriate what is good from popular culture. It would regard as good that which is beneficial, whether edifying to the Christian life or having evangelistic potential to direct attention toward the Good News of the Kingdom. This ethos would *not* regard culture as morally or spiritually neutral, nor all cultural artifacts as equally valuable, but would also caution against that which distracts or creates obstacles in

[22]Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The rise of an associational world* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000). I am indebted to Jason Vickers for directing my attention to this text.

[23]Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p. 2.

[24]Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p. 3.

[25]Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p. 75.

the life of faith. And this Wesleyan ethos would recognize that even avoidance or, indeed, condemnation of certain cultural expressions *is* in fact engagement.

These principles might derive from a historical look at some of the ways the Wesleys engaged and drew upon popular culture. This list is by no means exhaustive, and I invite (challenge, even!) additional work in this area to expand upon, as well as fill in, the historical gap between the Wesleys' day and our. But what I'd like to propose is a Wesleyan framework or hermeneutical model for engagement with popular culture drawn not strictly from this Wesleyan historical *precedent*, but from the structure of Wesley's *ordo salutis*, which guided the organizational structure of Methodism.[26] Namely, the *societies* correspond to prevenient grace; this was the largest group, where the unconverted were welcome and encouraged to come into contact with believers for mutual edification. The *classes* correspond to converting or saving grace, and their goal was perfection in love. And the *bands*—the smallest group for the most spiritually mature—correspond to sanctifying grace. This framework also clearly follows a Trinitarian structure, which commends it to us all the more. Might this provide a framework for different "levels" of popular cultural engagement as well?

In brief, I believe it can. We might formulate three corresponding but distinct levels or modes of cultural engagement (see Fig. 1, below). Beginning at the surface of the text, we might talk about *noetic* ways of reading popular culture; noetic simply refers to mental activity or the intellect. Here we recognize opportunities for theological reflection that arise from cultural "texts" that *explicitly* make reference to God, Jesus, the Bible, religion, religious figures, etc. Cultural texts that prompt this sort of reflection are fairly "on the nose," and do not require particularly well-formed eyes to see or well-tuned ears to be able to hear; texts that prompt questions or reflections about theological matters, but that, in a sense, we do not have to work very hard to get at. Accessible to all, these engagements operate at the level of prevenient grace.

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[26]This model was inspired, to an extent, by my recent reading of Steve Harper's book *The Way To Heaven: The Gospel According to John Wesley* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) where he observes a correlation between prevenient grace in Wesley's *ordo salutis* and the society meetings, where the unconverted were welcome and encouraged to interact with believers. Indeed, this itself may prompt reflections about the redemptive value in allowing the profane to come into contact with the holy. See Harper, p. 146.

A deeper level of engagement, one that requires us to work a bit harder, let us call a *poetic* way of reading culture, referring to *poesis*, a creative making or doing. We hear echoes of the word "poetry," of course, but this is also the Greek word that Jesus uses at the Last Supper when he instructs his disciples to "do this (*touto poieite*) in remembrance of me." This level of cultural engagement requires eyes of faith to see analogies, allegories, symbols and "traces" of the Divine in texts that are far more implicit. In fact, the truth or spiritual value that may be derived from these texts may not be intended by the creator of the cultural artifact at all (demonstrating the fallacy of authorial intention), but may only be known as revelation to those with eyes to see and ears to hear. In this mode, we must construct meaning—it is up to us to "make sense" of the texts and recognize the theological or spiritual significance of the text.

Finally, for a third level of engagement with pop culture, one that requires a sanctified imagination,[27] I have chosen the term *epiphanic*. Epiphany refers to a striking realization or manifestation, as when the wise men arrive to meet the Christ child and recognize him as the promised Messiah (we celebrate this in the Christian calendar on Jan. 6, the feast of Epiphany); or perhaps as well as the meal at Emmaus, when the two travelers recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread (the Greek term here for "recognition" is *anagnoresis*, which has very similar connotations; see Luke 24:13-35, especially verse 31). Epiphanies, properly so-called, should be viewed as rare occurrences resulting from deep and, dare I say, prayerful reflection, for indeed, in the original sense, an epiphany is possible only through Divine revelation. This mode of engagement brings about a sacramental encounter with the "real presence" of the Divine. Following James K. A. Smith's erudite analysis of "cultural liturgies," I would also emphasize the *formational* impact of participating in this mode of engagement.[28]

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[27]The earliest use of the phrase "sanctified imagination" I have been able to find in print appears in *The Works of Abraham Booth, vol. 1* (London: Button & Son, 1813), p. 327. Booth's *The Reign of Grace* (republished in the aforementioned volume) was originally published in 1768; the term appears in Chapter XIII, in the conclusion to the work. Booth (1734-1806) was an English dissenting minister of the Particular Baptist Church that met at Little Prescot Street, Goodman's Fields, London. See also Hugh White, *The Gospel Promotive of True Happiness* (Philadelphia: Herman Hooker, 1848), pp. 213-218.

[28]Cf. James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation (Cultural Liturgies, Vol. 1)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

In a recent *Christianity Today* article, Alissa Wilkinson called for an end of what she terms "lazy cultural engagement," characterized by treating culture as simply illustrations or proof texts for theological principles or moral application. About film in particular, she calls for "something that takes the movie into account both for what it tells us and how it tells us," which "has to do with things like movie history and cinematography and light."[29] I echo her sentiment, and believe she is calling for something like this third-level of cultural critique, where we move beyond the content of the artifact itself—beyond the images or stories or lyrics, beyond whether the content is morally laudable or lamentable, or even beyond whether it is theologically sound or not—to reflection on the form itself, or on the creative process itself and how God might be involved in or revealed through our *epiphanic* engagements with culture. While theological traditions that emphasize total depravity might permit that God may reveal Godself through culture as a function of God's absolute sovereignty, cultural engagement in a Wesleyan key emphasizes that the *imago dei*, though marred, is not entirely obliterated in humanity.[30] We are broken icons, but icons nevertheless. God can speak through human cultural utterance because something of original worth—something redeemable—still exists within the human person. We were created in the image of a creative Creator, and tasked to be stewards of creation, sub-creators with God. So, even if the content of the artifact dishonors God, the creative act itself may reflect something of the glory of the Creator in Whose image we were made. This work is not easy; indeed, I suggest it is impossible without the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

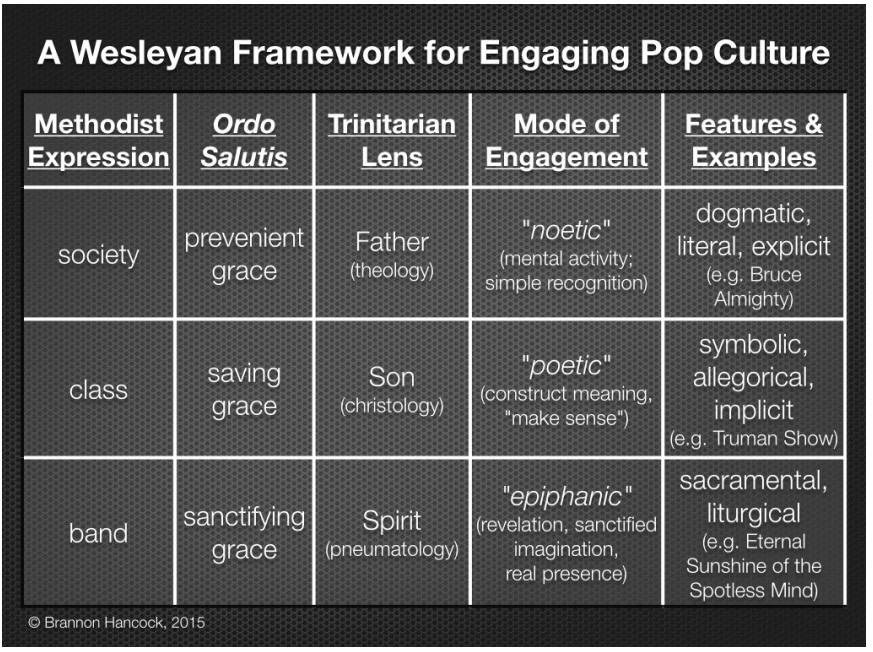
Conclusion

In conclusion, through a historical engagement with the Wesleys and early Methodism, this paper has attempted to sketch one possible Wesleyan model for engagement with popular culture. This is by no means a

[29]Alissa Wilkinson (10/1/2014), "Lazy Cultural Engagement." *Christianity Today* online. http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/october-web-only/lazy-cultural-engagement.html?paging=off#bmb=1, accessed 3/6/15.

[30]I am grateful to David Drury for this insight; namely, that a Wesleyan theological anthropology, with its particular understanding of what depravity is and means, will lead to very different conclusions about how and why God is able to speak through culture. This Wesleyan understanding is rooted also in incarnation; instead of God forcing God's way through from the "top-down," revelation rather percolates, so to speak, up from below. Again, Paul's sermon at Athens is a helpful guide: God has made us that we "would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us" (Acts 17:27, NIV).

finished work, and neither is this model definitive or the last word on this important topic. Much more work remains to be done, not only in particular engagements with particular popular cultural artifacts, but doing so in a Wesleyan key will require further development of this model, perhaps as well as other equally valid models that may emerge. This work will be most beneficial if it is carried out in a community (e.g., the Wesleyan Theological Society, the local church) engaged in what John Wesley called Christian Conference or "holy conversation"—one of the instituted means of grace. In the final instance, this on-going project is about doing the work (work that is, incidentally, much more difficult than simple, uncritical exclusion or embrace) of attending to where God might be seeking to be revealed through popular culture, as well as drawing upon the language and symbols and metaphors of the culture and using them to point toward the Kingdom, so that the culture, which is as ubiquitous as the air we breathe, may become a continual reminder of the Kingdom and a place where God may be revealed.



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[31]Diverse examples from various media (TV, fiction, music, etc.) could be employed in this framework; but Russ Gunsalus pointed out to me that it might be exemplified using only Jim Carrey movies. So, there you have it.

JOHN WESLEY'S *THE SCRIPTURE WAY OF SALVATION:* AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY FORUM

by

Jason Vickers

In 2015, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Wesleyan Theological Society. We also took time to celebrate the 250th anniversary of John Wesley's sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation" (1765). Across the years, there has been no shortage of discussion of this sermon. It is easily among Wesley's most well known and influential sermons.[1] However, scholarly engagement with the sermon has taken place primarily within the discipline of Wesley studies, where the main focus has been on 1) the extent to which "The Scripture Way of Salvation" is truly representative of Wesley's views on salvation; and 2) whether or not the term "way" suggests that a maturing Wesley had a more fluid understanding of salvation (as opposed to the seemingly more rigid understanding suggested by the term "order" in the phrase *ordo salutis*).[2]

Rather than simply rehearse debates that would be very familiar to many conference attendees, we decided to invite three younger scholars to examine and respond to "The Scripture Way of Salvation" from the vantage point of their respective disciplines. More specifically, we asked Presian Burroughs to interact with Wesley's sermon from the standpoint of contemporary biblical studies. We then asked Justus Hunter to engage the sermon from the vantage point of historical theology. Finally, we invited John Drury to enter into dialogue with the sermon from the standpoint of contemporary dogmatic theology. What follows here are lightly edited transcripts of their presentations.

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[1]For more on the history and importance of this sermon, see the introductory comments in *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection for the Christian Journey*, edited by Kenneth J. Collins and Jason E. Vickers (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2015), 581; and *John Wesleys Sermons: An Anthology*, edited by Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 371.

[2]On this later issue, see Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 13-17.

WESLEY'S REPRESENTATION OF SALVATION IN "THE SCRIPTURE WAY OF SALVATION": A PAULINE ASSESSMENT

by

Presian Burroughs

If I had the privilege of speaking with John Wesley today—and could understand his English accent!—I would commend him for his insightful exposition on faith and salvation in his sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation."[3] His soteriology clearly finds its roots in the Christian Scriptures, for he understands the faith that saves to be simultaneously the faith that sanctifies; in other words, God's salvation transforms God's people. Moreover, Wesley understands salvation and the faith by which one receives it as fundamentally relational. God's salvation brings reconciliation and peace between God and humans.

Since the time of John Wesley's ministry, biblical scholarship has deepened our comprehension of soteriology in ways that assist us in assessing, amending, and appropriating Wesley's poignant presentation of God's salvation in "The Scripture Way of Salvation." As we reflect critically on his account of salvation, we rediscover a distinctively Wesleyan vision of the gospel for our context today. My critique of *this* sermon purposely focuses on this sermon alone, apart from Wesley's other writings. As a student of Paul, I admittedly view Wesley's scriptural salvation through a lens shaped markedly by the Pauline Epistles. With these limits to my field of vision, I would suggest that Wesley provides a robust account of salvation even though that "salvation" often focuses exclusively on the individual human. Nevertheless, even though Wesley's scriptural salvation may appear overly individualistic to modern eyes, it helpfully highlights the real effects of salvation for transforming *this* life.

Wesley takes as his homiletical starting point a portion of Ephesians 2:8, "Ye are saved through faith."[4] Though by itself this verse seems to address discrete individuals, the wider context of Ephesians concerns itself with corporate aspects of salvation, which Wesley overlooks.

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[3]I thank Jason Vickers for inviting me to consider Wesley's scriptural account of salvation from a modern vantage point.

[4]John Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 372.

Although Wesley acknowledges the ways in which God's grace ("the work of God") may "include all that is wrought in the soul by which is frequently termed 'natural conscience', but more properly, 'preventing grace' . . . all the *convictions* which his Spirit from time to time works in every child of man," he focuses in this sermon upon a specific subset of salvation—that of justification and sanctification of the individual.[5]

Although he often depicts salvation using first person plural pronouns ("we" and "us"), Wesley in fact articulates a soteriology that addresses only the individual human self. Salvation involves "the forgiveness of all our sins," "our acceptance with God," and our being "born again"; we newly experience "love to all mankind"; "we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God."[6] While I by no means deny these individual dimensions of salvation, I would suggest that they ignore important corporate elements of salvation to which the author of Ephesians turns in the second half of chapter 2.

Ephesians 2:11-22 powerfully directs our attention to the corporate aspects of God's salvation, God's miraculous work of bringing Jews and Gentiles together into one body. God's salvation involves actual reconciliation between hostile groups. As we look beyond this letter, we find that salvation according to Paul repeatedly involves social groups, not simply individuals. For example, in Rom 10:1 Paul expresses his longing for the corporate salvation of Israel and in 11:11 he explains that salvation has come to the nations ("Gentiles") because of corporate Israel's momentary rejection of Jesus as Messiah. Ultimately, the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah by corporate Israel will usher in "life from the dead," resurrection (Rom 11:15). And when God's children are raised from the dead and revealed in glory, non-human creation itself will be fully liberated from its bondages to futility and destruction and will participate with glorified humanity in freedom (Rom 8:19-23). God's work of salvation is corporate, even creational, in scale.

Even still, by so stressing the salvation of entire people groups, Paul does not deny individual agency, action, confession, and even responsibility in the reception and completion of salvation (Rom 10:9-10; 11:14; Phil 2:12-13). As practicing Wesleyans, I'd like us to consider how we might hold together the individual elements of salvation with the creational in our preaching and teaching today.

Another way in which Wesley's account of salvation here is overly individualistic is in its overemphasis on inward, almost private, matters. To be sure, Wesley insists that God's salvation transforms the individual

[5]Ibid., 373.
[6]Ibid., 373-374.

in ways that are by no means private, for sanctification leads a person to perform "works of mercy, whether they relate to the bodies or souls of men."[7] Salvation entails relational changes. Yet notice, for Wesley, these changes stem from an inward, individualized transformation of circumstances (for example, the ways in which one is moved internally by divine love). Critics today might suggest that Wesley's way of salvation here attends insufficiently to the social forces—as Paul might say the *spiritual* forces—that hold people and all creation captive to injustice and destruction. It is not enough that a person is cleansed of the evil within the self, for evil threatens holiness and wellbeing from without, as Ephesians 6:12 powerfully illustrates: "For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (NRSV). Salvation involves God's redemption and rectification of *systemic* evils, not only of individual evil. Thus, in contradistinction to what is presented in "The Scripture Way of Salvation," biblical salvation is not limited to a Christian's personal relationship with God or even to the multitudinous relationships he or she has with God and members of creation. Salvation involves the rectification of all things —things seen and unseen, things in heaven and on earth. Thus, with Paul, I must encourage Wesleyans to highlight the systemic, cosmic, and creational forms of salvation that we experience now and for which we as yet hope, yearn, and work. For God's ultimate salvation involves a radically corporate, cosmic, spiritual, and creational event.

That God's salvation is something for which we continue to wait brings us to my next point. Salvation, as it is presented in this sermon, is experienced here and now. In expositing Ephesians 2:8, Wesley emphasizes the present and ongoing nature of salvation (as expressed by the perfect participle). Salvation is *not* otherworldly, a "going to heaven, eternal happiness" and "is not the soul's going to paradise."[8] In this sermon especially, Wesley insists that God's salvation makes a difference now, and he understands God's gracious salvation as holistic, as redeeming and reforming a person from the inside out. "It is not something at a distant: it is a present thing . . . the entire work of God, from the first dawning of

[7]Ibid., 378. Exposing his too narrow definition of salvation in this sermon, Wesley explains: "we wait for entire sanctification, for a full salvation from all our sins, from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief, or, as the Apostle expresses it, 'Go on to perfection.' But what is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love" (ibid., 374).

[8]Ibid., 372.

grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory."[9] I would suggest that Wesley's focus on the present effects of salvation provides a helpful corrective to "pie in the sky Christianity," a one-sided, overly spiritualized depiction of salvation that infects many sermons today.

By emphasizing that salvation "is not a blessing which lies on the other side of death" and that "[y]e *have been* saved,"[10] Wesley echoes the highly realized soteriology of Ephesians. The author of Ephesians gives readers the impression, by employing aorist verbs, that they have already been enlivened (*sunezōopoiēsen*, 2:5) and raised (*sunēgeiren*, 2:6). In the Pauline corpus these verbs describe the divine activity of resurrecting dead human life. The undisputed and disputed Pauline Epistles differ, however, in how they employ these verbs. When Paul, in the undisputed epistles, describes God's activity of "raising" and "making alive" he consistently uses the past tense to depict God's activity of resurrecting Jesus. Thus, Jesus was raised and made alive after his death on the cross (Rom 4:24, 25; 6:4, 9; 7:4; 8:11, 34; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:4, 12, 20; 2 Cor 4:14; 5:15; Gal 1:1). The undisputed Paul, moreover, employs the *future* tense to describe God's resurrection of human beings other than Jesus. In the eschatological future, God *shall* raise and make alive those who are "in Christ" (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:22, 52; 2 Cor 4:14). As a disputed letter, Ephesians 2:5-6 and its aorist verbs stand in some contrast to the foregoing examples by implying that Christians have already been made alive and raised with Christ, at least in some sense.

While this distinction between the so-called disputed and undisputed epistles provides an interesting lens through which we might read the Pauline corpus, it does not by itself determine our theological stance. We recognize all the epistles as authoritative scripture. However, it seems prudent for us *not* to stress a realized resurrection life too much, especially in light of what appears to be the spiritual arrogance of some Corinthian Christians whom Paul chastises for still living as flesh-driven infants in Christ even though they claim to be wise and spiritual (1 Cor

[9]Ibid. Although Wesley begins with Eph 2:8 and presents his reflections in a way that makes them appear as though they are drawn primarily from the letter to Ephesians, he in fact depends upon his own synthesis of the Pauline corpus. For example, while expositing Eph 2:8 he states, "we are at present concerned only with that salvation which the Apostle is directly speaking of. And this consists of two general parts, justification and sanctification" (ibid., 373). Although the author of Ephesians uses terms related to "justification" and "sanctification," the author does not mention justification (*dikaiōsis*) or sanctification (*hagiasmos*) explicitly or "directly."

[10]Ibid., 372. Emphasis his.

3:1-4). Salvation, as we find it articulated by Paul, is something for which we continue to wait (cf., Romans 13:11 and Titus 2:13). But what, for Wesley and Paul, does salvation entail?

According to Wesley, salvation is a gracious act of God involving justification and sanctification. To my knowledge, theologians have traditionally understood justification and sanctification as describing the salvation of human beings and not the salvation of other-than-human creation. At the very outset, then, we find Wesley limiting the scope of God's salvation simply by his choice of words. Although it is arguable that all of the Pauline corpus and the Christian Scriptures in their entirety are anthropocentric in nature, I would contend that Wesley's present sermon unnecessarily concentrates God's work of salvation—termed therein as justification and sanctification—on the human being to the neglect of God's liberation of all creation.

Wesley defines justification as "pardon," "the forgiveness of all our sins," (373) and entails "our acceptance with God" and "the peace of God."[11] For Wesley, justification consists of a forensic as well as a relational component. Forensically speaking, saved individuals are pardoned for the many ways in which they have broken God's commands. Relationally speaking, those who once opposed God and set themselves up as enemies of God are reconciled to God through justification. The reason Wesley can proclaim such a radical pardon for sinners depends, of course, upon the righteous living and dying of Jesus, the "meritorious" sacrifice of his life.[12]

Along with this apparently "legal" declaration in which sinners are justified before God, Wesley rightly insists that true justification leads to the transformation of sinners into saints through the process of sanctification. Wesley resists the misguided belief that God's justification simply and repeatedly provides pardon to those who confess their sins to God on Sunday but all the while intend to "live like hell" the rest of the week. For Wesley, justification is not a legal fiction. It effects real change in a person's heart, soul, mind, and relationships, even if the person has no opportunity to demonstrate that change through holy living (in other words, if the person experiences a death-bed conversion).[13]

Recent scholarship on Paul also stresses that justification (or rectification) is primarily a relational process rather than merely a forensic one.

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[11]Ibid., 373.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., 373-374. Wesley's statement that "repentance and fruits meet for repentance" "are necessary *conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for them" suggests that true justification is possible even when a person has no opportunity to demonstrate peace with God through righteous living (ibid., 376).

"Justification" involves a covenantal process in which a person who failed to meet the requirements of God's gracious covenant was not only "pardoned" for sin but also reconciled to God, rectified in his or her relationships with God and the community. Justification involves rehabilitation and transformation.

In light of the highly relational tenor of justification—and salvation, more generally—in the Pauline Epistles, it makes sense that recent discussions of "faith" as the way to salvation highlight faith's relational character. In some respects Wesley gets this correct. For him, faith results from divine revelatory action, for faith "implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God and the things of God, a kind of spiritual *light* exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural *sight* or perception therefore."[14] Faith, moreover, is "the condition, and the only condition of justification."[15] The substance or object of this faith is the assurance that "'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,' but also that Christ 'loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.' "[16] Wesley holds together head and heart in his doctrine of saving faith. Saving faith is not merely rational assent to the historic doctrines of the church; it is also a personal experience involving assurance and trust.

By stressing the personal experience of faith, Wesley follows in the Apostle Paul's footsteps, though with different words and forms of expression. I would suggest that we learn from those theologians and biblical scholars who suggest that Paul's soteriology is *participatory*. For Paul, the "saints," those "in Christ," are people who have committed themselves to Messiah Jesus and mystically participate in his incarnational life of self-giving love and in his heavenly reign of justice, mercy, and peace. In this way, they live in faith, in fidelity. The Christian has been crucified and put in the tomb with Christ through baptism and will be raised with Christ in glory (Rom 4:24-5:2; 6:3-5; 8:11-17; Gal 2:19-20; 1 Thess 1:4-10). A real, though sometimes impalpable, change has taken place—the person is transferred from one form of slavery (to sin and death) to another form of slavery (to righteousness, God, and life). To combine Wesley and Paul's forms of expression, we might say that saving faith transfers a person from one set of lordships (this world) to another (God and his Christ). This form of trust is thoroughly embodied in daily life such that the faithful turn from idols to the living God (1 Thess 1:4-10), repent of sin, live in righteousness, and follow Jesus to the death. This kind of faith—saving faith—is nicely captured in Paul's phrase the "obedience of faith" (Rom 1:5; 16:26) and in Wesley's "The Scripture Way of Salvation."

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[14]Ibid., 374.
[15]Ibid., 375.
[16]Ibid. Here, Wesley quotes 2 Cor 5:19 and Gal 2:20.

"DIALECTIC BORN OF LOVE": A REFLECTION ON SERMON 48

by

Justus H. Hunter

It is said that Aquinas, when preaching on our Lord's Passion, had to stop the sermon while the people wept. This from a man whose sermon *Emitte Spiritum*, an exposition of Psalm 103 for Pentecost, delivers such utterances as "the name 'spirit' seems to convey four things: subtleness of substance, perfection of life, impulse of motion, and hidden origin." He then proceeds to analyze each term in an order that can only be called meticulous. Perhaps a student of the Parisian Master could appreciate, or at least tolerate, the rigor of Aquinas's sermons, but a break for weeping seems rather incongruous.

We have no record that Aquinas ever took Ephesians 2:8 for his sermon text, as Wesley did on several occasions, most notably 250 years ago, in what we now know as Sermon 43, or "The Scripture Way of Salvation." Thomas's preferences were for the Psalms and Gospels. Like Wesley, though, he loved to preach. As a Master, he undertook his responsibility to preach (*praedicare*) with the same resolve and enthusiasm he undertook the other responsibilities of his office: to comment (*legere*) and to dispute (*disputare*). His sermons convey piety and principle. But Thomas was not very conscientious about the collation and circulation of his sermons—he saw to it on four occasions, from which we ascertain most of what we know of his preaching. Bonaventure was just the opposite. He gathered and circulated his homilies frequently. And history has rewarded his efforts; hundreds of the Seraphic Doctor's sermons have come down to us, many with dozens of manuscripts.

Reception can be very telling. No one could have predicted the influence Thomas's *Summa Theologiae* was to have, when, on December 6, 1273, he ceased composing the massive work which had engaged him for seven years. And yet, the text is now a paragon of theological exposition. Rare is the graduate survey which does not consider it. As rare is the seminar that touches Thomas's sermons. And while recent trends in Thomism have embraced Chenu and Torrell's case for the importance of his Scriptural commentaries, Bataillon's attention to the sermons has gained little traction.

We should not exaggerate the significance of this oversight; the syntheses of Aquinas are exquisite as cathedrals, to borrow Edgardo Colon-Emeric's metaphor. Yet one familiar with the extended debates over Wesley's mode of theologizing cannot avoid a certain affinity of judgment concerning these diverse figures. For Methodism's founder, his sermons have, at times, been given *apologia*. He was a folk theologian, his thought transmitted in homilies, hymns, catechisms, liturgies, somewhat embarrassing when compared to the "Systems" of what Outler dubbed academic theology that ordinarily capture the imagination of contemporary theologians. Conversations circulating about this Society and elsewhere have challenged these intuitions, producing more sensible and appreciative assessments in ways that Outler anticipated. To cite the most influential example, Maddox states with much approbation:

> [As] Wesley understood and practiced theology, the defining task of "real" theologians was neither developing an elaborate System of Christian truth-claims nor defending these claims to their "cultured despiser;" it was nurturing and shaping the worldview that frames the temperament and practice of believers' lives in the world.[17]

For Maddox, Wesley recovers early Christian conceptions of "theology *per se* as a practical endeavor," a recovery as valuable as it is timely.[18]

I want suggest that medieval theology, in particular that of the Schoolmen, provide substantive, and illuminating, analogies with Wesley's theological activity. Paul Vignaux has argued that medieval scholasticism did not arise as an alternative to mysticism. Rather, scholastic theologians of the thirteenth century employed their analytical rigor to explore *and provoke* faith. Theirs was, as Vignaux puts it, a "dialectic born of love."[19] Dialectic, the application of logic and grammar, is a form of devotion. Drawing upon Sermon 43, I will show that Wesley, like his

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[17]Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 17.

[18]Randy Maddox, "John Wesley—Practical Theologian?," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 23 (1988): 122.

[19]Vignaux, in describing Anselm's *fides quaerens intellectum*, states, "Dialectic born of love aims only for an *aliquatenus intelligere*, not for a *penetrare*—some measure of understanding, but not pentration." The comment bespeaks a union of mysticism and scholasticism in the theology of the Middle Ages. Paul Vignaux, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: An Introduction*, trans. E.C. Hall (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 40.

medieval forbears of whom he had little direct knowledge, likewise conceived of theology as "a dialectical activity born of love."

Much has been made of Wesley's genius for holding "productive tensions." Putatively, Wesley upholds alternatives ordinarily set against one another. He affirms law *and* grace, freedom *and* justice, personal *and* social holiness. What is striking to one at home in thirteenth century commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* is the congruity between the way in which Wesley manages alternatives, and the dialectical tools employed by scholastic theologians. Wesley's use of dialectic and logic in Sermon 43, to my eyes, does not uphold tension. Rather, Wesley applies the dialectician's tools in order to determine apparent contradictions. But there is resolution. The result is neither tenuous nor tensive, but firm. And that surety eventuates in expositions of the Christian faith that are as precise as they are persuasive.

Medieval *sententiae*—sentences—emerge out of the long tradition of Scripture *glosses*, authoritative interpretations of Scripture by early Christians. Over time, these *Glossa* expanded from marginal comments to compendia of authoritative "sentences" from the Fathers—Greek and Latin. The dialectician Peter Abelard shows an important application of these *sententiae* for medieval theology: they could be arranged into affirmations and denials of various theological assertions. Abelard's *Sic et non, Yes and No*, was developed as a handbook for training students in the application of dialectics—that is, logic and grammar—to apparently authoritative contradictions. Logical and semantic subtlety resolved *prima facie* disputes by developing increasingly precise responses to the question at hand. By aligning authorities and resolving dilemmas in this way, theologians sought understanding of the faith received.

As Outler notes, Sermon 43 follows a lengthy and intense reflection on the kind of causality exercised by Christ's atoning death in justification. After years of reflection, Wesley determined that Christ's atoning death was not the formal, but the meritorious cause of justification. As Wesley makes explicit in Sermon 20, "The Lord Our Righteousness," and elsewhere, the dispute *must* be determined accordingly. This determination, Wesley argues in Sermon 43, is integral to his doctrine of grace. His decision is rigorous, compelling, and decisive.

That decisiveness is apparent in Sermon 43: Salvation is the entire work of God. Salvation is by faith. Christ is the meritorious cause of justification. Our righteousness is the righteousness of Christ. These assertions are substantiated and clarified by extended arguments, in which Wesley overcomes objections and refines his claims. Put somewhat differ-

ently, he deploys the tools of the dialectician. Wesley sees objections as opportunities for subtlety, and so, on one occasion, he distinguishes necessary from conditional and immediate from remote conditions. Wesley's "dialectics" eventuate in conclusions. He determines.

But one might object: Did not Wesley, in "The Lord Our Righteousness," commend a certain theological liberty, provided a common spirit and sentiment? Do his words not authorize varied ways of speech? Did Wesley not hold, as Outler put it, a "radical ambiguity of religious language?"[20]

Indeed, in Sermon 20, as elsewhere, Wesley distinguishes between "word" and "sentiment" or "spirit." He insists that only the latter is a necessary condition for membership in the body of the faithful. But he is unequivocally clear that *his* determinations are the best explications of that "spirit," as he is clear that careful explication is *his* obligation. As he puts it in "The Scripture Way of Salvation":

> So much the more should we take all possible care to avoid all mistake concerning (salvation and faith), and to form a true and accurate judgment concerning both the one and the other.[21]

I suspect theologians of the thirteenth century would delight in Wesley's deployment of dialectics in Sermon 43. Not only because Wesley employs dialectics, or something rather like it. But more importantly, Wesley's dialectics are born from love.

In Wesley's hand, logical and semantic tools return to the form of their eleventh and twelfth century crafters, for whom scholasticism and mysticism were not opposed. To cite one particularly striking instance, Wesley gives four conditions for entire sanctification at the conclusion of Sermon 43 that are as rigorous as they are moving.

At the conclusion of Sermon 43, Wesley returns to his definition of faith as "divine evidence and conviction," the twofold gift of the Spirit cited in section II, paragraph 1—as an aside, Aquinas supplies a nearly identical twofold gift in a reflection on Ephesians 2:8 in the *Summa Theologica*.[22] Wesley gives four necessary convictions for perfection in love: that God has promised it in Scripture, that God is able to perform it, that

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[20]John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons I 1-33*, ed. Albert Outler, vol. I (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 455, n31.

[21]Sermon 43, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," 2.

[22]II-II, q. 6, a. 1, *sed contra*.

God is willing and able to do it now, and that God does it now. That is, Wesley establishes, first, that both necessary conditions for God's producing a contingent effect—its possibility and a divine volition—are satisfied. He then produces an argument from his established premise. Since the necessary and sufficient condition for salvation is faith *simpliciter*, nothing prevents perfection in love from becoming a present reality. Finally, completing the logic of the argument, he adds one more condition: that God does it *in fact*. His final condition is not only a tidy bit of logical housekeeping. It issues in a description of perfection in love so compelling that the hearer is driven toward the reality under analysis. Here Wesley's dialectic, born from love, issues in love, elicits love.

With Wesley, as with Aquinas and others, we find logic in service of devotion. Vignaux's "religious sentiment and logical rigor" coincide. Dialectic is born of, and returns to, love.

TEN DOGMATIC THESES ON JOHN WESLEY'S "THE SCRIPTURE WAY OF SALVATION"

by

John L. Drury

Thesis 1: "The Scripture Way of Salvation" is a core canonical text for Wesleyan soteriology. My point here is simple: "The Scripture Way of Salvation"[23] (hereafter SWS) is on the short list of texts Wesleyans must interact with in order to count themselves as Wesleyan.[24] Over the course of our history it has come to function among the criteria of Wesleyan identity.[25] I say this about SWS *as a text*. Its content may be criticized; its form may be contextualized. But SWS as a text cannot be simply set aside. For a soteriology to count as Wesleyan, it must contend with SWS. It is a normative text, one to which we are held responsible.[26]

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[23]There are many relevant editions of this sermon. The version I used in preparing for this panel appears in Albert Cook Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *John Wesley's sermons: an anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), pp. 371-380. Hereafter cited by its internal numbering system.

[24]My own pragmatic-historicist notion of canon has developed in conversation with various sources, two of which seem worthy of mention here: Richard Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres" in Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner, eds. *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 49-76 and William J. Abraham, *Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology: From the Fathers to Feminism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), especially chapters 1, 2 and 17.

[25]Needless to say, I am presupposing a clear distinction between a criterion of identity and a criterion of truth; otherwise I could not criticize the content of the text without falling into incoherence.

[26]Again, a shout-out to my influences seems appropriate here. My notion of normativity as inter-subjective responsibility is broadly Hegelian, especially as received and reinterpreted in the pragmatist tradition. Robert Brandon has been most instructive for me on this point—though it should go without saying that I forgo total endorsement of his project and perspective. See especially his *Tales of the Mighty dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), especially chapters 6 & 7; *Reason in Philosophy: Animating Ideas* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), chapters 1-3; *Perspectives on Pragmatism: Classical, Recent, and Contemporary* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. 1-34.

Now this seems to just simply be the case. It is a contingent truth of history. However, I think there are good reasons for SWS to have emerged as a canonical Wesleyan text. I hope that these reasons will emerge over the course of the following theses. Here is how I will proceed. I am going to identify three aspects of the text that express canonical conceptualities for Wesleyan dogmatics: Soteriological Holism, Soteriological Narrativity, and Soteriological Bifocality. I will dedicate three theses to each of these habits of thought. First, I will explicate the concept and thereby commend its dogmatic necessity. Second, I will to analyze some insufficiencies in Wesley's own formulation of the said concept and thereby call for dogmatic development. Third, I will identify dangers in the concept itself in order to disrupt any self-congratulatory Wesleyan *Bildung*.

I.

Thesis 2: SWS articulates a soteriological holism binding for Wesleyan dogmatics. What do I mean by Soterioligcal Holism? After opening with Ephesians 2:8, Wesley begins the first section of SWS thus:

> And, first, let us inquire, What is salvation? The salvation which is here spoken of is not what is frequently understood by that word, the going to heaven, eternal happiness. It is not the soul's going to paradise, termed by our Lord, "Abraham's bosom." It is not a blessing which lies on the other side death; or, as we usually speak, in the other world. The very words of the text itself put this beyond all question: "Ye are saved." It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing; a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of. Nay, the words may be rendered, and that with equal propriety, "Ye have been saved": so that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul, till it is consummated in glory.[27]

That is Soteriological Holism in a nutshell: the inclusion of all three tenses of salvation. Stated negatively: Soteriological Holism is the non-reduction of salvation to its past, present, or future dimensions. Wesley here blocks any such soteriological reductionisms, around which a typology of modern denominations could be so easily constructed. I believe such soteriological holism to be binding for Wesleyan dogmatics. Any reduction of salvation to just one tense contradicts the whole spirit of the Wesleyan

[27]"Scripture Way of Salvation," I.1.

tradition. In fact, many of the recurring problems in the Wesleyan tradition can be remedied by a vigilant refusal to reduce salvation to the past, the present, or the future.

Thesis 3: Wesley's own soteriological holism is insufficiently embodied. You can see this right in the quote above, though it is certainly not limited to this sermon. John Wesley is still too narrowly centered on the soul, i.e., the independent human inner essence and its invisible journey unto true happiness. Now it would be an anachronistic accusation to say Wesley's soteriology is uniquely disembodied. He shares this insufficiency with a long-standing tradition. Against this backdrop, Wesley can be praised for greater care and concern for the body. So embodiment can and does get added, but that's precisely the problem: it is *added* to a soul-centered paradigm. His soteriology is not sufficiently holistic at its core. The liberation and flourishing of bodily life must be articulated as internal to the fullness of salvation in all its tenses. To be faithful to Wesley we must radicalize his own holism.[28]

Thesis 4: Soteriological holism is itself dangerous. Holism is not optional for Wesleyans. But we ought to be wary of its dangers. What is dangerous about soteriological holism? Ironically, holism can be just another reductionism. For it is often (always?) over-determined by teleology, i.e., growth toward an end. What unifies the three tenses of salvation is the progressive movement toward a goal. Holism encloses the gospel within a paradigm of making progress, getting better, becoming godlier.[29] Now this is not wrong in and of itself. But it needs to be repeatedly shaken up an apocalyptic vision.[30] Salvation is not only the whole work of

[28]This radicalization can be performed along various lines. My own preferences are immaterial to the argument above. But I'll mention them here, simply as illustrative: (1) the embodiment of past salvation consists in the God's election of Israel fulfilled in Jesus by his life of love unto death; (2) the embodiment of present salvation consists in communion with the risen Jesus as he encounters us in the visible body of our brother, neighbor, and enemy; and (3) the embodiment of future salvation consists in the resurrection of the body unto life everlasting on a new earth under a new heaven.

[29]Concerning the deep teleological structure of Wesley's theology, there is no better resource than

[30]The most important Wesleyan critic of teleology is Craig Keen. This implicit concern is woven throughout his many essays, including those collected in Thomas J. Bridges and Nathan R. Kerr, eds., *The Transgression of the Integrity of God: Essays and Addresses* (Eugene, Or: Cascade Books, 2012). My own theological development, and especially my continuance as a self-consciously Wesleyan theologian, is inconceivable with Craig's work.

God in us from beginning to end. It is also the singular work of God for us in which God opens-up the totality of his embrace of us. Salvation is not only our journey into God, but also God's journey into us; not only our becoming more like him, but also his becoming more like us. The holism of salvation consists not only in the totality of what we get from God but also in the totality of God's grasp of us. God grabs us as wholes, taking on the total mess that we are. God's own telos is his deep intimacy with us, even and precisely in our own godlessness. We only become godly because God first became ungodly. So let us beware of holism without embrace, of teleology without touch, of transformation without transfiguration. God does not wait for us to become good enough for him. The teleological trip we take is crisscrossed throughout by an apocalyptic irruption to which we must also attend.[31]

So, in short, to be Wesleyan, we must be just as holistic as Wesley, and in fact more than him, yet do so wary of the dangers of holism itself.

II.

Thesis 5: SWS articulates a soteriological narrativity binding for Wesleyan dogmatics. In this sermon, Wesley tells a particular story about salvation. It is tempting to claim that his particular narrative is binding for Wesleyans. But I do not believe his actual plotting of the story of the Christian life is binding as such. For one, selecting the Wesley of 1765 over-against any earlier or later formulations is an ironically ahistorical move. There is no absolutely binding Wesleyan soteriological narrative. However, there is at least one feature common throughout Wesley's development: that soteriology is narratively structured.[32] For Wesley, salvation

[31]Perhaps it goes without saying that the specter of Karl Barth hovers over this paragraph. I gladly confess his abiding influence. However, it is worth noting that the tension between teleology and apocalyptic is not foreign to Barth's work. While apocalyptic dominates his early work (especially the second edition of the Romans commentary), a teleological shift can be discerned by at least the mid-thirties (cf. esp. *Church Dogmatics* II/1, §31.3). And yet a simple "from-to" story will not do, as the two motifs coexist to the end of his career (cf. esp. *Church Dogmatics* IV/3, §69.3).

[32]Despite their many interpretive quarrels, Ken Collins and Randy Maddox share a commitment to the narrativity of salvation—as all Wesleyan theologians must! Their ongoing *Auseinandersetzung* over the substance and structure of the story of salvation operates wholly within the shared sense that salvation is a story. Cf. Randy Maddox, *Responsible grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994) and Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007).

is a story. It is a path, a way, a plot. This is not a feature common to all Christian traditions. For many, the *ordo salutis* is an exclusively logical not chronological ordering. Wesley shares the broadly pietist instinct that Christian soteriology describes the developmental plot of actual lives.[33] So I want to assert that such narrativity in soteriology is determinative for Wesleyan dogmatics. We can (and should) contest particular proposed plot lines. But we cannot jettison narrativity without ceasing to be Wesleyan.

Thesis 6: Wesley's own soteriological narrativity is insufficiently social. Wesley's narrative is primarily a self-narration without social narration. There are many sides to this critique: ontological, epistemological, political. But the most obvious is the ecclesiological side: the church is not internal to Wesley's soteriological narrative. Of course, it would be downright silly to suggest that the church is incidental to Wesley's theology. No! According to Wesley, the church is indispensible. However, it is indispensible primarily as a means: the means by which God saves us.[34] Individual soteriology is the basic plot line. What's missing from this sermon (and from most of Wesley's writings) is salvation as the story of God's redemption of a people—not just of persons through a people. This aspect must be drawn to the fore, so that the story of the self is embedded within the larger story of the church. To be faithful to Wesley we must widen his own narrativity.

This ecclesiological criticism is rooted in a more fundamental ontological one: the story of salvation Wesley tells is ultimately only our story, not God's. Strictly speaking, God is in the story. God is writing, causing, using the story, but not a character in the story as such. Wesley is not uniquely guilty in this regard. Western Christianity in general has difficulty digesting the thought that God's being is per se narratable.[35] It

[33]I have explored this theme briefly in John L. Drury, "Barth and Testimony," in Christian T. Collins Winn and John L. Drury, eds., *Karl Barth and the Future of Evangelical Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014), pp. 102-114. For a much fuller treatment, see Amanda Drury, *Saying is Believing: The Necessity of Testimony in Adolescent Spiritual Development* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2015).

[34]It seems to me that this dialectic partially accounts for the continually contested character of Wesleyan sacramentology.

[35]Needless to say, there are good reasons for this indigestion. Although I am committed to the claim that narrative is ontologically basic, I would be remiss to not acknowledge this strong counter-claim. Perhaps the best recent attack on narrative theology can be found in Francesca A. Murphy, *God is Not a Story: Realism Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

seems to me that ecclesiology alone will not repair the sociality of soteriology. What is needed is a more radical narrativity: a narrative ontology, that is, one that speaks of God's being as in act, in this act, in story. The storyness of God's life is not a game he plays with us to teach us timeless truths and/or move us toward timeless goods, but the temporal outworking of his own divine life, a life that has a narrative structure to it in his triunity, from and to all eternity. On this reading, salvation is the intimate participation of the creature in this story, such that salvation is fundamentally social. For salvation just is the social story of the communion between the triune God and us in time. Only on these or some similar terms will the church be *intrinsic* to the story of salvation.[36] That's the sort of radical narrativity I recommend, all in service of being faithful to Wesley's own narratival soteriology.

Thesis 7: Soteriological narrativity is itself dangerous. Narrativity is not optional for us as Wesleyans. But it is dangerous. The great irony is that when we think in terms of story it can lead us into the temptation of a totalizing non-historical perspective. What happens is the plot (whether it is the story of the soul's journey, of the people of Israel, of the church, or some metaphysical story going on behind the scenes—wherever the accent lies) totalizes and colonizes every singularity, every event. The plot assigns meaning so that every particular event within the plot is made a little less dangerous, rendered innocuous by the fact that everything fits in the story. Case in point: coping with suffering by means of an explanatory apologetic.

Story stabilizes the self. This has positive psychological and theological functions. But it is also very dangerous, as its totalizing tendency forecloses us ethically and epistemically. Our narrative poetics are all too often a tool for closure. Such poetics are inevitable. But we may and must remain attuned to the post-narrative existence of Christ. We cannot speak of Jesus without telling his story. But his story came to a close in his death. His resurrection does not pick up where he left off, but discloses him as the one who now lives beyond story. "It is finished." And yet, "Lo, I am with you always." Jesus Christ in his risenness—that is, in his post-narrative existence—disarms, disrupts and discloses not only himself and

[36]These ontological musings have various antecedents. But the theological connection between narrativity and sociality is expressed with impressive clarity, conciseness, and consistency in Robert Jenson's work, especially in his brilliant but lesser known work, *Unbaptized God: The Basic Flaw in Ecumenical Theology* (Minneapolis : Fortress Press, 1992); but also, of course, his *Systematic Theology*, 2 Vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997-99).

his finished story but also us and our pretty little plots. "You have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God."[37]

So, in short, to be Wesleyan, we must be just as narratival as Wesley, and in fact more than him, yet do so wary of the dangers of narrativity itself.

III.

Thesis 8: SWS articulates a soteriological bifocality binding for Wesleyan dogmatics. So far I have spoken of narrativity only in general, formal terms. But we must also attend to the particular substance of Welsey's soteriological story. As already stated, every little detail of his narrative cannot be binding for us. However, there seems to be at least one feature binding for us, one that was near and dear to his heart and that recurs throughout his work, at least after 1738: the bifocality of justification and sanctification. Wesley's soteriology is an ellipse regulated by these two foci. Wesley consciously rejects soteriologies shaped by a single focus: either with justification at the center and sanctification at the periphery, or vice versa.[38] This pattern emerges in many of Wesley's writings, but none more clearly than in SWS. This is likely what renders this sermon such a classic: for here the bifocal architectonic of Wesley's soteriology finds an unparalleled literary expression.

What is at stake in this bifocality? Wesley's central claim in SWS is that faith is the key to both justification and sanctification. Though the causes and consequences of each are distinct, faith is at the heart of each. This move blocks a host of mistakes, ones that he admittedly used to make. Self-sanctification is not a prerequisite for justification! Nor is self-sanctification the subsequent task of the justified! Rather, both justification and sanctification come by way of faith.[39] This central claim is not

[37]These biblical allusions are from John 19:30, Matthew 28:20, and Colossians 3:3 respectively.

[38]Perhaps one way of narrating the soteriological shift in Wesley's thought in 1738 is from a sanctification-centered circle to a justification-sanctification ellipse. Note well that such a *structural* development does not require any *material* change in his doctrine of sanctification as such, which Wesley repeatedly denied. This denial finds its implicit canonical expression in the inclusion of "Circumcision of the Heart" among the standard sermons.

[39]This commitment to sanctification by faith is why Phoebe Palmer could rightly see herself as a faithful Wesleyan. She retained his parallelism between justification and sanctification. In fact, her development could be interpreted as a radicalization of Wesley's parallelism. Although her notion of naked faith is contestable, her status as a genuinely Wesleyan theologian ought not be questioned!

merely asserted in SWS, but articulated by the very literary structure of the sermon. There is of course a larger story, with prevenient grace at its beginning and consummation in glory at its end. But justification and sanctification hold together the inner structure of Wesley's soteriology. Justification and sanctification are the twin foci of the Christian life.

It seems to me that this soteriological bifocality is binding for Wesleyan dogmatics. If we adopt a reductionism to either foci, then we cease to be faithful to a core Wesleyan insight. If justification is merely a function of sanctification, merely the background noise to works of love, then we obscure the wideness of God's mercy to which Wesley was so well attuned. But if sanctification is merely a function of justification, merely the fine print on the gospel of grace, then we obscure the transforming power of God's mercy to which Wesley was also so well attuned. Sadly, much of the history of Wesleyan theology consists of an oscillation between these two extremes, each move warranted only as a prophetic corrective the other, yet mirroring the unwarranted onesidedness of its opposite. Wesleyan dogmatics would be wise to negate this negation by clearly and consistently articulating a compelling soteriological bifocality.

Thesis 9: Wesley's own soteriological bifocality is insufficiently dialectical. Although the parallelism of justification and sanctification in SWS is commendable, the relationship between them is insufficiently is insufficiently dialectical. Now a living dialectic is far from absent. He keeps both sides in play at all times. So the problem is less with his dialectic per se and more with the way his particular holism and narrativity overdetermine it. For despite his strong bifocality, Wesley is ultimately telling a story of the soul's sanctification. This holistic, teleological narrative has a tendency to reduce justification to the mere entry point of the Christian life: absolutely necessary, but ultimately left behind. It may continue to function as a recurring corrective. But it is difficult for justification to survive as an equal partner under the pressure of this plot. This leads to a onesidedness, whichWesley did not intend and aimed to block by continuing to preach justification-focused sermons throughout his career, incorporating them into the architectonic of the standard sermons, and producing bifocal sermons like SWS. But, given his collateral soteriological commitments, he struggled to keep the dialectic alive.

The key to addressing this issue is to articulate a thoroughly dialectical account of justification and sanctification that unleashes the power of Wesley's parallelism in the sermon. Justification and sanctification come to faith as living gifts of the living God: never a possession whose reception is simply past, but always arriving again and again. This is not to

deny the once for all character of justification or the more and more character of sanctification. But the again and again aspect must also be articulated. For justification and sanctification are not only two moments in the soul's journey into God, but also two aspects of the singular moment in which God encounters us again and again. It seems to me that only this sort of radical dialectic can keep alive the striking readiness for the immediate future expressed in the last paragraph of SWS: "Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment! Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it *now*, if you believe it is by faith."[40]

Thesis 10: Soteriological bifocality is itself dangerous. Although soteriological bifocality is indispensible for Wesleyans, it is nonetheless dangerous. On the one hand, if conceived as fixed points on an *ordo salutis*, it can ossify into a bipolar schema that disconnects it from the concrete realities of the Christian life. On the other hand, if the dialectic is radicalized as I suggest, it can undermine the coherence of the very narrative it is meant to plot. Either way, the two foci can easily generate an unending and unproductive oscillation between them. This oscillation—which Wesley himself so brilliantly avoids—seems almost inevitable. Perhaps his bifocality bears some responsibility for this oscillation throughout our history. Although we may not set aside his bifocal approach, we must be keenly aware of its dangers.

One way of preventing or at least resisting this polar oscillation is a more thorough development of the concept of glorification. As I see it, glorification is not merely the culminating moment of a holistic narrative, but the revelation of the truth of the narrative itself. Someway and somehow, glorification—our being-glorified by the God who raised Jesus from the dead—unveils the inner truth of our justification and sanctification as two aspects of the one whole this is our life. This seems to have some basis in the glorification of the Son that, at least according to the Gospel of John, occurs in the twofold event of his death and resurrection.[41] Christ's glorification is the weighty radiance of both his justifying death and sanctifying resurrection. And perhaps also for us: that our glorification is the final revelation of both our hidden justice and holiness. This may not be the best way to cope with the inherent dangers of bifocality.

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[40]"Scripture Way of Salvation," III.18. Obviously, Wesley is not making *my* point here; but it seems to me that *his* point cannot be sustained without a more dialectical imagination.

[41]This is a consistent and major theme throughout John's Gospel, especially in (but not limited to) his use of δοξάζω. For example, note the way John exploits the referential ambiguity of ὑψόω in 3:14; 8:28; and 12:32-34.

And it is surely not the only way. But we would be wise to be aware of these dangers and ready to resist them in some way.

So, in short, to be Wesleyan, we must be just as bifocal as Wesley, and in fact more than him, yet do so wary of the dangers of bifocality itself.

BOOK REVIEWS

Madueme, Hans and Michael Reeves, eds. *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. xii + 339 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0-8010-3992-8.

Reviewed by Amos Yong, Professor of Theology and Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.

With at least *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (edited by Ardel Caneday and Matthew Barrett; Zondervan, 2013) available in the evangelical marketplace of ideas, it is no wonder that a small industry of books is being generated at the intersection where science, theology, and the Bible meet. The book under review focuses primarily on the doctrine of the Fall and original sin, more precisely on retrieving and reappropriating such in an era when evangelicals may be concerned these are under assault. Book-ended by the editors' introduction and postscript are four parts and fifteen chapters. The first on Adam in the Bible and science includes chapters on the Old Testament (C. John Collins), New Testament (Robert Yarbrough), and modern science (authored by William Stone, "an academic paleontologist [who] has chosen for professional reasons to work under a pseudonym [as] neither his guild nor his colleagues will look kindly on what he has written here" [xii], for reasons that will become clearer momentarily). Part two includes five chapters on original sin in Christian history: expositive patristic (Peter Sanlon), Lutheran (Robert Kolb), Reformed (Donald Macleod), Wesleyan (Thomas McCall), and modern (Carl Trueman) perspectives. This is followed by four chapters on original sin from theological disciplines: biblical (James Hamilton), systematics (the editors), in relationship to modern science (Madueme), and pastoral theology (Daniel Doriani). The final part steps back toward the figure of Adam vis-à-vis Romans 5 (Thomas Schreiner), Genesis 3 (Noel Weeks), and issues in theodicy (William Edgar).

Readers of this journal who are familiar with the wider landscape of evangelical theology will immediately recognize by the volume contributors that this is by and large a Reformed rather than Wesleyan or any other set of voices. This should not be surprising given the editors both teach and work in conservative Reformed environments (Reeves at Wales Evangelical School of Theology; and Madeume at Covenant College, with

his Ph.D. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School). From this perspective, Thomas McCall, a Wesleyan theologian with his Ph.D. from Calvin Theological Seminary and director of the Carl Henry Center at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School who has published on Arminius, Wesley, and especially trinitarian theology, is an obvious choice to write the chapter on the Wesleyan tradition. He is able to represent such fairly as an insider but yet also capable of interpreting it from within the main lines of the Reformed commitments that otherwise dominate the volume.

Hence, Wesleyans looking for Reformed perspectives on the topics at hand will surely not be disappointed. But those attracted to the book's consideration of *Scientific Perspectives* advertised in the title should also consider themselves forewarned: not only is the paleontologist (consciously and anxiously) bucking the mainstream of his discipline—I cannot help but imagine this chapter as a proverbial "(scientific) fish out of (Reformed) waters"—but that turns out to be the only substantive chapter on science in the book. This is disappointing, when the editors' frame the book's concerns in relationship to recent evangelical thinking about these matters, particularly as manifest in BioLogos and related networks. Within this horizon one might reasonably expect that, even if scholars and theologically informed and interested scientists within conservative Reformed circles were desiring to write from out of their confessional commitments, they would engage the relevant voices and arguments. Yet Francis Collins, Denis Alexander, Denis Lamoureux, and the evangelical voices of R. J. Berry and T. A. Noble, eds., *Darwin, Creation and the Fall: Theological Challenges* (Apollos, 2009), et al., appear only in passing, so that the book turns out to be a missed opportunity on this front. From a scientific vantage point, the conservative Reformed faithful will find little more than what is already available in, for instance, Norman Nevin, ed., *Should Christian Embrace Evolution? Biblical and Scientific Responses* (InterVarsity Press, 2009; reprint, P & R Publishing, 2011), which answers with a resounding no.

To end on a more positive note, however, evangelicals—Wesleyans included—looking for historical perspective on Adam, the fall, and original sin, and on why and how these remain important for contemporary theology, will find much of value in this book. They might be intrigued to know that animal death may not be as much of a problem for conservative evangelical theology, as least in the Reformed stream, as is commonly thought. This point is argued in the final chapter by Edgar, who also takes on at some length the ideas of both William Dembski (of intelligent design fame) and Christopher Southgate (an Orthodox and evolutionary

theologian), and in doing so is one of the few chapters—Hamilton's sparring with evangelical Old Testament scholar Peter Enns' (Brazos, 2012) being the only other I could identify—to attempt any kind of more extensive consideration of and "answer" to alternative positions in the present ferment. These are some of the indicators of the vitality in contemporary evangelical Reformed theology observable throughout the text that will keep Wesleyans (and other evangelicals) busy going forward, and that itself is also a good thing.

Tickle, Phyllis with Jon M. Sweeney. *The Age of the Spirit: How the Ghost of an Ancient Controversy is Shaping the Church.* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014. 184 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0801014802.

Reviewed by Charles Augustine Rivera, Ph.D. student in Ancient Christianity, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Phyllis Tickle has made her name as the spiritual mother of the "Emerging Church" movement, and in *The Age of the Spirit* she (with co-author Jon Sweeney) reprises many of her favorite themes. This volume, intended for a popular audience, traces the long story of the Church's reflection on and experience of the Holy Spirit. It is replete with Tickle's trademark idiosyncrasies of thought. In the book's opening chapter, for example, the reader is introduced (or reintroduced) to her peculiar and grandiose theory that the Latin West undergoes massive cultural crises every five hundred years, like clockwork, and that we are due for another. Moving back through the history of Europe, Tickle identifies previous crises in the Reformation of the 1500s and the Great Schism of East and West in the 1000s, and, to complete the scheme, re-dates the collapse of the Western Roman Empire to the 500s. For the pure all things are pure, I suppose. At least those who tabulate the end of the world based on Revelation and Daniel are using scripture: for Tickle it is sufficient to ballpark some dates she found in a world history textbook.

Nevertheless, the main thrust of the book is that a lack of appreciation for the Holy Spirit, and a constant impulse to control the Spirit's motions through doctrine and institution, have characterized Western Christianity up to the present moment; now, however, the dawning of a new "age of the Spirit" is about to free us for a new way of life. The argument consists mainly in a string of historical vignettes, moving broadly chronologically. The first part of the book treats various developments in Christian doctrine from roughly the New Testament through the eleventh century. Various usages of "spirit" in scripture are surveyed, as well as perennial problems in the use of language to speak of God. We are introduced to very traditional narrations of some of the great disputes of the ancient Church: Montanus, Arius, and the Cappadocians all have their exits and their entrances. Finally comes the affair of the *filioque* and the eventual split between Greek and Latin Christendom. In this telling, the Great Schism was principally the result of the debate over the Spirit's procession, spurred on by the fact that Roman Catholic prelates are evil, barbarous, ignorant people (and here our authors' thoroughgoing anti-Catholicism is rather overt).

The book's second part carries the story forward with a more detailed account of the fateful events of 1054, as well as the Crusades. Leaving the East in ruins after the Fourth Crusade (we learn that the sack of Constantinople in 1204 was apparently due entirely to the average Frankish knight's great zeal for the *filioque*), Tickle and Sweeney turn our attention to Joachim of Fiore's prophecy of an "Age of the Spirit," which the authors, unsurprisingly, but rather fancifully, suggest is coming to fruition now in our own age. This "Great Emergence" felt its first rumblings with the birth of Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century. In traversing the distance from the high middle ages to the present day, the authors also include chapters on Islam and on late medieval mysticism and the Reformation; their relation to the argument of the whole is never quite elaborated. The book closes with an evocation of the "Age of the Spirit" that is dawning now, an age in which non-hierarchical, experiential, apophatic Christianity will emerge from the crumbling ruins of what has come before.

The book possesses a great many pretensions, and it would be laborious to catalogue and deflate them all. Most troubling, perhaps, is the way in which Tickle and Sweeney project a rhetoric of being universal, global, and all-including, while the book itself is decidedly parochial in its approach to church history. A persistent example of this is their constant opposition of 'East' and 'West.' This structure of thought, that Christendom may be divided into a Latin 'West' (viewed generally negatively) and a Greek 'East' (viewed more positively, but not exclusively so), is basic to the authors' outlook. It governs, for example, their treatment of the Great Schism in the eleventh century as *the* great and tragic breakage in the history of the Church. A truly global perspective would see that the Christological controversies of the fifth century fractured the Church far more decisively than the political squabbles of the eleventh. That the binary of 'East' and 'West' is a poor template for tracing the reality of Christian history is an idea that other books, such as Robert Wilken's *The First Thousand Years*, have hardly found it impossible to communicate to a popular audience.

Likewise, it is curious that we are really only introduced to non-elite Christianity with the arrival of Pentecostalism. The book makes a great many promises about its opposition to oppressive hierarchy, but goes on to present a history of Christianity consisting mostly of conflicts within the hierarchy. The abundance of good and accessible scholarly work on non-elite Christianity in all periods suggests this is a willful omission on the part of our authors. For it becomes clear that any sympathy Tickle and

Sweeney may have for the oppressive effects of an authoritative and worldly hierarchy on ordinary Christians' spiritual and material wellbeing is dwarfed by their feeling for the suffering undergone by "freethinkers" at the hands of a priestly "managerial class" (their bizarre description of the goings on at the Council of Toledo). Their heroes are thus always elite heroes, even if they may have their differences with the hierarchy, and the great awakening they look for in the present moment, as anyone with experience in the "Emergent" movement may testify, has far more in common with a Gnostic conventicle than a Methodist camp meeting.

A much more interesting book might have told a story of wonderful, strange, and challenging outbreaks of popular religiosity throughout the history of the Christianity *alongside* that of the elite theological debates. In such a book the general reader might learn of the development of the cult of the saints in late antiquity, in which the people of God began anew to experience the wonderworking power of the Spirit among them, or follow the lineage of Joachim of Fiore through the spiritualist Franciscans and the proto-revivalism of popular Latin Christianity in the later middle ages. Such a book might have featured more than a token appearance by the eighteenth century evangelical revival in England. But the authors here have little interest in the movements and realities of non-elite Christians, however much they preach an anti-hierarchical universality. Wesleyans who find the book's ideas appealing would do well to remember the popular wealth of our own traditions of renewal and spiritual awakening and to measure Tickle's promises against that canon.

Though it is possible to imagine a book such as *The Age of the Spirit*, for all its flaws, sparking an interest in Church history and the doctrine of the Trinity among lay readership, the ideological packaging is so bad (and so alluring to the novice mind) that I cannot recommend this book for either congregational or classroom study.

Root, Andrew. *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker*: *A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. 211 pages. ISBN 978-0-8010-4905-7

Reviewed by Brandon Winstead, Director of Student Ministries, Killearn United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, FL.

Finding historical biographies in the arena of youth ministry are often far and few between. Discovering one well researched and written with theological implications for youth ministry is even scarcer because analyses in the field have been so heavily shaped by sociological and psychological disciplines. As a result, few historical biographies exist that can help readers think theologically and theoretically about contemporary youth ministry.

Andrew Root, however, has provided such a work in his recently published monograph entitled, *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship and Life Together.* In the preface, Root states that Bonhoeffer's biographical record exemplifies how his life experiences can shape contemporary theologies of youth ministry. In particular, the author states that Bonhoeffer represents the "theological turn" needed in youth ministry today "because he incomparably weaves together youth work, attention to concrete experience, and commitment to the revelatory nature of God's continued action in the world through Jesus Christ" (8). He believes this is needed because many youth workers have stepped away from the technological and programmatic trappings of youth ministry in an effort to help young people experience the concrete action of God working in their lives (6-7).

In his initial section (which contains almost 160 pages of biographical material) entitled "The History of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Youth Worker," the author outlines how Bonhoeffer lived out and communicated this theological turn. From the days of his youth in a large tightly knit family to the time Bonhoeffer began working on his dissertation in 1925, Root maintains that the Berlin theologian developed a ministerial emphasis on "place-sharing," which is the act of giving and receiving Christ to youth through the concrete and communal life of a faith community. This "place-sharing" continued to shape Bonhoeffer's pastoral and theological work among young people from his days of leading and teaching children at Grunewald between 1925 to 1927 to his final days at Finkelwalde (the illegal seminary he helped lead from 1935 until its closure by the Gestapo in 1937) at the close of the 1930s.

Moreover, Root shows that this "place-sharing" was evident in Bonhoeffer's texts like *Act and Being* and *Ethics*, when he led catechism classes in Barcelona and Berlin, studied at Union Seminary in New York City, or contributed to the ecumenical youth movement of the Confessing Church in the early 1930s. Throughout these labors, the author details an underlying theme in Bonhoeffer's work that shaped his concept of "place sharing," namely that he desired for young people to encounter the real presence of "the Word" among the relational spaces of their faith communities.

For instance, in chapter seven, Root contends that Bonhoeffer combined his formal theological writing with his positive experiences of teaching Sunday school to Harlem children to argue that the church's spiritual and existential "carrying" of children signifies the eschatological event of salvation. It does so because a child's baptism into the church is the same as Christ's full acceptance of the poor, lame, and broken (77). Furthermore, in the eleventh chapter, when unpacking Bonhoeffer's "Eight Theses on Youth Work" Root argues that Bonhoeffer wanted the church to realize its task of proclaiming the real and continued presence of Jesus to young people so that they could become fully devoted followers of Christ. He underlined this when he stated, "Church youth work is possible only on the basis of addressing young people concerning their baptism and with the exclusive goal of having them hear God's word" (132).

In sum, this idea of "place-sharing" drives Root's theological and historical reconstruction of Bonhoeffer and in the second section of his work, the author hopes readers will glean this in his analysis of Bohoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*. For example, Root contends that Bonhoeffer, in the former work, wanted his readers to move from accepting cheap grace to embracing costly grace. This means that youth workers and youth must follow the living Jesus, not an idea *of* Christ. It also requires that both parties follow the real Christ that beckons all to follow him to the cross. As we do, we carry our "crosses" together and listen intently for the living Word to bring us forth "from this fear and death to *follow* and find life in his person" (190)! For Root, such a call forces youth ministries to move away from following trends or ideas and instead to obey the living Word that brings us grace, strength, and forgiveness amidst the shared spaces of our lives.

Perhaps this is where Root's work shines the brightest for Wesleyan youth workers and where academicians can discover the greatest insight of Root's work. The author shows how Bonhoeffer's ministry, teaching, and writing were committed to helping the church see the importance of

sharing real lived spaces with young people to help mold them into Christian disciples. This is a notion that has no doubt shaped the historical and theological tradition of many Wesleyans that have wrestled with John Wesley's age-old question, "How do we make Christian disciples?"

In the end, aside from providing the *only* intentional youth minister biography of Bonhoeffer, Root has now provided a resource when thinking about how to best address the above question among young people. Specifically, Root's unpacking of Bonhoeffer's stress on the child as eschatological gift for the church, God's continued action and presence in shared spaces of young people's lives, and Bonhoeffer's youth ministry labors in diverse places like Barcelona, Berlin, Harlem, London, and Finkelwalde offers the reader historical examples to draw upon when considering how to develop relevant and contextual models of youth discipleship inside Wesleyan contexts.

These strengths aside, however, the premise that Bonhoeffer is the progenitor of the theological turn in youth ministry may need to be analyzed further if we are going to see how historical biography can open up new theological avenues for contemporary youth ministry. Even though, as Root shows, theological and ministerial insights can be gleaned from Bonhoeffer's life and work, it is safe to ask why a European theologian is the forefather to a movement that emerged and is largely confined *to* the United States.

Theological reflection, no doubt, can have implications across time, space, and geography. However, to claim that one is the father of the theological turn in youth ministry obscures plenty of other historical figures that wrote and labored to make evident God's concrete action among young people in the United States.

Prominent ministers and theologians like Horace Bushnell and Walter Rauschenbusch labored, wrote prayers, and reflected on the importance of making God's presence known in the lives of young people during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, since the late eighteenth century, African American ministers and evangelists like Richard Allen, Nannie Helen Burroughs, Emma Ray Smith, Amanda Berry Smith, and Mary McLeod Bethune (all of them except Burroughs were Wesleyans) always worked to develop programs and ministries that addressed their oppressive realities of black youth and children. Is it possible that *they* represent the theological turn in youth ministry, at least in the United States, and not Bonhoeffer? If so, what place does Root's thesis and Bonhoeffer's work have for those who desire historical figures who have written about and worked in youth ministry *in* various parts of the United States?

Maybe these are unfair questions to levy against Root and his work because the author's concern throughout is unpacking history for the sake of theology and contemporary youth ministry. However, if the author is going to make such a bold historical claim, it may be reasonable to see if there are other historical figures who could challenge his primary thesis. If nothing else, it could yield a plethora of resources that youth ministry scholars and practitioners could draw upon in order to effectively translate the gospel to young people across different racial, ethnic, and economic lines in the United States and other parts of the globe.

Thorsen, Don. *Calvin vs. Wesley: Bringing Belief in Line with Practice*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2013. 158 pages. ISBN-13: 978-1426743351.

Reviewed by J. Russell Frazier, Lecturer at Africa Nazarene University, Nairobi, Kenya.

The present book, as the title suggests, is a comparative study between John Calvin and John Wesley. Don Thorsen, professor of theology at Azusa Pacific University, attempts to deal irenically and impartially with both theologians, and the subdivisions of each chapter reveal a balanced approach. Although the author admits bias toward Wesley (xi), he values Calvin's contributions to the theological enterprise (xvii-xviii). Thorsen holds that Calvin's theology is more systematic than that of Wesley's, but readily emphasizes the weaknesses of systematics as more propositional, divisive, and rational (xv). As a result, such theological systems "often fail to capture the Spirit-led vitality of what [Wesley] called 'religion of the heart'" (xv). Nonetheless, Wesley's more practical approach to theology emphasizes a more dynamic, Spirit-led and relational view of the Christian life (xvi). Wesley also held in creative tension elements of the Christian tradition to such a degree that "'he integrates contrasting emphases that are vital to a healthy and comprehensive vision of the Christian faith'" (xvii).

For this reason among others, Thorsen argues one of his key themes for this present work: "Wesley provides a better understanding of Christianity and the Christian life in practice than Calvin does in theory" (xiv). This thesis is reflected in the subtitle of the work: "Bringing Belief in Line with Practice." For him, one should align one's beliefs with one's practices (xiv). In the conclusion of the book, the author launches an appeal to the Calvinists "to decide for themselves with regard to how they may best integrate their Christianity in line with their practice" (127).

With chapter one, Thorsen begins a comparison and contrast of specific doctrines and represents the polarities of each theologian's position that become evident in the chapter titles. The first chapter, entitled "God: More Love than Sovereignty," underscores that Calvin held a "high regard for the sovereignty of God" (3) to such a degree that God exercises absolute control over every aspect of life (5). At the opposite end this polarity, Wesley emphasized the love of God in a way that Calvin did not. Although Wesley held to the classic view of the sovereign, almighty power of God, he did not overstress the power of God to the point of undoing the divine concern for relationship with the human beings that God created (7).

Chapter 2 is entitled "Bible: More Primary than Sole Authority." Thorsen asserts there are differences between the ways the two theologians viewed Scripture in relation to other religious authorities. According to Thorsen, Calvin's position can be described as *sola Scriptura* whereas Wesley, though he held to the primacy of Scripture, employed other religious authorities. However, the distinction made in this chapter between Calvin and Wesley on their use of Scripture and other sources of religious authority is unclear because, as Thorsen affirms, "Throughout Calvin's writings, references can be found to . . . patristic writers . . . as Christian authorities to whom Calvin appealed in developing his theology and ministry" (21). Indeed, Calvin may have used the Bible as a more prescriptive standard (20), but Wesley employed Scripture with a more broadminded approach. However, more information about and examples of the manner in which these two theologians employed scripture is needed.

"Humanity: More Freedom than Predestination" is the title of chapter three. Calvin held to total depravity to such a degree that it was essential for God to unconditionally elect human beings to salvation. His conclusion may be summarized as follows: "God wills that people want to act the way that they are foreordained to act" (34). Wesley followed the more classic position of the Church by insisting that God by means of prevenient grace permits the freedom that enables humans to respond to (or to resist) the overtures of the Spirit (35). The Wesleyan concept of prevenient grace is further developed to counteract the Calvinist doctrine of effectual or irresistible grace in the subsequent chapter, "Grace: More Prevenient than Irresistible."

Although Calvin did not explicitly affirm the doctrine of limited atonement, his system leads one logically to the conclusion that only the elect benefit from it (61). Thorsen discusses not only Wesley's opposing doctrine of unlimited atonement, but he discusses the two theologians views on the orders of salvation (62f) found in the theologies of these theologians in this chapter on "Salvation: More Unlimited than Limited."

The next chapter, "Spirituality: More Holiness than Mortification," deals with the two theologians' concepts of holiness. Calvin stressed mortification and held that the Christian life is a continual struggle against sin; believers are "always saved, always sinners" (77). Wesley was more optimistic than Calvin about the possibility of transformation in the likeness of Christ (83).

Chapter 7 deals with the church, "Church: More Catholic than Magisterial." In this phrase, Wesley's thought and spirit are revealed in the ser-

mon "Catholic Spirit," in which he underscores the importance of "heart-religion" and a practical love for others. Calvin's view of the church was much more authoritarian; Calvin "promoted a closer relationship between ecclesiastical and civil governance" (93) in his early ministry and used the connection to guard the purity of the church. The last chapter, "Ministry: More Empowering than Triumphal," deals with a similar theme in Calvin's authoritarianism. Thorsen contrasts the top-down leadership style of Calvin's with the empowering leadership of Wesley, citing the empowerment of lay pastors and the creation of the Methodist societies, class meetings, and bands for the laity.

The conclusion of the book provides a helpful summary and makes an appeal for "More Wesley, Less Calvin." The appendix of the book, "Appendix: More ACURA than TULIP," presents an alternative to the acrostic summary of the Calvinist message TULIP by appealing for the acrostic ACURA: All are sinful, Conditional election, Unlimited atonement, Resistible grace and Assurance of salvation. The writer discusses briefly Arminius and the history and theology of the Remonstrants and their role in the Canon of Dort.

In summary, Thorsen provides a relatively balanced approach to the topic although he admits of a bias for Wesley's theology. Ultimately Calvin becomes Thorsen's whipping boy, and Wesley the chosen son of the house.

The book provides a good treatment of the topic, though not an exhaustive treatment as it was written accessibly for a popular audience. A number of differences between the two theologians could be broached but were not addressed here. It is nevertheless a good summary of the differences and similarities between the theologies of Calvin and Wesley. Some readers may find Thorsen's pragmatism quite disconcerting as he attempts to bring belief in line with practice rather than bring practices in line with belief. Such pragmatism may be the very undoing of his appeal to the Calvinists.

O'Donovan, Oliver. *Finding and Seeking: Ethics as Theology, Volume 2.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 249 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0-8028-7187-9.

Reviewed by Aaron Perry, Ph.D., Regent University; Associate Pastor, Centennial Road Church, Brockville, ON.

Finding and Seeking is the second installment of Oliver O'Donovan's projected three-volume project of *Ethics as Theology*. Not quite double the length of the initial volume *Self, World, and Time*, *Finding and Seeking* continues in the same dense yet rewarding style, at times clarifying and, at others, obscure. This review will summarize this second volume and then offer brief critique, appreciation, and recommendations for its use.

After sketching the structure necessary for engaging in ethics as theology—a structure of self, world, and time—O'Donovan deepens the actual practice of ethics as theology in *Finding and Seeking*. O'Donovan's engagement of ethics as theology is not to use ethics as a source for theology, but to engage in ethical thinking theologically—performing the process and understanding the experience of ethics in light of the gospel. This work displays what it looks like for ethics to be practiced and described by a theologian.

Finding and Seeking plays on the biblical affirmation expressed in the words of Jesus, "Seek and you shall find" (Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:13; Matt. 7:7). Here is the first clue that O'Donovan is doing ethics as a theologian. The starting point for moral reflection is not in seeking, but in finding oneself—a kind of waking, raising from the dead, being enlivened by the Spirit (x). One finds oneself always in one's own context—one's own today, the fresh dispensation of time that is unique and demands ethical reflection (5). O'Donovan grounds the importance of theological reflection on ethics in that while truth is useful, it is never *simply* useful. It is the necessity of life (5). Truth lived out in ethics is the completion of Christian doctrine by being an offering of praise in the disciple's life (6).

The initial act of *finding* is the self's call to God—"the first human act" (12)—where one realizes the self as an *agent*. An agent is one with freedom to act and responsibility as an actor, including to and for the challenges and possibilities of today's world (31) and for one's view of the world (97). ["World," for O'Donovan, is always subject to a point of view, whether individual or corporate. It is not quite the same as "reality" (73).] As an agent, one *acts* (26). The self does not simply encounter events, nor is one simply acted upon. Agent, instead, develop a history, "a coherent narrative . . . by directing and taking responsibility for one's active powers" (34). The coherent narrative is the fruit of working out the logic of

conversion—"the first act of freedom" (38). Agency is not simply individual but belongs to the community, as well, with both to be conformed into the image of Christ (40).

This notion of *finding* means that faith is the starting point of ethical reflection—the possibility of ethical reflection, as a theological exercise. But faith is followed by love—the shape faith takes in the world. The agent has found herself as the loved one of God and loves the neighbor out of this agency for the sake of God's love for the neighbor (55). The self, thus, is not another in the line of love-deservers. Instead, the self is the necessity if there is to be one who may love (50).

Human freedom is the ability and responsibility in and to the world to love. This privileged place is not to be denied and no good comes if it is. The human has a responsibility in creation that the rest of creation does not. Humans have a responsibility to trees, but we cannot "expect that equal regard be paid to us by trees" (64). And within this community, there are various abilities—none of which affirms or denies one's place of membership. Humans are equal before death, judgment, and responsibilities to one another, but not in terms of potential (65)—like creativity, education, knowledge, and various skills. There is variety within human potential: "[God] did not redeem us to make us indistinguishable and average" (105).

With the sketch of the agent, the "world" in which the agent lives, and the proper engagement with the world first as faith and then as love, O'Donovan moves to hope. Hope shapes the posture of the agent toward the future because of the resurrection of Jesus. O'Donovan combines the practical future that ethical thinking and activity must shape with the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is "beyond and behind all present possibilities" but to it belongs hope in a unique way (160). The resurrection of Jesus combines the anticipated future with the Kingdom of God, but not in a way that demands history be a "joined-up narrative" nor the kingdom a "culmination of a process we can hustle along its way" (161). We act in the world in a Kingdom way while we hope for the Kingdom.

Finally, O'Donovan moves to two practical considerations shaped by the theological understanding of the field of ethics: deliberation (chapter 8) and discernment (chapter 9). Deliberation avoids the error of moving directly from Christian doctrine into activity. The activity of deliberation is fruitful because of hope, but hope itself is not an effective ethical action. Instead, deliberation makes possible the elimination of practical impossibilities and a possibility that is the right one (or ones) (184) by conceiving the moral laws of an ordered system, by taking intelligent action, and by

aiming for the moral law and the law of love. But deliberation comes to an end where the agent is left with *choice(s)*. Here discernment becomes essential as there are reasonable, faithful possibilities produced through deliberation that cannot all be realized. The moral law cannot "tell what is to be done *next*" (215, italics in original). Here O'Donovan engages the concept of vocation, the personal calling of the individual that may or may not be unified under a grand theme, but can help produce coherence to a life engaged in the ethical field.

By way of evaluation, let me offer two critiques. Similar to the first volume, *Finding and seeking* is very dense—at times unnecessarily. The reader needs to read and re-read sentences and whole sections of material to understand and maintain a grip on the context. At times re-reading the material provides moments of clarity, while at others it does not. However, dissimilar to the previous volume, this one is not concise. At times O'Donovan writes with clarity and ease; at other times, the prose seems still in process. The work would be strengthened if it was shorter and its progression of thought more easily marked.

Yet even with these challenges, *Finding and Seeking* is well worth every bit of effort. One benefit is a helpful critique of modern, Western democracy. O'Donovan urges readers to reject the "polarized postures . . . [and] . . . habitual response to the noise of discourse" (87). Critical thinkers should be aware that any point of view on the world is re-presented and constructed. As such, people should "sense danger" when "certain points of view have become fashionable" (88). Politicians may be tempted with the fashionable because they are consistently called upon to "ignite and unite passions" of the electorate. And this ignition can become all-encompassing, hyper competitive, leaving little room for lasting success for those with careful judgment (88).

Second, though written by an Anglican, *Finding and Seeking* has certain sensitivities that Wesleyans will appreciate. O'Donovan, as a practical thinker, is concerned that the future remains open enough to the person's action so that responsibility is *real*. (This is not an endorsement of open theism.) It simply will not do to have a future pre-determined in contrast to the practices of deliberation and discernment. Further, O'Donovan is concerned with holiness. If there is an *ought*, there is an *ability* to perform it by the power of the Spirit. The capacity to be holy is the same capacity to be under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Third, O'Donovan engages in critiquing the social-scientific mindset as the bearer of ethical truth. One can sense O'Donovan's frustration with this mindset along with the shortcomings of modern democracies as

studies are used to direct and sway people's opinions without anyone engaging in ethical reflection. "To think about human behavior without asking how we humans shall behave is to install the point of view of a surveyor of opinions in substitute for that of a responsible agent" (69). O'Donovan's urgency and belief in the necessity of theological ethical reflection is clear and inspiring.

Finding and Seeking is a helpful and challenging advancement of the overall *Ethics as Theology* project. It is an important volume for students and teachers of theological ethics and will reward the determined reader—even from outside the Christian faith—what it looks like for a theologian to explore ethical experience.

Noll, Mark A. *From Every Tribe and Nation: A Historian's Discovery of the Global Christian Story*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. 204 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0-8010-3993-5.

Reviewed by Russell E. Richey, Dean Emeritus of Candler School of Theology and
William R. Cannon Distinguished Professor of Church History Emeritus, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

Mark Noll's intellectual autobiography might seem, on the face of it, beyond the theological/religious interests of this journal's readers. One of the most distinguished and productive of today's church historians, he does not belong and has not belonged to our denominational family. Nor can one term him a closet Wesleyan. However, in a number of respects, Noll's spiritual/doctrinal pilgrimage covers terrain, time, and topics that Methodists/Wesleyans will find instructive and helpful.

A quite contrary judgment might come from a quick look at the index for explicit entries for the Wesleys, Wesleyanism, our denominational labels, or other Methodist-specific terms. Other than four references to Charles Wesley, one finds little. Charles is the only 'Methodist' who made it, one might think. However, Noll's story exhibits a great deal more of the Wesley-world than a first glance at the book might suggest. Quite a number of his other Methodist references do not 'earn' indexing or even, as we shall see, require denominational identification in the text.

Noll charts his biographical way from family membership in Calvary Baptist Church of Cedar Rapids, Iowa and its conservative-evangelical-missionary theological orientation to today's irenic, ecumenical, global historiographical stance and to wide-ranging interests befitting his recent relocation to Notre Dame. Noll tracks this evolution through engagements and activities but especially through his own reading and writing. His transformation proceeds through ever greater appropriation of "the religion of Luther, Calvin, Wesley and Edwards" (13, one of several Methodist references not indexed). So while he makes few direct appeals to either of Wesleys or to American Methodism, Noll carries the reader through an intellectual pilgrimage implicitly covering the world within which the several Methodist denominations function.

The book may be especially instructive to persons like myself in the moderate to liberal wing of Methodism. Noll's development in some interesting ways both modeled and led the transformations through which evangelicalism went in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

One can appreciate those changes by carefully following as he charts the continuous enlargement of his world—of family awareness of global affairs through interest in missions; of studies deepening his intellectual world at Wheaton College, then the University of Iowa, then Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and then Vanderbilt University; of stimuli in successive disparate short-term teaching and research opportunities; and of his return to long term service to and moderating of evangelicalism while teaching at Wheaton. Throughout Noll reports on books and engagements that proved particularly instructive. So he provides something of a survey of late twentieth century evangelical literature (Methodist included, as I note below).

He confined this mapping of late twentieth century scholarship primarily to the historical genre with occasional nods to important items in other theological fields. That, however, is perhaps a strength. He takes the reader through the ways in which scholarly attention to realms beyond the European-American axis gradually metamorphosed from mission-supportive, quasi-apologetic, sometimes finance-seeking production to conventional but wide-angled scholarly historiography. Several chapter titles show Noll's own increased engagement with "the Global Christian Story"—"Looking North: A Guide," "Looking South: A Guide," "China Watching," and "Explorations with Pen in Hand." Mapping his own scholarship and that of colleagues, Noll charts an increasingly global mode of doing church history.

What about this enlarged historical writing is Methodist or would be of interest to Methodists? The historians! Indeed, to historians who are Methodists Noll devotes considerable attention. He deems them important in transforming the historiographical world. Without noting their denominational identity, they command a huge chunk of the book. These include Andrew Walls (91-98, but elsewhere as well); W. Reginald (W.R.) Ward (118-20); Dana Robert (120-23); Lamin O. Sanneh (118-25, and also elsewhere); and David Martin (147-52). Methodists Grant Wacker receives passing attention and Karen Westerfield Tucker provides one of three front flyleaf endorsements. (Sanneh apparently has relinquished his Methodist membership. However, as I recall, much of his scholarship appeared when he still accepted the denominational label.)

By and large, Noll does not find denominational labels pertinent to his analysis. He does identify Walls "as a Methodist 'local (or lay) preacher'" and mentions his preaching "regularly on Methodist circuits" (91-92). And he labels "the British Methodist Herbert Butterfield" (100). Otherwise, he ignores the denominational identity of the many, many

scholars he treats. For the Methodist identity of others mentioned above, I am relying on my own experience and memory (I hope correctly). The important point here is implicit in Noll's disinterest in the confessional orientation of treated scholars. In their wide-angled attention to global Christianity, he finds little theological or sectarian bias.

Noll's autobiography, then, tells a big story. His intellectual pilgrimage, careful attention to what he read, and notation of when important items appeared make the book not just his journey but indeed a mapping of a half-century of historical sensibilities and publications. Readers can expect similar overviews of the terrain of other scholarly fields from other books in this series, "Turning South: Christian Scholars in an Age of World Christianity." (The series general editor is Joel Carpenter, and books have already appeared by Nicholas Wolterstorff and Susan VanZantgen.)

This is a book worth buying and studying!

Rodes, Stanley J. *From Faith to Faith: John Wesley's Covenant Theology and the Way of Salvation*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013. 272 pages. ISBN 13:978-1-62032-544-5.

Review by Mark K. Olson, Adjunct Instructor of Bible and Theology at Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, IN and Nazarene Bible College, Colorado Springs, CO.

From Faith to Faith is based on the doctoral work of Stanley Rodes, for which he was awarded the 2011 Outstanding Dissertation Award from the Wesleyan Theological Society, and represents an important contribution to Wesley studies. With its central aim to examine Wesley's use of the *faith of a servant* and *faith of a son* metaphor, Rodes shows that Wesley's theological principles were informed to a great extent by the covenant theology of the English Reformed tradition. This is an aspect of Wesley's thought that has received far too little attention from scholars.

The book opens with a survey of Wesley's use of the servant/son metaphor in his writings. Rodes notes that the metaphor came into more frequent use in Wesley's later writings, which he suggests was due to a shift in emphasis from changing circumstances and not from new developments in his thought. Rodes next explores the sources of Wesley's covenant theology as the theological setting or environment from which he drew the metaphor. After acknowledging the influences of his family background in Dissent and other Anglican sources, Rodes turns his attention to the covenant theology of William Perkins, William Ames, Johannes Cocceius, and others in the English Reformed tradition, proposing that Wesley acquired the servant/son metaphor from the famed Pietist theologian Johannes Bengel, who was deeply influenced by Cocceius and who was a primary source for Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*. Chapter three examines the adjustments Wesley made to the Puritan version of covenant theology. While endorsing the basic framework of two covenants, Wesley diverged from the Reformed tradition by postulating that the covenant of works was terminated at the Fall when Adam sinned and was not to be identified with the Mosaic Law. Instead, Wesley saw the covenant of grace as beginning at the Fall and including two primary dispensations: legal and evangelical (law and gospel). With these alterations, Wesley offered an Arminianized version of covenant theology that placed the entire human race under the covenant of grace and as recipients of God's universal prevenient grace.

Moving forward, Wesley's understanding of the servant/son metaphor in relation to his covenant theology becomes apparent in chapters

four through six. Drawing from Wesley's commentary on the book of Hebrews that contrasts Moses as a *servant* in God's house to Christ as the *son*, Rodes demonstrates that Wesley used the labels of servant and son both to identify the legal and gospel dispensations and to mark the salvific movements of the Spirit in the lives of those who are responding to divine grace. These salvific movements are further delineated as the "responsive unregenerate" and the born-again Christian. The soteriological standing of the "responsive unregenerate" is described as a middle state between the unrepentant sinner and the born-again Christian, and this included both those who have never heard the gospel and those who have heard the gospel. It was on the latter group of the "responsive unregenerate" that Wesley applied the metaphor of the servant. Rodes shows that the 1745-1747 Conferences concluded that the servant represents a person living in the legal state, experientially having a degree of faith that sincerely obeys God out of fear but falls short of "the proper Christian faith." Then shortly after the 1747 Conference Wesley drew a clear distinction between "justifying faith" and "the proper Christian faith." While the former saves from God's curse and wrath, only the latter represents true Christian experience. With a faith lower than Christian faith now deemed as saving in relation to one's eternal destiny, Rodes explains that the baseline soteriological standard for Wesley was found in Acts 10:35 (fear God and work righteousness). Rodes stresses the point that Wesley found this standard in a number of scripture passages, which was "emblematic of one having the faith of a servant" (121). So, although Wesley continued throughout his life to distinguish between "those who *fear* God and those who *love* him" (129), at times he identified the faith of a servant with the "real Christian" when contrasting it to the worldly state of the nonbeliever.

With the soteriological standard set, Rodes demonstrates in the last three chapters that Wesley held the covenant of grace to be salvifically sufficient in an historical sense (salvation was available to OT saints) *and* in a contemporary sense (i.e., both the servant and the son have eternal salvation). Even so, for Wesley the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost represented the perfection of the covenant of grace and the beginning of the gospel dispensation. As such, the transition from the faith of a servant to that of a son is the watershed event in becoming a real Christian in the proper sense of the term. Rodes proposes that Wesley understood the Spirit's witness in a two-fold sense: first, by awakening sinners to their condemnation and servitude to sin; and second, by witnessing to the believer's forgiveness and new life in Christ. In the final chapter, Rodes

walks through several examples of Wesley's use of the servant/son metaphor in his pastoral counselling and concludes that, on the question of the servant's soteriological standing, the servant does not yet enjoy gospel justification but does have a degree of acceptance relative to one's standing in the legal dispensation. However, the certainty of God's gracious provision means that, if those in the servant state continue to seek, then they too will find grace to pass *from faith to faith*—from the faith of a servant to the faith of a son.

From Faith to Faith represents an in-depth study of Wesley's covenant theology and leaves little to critique. But a few comments are in order. First, Rodes' examination of the sources for Wesley's covenant theology calls for further investigation. The links to the English Reformed tradition are strong but reflect the period of the 1740s and later, whereas the presence of covenant theology first shows up in the early Wesley and confirms mainstream Anglican influence. For example, the remarks on covenant theology in the 1746 Conference Minutes most likely reflect the influence of the Anglican William Beveridge. This leads to another area of inquiry. Rodes does not deal with developments in Wesley's covenant theology over the course of his lifetime. Yet, scholars have long recognized that developments did take place in his theology, and these shifts suggest changes in his covenant theology as well. Identifying these areas of change would be helpful in understanding Wesley's overall theological growth. Last, Rodes stresses that in Wesley's view the covenant of works terminated at the Fall, but the 1746 Conference Minutes (Q. 25) state otherwise. This calls for further investigation and a nuancing of some of Rodes' conclusions. Even with these criticisms, Rodes' study is groundbreaking and essential for anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of Wesley's theology of salvation.

Taylor, David W. *Like a Mighty Army? The Salvation Army, the Church, and the Churches*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014. xviii + 290 pages. ISBN-13:978-1-62564-436-7.

Reviewed by R. David Rightmire, Professor of Bible and Theology, Asbury University, Wilmore, KY.

In *Like a Mighty Army?* David Taylor identifies three intertwined ecclesial strands in the course of the historical development of the Salvation Army: "mission," "army," and "church." He contends that these three strands have become "unhelpfully tangled" in the movement's developing ecclesiological self-understanding, creating tension in its current ecclesial convictions.

The work quite easily falls into two parts. The first deals with what the author maintains are the three phases of the Army's ecclesiological development, corresponding roughly to three ecclesial strands: its origins as the Christian Mission in the East End of London, 1865-1878 ("mission"); its establishment as the Salvation Army, 1878-1948 ("army"); and its contemporary self-identification as an international denomination of the Church, 1948-present ("church"). The second part of the book is comprised of an evaluation of the ecclesiology of Karl Barth, whom Taylor proposes as a dialogue partner for the Army, with the purpose of encouraging deeper theological reflection and ecumenical discussion.

In the historical analysis of the Army's ecclesiology, the author correctly traces the movement's origins to the effect of trans-Atlantic revivalism, and finds the roots for the Army's ecclesial "mission" strand in the "aggressive Christianity" and pragmatic methods ("new measures") of American holiness evangelists during the British holiness revival. Of particular note is Taylor's treatment of the influence of James Caughey, Charles Finney, and Phoebe Palmer on William and Catherine Booth (cofounders of the Salvation Army). The author maintains that the holiness evangelism inherited and espoused by the Booths had a direct effect on Salvationist ecclesiology, especially in its emphasis on individual salvation and its "subjective focus on the conditions that the individual must fulfill" (14) in the experience of justification and sanctification. Although the focus of the Booths was on the priority of mission, understood in relation to their postmillennial eschatology, they put "relatively little emphasis upon the shape of 'full salvation' in the community life of the church" (53). This, of course, can partly be explained by the fact that they understood their ministry in missional, rather than denominational, terms.

The author maintains that the Christian Mission "took a significant step forward in its ecclesial identity" when it renamed itself "The Salvation Army." The decision to adopt this military metaphor is viewed as a

"logical progression given the aggressive nature of holiness revivalism." Taylor views the adoption of this military metaphor as pragmatically designed to further the mission, with little theological reflection given by the Army on the suitability of this term in expressing the "nature and visible form of God's Church" (55). Combined with William Booth's autocratic leadership style and desire for independence from all ecclesial control (including the ill-fated attempt by the Church of England to incorporate the Army as a quasi-religious order), the adoption of the military metaphor resulted in a polity that was autocratic and hierarchical, with an "army" of highly disciplined and regulated members ("soldiers"), under the command of "quasi-clergy" ("officers").

Taylor sees a connection between the nature and identity of this "army" and Booth's decision to abandon sacramental practice (1882), although he never explicitly "connects the dots" in this regard. The author does suggest, however, four factors that led the Founder to dispense with baptism and the Lord's Supper: (1) sacraments are not means of grace, and therefore not necessary for either justification or entire sanctification; (2) their use was pragmatically ineffective in the mission of holiness revivalism; (3) they were "not constitutive" for *koinonia* within God's church; and (4) their establishment on the basis of Christ's command lacks biblical support. Taylor interprets the abandonment of sacramental practice as a loss of "the signs and symbols of an objective theological focus on God's work of grace in God's community" (83), with a resulting emphasis on the subjective expression of divine action in sacramental living.

The author views the third ecclesial strand ("church") as the direct result of the Army's developing ecclesiological identity catalyzed by its involvement in the ecumenical movement. He maintains that there is a fundamental incompatibility in the combination of this strand with the Army's historical "mission" and "army" strands. The author evaluates the Army's historical relationship with the World Council of Churches, and in particular, its response to the Faith and Order Paper, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982). He claims that Salvationists were prompted to reflect on the nature, form, and mission of the Church, while paradoxically defending their non-sacramental practice. Taylor engages in a lengthy assessment of the most developed treatment of Salvation Army ecclesiology, *Community in Mission* (1987), by Philip Needham. Although appreciating this contribution to the Army's ecclesiological self-understanding, and its call for official re-evaluation, Taylor maintains that Needham's work fails to explore the theological concept of church as *koinonia*.

The second part of the *Like a Mighty Army?* may take the reader by surprise, as it focuses on the ecclesiology of Karl Barth, who the author

believes is "a helpful dialogue partner for Salvationists intent on addressing difficulties that stem from their individualistic and subjective roots." Taylor maintains that the Army's ecclesiological reflection would benefit from Barth's emphases on the objectivity of God's grace in the *via salutis* and his understanding of "the Church's essential communal nature" (265). The author claims that Barth's "Christological ecclesiology" provides Salvationists with the means for untangling the Army's "tangled cord of mission, army, and church" (153).

Taylor, over the course of six chapters, identifies key concepts from the writings of Barth, and then attempts to show their relevance for Salvationist ecclesiological understanding. These include Barth's distinctive doctrine of election and its outworking in the dynamic event of reconciliation, and the origin and nature of the Church as the result of a "dialectic of indestructible divine action and destructible human action" (186). In particular, the author maintains that Barth's doctrine of election helps to underscore the gracious initiative of God in the work of salvation, helping re-balance what he views is an over-emphasis on human agency in Army soteriology. Taylor unpacks Barth's understanding of the four classical "marks of the church" (one, holy, catholic, apostolic), but adds a fifth, the Church's missionary calling. The author highlights how Barth's interpretation of these marks could serve as a corrective lens for Salvation Army ecclesiological re-evaluation. Although many of Taylor's suggested improvements show promise, when dealing with Barth's understanding of the Church's holiness, it is not clear that the recommended correction to Army pneumatology (involving a focus on "prevenient sanctification") adequately represents the classical Wesleyan theological conjunction of free and co-operant grace.

Like a Mighty Army? is a well-researched and clearly written work, with an extensive bibliography and helpful index. As a life-long Salvationist, and thirty years as an officer (ordained minister), Taylor does not speak as an outsider, or an armchair theologian, but one who has a vested interest in the future ministry of the Salvation army. Thus, he concludes his work with suggested reforms for the Army's consideration. Taylor calls for a recognition of the limits and liabilities of the "army" metaphor, and for the adoption of the "primary metaphors of the Church as the pilgrim people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit" (268). He believes that these metaphors are more helpful in fostering an understanding of *koinonia*, which the author views as the "essential characteristic" of the life that God shares with his people. As a result, the Army's ecclesiological self-understanding needs to value the "organic

body" over the institutionalized "organization," to emphasize the diversity of God's gifts over "a uniform style of Christian discipleship," to place a greater emphasis on the local congregation and "the integral relationship of community and mission" (268), with church discipline that is modeled on the "living law of Christ" rather than on human authority expressed through a "legalism of rules, regulations and lifestyle choices" (269). Finally, the author calls for the reinstitution of baptism and the Lord's Supper, viewing these practices as helping promote *koinonia*, and in no way undermining the Army's understanding of the Christian life as a living sacrament.

Sider, Ronald J. *Nonviolent Action: What Christian Ethics Demands But Most Christians Have Never Really Tried.* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015. 177 pages. ISBN-978-1-587-43-366-5.

Reviewed by Richard Hadley, Manager of Pastoral Services, Mercy Hospital Jefferson, St. Louis, MO.

Roughly one-third of John Wesley's sermons are shaped by ethics or speak directly to ethical concerns. This ought to be enough to secure the interest of the classical Wesleyan toward an exploration of Ronald Sider's counter-culture work. The appeal to the developing Wesleyan mind, particularly with a nod toward process theology, is the pragmatism with which Sider offers an often rebuffed alternative to conflict and injustice. For those pursuing responsible, faithful personhood in the dark reality of the human condition, this book is the warm-up exercise for the harder work of personal and collective justice.

The author directs the reader not to make early presumptions about the book's contents. "This book does not deal with the old debate between pacifists and Just War theorists" (xv). Sider contends the issue of nonviolent action lacks something essential: new and sustained testing of its possibilities among people who claim peace and nonviolence as a personal or corporate value. For Sider, engaging reasonably with this paradigm requires both a rational approach and a passionate conviction. The development illuminates the distinction between peace-keeping and peacemaking as it subtly exposes the polemic found in pacifism and in Just War theory. Nonviolence, here, is defined by activist confrontation that respects personhood and holds from the beginning the goal of reconciling oppressor and the oppressed as it brings the oppression to an end. Sider is not content with passive nonresistance and argues that coercion can be nonviolent in its methods. He contends a myriad of strategies go untried or relent prior to success. "Concrete situations demand a unique mix of tactics" (xvi).

Persuasive power gathers from the inspirational, often surprising, accounts of successful nonviolent action against oppression. The anecdotes are carefully chosen to demonstrate viability in social, economic, and political situations. This historical review leading up to present time demonstrates nonviolent action is effective even against the most brutal and powerful. It is clear the author's purpose is not to win the trial but to justify a hearing. The outcome is simple: to tease the mind of possibilities rarely imagined though in alignment with the pulse of the virtuous heart. There is a deliberate contrast drawn here. Violent reaction to violent

oppression perpetuates a cycle of bloody retaliation. Generationally and socio-politically retribution oaths escalate inevitably creating short-lived periods of faux-pax. For the disciple who has considered the cost of following Jesus, violence in response to anything remains incongruent to the Jesus ethic (John 18:36). The call to be actively engaged against corruption within the well-oiled machinery of human corruption is imperative (Matthew 10:16). Yet respecting personhood and creation in the process of the struggle is a parameter setting built into the framework of faith and grace engaged against injustice (Ephesians 6:12).

There is little to contend with critically within Sider's work. The book, by intention, builds a case to present a case. It is a call for a dialogue, not a dogmatic movement to a solution. Sider invites those who have yet to consider nonviolent action as a formidable tactic in overthrowing despots and securing human rights to review the evidence written on the many lives of those who attempted it and won. He also serves to encourage and challenge those who agree, at least in sentiment, with the notion of nonviolent action to understand the naivety and immoral condition of death-seeking for the sake of martyrdom. Especially helpful is Sider's argument that war is difficult to end simply because it is so attractive. Personally and culturally, heroes are lauded for the virtues war elicits: bravery, self-sacrifice, discipline, dedication. "It rewards the daring" (176). If nonviolent action is going to seize the mind of scholars, politicians, and influencers globally, it must offer equally appealing alternatives to the glamorous virtues war now holds. It does. Sider's work provides the flip switch to demonstrate the moral courage, inner discipline, and collective pride found in this form of resistance. Morose, like the bitter-sweet ending in a suspense novel, Sider concludes with stark actuality: Everyone is training armies with weapons. No one is training armies of nonviolent troops. How, then, does this ethical approach to injustice and oppression ever move to the mainstream of our thinking and behaving when no substantial investment in it can be found anywhere? And why, Sider asks, has the Church, historically, been absent from its intentional development and practice? Wesleyans, especially, will find this book helpful as the opening argument for classroom, living room, and conference room conversations long overdue within a subculture of Christianity which self identifies as movement dedicated to practicing and developing a just and righteous society.

Shelton, W. Brian. *Prevenient Grace: God's Provision for Fallen Humanity.* Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 2014. 283 pages. ISBN 9781593176617.

Reviewed by Jonathan Morgan, Assistant Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology, Toccoa Falls College, Toccoa Falls, GA.

The doctrine of prevenient grace is fundamental to Wesleyan-Arminian theology. While expressions of it vary, the central idea is that God, through the atoning work of Christ and the subsequent outpouring of the Spirit, has bestowed upon fallen humanity a grace that enables sinners to respond in faith to his offer of salvation. For Wesleyans, prevenient grace is the theological key to understanding the relationship between (1) the necessity of divine grace for salvation, (2) God's universal offer of salvation, and (3) the efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection for the world. God initiates salvation through grace, but the graciously enabled human must accept or reject the offer of forgiveness and reconciliation. Though the doctrine is often misunderstood, particularly by Reformed theologians, Wesleyan-Arminians insist that the doctrine is rooted in Scripture, manifest throughout church history (in one form or another), and theologically compatible with the natures of God, man, sin, and salvation.

It may, therefore, come as a surprise that Brian Shelton's new book, *Prevenient Grace: God's Provision for Fallen Humanity*, is the first of its kind. Though prevenient grace is as essential to Wesleyan theology as unconditional election is to Calvinism, until Shelton's work no *comprehensive* account of prevenient grace has been written. To be sure, good scholarship exists on particular aspects of prevenient grace (as well as Wesley's view of grace as a whole), but Shelton accomplishes what no one else has set out to do: he composes an apologetic of prevenient grace that brings together its biblical, historical, systematic, and experiential tenets in one volume. Because the doctrine has been taken for granted or, in some cases, distorted into a doctrine of unfettered free will, Shelton's overarching goal is to "restore the role of grace in Arminian soteriology to its proper place of preeminence" (xi). To do so, Shelton makes use of the so-called "Wesleyan quadrilateral" in his methodology by emphasizing how Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience shape the doctrine of prevenient grace. After explaining the core principles of the doctrine in chapter one, the succeeding chapters build the case by considering its place within the biblical testimony, the history of its promulgation, systematic cohesion, and its application for faith and practice in believers' lives.

Shelton defines the doctrine of prevenient grace in the opening chapter, particularly in relationship to the Fall. The sinfulness that has

affected all of humanity precludes anyone from seeking after God and exercising saving faith. Prevenient grace is God's antidote against human inability in that it empowers humans to believe the gospel that they might be saved. But Shelton is careful to stress that prevenient grace is not salvific in itself. It is *enabling* grace, not *saving* grace. He also makes clear that this grace is for all, though it comes to people in different ways. Shelton distinguishes between the objective and subjective means by which God offers God's grace to sinful human beings. Objectively, grace comes upon all in a general, unbiased way; subjectively it comes to individuals in unique ways particular to each person's circumstances that enable belief. This insight emphasizes the mystery of this work of God and the need for humility for those seeking to understand its saving implications.

Chapter two explores the exegetical foundations of prevenient grace. Shelton moves through important biblical texts that underscore human inability to do good (e.g., Ps. 51; Rom. 5 and 7) matched with passages that support divine enabling whereby humans can respond to God (e.g., Matt. 7:9-11; John 1:9; Rom. 1). While refusing to engage in straw-men polemics, Shelton highlights common Reformed interpretations of these texts before offering a rebuttal. For example, he draws attention to the Calvinist assumption that the New Testament word "all" referring to those for whom Christ died must mean "every" since the alternative would imply universalism. On the contrary, Shelton shows that, while universalism is unbiblical, forcing the word "all" to mean "every" betrays an *a priori* reading of limited atonement into the biblical texts. In this case, as well as many others, prevenient grace makes sense of human inability coupled with God's call to salvation. Since Christ died for all, God's enabling grace has gone out to all and allows human responsibility to function in a meaningful way.

Chapters three and four survey the historical record of prevenient grace, with the third chapter highlighting patristic through post-Reformation proponents, as well as the ancient Eastern tradition of "synergism" that still persists in Orthodox churches. The fourth chapter offers a close examination of Arminius and Wesley as the "historical artisans" of prevenient grace. This, in my opinion, is the strongest chapter. Shelton shows familiarity with the extensive scholarship on both figures, and is especially at home with the primary sources. He capably handles difficult texts by bringing clarity and drawing out important implications. Although giving both figures a sympathetic reading, Shelton does not gloss over inconsistencies or areas of confusion. Nonetheless, he offers a compelling case that prevenient grace finds its best expression in both Arminius and Wesley.

In the final two chapters, Shelton offers further arguments for prevenient grace from a systematic theological perspective, as well as ways in which prevenient grace is applied and experienced. He argues that the overarching biblical testimony points to prevenient grace. Throughout his discussion, he is reluctant (as was Wesley himself) to detail the exact mechanism that accomplishes salvation, noting the proper place of mystery in the grace-faith-salvation relationship. However, Shelton does provide clarity on certain sticking points within the debate. For example, he outlines various types of theological synergism and identifies key differences as well as areas of overlap between prevenient grace and the Calvinistic concept of common grace. These distinctions underscore the coherence of Wesleyan-Arminian soteriology.

Shelton's book is lucid, well organized, and meticulously researched. However, there are a few minor quibbles to point out. The first is Shelton's use of the term "Semi-Pelagian" in chapter three. Though he discusses its meaning in a footnote, it is unclear whether the term can be (or ever really has been) divorced from its original Augustinian-Pelagian context. To many, the term is more loaded than simply implying non-determinism. Outside of its classical sense, it would have been better to avoid the term when relating to the present context and use a different term (such as "synergy") when discussing non-deterministic soteriologies. Further, though Shelton's aim in chapter three is only to survey the historical landscape, he should not label John Cassian as a Semi-Pelagianism or Macarius as a Messalian without qualification. Recent scholarship has challenged these labels leveled against both figures, and a footnote addressing this would have been instructive. Finally, this book could have used a competent editor. A number of errors throughout (e.g. missing words, misnamed titles, an inaccurate quotation) should have been corrected before the manuscript was published in its current form. This is a very important book, and errors such as these detract from Shelton's valid arguments.

Aside from these minor weaknesses, however, Shelton is to be commended for his valuable contribution to the study of prevenient grace. He succeeds in bringing clarity to this doctrine and demonstrates its essential function in Scripture and Wesleyan theology. Shelton's book should be standard reading for anyone wishing to understand the doctrine of prevenient grace.

Olson, Roger E. and Christian T. Collins Winn. *Reclaiming Pietism: Retrieving an Evangelical Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2015. 190 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0-8028-6909-8.

Reviewed by Andrew Kinsey, Senior Pastor of Grace United Methodist Church, Franklin, IN.

Over the last decade, numerous conferences and publications have emerged in Europe and North America focusing on the importance of the "Pietist Impulse" in Christianity. These conferences and publications have brought forth several worthwhile projects of research to emphasize the crucial aspects of Pietism in the wider Evangelical tradition. A great deal of work, both historically and theologically, has gone into uncovering the unique contributions Pietists have made to the Church in general and to the Christian life in particular. In this well-written introductory text, Roger Olson of Baylor University and Collins Winn of Bethel University have provided both teachers and students of Evangelicalism a solid foundation upon which to explore Pietism, noting how this world-heart transforming movement is anything but monolithic or anti-intellectual.

This last claim is important. A key to Olson and Collin Winn's argument throughout *Reclaiming Pietism* is the fact that Pietism, in its many-textured variety, need not suffer from the reputation of being equated with "holier-than-thou" attitudes, religious legalism, or withdrawal from society (x). To be sure, *some* Pietists have such an image. Rather, central to Olson and Collin Winn's work is that the ethos and heritage of Pietism *as a whole* supplies wonderful resources of renewal, especially with respect to those streams running through Christianity at the moment whose family resemblances are Pietistic (e.g., Pentecostalism, Methodism, Holiness movements). As an introduction, *Reclaiming Pietism* offers a welcomed springboard upon which to dive deeper into the themes and contours of the Christian life. Olson and Collins Winn begin their book by discussing the contested nature of Pietism and clearing up, if not cleaning up, misconceptions about the term and its history. Here, the shadows of Albrecht Ritschl and Karl Barth loom large, as both scholars criticized Pietism for what they considered Pietism's "excessive" individualism (11). That critique is not surprising, of course, as there is a strong *personal emphasis or dimension* flowing through Pietists' veins. However, what Olson and Collin Winn show is that the original impulse of Pietism was very much communal in its comprehension and practice of the gospel (39). Growing out of medieval devotional movements, Pietism carried within itself Orthodox and Roman Catholic sensibilities (29). Indeed,

what Olson and Collin Winn uncover is how the ministries of Pietists like Spener, Zinzendorf, and Franke are unintelligible without the previous witness of mystics like Arndt, Kempis, de Labadie, and Bohme. This spiritual thread runs throughout Pietist literature.

The remainder of the book explores more thoroughly the major themes and leaders of the Pietist movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Especially helpful are the chapters outlining the beginnings of the movements and the key leaders (e.g., Jacob Spener, Auguste Franke, and Count von Zinzendorf and the Moravians), as well as the themes which "paint the portrait" of the genuine Christian life (e.g., conversion, new birth, orthodox doctrine, study of Scripture, Christian living and practice, corporate fellowship and worship, and mission). These chapters are pivotal as they assist readers in mapping Pietism in Europe and North America, and as they introduce new names into the church's lexicon (e.g., Johann Albrecht Bengel, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, Friedrich August G. Tholuck, Johann Christoph Blumhardt, Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, and Johann Wichern, to name a few). Rather than paint in one broad stroke, Olson and Collin Winn depict how the subtle nuances between the various branches of Pietism provide more color than not—from Halle to Herrnhut to Wuttemberg to Tubingen to Stuttgart to Berlin to Copenhagen to London to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Pietism grew in anything but arid soil. Indeed, the educational, social, and intellectual depths of Pietism are still felt today, even as the offspring of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Kierkegaard tussle among the fragments of postmodern culture. Olson and Collin Winn are to be congratulated on showing the connections between these philosophical "giants" and the influence the Pietist theological heritage still has on the church's self-understanding (143).

Hence, there is the need to promote Olson and Collin Winn's work among Wesleyan, Holiness, and Pentecostal scholars and students! The research taking place within and without Pietist ranks is welcomed news, and the opportunity to "cross-fertilize" between the various branches of Pietism can provide fruitful avenues of conversation about the *retrieval* of those aspects of the Pietist tradition that are vital to the church's witness. In addition, misconceptions about Pietism as a spent, anti-intellectualist force and subjectivist movement can also be addressed. The common elements binding Methodists and Pietists, for example, are indeed strong, and they are definitely worthy of attention (as they have been in the past through the work of Donald Dayton, Steven O'Malley, and Scott Kisker). What Olson and Collin Winn's book shows is how the ever-flowing

streams of Pietism come in and out of one another, and how the church's orthodox faith is central to its life and vitality. With the rapid growth of Pentecostalism, Pietism and its influence simply cannot be ignored.

Such historical and theological reflection, of course, is important. As Olson and Collin Winn share at the end, the influence of Pietism is still felt in the theologies of Jürgen Moltmann, Richard Foster, Donald Bloesch, and Stanley Grenz. All of these thinkers fly within the Pietist orbit, and all bring to bear Pietistic sensibilities on theology. All address in creative fashion the undercurrents of modern and postmodern culture and all bring the kind of devotional-practical-biblical-political acumen to the church's mission. In short, these "Pietists with Ph.D.'s" do not disengage from society and simply sit in ivory-towers!

Readers may certainly ask why these four theologians were chosen as representatives of Pietism. That's a fair question, but one that should not distract from the book's usefulness. Such a question only waits future investigation. In the meantime, those interested in reclaiming Pietism as a vibrant tradition within Evangelicalism can enjoy this volume.

Barbeau, Jeffrey W. and Beth Felker Jones, eds. *Spirit of God: Christian Renewal in the Community of Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 267 pages. ISBN 978-0-8308-2464-9.

Reviewed by Barry W. Hamilton, Emeritus Professor of Historical and Contemporary Theology, Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, NY.

Although some call the Holy Spirit the "quiet member of the Trinity," these essays bring pneumatology to the forefront of evangelical theological discussion. As Barbeau and Jones observe in the introduction, systematic theology textbooks often minimize or even ignore the Third Person of the Trinity. In particular, evangelical theology fails to fully engage the Holy Spirit as manifested in the global Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal movements. Consequently, the Church suffers deprivation in its preaching, liturgy, and spiritual life. Inspired by the 23rd annual Theology Conference at Wheaton College (11), *Spirit of God* offers an array of perspectives on pneumatology. These essays should stimulate ecumenical conversation and theological reflection, enrich evangelical theology, and through the Spirit bring renewal.

The essays in *Spirit of God* have been divided into two major sections. In the first, the essays deal with biblical and historical perspectives on pneumatology. Sandra Richter's study looks broadly at the Holy Spirit in the Bible. She finds the Holy Spirit as pervasive in both testaments, present from creation to the final consummation of history. Rather than a mysterious force, the Holy Spirit is in the foreground of redemptive history. Gregory Lee's essay examines pneumatology in Basil of Caesarea and Augustine of Hippo, and establishes the distinctive identity of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son. Lee notes that these figures highlight the similarities between East and West, and the importance of the Spirit in human redemption with regard to the other Persons of the Trinity. In his essay "Rationalism or Revelation," Matthew Levering demonstrates that Thomas Aquinas' advocacy of the *Filioque* clause did not originate in rationalistic theology, but rather from profound reflection on the biblical text. Thus, the distinctiveness of the Spirit's identity lies in relationship to the Father and Son, rather than in difference or division in substance.

Jeffrey Barbeau's essay, "Enthusiasts, Rationalists, and Pentecost: The Holy Spirit in Eighteenth-Century Methodism," examines the importance of pneumatology for both John and Charles Wesley. However, it highlights the latter's greater emphasis. The brothers left "competing narratives

. . . [that] bequeathed to the family of Wesleyan churches a pneumatology riddled with tensions and ambiguities" (90). Employing insights from Jonathan Edwards' theology, Oliver Crisp shares a Reformed perspective: "Uniting Us to God." He observes that the Holy Spirit does nothing without the other two Persons of the Trinity, and that the Spirit always works in view of "God's first intention to be united to his creatures" (109).

The remaining two essays in the "Biblical and Historical Perspectives" section consider pneumatology through a Pentecostal lens. Allan Anderson's "The Dynamics of Global Pentecostalism" does not consign a single origin to the movement, but rather sees a confluence of factors that converged in several geographic regions. Consistent with the book's theme, Anderson highlights the Spirit's role in the explosive growth of Pentecostalism, particularly in bringing people to "a divine encounter" (117). In "The Spirit of God: Christian Renewal in African American Pentecostalism," Estrelda Alexander analyzes the influence of African spirituality on the shape of Pentecostal worship. Through phenomenological interrogation of liturgical practices, she parses out how participants respond to the Spirit's presence and in turn exercise discernment on the authenticity of spiritual worship (e.g., whether it is merely "flesh"). She also examines the Wesleyan-Holiness roots of African American Pentecostalism, particularly the role of the Spirit whose fullness through sanctification brings purity and power beyond that received in regeneration (136-38).

The essays in Part Two of *The Spirit of God* look at "Doctrinal and Practical Perspectives." Discussing the Spirit's role in biblical hermeneutics, Kevin Vanhoozer clarifies how renewal movements like Pentecostalism contribute to scriptural interpretation. He validates "the renewal tradition's desire to get beyond exegetical excavation" and admires its hermeneutic as "a way of interpreting that enlists readers as active participants in the Spirit's ministry of Scripture's subject matter: the new order in Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns today" (157). In his exploratory essay, "*Creatio Spiritus* and the Spirit of Christ," Amos Yong introduces the issues related to "a pneumatically focused approach to the Christian doctrine of creation" (169). Significantly, he points out how theology emerges not through the self alone but also in community with others who bring insight through diverse cultural perspectives. Renewal thus emerges across the entire spectrum of knowledge.

In " 'Rooted and Established in Love,' " Michael Welker explores the relation between the Holy Spirit and salvation. He notes how theology has been "poisoned" (185) by an Aristotelianism that defines spirit as nothing

more than human thought: "A biblically oriented alternative to Aristotelian thought about the spirit has to start from a different perspective than the self-referential cognitive and mental power." Rather, it commences with the " 'outpouring of the Spirit' " in community. Pneumatology thus becomes "subversive and even revolutionary" (186) and challenges oppressive relations. A different perspective on pneumatology emerges from Geoffrey Wainwright's essay on liturgical expression in Scripture and in "the classical prayers of the Christian churches" (195). His exposition exudes solid Trinitarian teaching about the Spirit, in respect to Father and Son, as well as the Church. As a Methodist he includes examples from the "formative works of John and Charles Wesley" (200-201).

In "Stories of Grace," Douglas Petersen establishes a strong connection between Pentecostals and social justice. As a cofounder of a child care ministry in Latin America for the Assemblies of God, he relates several moving stories about the impact of Pentecostal ministries that engaged both the Gospel and social justice. In the final essay, " 'In All Places and in All Ages,' " Timothy George endeavors to show how the Holy Spirit works through the Ecumenical Movement to bring about unity in the Church. Drawing from patristic sources like Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, he drives home the importance of affirming the equality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. In the conclusion, "Come, Holy Spirit," the editors invite readers to reflect on what a fully pneumatological theology would mean for the Church. Taken together, these thoughtful essays could help today's Church explore paths to renewal for effective ministry in the twenty-first century. Through an engaged, genuinely Trinitarian theology—and through the Spirit's direction—the Church could experience greater dimensions of life in its worship, fellowship and mission as a gift from the Giver. Like their contributors, the editors share a vision of a renewed Church and renewed creation through the fullness of the Spirit.

Frazier, J. Russell. *True Christianity: The Doctrine of Dispensations in the Thought of John William Fletcher (1729-1785)*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014. 320 pages. ISBN-13: 978-1620326633.

Reviewed by Laurence W. Wood, Frank Paul Morris Professor of Systematic Theology, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY.

J. Russell Frazier has offered a comprehensive interpretation of John William Fletcher's doctrine of dispensations. He appropriately entitled it, *True Christianity.* Frazier has provided the context for understanding the thought of John Fletcher, highlighting that in his mature theological understanding, he developed an order of salvation corresponding to the history of salvation. That is, Frazier contends that Fletcher's thought reveals that the development of God's revelation as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit generally reflects the personal history of salvation in which each individual believer progressively transitions from a general awareness of God to a more specific knowledge of God as Father and Creator revealed in the Old Testament and finally to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, whose life is distinguished between his earthly ministry entailing his life, death, and resurrection (Easter) and the outpouring of his Holy Spirit upon the church (Pentecost). Frazier shows that the most problematic feature of Fletcher's theology of dispensations is the soteriological use that he made between the early followers of Jesus (pre-Pentecostal believers) and Pentecostal believers. This theology of dispensations, as Frazier so rightly pointed out, has nothing in common with the dispensational theology of Darby or Schofield. As Frazier showed, Fletcher understood Jesus' earthly life as a brief period of time that represented a development of faith that was "singular" (as Fletcher put it) to John the Baptist and Jesus' early disciples. Fletcher interpreted the disciples of the earthly Jesus as having attained forgiveness of sins and justifying faith, but they had not yet experienced the fullness of the Christian dispensation that came on Pentecost.

Frazier is to be commended for his excellent exposition of the milieu of Fletcher's theology and his theological foundations. His bibliography is most helpful and is worth the price of the book. His discussion of the contemporary understanding of Fletcher's theology is fairly presented, but there are a few nuances that I think could have strengthened his presentation.

First, Frazier's discussion of John Fletcher's idea of regeneration is incomplete. He is correct to point out that Fletcher linked the new birth to the baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, Frazier did not point out

the larger Catholic understanding of the new birth that Fletcher embraced. For instance, Fletcher's unpublished essay on the new birth equated it with Christian perfection [I located this essay in the Fletcher-Tooth Archival Collection as part of the Methodist Archives in the John Rylands Library of Manchester University, England, and it was published in *The AsburyTheological Journal* 50.1 (Spring, 1998): 35-56]. As J. E. Rattenbury pointed out, Charles Wesley also equated being born of God or the new birth with Christian perfection, except in one possible verse [*The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns* (London: Epworth Press, 1941, 260-264; cf. John Tyson, *Charles Wesley on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1986), 214-225]. Thus, Charles Wesley and John Fletcher equated the new birth with Christian perfection. Likewise, the early John Wesley equated Christian perfection with the new birth. Only later did John Wesley come to equate the term "new birth" with initial justifying faith. So Frazier has assumed a uniform meaning of the term "new birth" as if it only referred to initial justifying faith. From my perspective, the evidence suggests otherwise.

Frazier's definition of the new birth is apparently the source of his assertion that Fletcher used the phrase "the baptism of the Spirit" for initial justifying faith as well as Christian perfection. If so, that really contradicts Fletcher's explicit statements made on several occasions that he intended to make John Wesley consistent in linking the baptism of the Holy Spirit with Christian perfection. In effect, Frazier made Fletcher also "inconsistent" on the very issue that he charged John Wesley with being "inconsistent." Fletcher carefully developed his understanding of the baptism with the Spirit while he was at Trevecca and he never deviated from it. I have never seen a single instance in Fletcher's writings after 1770 where he identified the baptism with the Spirit with justifying faith. On Pentecost, Fletcher says in his *Essay on Truth* that the believers moved from the dispensation of the Father, to the dispensation of the Son, and to the dispensation of the Spirit all at the same time, although he allowed that some may have only "seemed" to have moved into the dispensation of the Spirit when after a few days later they may have discovered indwelling sin still remaining in their hearts. Always for Fletcher, if one has entered the dispensation of the Spirit and has been baptized with the Spirit, he *ipso facto* was entirely sanctified. Fletcher often said that he himself had not entered the dispensation of the Spirit, and he worried that he might die only a disciple of John the Baptist because he had not been made perfect in love through the baptism with the Spirit.

Frazier said Joseph Benson changed his mind about the linkage between the baptism with the Spirit and Christian perfection, but I have

not find anything to support this shift. Frazier cites Benson's letter to Mary Bosanquet (Fletcher's future wife) in 1778 as proof of this, but his interpretation apparently resulted from an inadequate transcription of the letter. Benson complained to Mary Bosanquet about the "language" that Fletcher used to speak of those who had heard the gospel but refused it. Benson was referring to a manuscript that Fletcher had sent to him entitled, "The Language of the Father's Dispensation." I also located this essay, and it is also published along with the Fletcher's essay on the new birth in same issue of the *Asbury Theological Journal.* In that essay, Fletcher said that those who heard the gospel but otherwise did not accept it could still be included in the dispensation of the Father and as such the "language" of "children of God" could still be applied to them. Benson strongly objected to this idea. Benson said to Mary Bosanquet in the opening paragraph that he fully supported Fletcher's emphasis on "the baptism with the Spirit," noting "now who of us will ~~contradict~~ speak a word ag[ains]t this? Who of us will not, rather as we have ability & opportunity bear our testimony to it? About this there is then can be no disputation." Rather, the disputed thing which "will be deem'd not only new but also unscriptural by most of the serious people in the nation" is the idea that "to whom the gospel is clearly preach'd & its greatest blessing the fullness of the Spirit offer[e]d, may still be under the inferior dispensations of divine grace" and thus be "called children of God." If Benson had been referring to Fletcher's use of the language of the baptism with the Spirit, Benson could not have called it in 1778 something "new" and unacceptable to Methodists because Fletcher's *Last Check* [explaining that Christian perfection was through the baptism with the Spirit] had already been published and endorsed by John Wesley three years earlier. Actually, just one year before writing this letter, Benson said in 1777 his views about the baptism with the Spirit had not changed since he was at Trevecca. This fact must have escaped Frazier's attention because he quoted this material (see 191 n 161). Frazier also reported that Benson's published sermons on sanctification excluded pneumatological language, but Benson actually said that we are fully sanctified through the fullness of the Spirit [*Two Sermons on Sanctification* (Leeds, 1782), 29]. In the appendix to his biography of Fletcher in 1804, Benson defended Fletcher's theology of Pentecost against his critics, noting in particular Fletcher defined being "sanctified wholly" with "the fullness of the Spirit" and "Pentecost" [*The Life of the Rev. John William de la Flechere*, in *Works*, 8:435-436].

Finally, Frazier thinks that Fletcher did not equate the baptism with the Spirit and Christian perfection. Fletcher says without qualification in

a letter to Charles Wesley that "the difference [between your brother and me] consists (if there is any) in my thinking, that those who were … baptized and sealed with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost … were in the state of christian perfection … . As contradistinguished from the faith of ~~the~~ babes, or carnal believers . . . which the apostles had before the day of pentecost. [See *"Unexampled Labours," Letters of the Revd John Fletcher to leaders in the Evangelical Revival*, ed., with an introduction by Peter Forsaith, with additional notes by Kenneth Loyer (London: Epworth, 2008), 320]. I believe this characterization of the two classes of Christian is consistently maintained throughout Fletcher's writings after 1770. Of course, Fletcher had a wide assortment of interchangeable terms to describe the larger meaning of perfection, as Frazier has carefully shown.

One can assume that Fletcher understood that Pentecost marked the birthday of the Church, and we know that he supported the rituals and beliefs of the Church of England. His ecclesiastical practices saved his soteriology from an individualistic view of holiness, but his writings in isolation from his actual practice as the vicar of Madeley led to a kind of individualism in early American Methodism and in the subsequent Wesleyan holiness movement where entire sanctification was absolutized and narrowed down to a crisis moment. Fletcher consistently insisted that only fully sanctified believers were Pentecostal believers and that the believer needed "daily" and more complete baptisms with the Spirit as one grew in sanctifying grace. Frankly, I think Fletcher's unqualified equation of Christian perfection with the baptism with the Spirit tended toward a contradiction of the baptismal/confirmation liturgy. No one who has become a member of the Church through water baptism (Easter) and confirmation with the laying of hands (Pentecost) can be called literally a pre-Pentecostal believer. Experientially, I think Fletcher was right that such believers may not measure up to their status as a Christian and may be living beneath their privilege as a Pentecostal believer, but nonetheless they are Christian believers and they have access to all the potentialities of divine grace. There is literally no such thing as a pre-Pentecost believer in the strict sense of the term. Benson explained in the appendix to his biography that Fletcher intended his comments about Pentecost and the baptism with the Spirit to be taken metaphorically, but if so, it is not clear that he did. Nor was it clear to Fletcher's critics. Frazier was rightly worried about any attempt to "flatten out" Fletcher's theology of Pentecost, but equally important is it to recognize the dispensational demarcations that were so important to Fletcher. As Frazier so accurately argues, each succeeding dispensations includes the previous ones, but at

the same time Fletcher was consistent in maintaining their differences and insisting on the superiority of each advancing higher dispensations.

Frazier's fine exposition is a reminder of one of the early leaders of Methodism whose influence was profound and extensive.

This is a slightly revised version of a review that appeared in *Methodist History* 53 no. 2 (January 2015). Used with permission.

Oord, Thomas Jay. *The Uncontrolling Love of God: An Open and Relational Account of Providence*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015. 229 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0830840847.

Reviewed by Samuel M. Powell, Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA.

My purpose in this review is to give a critical analysis and evaluation of the main claims set forth in Professor Oord's book, along with observations about its writing style, intended audience, and potential use.

Before doing so, however, I want to distinguish my review and critique from the ecclesiastical hysteria surrounding the ideas espoused in this book, a hysteria fomented by misguided theological wannabes of modest intellectual stature whose reverence for a past they do not understand is commensurate with their fear of ideas whose significance they cannot grasp. Professor Oord's book does, in my judgment, fail to persuade on certain crucial points; it is, however, marked by a deep pastoral concern for the Christian church and a keen sensitivity to the intellectual and practical difficulties generated by certain tenets of traditional conceptions of God. That the sentiments expressed in this and similar books have occasioned institutional panic in some quarters of the church is a measure, not of the book's shortcomings, but of the incapacity of some to appreciate the importance of intellectual coherence and a stubborn refusal to entertain the possibility that some have a better grip on the meaning of scripture than do they.

The chief value of *The Uncontrolling Love of God* lies in its ability to articulate, in a readable and fairly nontechnical way, the assumptions and conclusions of Open Theism and Relational Theology, especially in relation to alternative ways of thinking about God, freedom, and evil. As such, it is a valuable tool for anyone who wishes to become acquainted with this school of theology or to probe Professor's Oord's particular rendition of it. The writing style is extraordinarily clear, succinct where necessary, and expansive where helpful. It is suitably interdisciplinary, given the wide range of topics, and discusses many important theological themes and representatives.

Additionally, it is a merit of Professor Oord's book that it identifies and rightly rejects one of the silliest ideas ever promulgated, an idea that is curiously favored in the Evangelical community. I refer to the notion that although, *in se*, God is omnipotent and sovereign, God has freely chosen not to exercise divine power in order to secure creaturely freedom. Space does not permit a rehearsal of Professor Oord's excellent dis-

mantling of this absurd notion, but I commend him for calling attention to the Evangelical emperor's lack of intellectual clothing (see 141, 158).

Before proceeding to points of critique, I need to register my sense of confusion about this book's genre. Neither the preface nor the rest of the book indicates the intended audience. As this book is published by IVP Academic, I assume that it is an academic book and thereby expect a certain sort of argument, characterized by a breadth of evidence, a depth of logical rigor, and attention to formal arguments—the sorts of things that academic types favor. My expectation, however, remains unfulfilled. Perhaps, then, this book is intended for a more general audience. It does, I think, work better as a manifesto—a statement of first principles and conclusions—than as a work of analysis and argumentation (at least the sort of argumentation that I find persuasive).

Here is what I mean about the book's argumentation. For my taste, one finds in *The Uncontrolling Love of God* a disappointing array of unnecessarily weak arguments:

- Generalizations without supporting evidence: For example, "By the end of the twentieth century, it seemed the majority of Christian scholars rejected the classical view of impassibility" (125). What is the basis of this claim? Similarly, Professor Oord argues upon the basis of what "most of us think" (33). How could the number of people who think in a certain way be established?
- Citation of the views of other theologians and philosophers in place of expressed argumentation—an excessive tendency to appeal to authorities.
- Questionable premises offered without justification: For example, "Such appeals do not help us make sense of life, which is what we are all trying to do" (89). Is it true that making sense of life "is what we are all trying to do" and constitutes a valid criterion for judging theological claims?
- Offering evidence in place of argumentation: "As I argued earlier, the most powerful evidence for free will is our own personal experience. In the way we act, we all inevitably presuppose we are, at least to some degree, free. I call this an experiential nonnegotiable" (60). Our sense of freedom may be useful evidence, but it does not constitute an argument.

I was similarly disappointed by the use of scripture in this book. The abundance of scriptural references in this book is, sadly, not matched by a uniformly responsible use of scripture. For instance, Professor Oord

believes that the Bible teaches us the reality of chance events via the episode about the unfortunate men who died when a wall fell upon them (Luke 13:2-5) (30). But surely the purpose of the story is to deny that God caused the event, not that it was a chance event, in the rather loose way in which *chance* is used in this book. Likewise, Professor Oord has not resisted the temptation to exercise selective attention in his use of the Bible (e.g., 109). He thus has no trouble finding biblical passages that support his view, but there is a noticeable lack of reference to texts that do not fit so easily into his theses. Then, there is the strange practice of reading the biblical text in an overly literal manner (see, e.g., 110). For Professor Oord, there seems to be a fairly straight and simple line from biblical references regarding God's changing and repenting to affirmations suitable for a formal doctrine of God. When others engage in such linear reading, we ordinarily label them Fundamentalists.

On a different note, I wish to mention a certain conceptual looseness found in the book. Take *randomness*, for example. In the discussion of this important notion, the impression is given that randomness means that which is causally undetermined (at least I think that is what it means), for the book connects randomness and the indeterminacy described by quantum physics. At the same time, events such as the results of a coin-toss and the path of a golf ball blown by the wind are said to be random (32-33). But these latter events are surely not causally undetermined. They may be unpredictable, but they are not causally undetermined. Likewise, Professor Oord unwisely associates indeterminacy and randomness with chaotic, i.e., complex, systems (36), even though physicists generally interpret complex systems as deterministic. Finally, it is doubtful that quantum indeterminacy really implies an open universe in the manner in which this book claims (35).

Finally, I invite attention to one of the book's central claims, namely that in each moment God gives to creatures freedom, agency, and self-organization (e.g., 169, 173). This is a curious claim, because Professor Oord believes as well that "self-organization at life's lower levels derives from the inherent structures of things in themselves. The form, genes or mere existence of a thing contributes to it becoming what it is, moment by moment" (52-53). Self-organization, then, and presumably the freedom and agency that depend on it, are the result of a thing's inherent structure.

It is therefore not clear just what God contributes and one is tempted to find the book's claim (that it is God who gives freedom and agency) a vacuous one.

Regarded as a manifesto, there is much to like about "The Uncontrolling Love of God," not least its commitment to courageously asserting the conclusions that follow from its assumptions. Readers may or may not agree with those conclusions, but this book serves the important function of presenting Open Theism and Relational Theology in the most persuasive light possible.

Tyson, John R. *The Way of the Wesleys: A Short Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 212 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0802869548.

Reviewed by J. Gregory Crofford, Coordinator for Education and Clergy Development, Church of the Nazarene (Africa Region).

Numerous books have been published about John Wesley's life and thought, fewer about Charles Wesley, but rarely a volume that considers them together. John Tyson's *The Way of the Wesleys: A Short Introduction* falls into the final category, what Tyson calls a "theological assessment" (ix). At just over 200 pages in length, Tyson intends not an exhaustive treatment but a primer. Each of the fourteen chapters helpfully concludes with questions for reflection and several suggestions for further reading.

In keeping with the main thrust of the Wesley brothers' preaching and writings, most of the book's chapters deal with aspects of soteriology. Readers are treated to traditional themes such as sin, the new birth, holiness, Christian perfection, and grace. In other chapters, John Tyson lays out the brothers' views on the atonement and the Trinity. Likewise, Tyson addresses ecclesiology in a practical manner through well-conceived chapters on the means of grace generally and the Lord's Supper specifically as well as the church's social role in the world. Though his selection of topics reflects the main emphases of John and Charles Wesley's thought, notably missing is any mention of eschatology.

John Tyson presents hamartiology early in the book, noting that the Wesleys "affirmed a doctrine of human depravity at a time when enlightened people viewed it as a superstitious error that had debilitating effects upon human moral agency and action" (16-17). Citing John Wesley's 1757 treatise, *On the Doctrine of Original Sin*, Tyson defines sin as a transgression of the law, the standard Wesleyan formula. But is this definition sufficient in light of Scripture? One will have to consult other interpreters to answer that question. As is true here and elsewhere in the book, Tyson is content to present raw data but offers no critique.

Nonetheless, John Tyson shines when he expounds areas where the younger Wesley made a stronger contribution than his older brother. One such subject is pneumatology. Tyson notes: "While both brothers turned repeatedly to the role of the Holy Spirit to explain the inner workings of salvation and Christian life, Charles' hymns and sermons show a particularly strong affinity for the person and work of the Holy Spirit—no doubt because of the connection between Pentecost and his personal faith" (69). Especially illuminating is the nexus between prevenient grace and the activity of the Holy Spirit, a connection that Tyson rightly parses in terms of the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin.

For those of a sacramental bent, a chapter on the Lord's Supper is sure to provoke discussion. John Tyson ably argues that, for the Wesleys, the Eucharist was both a "confirming and converting ordinance" (146). Tyson references 1740 correspondence between John Wesley and Thomas Church establishing Wesley's belief that celebrating Holy Communion can be the moment when one first repents and believes. As Tyson notes, this is consistent with the view that the Lord's Supper is one means by which God may convey justifying, sanctifying, or preventing grace (147).

Besides the Lord's Supper, John Tyson also speaks of John Wesley's view of stewardship. Here, he notes the divergence of his practice with that of his brother Charles, who as a father was willing to indulge the interests of his sons, even when costly (162). New to the discussion of the older Wesley's spending habits is the calculation that John Wesley during his lifetime gave away the equivalent of $1.5 million, a testament to his frugality.

Although *The Way of the Wesleys* on-balance is a helpful book, a second edition would do well to correct some weaknesses. Chief among these is the absence of endnotes or footnotes, a surprising omission. Correspondence with the author revealed that the original manuscript contained footnotes but that the book's editor removed them prior to publication. This makes it difficult for a reader who wishes to dig deeper by consulting primary sources. On the positive side, the book's editing is well-done, with only one apparent typographical error discovered (a reference to "life in a moral, fallen body" rather than a "mortal" body (96).

These shortcomings notwithstanding, *The Way of the Wesleys* makes a welcome addition to the collection of introductory works on the brothers Wesley. Further, the many Charles Wesley hymns cited throughout the book amplify the voice of Methodism's finest poetic theologian, convincingly demonstrating that the brothers' combined impact is greater than if John Wesley had worked alone.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Journey toward Justice: Personal Encounters in the Global South*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. 253 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0801048456.

Reviewed by Dustin D. Benac, Doctor of Theology candidate, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC.

Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Journey toward Justice* offers an enriching exploration of how a preeminent American philosopher came to think about justice and the contribution of encounters in the global south to his thought and political engagement. Drawing from his experience of writing about justice and speaking against injustice for more than forty years, Wolterstorff interweaves narrative and theoretical components to offer an account that is part autobiographical and part philosophical in scope. The synthesis of story and philosophical reflection develops a secondary line of inquiry about the means by which one is moved to action when confronted with injustice.

Six parts and thirty-one chapters provide the preliminary structure for Wolterstorff's work. Although Wolterstorff introduces the text as a "personal story" rather than a "systematic tour" (xii) of his thought, such a characterization may understate the content of *Journey toward Justice*, for it delivers on both narrative and philosophical grounds. As with any narrative, strict chronology does not always apply. Much as telling a compelling story may require presenting some parts in greater detail and then filling in chronological and conceptual gaps later, Wolterstorff develops his story with sensitivity both to the narrative structure and philosophical precision.

Part I introduces two encounters with the global south that catalyzed Wolterstorff's "awakening" (1) to injustice. Through his experience at a conference in 1975 in Potchefstroom, South Africa and a 1978 conference about Palestinian rights in Chicago, Wolterstorff was confronted with the "faces and voices of the victims of systemic injustice" (156) and felt a calling from God to respond (7). These experiences compelled Wolterstorff to "tread a different path" (28) as he sought to develop a theory of justice. In contrast to Plato's *The Republic* and John Rawls's *Theory of Justice*, which seek to develop ideal theories of justice, Wolterstorff began by attending to the actual structures of communities and the institutions, laws, and policies that inform the pursuit of justice in society.

Parts II through V chronicle the development of Wolterstorff's theory of justice along the trajectory outlined in Part I. His theory of justice serves as the logical fulcrum that connects his personal experience to his

philosophical reflection. Working within an Ulpian conception of rights, Wolterstorff defines 'rights' in Part II according to social relationships in which one has a claim "of being treated in a certain way" (44). Part III extends his exploration of rights and their source of legitimization by demonstrating the Old Testament and New Testament commitment to justice and the implicit affirmation of natural rights expressed by Christian Scripture and the early church fathers (120-21). In contrast to claims that love supplants justice in the New Testament, for Wolterstorff the biblical theme of shalom offers a unified, scripturally grounded vision of justice and love (113-18).

Part IV makes a constructive turn by considering human rights and the role of social justice movements in righting injustice. For Wolterstorff, human rights are grounded in God's love "for each and every one of God's human creatures—more specifically, [in] God's desire for friendship or fellowship with each and every human being" (137). Such a commitment bestows dignity and honor regardless of human capacity.

Positioned within Part IV, chapters 23 and 24 advance Wolterstorff's second line of inquiry about the means by which one is moved to action when confronted with injustice. Although he has intimated the question elsewhere, Wolterstorff now explicitly considers why his encounter with the injustices in the global south compelled him to think seriously about injustice and prompted an empathetic identification, while his encounters with the injustices in his own country did not evoke similar reflection and identification. Wolterstorff emphasizes the impact of seeing and hearing *actual* voices and faces (156) and provides helpful analysis about why others who were also present at these events may have not respond similarly (158). However, his commentary at this point offers the reader an underdeveloped explanation of how one is moved to action and the factors that shape individuals' and communities' estimation of dignity. Chapter 24, which presents a structural analysis of social justice movements and their stages of progression, offers an initial pass at a more developed understanding of his and others' response to injustice, but the topic merits more thorough analysis.

Wolterstorff explores just punishment in Part V by recounting a recent visit to Honduras that demonstrated, for him, the importance of combining primary justice with reactive justice. Whereas Wolterstorff had previously been moved by South Africans' and Palestinians' cry for primary justice, the absence of reactive justice in Honduras demonstrated that "without a just and effective system of criminal justice, the struggle for primary justice and for the righting of primary injustice will get

nowhere" (192). Discussions that follow about Paul's rejection of retributive punishment, the state's authority to order a just society, and the link between justice love and forgiveness, complement Wolterstorff's affirmation of the need for reactive justice.

Part VI concludes Wolterstorff's work by suggesting both the unity between justice and beauty and the importance of Christian hope in sustaining social justice work. Much as at an earlier point shalom—universal flourishing—provided unity to his understanding of justice and love, shalom here offers coherence to his understanding of the interrelated character of beauty and justice. Wolterstorff presents the Christian understanding of hope as a desire for consummation and deliverance (230). Such desire stretches beyond the horizon of human history and is grounded in the "promise that Christ will bring about his just and holy kingdom" (240). Without a firm vision for Christian hope, the pursuit of justice risks adopting the many secular simulacra that conflate Christian hope with secular optimism (236).

When read within the Wesleyan tradition, Wolterstorff's work and Wesleyanism offer mutually illuminative insights. For Wesleyans, *Journey toward Justice* contains helpful resources to support a Wesleyan commitment to justice and engagement with injustice—in the global south as well as in other regions. In particular, Wolterstorff's theory of justice can assist Wesleyans in more precisely defining the character and content of Wesleyan works of mercy. Regardless of where Wesleyans pursue justice, Wolterstorff's account also presents a compelling injunction to pursue justice by telling the stories of victims of injustice and considering whose stories are either not being told or not being heard.

Meanwhile, the Wesleyan tradition can deepen Wolterstorff's account of the process by which one is moved to action and the role of empathetic identification in catalyzing and sustaining social justice movements. In Wolterstorff's "awakening" (1) and turn to justice, one may find an analogue to John Wesley's Aldersgate experience and later commitment to social justice. Reading these two events together suggests the great mystery that characterizes Christian calling and awakening. As Wolterstorff rightly implies, one cannot fully explain the mystery of God's call and human response. However, Wesleyanism also contains a rich tradition of reflection on the role of Christian affections in inspiring and guiding human action. In particular, scholarship about affections and formation by Wesleyan scholars—such as Don Saliers, Richard Bondi, Fred Edie, and Randy Maddox—could offer illuminative resources that could deepen Wolterstorff's already probing account.

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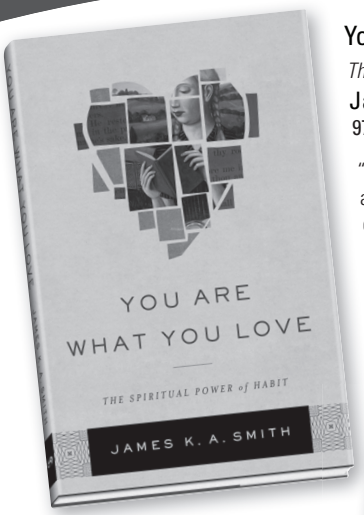

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