Wesleyan Theological Journal

Publication of the
Wesleyan Theological Society

Volume 32, Number 2
Fall, 1997

The Journal
of the
WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
A Fellowship of Wesleyan-Holiness Scholars

Editor and Chair of the Editorial Committee:
Barry L. Callen, 1993 to present

All communications concerning editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor, Barry L. Callen, c/o Anderson University, East Fifth Street, Anderson, Indiana 46012. Communication about book reviews is to be directed to the Book Review Editor, David Bundy, c/o Christian Theological Seminary, 1000 West 42nd Street, P.O. Box 8867, Indianapolis, Indiana 46208. Membership dues and other financial items should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer, William Kostlevy, c/o Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky 40390. Rate and application form are found at the end of this issue.

Publication Address: Wesleyan Theological Society, P. O. Box 144, Wilmore, Kentucky 40390.

WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
(Organized 1965)

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

WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Published by the Wesleyan Theological Society
P. O. Box 144
Wilmore, Kentucky 40390

ISSN-0092-4245

Indexed with abstracts in *Religion Index One: Periodicals,* American Theological Library Association, Chicago, and by Christian Periodical Index of the Association of Christian Librarians. Available on-line through BRS (Bibliographic Retrieval Series), Latham, New York, and DIALOG, Palo Alto, California.

Available in Microform from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeek Road, Dept. I.R., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

Printed by
Old Paths Tract Society
Shoals, Indiana 47581

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

Estrelda Y. Alexander, Associate Minister, Harvest Temple Church of God, Forestville, Maryland, and Ph.D. Candidate, Catholic University of America.

Charles R. Hohenstein, Adjunct Professor, University of Notre Dame.

Steven T. Hoskins, Assistant Professor of Religion, Trevecca Nazarene University.

Henry H. Knight, Assistant Professor of Evangelism, St. Paul School of Theology.

William Parkes, Minister, Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford, England.

Sharon Clark Pearson, Associate Professor of New Testament, Azusa Pacific University.

Rodney L. Reed, Pastor, Arlington Church of the Nazarene, Arlington, Virginia.

Lester Ruth, Assistant Professor of Liturgical Studies, Yale Divinity School and Institute of Sacred Music.

Cheryl J. Sanders, Professor of Ethics, Howard University, Pastor, Third Street Church of God, Washington, D.C.

Kenton M. Stiles, Ph.D. student, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley.

BOOK REVIEWERS: David Bundy, David Rightmire, John Stanley, Andrew Tickle.

EDITOR'S NOTES

The thirty-second annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society convened at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D. C., in November, 1996. The theme addressed there was "The Worship of God." It was recognized that worship settings, styles, and orientations comprise a significant and often controversial transitional area in contemporary church life. The Society's intent was to explore this vital and volatile area biblically, theologically, and historically, with special attention to the precedents, perspectives, and resources available to today's church from the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition.

This issue features edited versions of ten of the presentations made at this historic meeting. The subjects include the central purposes of worship, aspects of worship practices in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition in England and the United States, and the significant search for liturgical identity in this presumably "non-liturgical" tradition. Two emphases are that the church was born in song and authentic Christian worship both glorifies God and sanctifies humanity.

Honored here are William Arnett and Charles Carter, two special men of God, both recently deceased. They were key leaders in the Wesleyan Theological Society and have left behind a rich legacy of scholarship and sacrifice. Their lives were acts of worship.

The book reviews and advertisements highlight the ongoing vigor of scholarship by and about the Wesleyan/Holiness theological tradition.

BLC
October, 1997

WORSHIP AND SANCTIFICATION

by

Henry H. Knight III

One year in the late 1970's when I was still a fairly new pastor in the United Methodist Church, I attended a district-level collection of workshops on a variety of topics, of which we each could choose two. The two I chose were worship and evangelism. The workshop on worship was led by a pastor and his choir director, both noted for their expertise in the area. Their workshop idea was to plan their service for Easter Sunday, right there before our very eyes, so that we could see how was done and then go and do likewise. There was much discussion about the lectionary lessons, an appropriate psalter reading, the choir processional and anthem, the lighting of the Christ candle, and so on.

Of great importance was said to be the choice of hymns. Charles Wesley's "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" was judged obvious as an opening hymn. Then the choir director noted that many people like "Low in the Grave He Lay," also known as "He Arose." One pastor visibly winced and then said somewhat sarcastically that if his congregation had to sing that song, it would ruin the Easter service. There was some snickering at this remark by others in the workshop.

Worship was a major concern in the evangelism workshop as well. But the pastor leading this workshop, who had a numerically growing church, was more interested in whether newer and potential members actually liked the worship. He clearly was not to be constrained by a lectionary—instead, he emphasized topical preaching which addressed felt needs. As for music, he was dubious of the value of traditional hymns since they are so much at variance with what people listen to today. Had this workshop been held ten or fifteen years later, I suspect we would have heard more about alternatives to the organ and the hymnal, perhaps even praise choruses projected on the sanctuary wall. This attitude toward traditional hymns has recently been expressed by Doug Murren who, in his book *The Baby Boomerang,* has a chapter entitled "Roll Over, Chuck Wesley."[1]

These are anecdotal stories, but they reflect well a real tension which runs through our practice of worship. They represent two entirely different sets of criteria for evaluating the adequacy of our worship. The first was governed by the aesthetic sensibilities of a pastor and choir director, both trained in classical music, who saw worship as the occasion for bringing their best before God. The second was driven by the desire to share the gospel with those outside the church, and sought to remove barriers to their participation.

I do not want to imply that these workshops represent the best thinking from either the liturgical or evangelistic arenas. However, I fear they are typical of how that thinking is often appropriated in the local church. Neither do I wish to deny the validity of the issues they raise. I take very seriously both the concern to be rooted in the tradition—to maintain our identity as Christians—and the concern for contextualization—to be relevant to our culture. The problem is that, while the issues are real, the proposed solutions are often one-sided. Their fundamental problem is that they frame the question wrongly as a presumed choice between "traditional" or "contemporary" worship, or between worship which reflects "high" culture or "popular" culture.

Instead of letting aesthetic or utilitarian concerns provide the governing criteria for evaluating worship, I propose understanding the central purpose of worship as "the glorification of God and the sanctification of humanity."[2] Drawn from the Roman Catholic tradition, this phrase has two distinct advantages for evaluating Christian worship, especially for those of us in the Wesleyan tradition. First, it suggests the obvious twofold test: does our worship glorify God, and does it encourage or enable the sanctification of the participants?

---

[1]Doug Murren, *The Baby Boomerang* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990).

[2]James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship* (rev. ed.) (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 29.

Second, it raises the question of how the glorification of God is related to the sanctification of humanity. I will argue that worship which glorifies God at the same time sanctifies persons through forming and shaping distinctively Christian affections. However, when worship has as its overriding purpose evangelism, therapy, social activism, or any other human-centered goal, it neither glorifies God nor sanctifies persons. It becomes anthropocentric instead of theocentric. Authentic worship is necessarily centered on God.

Remembrance and the Glorification of God

What, then, is worship that glorifies God? At its heart, such worship is praise and thanksgiving for who God is and what God has done in Jesus Christ. That is, it is fundamentally doxological and eucharistic, and is so because it is anamnetic--it remembers God's character, redemptive and creative activity, and promises of salvation and new creation.

Remembrance as *anamnesis* does not mean what we so often mean by the word "remember"—it is not a recalling to mind of a past event or person that is no longer present. Rather, *anamnesis* is remembrance in which the event or person becomes present to us—it is something like experiencing that event or person anew, as a present reality.

The celebration of the Passover is paradigmatic of this remembrance. Central to the meal is a recital of the narrative of the Exodus event. But, as Don Saliers says,

> It is clear also that on the present night—in this very prayer and ritual action of the meal—the liberating power of that past event is here and now, made actual among the community of memory and hope.[3]

The forms which this remembrance take for Christians are many. Certainly the reading of Scripture and the proclamation of the Word are primary means of presenting the story and character of God. The sacraments are enactments through words, signs, and actions of what God has done in Jesus Christ. In addition, prayers and hymns often tell us who God is and what God has done.

To name these elements of worship is to recognize the inextricable linkage of remembrance to praise and thanksgiving. While proclamation

[3]Don E. Saliers, *Worship As Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 96.

might call for a subsequent response to God, sacraments, hymns, and prayers more often integrate the remembrance within the praise and thanksgiving. That is, it is *as* we are praising or thanking God that we remember God and joyfully enumerate the reasons for our thanks and praise.

In our glorifying of God, what, then, do we remember? Described most generally, we remember who God is and what God has done, with the latter the prime indication of the former. For Wesley, the entire sweep of God's activity from creation to eschaton is a testimony to God's love and to God's purpose of transforming and renewing the world. His focus, of course, was on the renewal of the image of God in humanity, and the central event in this entire drama of redemption is God's act in Jesus Christ. There is a christological concentration in Wesley's work which evokes not only praise and thanksgiving, but repentance and awe as well. The following stanza of a hymn by Charles Wesley illustrates this:

> O Love divine! What has thou done!
> Th' immortal God hath died for me!
> The Father's co-eternal Son
> Bore all my sins upon the tree:
> Th' immortal God for me hath died,
> My Lord, my Love is crucified.[4]

This remembrance of what God has done is linked in Wesleyan theology with what God will do. Many of the eucharistic hymns speak of a present experience of eschatological promise, again focused christologically. For example:

> By faith and hope already there,
> Even now the marriage-feast we share,
> Even now we by the Lamb are fed: . . .[5]

Of course, in Wesleyan worship there is special focus on the soteriological promises of pardon and holiness. But these are consistently related to God: what God has done in Christ, what God is doing through the Spirit, and what God will do in the end.

[4]Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds., *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 114 (Hymn 27). Vol. 7 of *The Works of John Wesley*, Frank Baker, ed.

[5]J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley* (Cleveland: OSL Publications, 1990), H-31 (Hymn 5).

God's redemptive activity reveals the character or identity of God—who God is as God. There is a rich set of descriptive imagery. God's holiness, sovereign majesty, wisdom, and power are examples. All elicit praise. Most centrally for Wesley, God is love, a love manifest supremely in Jesus Christ which governs all of God's other characteristics. As Wesley says, commenting on 1 John 4:8:

> God is often styled holy, righteous, wise; but not holiness, righteousness, or wisdom in the abstract, as he is said to be love; intimating that this is his darling, his reigning attribute, the attribute that sheds an amiable glory on all his other perfections.[6]

It is remembering this God which elicits our gratitude and praise in worship.

Thus far I have used the terms "praise" and "thanksgiving" somewhat interchangeably. Having described something of the content of remembrance, we can now distinguish the two more carefully. Thanksgiving is when we have gratitude for something which is done on our behalf--an act of compassion, the giving of a gift, an enduring friendship. Praise is an acknowledgment of excellence in another, a recognition of qualities which we deem praise-worthy. In terms of worship, thanksgiving is a response to God's gracious and loving activity in creation and redemption; praise is elicited by who God is. Together, they are linked to such related responses as awe before the mystery and majesty of God and delight as the sheer enjoyment of God.[7]

To say that praise and thanksgiving are at the heart of worship is not to say they are the whole of worship. Worship contains a number of other essential elements, such as confession and intercession. What it does mean is that praise and thanksgiving keep all of worship centered in God's character and activity rather than in our own agendas. Apart from this centering, confession could become cheap grace and intercession a personal wish list. When authentic praise and thanksgiving govern our worship, the remembrance of God is central. Confession then is a response to being accountable to this God, and intercession is bringing the world before the God who created, loves, and redeems it.

---

[6]John Wesley, *Notes on the New Testament*, 1 John 4:8.

[7]On awe and delight in worship, see Don E. Saliers, *Worship Come to Its Senses* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

I emphasize authentic praise and thanksgiving because not everything that goes by these names is integrally related to remembrance. Sometimes what is called praise is only lively singing cast adrift from the biblical story of God. It may be celebratory, but the reason for celebration remains unclear. Even Scripture choruses can have this effect unless those singing them have some sense of the biblical accounts from whence they were extracted. Don Saliers observes "that in liturgy, as in life, we do well to tell the difference between short-term episodes of pleasure and the deeper, more permanent sources of joy and delight."[8]

"Exciting" worship does not always direct us to God. This fact is not, however, a blanket condemnation of exuberant worship in favor of a more solemn worship style. Rather, it suggests as one criterion for worship, whatever the style, the question of remembrance: Does it tell us who God is? Does it set before us the God revealed in Scripture? Saliers reminds us that

> . . . there is no way around the need for the specific character of God's Word. That Word in the Scripture, proclamation, and sacrament keeps stretching us—seekers and "settled believers" alike. Worship well-grounded in the whole Bible continually invites us to ponder the mystery of God's ways just as Mary pondered in her heart the awesome work of God.[9]

Glorification of God, understood as praise and thanksgiving elicited by the remembrance of God, is the alternative to all utilitarian forms of worship. As Leander Keck insists, "If praise is the heart of worship, then making worship useful destroys it, because this introduces an ulterior motive for praise."[10] Such worship is always a substitute for the real thing, whether its goal is to reach the unchurched, enlist the churched in a social agenda or building program, or just help people feel good about themselves or to realize their potential.

In lifting up authentic praise, Keck raises an important issue. He argues that praise, and not thanksgiving, lies at the center of worship, for

> authentic praise of God acknowledges what is true about God; it responds to qualities that are "there" and not simply "there

[8]Ibid., 40.

[9]Ibid., 26.

[10]Leander E. Keck, *The Church Confident* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 35.

> for me." . . . In other words, God is God, because of what God is and does, quite apart from what God is and does for me.[11]

Keck's concern would be understood and endorsed by many in the Reformed tradition, including Jonathan Edwards. But it should give Wesleyans pause because John Wesley characteristically moved in the opposite direction.

Worship for Wesley was often most centrally eucharistic and, therefore, doxological as well. If by this Wesley simply meant gratitude that God in Christ was Saviour of the world, there would be no problem. But this the pre-Aldersgate Wesley could readily affirm to the Moravian Bishop Spangenberg in Savannah. No, Wesley insisted that

> faith is a divine evidence and conviction, not only that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," but also that Christ "loved *me,* and gave himself for *me.*" It is by this faith. . .that we "receive Christ"; that we receive him in all his offices, as our Prophet, Priest, and King.[12]

It is that dreaded "for me" which theologians like Edwards believed undercut authentic praise of God for simply being God.

In Wesley's theology, gratitude for one's own justification and sanctification does not compromise praise because the "for me" is what is so revelatory of God as God. As we have seen, for Wesley the reigning attribute of God is love, and that love is revealed in Jesus Christ. It is only natural that our personal experience of God's love would lead us increasingly to grow in our knowledge and love of God, and thereby in our gratitude toward and praise of God. "We love because God first loved us" (1 John 4:19), and thanksgiving is the central way of expressing our love for God.

This is not to say that there is no danger in beginning with the benefits received. Apart from the trivialization of God as the dispenser of whatever our hearts desire (which, knowing how sinful those hearts are, Wesley would seek to avoid), there is the constant temptation to focus on the salvific gift rather than the giver. "You look inward too much, and upward too little" Wesley advises Miss Bishop.[13] This for Wesley was one form of

---

[11]Ibid., 30.

[12]Albert C. Outler, ed., *Sermons II 34-70* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 161. Vol. 2 of *The Works of John Wesley*, Frank Baker, ed.

[13]"Letter to Miss Bishop" (Feb. 16, 1771) in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*, Thomas Jackson, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), XIII:20.

"enthusiasm." He guards against it by placing pardon and holiness securely within the story of God, continually referencing it to Christ and the Spirit. We've seen this already in the hymns, as well as his insistence that we receive Christ in all his offices as Prophet, Priest, and King. He never divorces the benefits of Christ from the remembrance of Christ.

Affections and the Work of Sanctification

This brings us back to the original thesis, that worship is both for the glorification of God and the sanctification of persons, but it can only aid the latter if its focus is on the former. We are now in a position to see the role of the glorification of God in worship in the work of sanctification. To do this, we must first say something of the nature of sanctification for Wesley.

As the works of Gregory Clapper, Richard Steele, and Randy Maddox have amply demonstrated, Wesley understood the Christian life to consist of a pattern of affections or "holy tempers," rooted and grounded in the hearts of believers.[14] For both Wesley and Jonathan Edwards, this way of conceiving the Christian life was in contrast to the typical anthropologies of their day, which presupposed a conflict between reason and "the passions." The rationalists, for example, argued that reason needed to control the will rather than its being controlled by the passions, for while the latter tempted to sin, the former could ensure moral choices. Maddox has shown how this anthropology supplants that of Wesley in nineteenth century Methodism among both the partisans and opponents of the holiness movement.[15] When worship is related to this type of anthropology, it is going to emphasize those elements that inform and persuade the intellect.

For Wesley and Edwards, the affections provided a more holistic anthropology, integrating the mind and the heart. While some nineteenth-century Methodists, influenced by Scottish common-sense realism or Kantian idealism, found Wesley's anthropology incoherent, twentieth-century writers have been more appreciative of the affections. Both

[14]See Gregory S. Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1989); Richard B. Steele, *"Gracious Affection" and "True Virtue" According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1994); and Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 69-70.

[15]Randy L. Maddox, "Holiness of Heart and Life: Lessons From North American Methodism," *Asbury Theological Journal* 50-51(Fall, 1995-Spring, 1996), 157-172.

Robert C. Roberts and Don E. Saliers have developed contemporary versions of the affections, with Saliers maintaining that terminology and Roberts calling them "emotion—dispositions."[16]

In my own appropriation of their insights, I have come to describe the affections as having three characteristics. First, they are dispositions—abiding inclinations in the heart which characterize us as persons. Thus, to be Christian is to have and be growing in certain affections such as love of God, love of neighbor, faith, hope, humility, gratitude, joy, and the like. Affections as dispositions are to be distinguished from what we today often term feelings. While one may or may not feel loving or thankful at a particular time, to be a Christian is to be a loving and thankful person. The affections are deeper in our character than feelings which come and go; they abide in the heart and remain over time.

Second, affections provide a certain perspective on the world. In a way they mediate our experience. When we experience a hungry child, it matters greatly whether one's life is characterized by selfishness or compassion. Affections provide us with a way of evaluating our experience as well as the motive to act on that understanding. If asked why we are involved in combating world hunger, the reason we are likely to give is that we have compassion for those who suffer.

Third, affections are intrinsically relational—they take objects. One does not simply love, one loves someone or something. Christians love God and neighbor; they do not love money—or at least struggle with the latter while growing in the former. In the case of an object who is a subject, the relationship can be two-way: we are the objects of God's love; we love God in return.

The relationality of the affections is central to our consideration of worship and sanctification. We cannot have Christian affections apart from an ongoing relationship with God. To forget, ignore, or reject God is to replace God with some other object of our love. When the object of the love changes, the affection of love and the resulting life change as well. To use Saliers' language, the object forms and shapes the affections. Thus, to love the God revealed in Jesus Christ has a profound formative effect on who we are—it is what makes us Christians in the Wesleyan sense of

[16]See Don E. Saliers, *The Soul in Paraphrase* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980, reprinted by OSL Publications), and Robert C. Roberts, *Spirituality and Human Emotion* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982).

holiness of heart and life. In contrast, to love money would make us very different people, leading lives reflecting values and priorities at variance from those of the gospel.

If the affections are the content of sanctification, and they are formed and shaped by their object, holiness of heart and life is dependent on our remembering experientially the God who is holy. Here is the essential link between worship and sanctification: it is as we praise and thank God that, through remembering again and again who God is and what God has done, we grow in the knowledge and love of God. Our own lives are continually shaped and our affections deepened by our encounter with this God over time. As we bring our whole lives to worship God, we render our lives worshipful. This is the essential interrelation of liturgy to ethics, or, in John Wesley's language, of acts of piety to acts of mercy.

For clarity, let me state what I do not mean. I am not saying that worship provides information about God which we cognitively appropriate and then will to emulate. Rather, I am suggesting that in worship we encounter the God revealed in Jesus Christ, who is present by way of the Holy Spirit, and made known to us through faith, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus we do not simply know more about God, we come to know God ever more deeply; and this God is not simply an amorphous feeling, but a God who has a distinctive character revealed in Scripture. Authentic worship, then, is not only anamnetic but epicletic; it not only remembers who God is but encounters the living reality of that God through the Spirit. At one and the same time, it avoids the extremes of a formalism which simply goes through the motions and an enthusiasm that substitutes enjoying feelings for knowing God.[17]

It is for this reason that worship which glorifies God at one and the same time sanctifies the participants. Worship that is at its heart utilitarian, or aesthetic, or entertainment cannot sanctify because it doesn't really glorify—it doesn't remember the God of Israel and of Jesus Christ as the ground and motive for its thanksgiving and praise. Worship that remembers this God cannot but give God thanks and praise, and evoke in its participants ever-growing love, hope, humility, joy, peace, and gratitude in response to the love God has so richly shown in creation and especially in redemption through Jesus Christ.

[17]For a discussion of formalism and enthusiasm as they relate to means of grace, see Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life* (Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1992).

SACRED SONGS/SACRED SERVICE

by

Sharon Clark Pearson

"The Christian Church was born in song."[1] This significant observation is the conclusion of formal study of the liturgical traditions and hymnic deposits embedded in New Testament documents, a study whose results are now broadly recognized. One function these sacred songs perform is to reveal the content of the worship and teaching of the early Christian communities. They are windows into the life of the church. These songs demonstrate what was identified as specifically Christian in the early churches. As traditions which predate the New Testament text, they indicate what was accepted as authoritative teaching, what was recognized as authoritative by an early community and what was passed on with assumed authority.

The songs incorporated into the New Testament perform another function as well. Study of the place they hold in the New Testament documents discloses their vital function of directing the exhortation and instruction in the texts themselves. The inspiration of the hymnic traditions creates the impetus for the rhetorical requirements the text makes on its readers. The Christolgies are never left in the realm of doctrinal propositions. The significance of the claims about the Christ is laid out in

[1]This article is dedicated to Dr. Ralph P. Martin whose inspiration has touched my life; but far beyond that he has challenged the Church to embrace its rich heritage to the full. Ralph P. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 39. With the artistry of a songwriter, Martin opens his Chapter 4, "Hymns and Spiritual Songs." This sentence provides the quintessence of this article.

practical applications of what faith means in the community and in the world.

Songs and Early Christian Belief

The Christology of the New Testament is "virtually contained in those passages most likely to be classified as early hymns of the church. . . ."[2] Song is the language of worship; song is the vehicle of praise bursting from the human heart. It is in song that the experiential and the analytical unite forces. From the beginning, the early church encapsulated its faith in song, its song in worship, and its worship in instruction, thereby creating a circle of inspiration, implication, and application. What began with the great act of God in Christ culminates in the human response of confession, adoration, and service. The center of Christian worship is Christ, a "word" about Christ (reading of Scripture, song, liturgy, and preaching), the sacrament of Christ, and then service in the name of Christ.

What is distinctive about Christian worship is its Christology. Early Christian understandings of Christ were derived not only from reflection on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and not only in the available conceptual constructs of their cultures and time. The conviction of Jesus' identity did not flow first from philosophical speculation, but rather was apprehended in the experience of community worship, the experience of the living and reigning Lord in the midst of the believers. The exalted language of worship, received in traditional liturgical deposits, reflects both the glory of the resurrected Lord, present in and to the church, and the historical constructs in which that worship was expressed. The psalms of old now burst forth into fresh creations, hymns of the One sent from God and acknowledged as Messiah and Lord. The Christ event is so astounding that a plethora of images, old and new, are enlisted to communicate in exquisite form the significance of God's act in the Christ. Christ is exalted because he had performed a specific function. In him, God had accomplished something for each one who is worshipping and for all of them together.[3]

---

[2]Ralph P. Martin, *The Worship of God* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 52. This is particularly the case with 1 Peter, which will be the focus of this study.

[3]This is a summary of the thinking of Larry Hurtado in *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988).

Once the place of hymns in the early church is established by New Testament evidence, a related inquiry may be pursued. The inquiry is directed by a question: What role did hymnic materials fulfill in the production of the text of the New Testament? The question restated is, What service did the sacred songs of the church play in the development of the Scriptures of the church? The thesis presented here is that the songs of the early church performed the vital service of defining what was specifically Christian. They became the center of Christian worship and then they became the foundation for instruction that was incorporated into the New Testament. The songs now embedded in the New Testament texts functioned first in the service of worship and then as the authority for Christian exhortation, encouragement, and engagement in the life of the church and in the world. The song served in the making of the Christian community, then and now. Song invites the worshiper into correct understanding *and* experience.

One of the more secure conclusions of studies of the New Testament is that, before those books were produced, collections of pre-formed liturgical (including song), catechetical, and parenetic material were in circulation in the church and were appealed to as authoritative sources. Such traditional deposits formed a common fund which was used in the production of the texts of the New Testament. The effectiveness of such traditional material is assumed by the authors who employed them to great effect as anchors and centers of understanding and prescribed action.

In the early church, much of the interpretation of the Christ event was presented in the conceptual constructs of the Old Testament, reflecting the authority that the Old Testament canon held in the community. Many of the songs of the church were based on the language, the concepts, and often, even the form of Old Testament worship materials (parallelism).[4] A further conclusion reaching near consensus in New Testament studies is that the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament texts followed recognizable patterns, including the selection of whole blocks of writing, especially from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Psalms (in contrast to isolated proof-texts).[5] For example, 1 Peter reflects the

[4]Martin, *The Worship of God*, 54.

[5]For a summary of these findings, see Ralph P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations*, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 248-256.

imagery and even the words of Deutero-Isaiah. Furthermore, in the hymns of 1 Peter the Christ event is presented in the concepts and even the explicit language of the "servant songs."

The Identification of Hymns

Three passages in the New Testament refer to the occurrence of singing in worship: 1 Corinthians 14:26; Colossians 3:16; and Ephesians 5:19.[6] The identification of liturgical (creedal or hymnic) passages in the text of the New Testament, begun in the early 1900s, was based on grammatical and syntactical evidence. For example, E. Norden (1912) listed a number of literary devices as indicative of such materials: *parallelismus membrorum*; a pronominal beginning; descriptive participles; and relative clauses.[7] Since the earliest work on such material, many passages in the New Testament have been isolated and identified as hymnic in nature or genre.[8] The evidence considered by such investigations includes not only the internal structure (strophes or parallelisms) and poetic devices, but also contextual dislocation produced by the insertion of such material into the prose style of narrative or epistle. Traditionally, the psalms of Luke 1-2 and the doxologies of the Book of Revelation have been accepted as such pre-formed deposits. Other texts, well-established as "hymnic" by form criticism in the past few decades, are Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1:15-20, 1 Timothy 3:16, and John 1:1-18. A number of other passages have been isolated and identified as "hymnic," at least in some sense. First Peter, for example, has been the subject of much recent attention, particularly in terms of its Christological materials.

---

[6]James 5:13. "Songs of praise" could refer to private or public worship.

[7]As summarized by Martin Hengel, "Hymn and Christology," *Studia Biblica* III, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Supplement Series 3 (Sheffield, 1980), 186. See Hengel, *Studies in Early Christianity*, 1995.

[8]Reinhard Deichgräber has prepared a through historical summary and analysis of the study of early Christian hymnic materials in his work *Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit: Untersuchungen zu Form, Sprache, und Stil der frühchristlichen Hymnen*, Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments, 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1967). Various critical methods developed by literary and form criticism are used to identify traditional deposits. Recent work on Christological hymns and hymn fragments have attempted more precise distinctions and delineation of the provenance of each classification.

First Peter: A Case Study

1 Peter is an epistolary form which incorporates a kaleidoscope of traditional deposits from the worship and teaching milieu of the early church, as well as quotations and allusions from the Old Testament. The dependence of 1 Peter on pre-formed materials, as well as numerous Old Testament citations and allusions (nearly 46 quotations and pointers), is so great that the document has been characterized as "the epistle of tradition."[9] Schutter summarized the findings of source studies of 1 Peter (as well as his own study of the hermeneutic of the author) by describing the text as "[an] intricately woven texture, a nearly continuous synthesis of source-materials of one sort or another."[10]

As early as 1906, Alfred Seeberg made note of the use of formula-like material in this epistle.[11] The studies which followed were concerned with detecting such pre-formed deposits on the basis of lexical, stylistic, and contextual study. Over the last century, form-critical study has identified a number of types of traditional material and formal sources (beyond the Old Testament citations). These types have been classified as the following: *topoi*, ethical lists, kerygmatic and creedal statements, hymns or

[9]Ceslas Spicq, *Les Épîtres de Saint Pierre*, *Sources Bibliques* (Paris: Libraire le Coffre, 1966), 15. Clark Lyndon Palmer asserts that 1 Peter includes more traditional material for its length than any other epistle ("The Use of Traditional Materials in Hebrews, James, and 1 Peter," Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985, 201).

[10]William L. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter* (WUNT 2nd series, 30, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989), 49 (hereafter cited as Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition*. Selwyn said as much in 1947: "Its synthetic character is evident in the use freely made of liturgical and teaching forms current in the Church of the day, and in the close and compact interweaving of its theology and ethics . . ." (*The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 198, 1). The difference in the two works is not only that Schutter's work reflects the further development of understanding of the forms behind 1 Peter since Selwyn's study, but also the fact that Schutter completes the analysis that, comparatively, Selwyn only began, including the complex and coherent use of the Old Testament in 1 Peter.

[11]Alfred Seeberg, *Der Katechismus der Urchristenheit* (Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903), 86-96. Seeburg was first to discuss the "formula-like" material in 1 Peter. See also Rudolf Bultmann, "Bekenntnis und Liedfragmente im 1 Petrusbrief," *Coniectanea Neotestamentica* XI (1947): 1-14 (hereafter cited as Bultmann, "Bekenntnis und Liedfragmente").

hymn fragments, catechetical instructions, doxologies and eulogies, household rules, testimonia and dominical sayings.[12] Such source materials are found throughout 1 Peter.

The Christology of 1 Peter is advanced primarily by the use of traditional deposits which have been carefully integrated into the text. The epistle employs these traditional materials without attempting to expand on their doctrines (1 Peter is not a "theological treatise" as such).[13] Its essential Christological testimony occurs in 1:3-12, 1:18-21, 2:4-8, 2:21-25, and 3:18-22. Each of these passages contains traditional materials, whether from oral or literary sources. With the exception of 2:4-8, each passage has been identified by style and form as containing traditional liturgical fragments.[14] The conclusion that formal liturgical or "hymnic" materials are embedded in 1 Peter has been widely recognized since the early studies by Bo Reicke (1946), R. Bultmann (1949), J. Jeremias (1949), and H. Windisch (1951) who identified 1:3-12, 1:18-21, 2:21-25, and 3:18-22 as hymns.[15]

The Christological Hymnic Material in 1 Peter

The Christological pericope 1 Peter 1:3-12 is a distinct unit (composed of a single sentence) and a tightly woven declaration based on at least six varieties of formal materials exhibiting several accretions of tradition. The *berakot* form ("Blessed be . . .") which opens the pericope establishes the types of sources employed in the unit as a whole (verses 3-

---

[12]Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition*, 33. Schutter offers an extensive list of these occurrences, as well as the scholars who have developed the study of each type.

[13]F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 31. This is not to say that 1 Peter is not theocentric. Ralph P. Martin asserts: "Probably no other document in the New Testament is so theological as 1 Peter" (*New Testament Foundations*, vol. 2, 344). But Beare correctly makes the point that it is not a philosophical discussion of doctrine.

[14]Selwynn argued that 1 Peter 2:6-8 was based on a hymn (the same hymn that he saw reflected in Romans 9:33). However, there is little support for his thesis that the material is "hymnic." Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 277.

[15]Bo Reicke, *The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism: A Study of 1 Peter 3:19 and Its Context* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1946). R. Bultmann, "Bekenntnis und Liedfragmente"; Joachim Jeremias, "Zwischen Karfreitag und Osten," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 42 (1949): 194-201. H. Windisch, *Die katholischen Briefe*.

12) and also the intent of 1 Peter. The passage is created from language and forms of Christian worship and was for Christian worship.[16] Preformed traditional materials have been worked into a complex introduction to the whole of 1 Peter.[17]

First Peter 1:3-12 portrays both literary and grammatical elements of a rhythmic style with hymnic features. It is not possible to produce evidence for reconstruction of a hymn or a hymnic fragment in 1 Peter 1:3-12, even in the most obvious verses 1:3-5. Yet, given the limitations admitted here, it is possible to claim a "hymn-like" quality for at least 1 Peter 1:3-5, and probably even for the materials through verse nine. A Christological pattern of sufferings/glories, which appears in the liturgical forms behind this exquisite literary proem, creates the center of the unit 1 Peter 1:3-12 which, in its final form, is best identified as a formal, didactic ascription.[18]

The pericope of 1 Peter 1:18-21 is a composite of formulary materials primarily determined by the Isaiah 53 tradition and deliberately reflecting a dynamic of the sufferings/glories. The descending clauses, in two couplets (with balanced antithesis) preserve, traces of the hymnic nature of the traditional sources. The participial phrase in verse 18 is used as a technical introduction to "standardized teaching" which follows.[19] The poetic forces of parallelism and assonance and the unusual liturgical language of the pericope (7 terms not found elsewhere in 1 Peter) create the authority that enforces the exhortation of 1:13-17 and is continued after 1:21, most often in the language and thought forms of Deutero-Isaiah.

---

[16]The *berakot* form is derived from the prayers of the Jewish synagogue. It is Chrisitanized with the addition "[Father] of our Lord Jesus Christ." See also Ephesians 1:3 and 2 Cor. 1:3.

[17]David Kendall argues that the pericope "provides the foundation for *all* of the authors subsequent remarks." This is an overstatement if all specifics are meant. However, the general concerns of the text and the Christology of the ascription are certainly guiding the following presentation. "The Literary and Theological Function of 1 Peter 1:3-12" in *Perspectives on First Peter*, NABPR Studies Series, Number 9, Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 106.

[18]Detailed evidence and historical dialogue on each of the hymnic passages investigated in this article may be found in my Dissertation, *The Christological Hymnic Pattern of 1 Peter* (Ann Arbor Michigan: UMI), 1993.

[19]See the same participial expression in Rom. 5:3,, 1 Cor. 15:58, 2 Cor. 1:7. J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), 72.

The next hymnic pericope, 1 Peter 2:21-25, exhibits a different linguistic usage, terminology, and style from its context. The arrangement of parallelisms together with strophes sets this unit off from the surrounding context. Derived from a rearrangement of several lines of Isaiah 53, this hymnic piece is based primarily on the feature of parallelism original to the source.[20] The features that indicate the independence of this unit (contextual dislocation and linguistic usage) also give the unit the character of a traditional deposit (a pre-formed unit) and, more particularly, a hymn.[21] The pericope includes the ethical example of Christ as the archetypal righteous sufferer and the dominant theme of Christ's suffering as atonement. A sufferings/glories pattern is portrayed here in the language of Isaiah 53.

Whereas the pericope of 1 Peter 2:21-25 emphasizes the obedience of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, the last pericope to be considered, 1

---

[20]First Peter 2:22________Isaiah 53:9b
2:23________53:7, 9
2:24________53:4, 11, 12
2:24b_______53:5
2:25________53:6

[21]All of the general stylistic criteria listed by Shimada apply to this hymn. Shimada lists 6 general stylistic criteria: (1) elevated prose style; (2) rhythm; (3) correspondence between words and phrases; (4) combination of parallelism, rhythm and poetic beauty; (5) differences in linguistic features, terminology and style in a given context; and (6) repetition of creed-like contents in different passages. Under the designation of structure, Shimada lists another five criteria. Shimada then moves to the level of minute detail in his listing of 12 particular stylistic criteria (e.g., grammatical features such as the relative construction or participial construction). K. Shimada, "Formulary Materials," 102-4. Even those who are hesitant to list this passage as a hymn must discuss it as an option given the force of the findings. In his new commentary (*1 Peter*, Hermeneia-A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996,, 192-3), Paul Achtemeier allows that this text may be hymnic in origin. However, after he lists the evidence, he then disputes the list point by point. His conclusion is basically a statement of uncertainty, but his line of argumentation does not recognize that the evidence he disputes is that which is common to liturgical deposits in 1 Peter. Achtemeier's hesitancy to recognize hymnic material seems to arise out of his not seeing the larger patterns of 1 Peter and its use of source materials throughout. See my dissertation for an overview of the use of liturical deposits in 1 Peter: *The Christological Hymnic Pattern of 1 Peter*. Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* , ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup, 1st English ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 208.

Peter 3:18-22, moves immediately from the suffering of Christ to his vindication, exaltation, and triumphant reign in the present, which assures the future. First Peter 3:18-22 begins with a repetition of the language and structure of the introduction to the hymnic form in 2:21-25. The introductory "for" (*gar*), the "because" (*oti*), and the phrase "Christ also suffered for our sins" (2:21 and 3:17-18) are all parallels, as is the "in order that" clause expressing motivation.[22]

The pericope opens with a primitive creedal statement and expands into a hymn fragment which frames verses 18c-22. Despite first appearances, the pericope is not a haphazard juxtaposition of disparate materials. The progression of thought in 3:18-22 is produced by a long series of qualifying statements or dependent clauses, each one specifying the preceding statement. Following the synthesis provided by Intertestamental literature, verses 20-21 offer a sort of midrash developed on Enoch/Noah traditions.[23] Verse 3:22 returns to the resurrection inference of verse 18 in a resolution in which Christ has become the "*Cosmocrat*" and "judge of all history."[24] Each assertion of the pericope is a purposeful progression built on the authoritative base of a sufferings/glories scheme.

Some of the evidences, identifying hymnic features in this pericope include the rhyming participles of verse 18b which are *hapax legomena* in 1 Peter. The third participle which occurs in verses 19 and 22 makes it even more likely that traditional material is being used. Another clear sign

---

[22]William J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965, 1989), 110. Dalton accepted Reicke's conclusion that the theology of Christ's suffering is introduced in the same way in both passages.

[23]Michaels' thought is based on the principle (attributed to Jesus) that "as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17:26; cf. Matthew 24:3). *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 49 (Waco, Texas: Word Books Publ., 1988), 200. "A rationale has been presented for the conflation of the Noah and Enoch traditions from 1 Enoch. Isaiah 54:9-10 is the inspiration for the Christological assertions of 1 Peter 3:19-22. Christ takes on the roles of the Suffering Servant, the Son of Man, the Messiah and even the typology of Enoch and Noah. As the new Enoch, the Son of Man, the Messiah, the Righteous One (3:18-22) has pronounced judgment and thereby salvation. That salvation is shared symbolically in Christian baptism which is a sign of the turning point in salvation history. The Christ is vindicated and exalted, so assuring the vindication of his followers.

[24]Martin, *Foundations*, Vol. 2, 267.

of creedal or hymnic material is the intentional antithesis with parallel clauses. Such criteria are found in verse 18b. The anaphoric style of 1:20 is repeated as well. Also, with the verb endings and noun endings the same, the rhetorical device of epiphora creates a certain assonance in these paired participial phrases.

The final verse of the pericope also reflects a creedal or hymnic character. The connecting relative pronoun, the two participial verbs, and the anaphoric style are all signs of a traditional piece.[25] The "themes of enthronement, ascension to a heavenly realm, and domination or subjugation of the cosmic powers" are described in elevated style and language.[26] The content, which recalls the basic facts of *Heilsgeschichte*, again indicates poetic and hymnic character. The phrase "who is at the right hand of God" is paralleled in Romans 8:34, including the relative pronoun (cf. Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3; 10:12; 12:2). The original source of this phrase is the LXX of Ps. 109 [110]:1.[27]

The last line of the pericope consists of a participle and three nouns without definite articles: "with angels and powers and authorities subject to him." Assonance is produced by the rhyming endings. The defining nouns are similar to those found in 1 Corinthians 15:24, Ephesians 6:12, and Colossians 2:15, which again reveals their traditional nature.

First Peter 3:18c-22 is so clearly distinct from 3:18ab and parallel to 1 Timothy 3:16 that it suggests the theory of an underlying hymn. First Peter 3:18ab serves as a "superscript" for 3:18c-22 in the same way that 2:21 functions for 2:22-25.[28] After presenting a summary of the historical

---

[25]Michaels, *1 Peter*, allowed that there are "two traditional statements about Christ's exaltation here," but negated the idea that the relative clause "who is . . ." is a part of any traditional formula. He explained that the phrase found here and in Romans 8:34 is the author's "ad hoc construction." On the basis of the surrounding evidence (such as the use of participles) and the fact that such a clause is common to traditional and hymnic material, the phrase is considered here to be an integral part of the hymnic piece.

[26]Earl Richard, "The Functional Christology of 1 Peter," in *Perspectives on 1 Peter*, Special Studies Series, no. 9, NABPR, 1986, 129.

[27]Hengel identified 1 Peter 3:18, 22 as a hymn fragment. "Hymn and Christology," *Studia Biblica* (1978). He sees the influence of Psalm 110 on this hymn as well as on the hymn fragments he locates in Ephesians 1:20-22 and Romans 8:34.

[28]Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, 68-9. Schutter's analysis is accepted at this point.

dialogue of the form-critical work on 1 Peter 3:18-22, Martin concluded that 1 Peter 3:18f, 22 is a "pre-formed early version of a hymnic formula of which 1 Timothy 3:16 is a more complete or refined version."[29] Schutter cautiously concurred with the proposal of an underlying hymn behind 3:18c-22. In fact, he explained Goppelt's rejection of a hymn fragment partly as "neglect" of the parallels which may be observed in 1 Timothy 3:16; he quoted Sanders' comparison of the sequence of 3:18c/19/22 and the order of 1 Tim. 3:16 in defense of an underlying tradition.[30]

The Sufferings/Glories Pattern of the Hymnic Material

In 1 Peter the Christological hymnic deposits have been selected and reworked in a fashion consistent enough to create an identifiable pattern. The Christological pattern or scheme of the four passages identified above (which contain traditional liturgical material: 1:1-12, 1:18-21, 2:21-25, and 3:18-22) introduces the primary focus on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is presented as constituting a unity. In 1 Peter, this unity is understood to reveal God's plan. The dynamic of the pairing of death/resurrection is presented throughout 1 Peter in the scheme of "sufferings" and "glories" (1:11). That scheme presents the conviction that, in God's plan, righteous suffering is followed by vindication, exaltation, and "glories." The Christological materials of 1 Peter have been selected, correlated, and arranged by the scheme of sufferings/glories so as to create a pattern. This suffering/glories pattern or scheme (hereafter referred to as the S/G pattern) is not only appealed to at significant junctures in 1 Peter; it has been made the model which guides the development of the text itself.

Edward Lohse declared in 1954 the design behind the author's selection of the Christological pericope in 1 Peter: "The creedal and hymnic pieces used by 1 Peter center on the theme of Christ's sufferings and are cited precisely because of that content."[31] E. Richard and W. L. Schutter continued the direction anticipated by Lohse, each from a different angle. Richard isolated liturgical fragments he detected in 1 Peter and claimed to have discovered a "hymnic pattern or mythic structure" which "empha-

[29]Martin, "Peter, First," *ISBE*, III, 812.

[30]Schuttter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, 69.

[31]Eduard Lohse, "Parenesis and Kerygma in 1 Peter." Translated by John Seely. In *Perspectives on 1 Peter,* NABPR Special Series, no. 9 (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986), 59.

size(d) two movements within [the] Christological progression: suffering/death and glory/right hand." He concluded his proposal with the statement: "For our author, Jesus is the image of suffering and glory." Richard made this thesis foundational to his understanding of the total document: "Indeed, the entire structure of 1 Peter is an appeal to authority . . . Christ's example, that is, his suffering and glory are the authority or model of Christian life in the world both as defense (3:15) and as life (2:21)."[32]

Schutter recognized this sufferings/glories pattern and its centrality in 1 Peter. He found this scheme to be so foundational in 1 Peter that he made the claim that the S/G "has operated as an organizing principle in the way the author has read the Scriptures. . . ."[33] In his analysis of five passages in 1 Peter, where the Old Testament controlled the task of composition, Schutter found that each one reflected the S/G scheme of 1:11.[34] Therefore, he concluded that the sufferings/glories scheme in 1:10-12 is the definitive statement of the hermeneutical method of 1 Peter. That scheme is understood by the author/s of 1 Peter to be the core of the message of the prophets. According to Schutter, the sufferings/glories motif is derived from the humiliation/vindication theme of the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah, especially Isaiah 53.[35] In particular, he found that the source behind the Christological material in 1:18-22, 2:21-25, 3:18-22, and 4:13-14 was Isaiah 53:

> . . . no OT context makes itself felt as strongly in this respect . . . as that of Is. 53. The three explicit allusions to it already identified in 2.22, 24, and 25 make three more in 2.23-4 likely, so that vv. 4-14 in Is. 53 are spanned. Thus other possible allusions to Is. 53 at 1.19 (53.7) and 3:18 (53.11 LXX) become likely. So, by virtue of the allusion to 52.3 at 1.18, a block of Isaiah comes into view, helping the prospects for another allusion at 1.21. . . .[36]

The presentations of these two scholars only begin to do justice to the fact that the sufferings/glories motif appears throughout 1 Peter (as a

[32]Earl Richard, "The Functional Christology in 1 Peter," passim.

[33]Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in 1 Peter*, 123. Schutter identifies the sufferings/glories scheme with the abbreviation S/G.

[34]Ibid., 168, 170.

[35]Ibid., 106, 108-109, 168, 170.

[36]Ibid., 38.

pattern, sixteen times). Their work prepares the way for the conclusion that in 1 Peter, the S/G pattern, derived from and couched in traditional deposits, has become not only the message, but also the method of the document.

Summary of Findings

What becomes apparent in this brief case study is that pre-formed traditional deposits, originally carefully crafted, are painstakingly incorporated into the text of 1 Peter. From the opening proem to the closing affirmation of the triumphant *cosmocrator,* these traditional materials are appealed to as authoritative presentations of the Christ which are presumed then to require a certain response from the congregation. In content and in form, these songs contain the inspiration to move the church to worship and service.

The importance of the four Christological passages (1:1-12, 1:18-21, 2:21-25, and 3:18-22—and also 2:4-8) studied above is that they form the conceptual unity for the document. They provide a foundation for the central motif of 1 Peter: sufferings/glories.[37] The suffering and the glorification of Christ are made the foundation for the encouragement and exhoration offered to the suffering communities of northern Asia Minor.

Many scholars (including Goppelt, for example) have noted that the three Christological formulas (1:18ff.; 2:21-25; and 3:18-22) in 1 Peter furnished the parenesis (ethical material) with a Christological foundation.[38] The layout of material creates a pattern of indicatives (givens or facts) which guide the imperatives (resulting commands). First Peter 1:3-12 introduces this pattern with a broad-based indicative. The Christological traditions are then employed throughout the text as the authority on which the imperatives rest.

The formal source material of 1 Peter, especially the liturgical texts which originally had been created in the realm of worship, are re-enlisted and directed to a worshipping community. The author(s) of 1 Peter draws

[37]The unity of the letter and its design reflect the unity of the source materials portraying the humiliation/ vindication motif or sufferings/glories scheme from Isaiah 53. These findings are consistent with the observation that much of the language and themes of 1 Peter can be traced to Deutero-Isaiah. This includes the finding that there are few liturgical/hymnic lines in 1 Peter in which there are no references to the themes or language of Deutero-Isaiah.

[38]Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*.

on these authoritative statements of the faith (whether the sources are Scriptures, Christian forms developed from Scripture, or Christian liturgy) in a great variety and number of forms, all of which are used for the purpose of heightening the effect of encouragement and instruction in the worship experience offered by the text.

The Christology of the five major tradtional pericopae of 1 Peter (1:3-12, 1:18-21, 2:4-8, 2:21-25, and 3:18-22) controls both the soteriological assurances and also reveals and responds to the sociological realities of the recipient community. These pericopae function as the rationale, the assurance, the requirement of the community of faith, and as a theodicy that both promises vindication and justifies God's action/inaction. The songs of 1 Peter provide a sacred service in the document and presumably in the worship life of the communities that received the inspired word about Christ.

This case study of 1 Peter demonstrates that the hymns of the early church which lie behind the text not only functioned as worship material for the recipient community, but also served as the authority for the exhortation of the text. Further, the song material embedded in 1 Peter actually guides the method and the logic of the text: sufferings/glories. Christ, the innocent, suffered unjustly. God vindicated the suffering of the Christ and exalted him. You suffer (innocently). You will also be vindicated by God. These sacred songs perform a sacred service first in the worship of the early church and then in the function they play in the sacred texts of the church (such as 1 Peter).

From the above brief perusal of the phenomena of hymnic deposits in the New Testament, it seems that the Christologies of the early churches reflected therein were presented in the forms and language of worship, and not in extended philosophical discourse or rhetoric. Whereas the early songs portrayed a unity in the worship of the Christ (though in diverse concepts), later philosphical reflection on the Christologies of the hymns created great diversity and even division in the church of the early theologians ("fathers"). It seems that only the form of experience and expression called "song" is able to proclaim adequately the truth about the Christ and the "indescribable and glorious joy" of loving Christ (1 Peter 1:8).

Implications and Applications

The major theses of this article are: (1) the Christology of the New Testament is located almost exclusively in the hymnic material of the early church; (2) these songs of the early church performed the vital service of defining what was *specifically Christian*; (3) the Christological hymns/hymnic fragments functioned as authority for Christian exhoration, encouragement, and engagement in the life of the church and in the world; (4) such songs invite the worshipper into both correct understanding and experience; and (5) these traditional materials are now a part of what is identified as the received traditions, the authoritative literature of the church, Scripture.

What are the implications of such a study? How does this study inform the church today in its theory and practice of worship? At the very least, and first, worship and instruction in the church ought to proceed from its Christology. What defines the worship of the church as "Christian"? The worship of the One whose plan of salvation is revealed in Christ Jesus. What kinds of affirmations may be made? Those that are declarative of the One worshipped and those which express the experience of the worshipper ("you love him . . . and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy—1 Peter 1:8).

What difference does this study make for the planning and practice of the worship of the church of today? How important are the songs of the church? How important is the text of the songs of the church? Are assembled Christians today singing all or even the core of what they believe? Do the songs of the church have the breadth that preaching and teaching does? Are they as instructive as they are inspirational or are they just "odd little tidbits" of theology or Christian experience?[39] Is the church making full use of the opportunity to sing all that needs to be sung if, in fact, song is both powerful in experience and memorable in impact? As conservators of the traditions of the church, how adequate are the songs selected for the only service of worship many congregants will participate in per week?[40]

In most Christian communities, song is a vital part of worship. Many

[39]A negative criticism by Marvin McKissick, Associate Professor of Music at Azusa Pacific University (31 years) in a dialogue in which he graciously responded to this article. Professor McKissick has evaluated much of the theology of the songs of the church as inadequate. His partial explanation for this phenomena is that the music of the past was written by ministers and theologians. Recent songs have been written primarily by musicians who are often woefully illiterate, biblically and theologically.

[40]McKissick suggests such "so what" questions as contained in this paragraph. Such questions (my paraphrase) should be asked by those who plan or teach worship.

traditions boast multiple resources of considerable breadth to support this exercise. Most hymnals "contain hymns from almost twenty centuries and liturgical pieces that go back to the earliest church. . . ."[41] Along with this age-old heritage, many of the great reformations of the church have been accompanied by an outburst of song. "Both Luther and Wesley wrote new music to supplement the musical heritage they already had, a faith tradition passed on from one generation to another."[42] Focus on the Wesleyan tradition reveals a rich heritage of vibrant music, deliberate theology and songs of experience. John Wesley compiled selections from some 6,500 songs of his brother Charles Wesley in *The Collection of Psalms and Hymns*.[43] This hymn book became "very much a part of Wesley's educational and evangelical ministry."[44] Hymn-singing was found to be:

> [a] powerful instrument of both evangelism and Christian worship . . . by means of the hymns the Methodist people were not only brought to religious convictions: they came to understand their Bibles better, a secure foundation of evangelical theology was laid in their minds, and they were built up in the Christian faith. . . . Methodists everywhere became well-known for their singing.[45]

John Wesley designed the hymnal with the concern that it be "large enough to contain all the important truths of our most holy religion" and judged it unique in providing ". . . so distinct and full an account of scriptural Christianity."[46] Charles Wesley's deep knowledge of Scripture, exhibited in his natural and capable paraphrase which highlighted themes rather than precise vocabulary, demonstrates a conscious commitment to the truth of Scripture as well as to the Wesleyan concern for religious experience.[47]

It is typical of reforming movements to complain of the weaknesses

---

[41]Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 182.

[42]Ibid., 185.

[43]Very few of his own songs were included. However, while the collection is almost completely Charles' songs, most of them bear the marks of John's editing, which in some cases was considerable. Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds., *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 7 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983), 58.

[44]Ibid., 55.

[45]Ibid., 61-62.

[46]Ibid., 55.

[47]Ibid., 49.

of the worship traditions of parent bodies. In some cases the accusation has been that the songs are staid and empty of inspiration.[48] Note:

> It is a fact well known, and felt by the saints, that the hymns of the past fail to express the glorious Light and Liberty, Grace, Truth and Power, the Free and Holy Church has attained in this blessed evening light. Hence the Lord has marvelously given us these NEW SONGS [his emphasis] that we may sing more fully the Joy and Victory we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.[49]

A later church historian of this particular reforming group (Church of God, Anderson) agreed that such new songs "lyricized the theology and the spirit of the movement in such a way that it became even more joyful, inspiring, and contagious than it had ever been before."[50] Another participant of this movement went farther, crediting the music for the reformation: ". . . it was their inspired music which had so much to do with bringing to birth a new spirit of reformation among the people."[51]

Part of the genius of the Wesleyan tradition is experience-oriented worship (demonstrative). "Emotion is a response, an accompaniment, and a confirmation" of the saving activity of God in the individual and the church.[52] This powerful affirmation of the value of experience in worship is offered by a songwriter whose theology is deeply steeped in the traditions of Scripture:

We sing of him whose wondrous name

[48]Just recently, a young student of mine compained that our home congregation was missing the great reformation in the church. His proof? The reluctance of the church to replace hymns with new choruses.

[49]J. C. Fisher, *Songs of Victory* (Williamstown, MI: Gospel Trumpet Co., 1885). Preface. Fisher was an early participant in the Church of God Reformation Movement now identified with Anderson, Indiana.

[50]John W. V. Smith's analysis in his book *The Quest for Holiness and Unity*, (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, Inc., 1980), 66.

[51]"Our Church Musicians" by W. Dale Oldham, in *A Time to Remember: Teachings*, The Church of God Heritage Series, editor Barry L. Callen (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, Inc., 1978), 24 (264).

[52]Frederick G. Shackleton, Professor Emeritus of Religion and Philosophy, Azusa Pacific University. Member of the General Hymnal Committee which produced the 1953 and the 1971 Hymnals of the Church of God, Anderson, Indiana. Interview, May 26 and June 1, 1997.

Fills all our hearts with song;
Our highest praise to him we'll raise
Throughout the ages long.
Jesus Christ is the Lord
to the glory of God the Father.
Jesus Christ is the Lord,
Let ev'ry tongue proclaim.
Name above all names
Ev'ry knee should bow before him
Savior, Lord and King,
Forevermore the same.[53]

It is true that Scripture is full of stories of personal encounters with God: Abraham, Moses, Mary, Martha, and Paul were confronted by the God who willed to be revealed. Personal and corporate testimony of that experience is the natural outcome. Theological reflection is the attempt to understand and explain that experience. But, for the Christian, reflection on experience does not happen in a vacuum. It is defined in the realm of the Christ-event, God's fullest self-disclosure, prophesied and fulfilled according to the testimonies of the Old and New Testaments.

But, what does the the emphasis on the authority of Scripture imply when it comes to the question of songs in the church? If Scripture carries a special authority, what does the study of 1 Peter suggest to the church? The case study of 1 Peter is informative, not only for the particular emphases of the Weslyan tradition, but also for the church in her myriad traditions and expressions. The ascription of praise, 1 Peter 1:3-12, which functions to introduce the themes of 1 Peter, is instructive. It covers a remarkably broad range of theology: the doctrine of Christ, the trinity, salvation history, the church as the people of God though aliens and sojourners in the world, those who "love" and "exult" "without having seen," eschatology with the comfort of hope, and a rich theodicy for those who "suffer." What God has accomplished in Christ for salvation (about to be revealed) is the center of the assurance and exhortation of this epistle. While not every song will cover vast theological territory, songs of a given worship event ought to be definitive expressions of Christian doctrine and experience. So, for example, the church can sing knowingly of salvation with Charles Wesley, "O for a Thousand Tongues to sing my

[53]"Jesus Christ is Lord" by Frederick G. Shackleton, in the *Hymnal of the Church of God*, Hymn # 51 (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1971).

great Redeemer's praise,"[54] or with Fanny Crosby, "To God be the Glory, great things he has done, So loved he the world that he gave us his Son."[55] Such songs lead the worshipper into correct understanding and experience. They are based on the authority of the testimony of Scripture as well as personal experience of God's saving presence.

Until recently, theologians and ministers wrote the songs of the church. Many of the contemporary choruses are written by biblically and theologically illiterate laypeople (usually musicians). Wrong-headed theology and uncertain esoteric experience can and does mislead the church in grave ways. Part of the problem is the lack of awareness or understanding of Scriptural revelation. Another part of the problem is historical ignorance. Two thousand years of church music can be a blessing as easily as a "curse." Unfortunately, most "contemporary" services "seem to slice out only a few recent years [of music] and thereby deprive their participants of their rightful place in that larger picture."[56] Ignorance of what has gone before is a grave handicap; a crippled church cannot be effective in a world that needs all her gifts!

Marva Dawn challenges the church: "What kind of character is being formed by certain styles of worship?"[57] "Shallow music forms shallow people."[58] Warning against "dumbing down" the church in a misguided and misinformed attempt to be culturally relevant, Dawn encourages the church to reject music that is theologically misleading, inadequate, sub-Christian, or shallow.[59] In his theology of worship text, Ralph Martin offers four helpful criteria by which to test hymns and songs of the church. A song ought to:

> (1) articulate the praise of God the Father in whom his creation lives . . . ; (2) celebrate God's activity in history . . . and [Christ's] continuing reality in every age including our own; (3) register sensitivity to personal experience of God's saving

[54]"O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" by Charles Wesley in the *Hymnal of the Church of God*, Hymn #65 (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1971).

[55]The song continues: "who yielded his life an atonement for sin, and opened the lifegate that all may go in." "To God be the Glory" by Fanny Crosby in the *Hymnal of the Church of God*, Hymn # 5 (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1971).

[56]Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*, 182.

[57]Ibid., 167.

[58]Ibid., 165.

> and renewing grace in Christ and in the Spirit, leading to encouragement . . . to rise to full stature in Christ; and (4) contain understandable language and application of truth at the social level.[60]

Let us reach out in the church and to the world with the best music we can offer from the church's entire history, from the distant past to the present. Let us offer our praise out of the depth and the breadth of God's love at work among us, as recorded in Scripture and testified to by the saints. Let the church always and ever "sing a new song . . . because God is present in our midst in new ways."[61]

As in the days that 1 Peter circulated among the congregations of Asia Minor, now as then, song with its great affect and effect becomes a primary tool for the induction, instruction, inspiration, and increase of Christian faith and life. Song is one of the more powerful tools for the edification of the worshipping community. What is best remembered? Sermon or song? Lesson or hymn? Proclamation or praise? What best creates and sustains a "word about Christ"? That which draws both heart and mind into the presence of God and into an experience of the Christ "for us." May we not waste such a precious and rich inheritance of song which is a birthright of our great salvation! May we employ the sacred songs of the church to the sacred *services* of the church in *service* to the church! And may the church, with the saints and angels above, sing a "new song" with full voice:

> Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered
> to receive power and wealth
> and wisdom and might
> and honor and glory and blessing![62]

---

[59]Ibid., 166, 170-174.

[60]Martin, *The Worship of God*, 59.

[61]Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*, 204.

[62]Revelation 5:9, 12, NRSV. Martin identifies this passage as a "hymnic form" containing "distinctively Christian versicles." *Foundations*, II, 262.

WATCHNIGHT, COVENANT SERVICE, AND THE LOVE-FEAST IN EARLY BRITISH METHODISM

by

William Parkes

Hester Ann Rogers was the wife of James Rogers, one of John Wesley's preachers whose journal of spiritual experiences (joined with selected letters) went into numerous editions both authorised and otherwise in the first half of the nineteenth century. Hester Rogers wrote to John Wesley from Dublin in January, 1788:

> The Christmas festival was a most blessed season. On Christmas morning, at four o'clock, the preaching-house was well filled, and God was truly present to bless; many were awakened, and some converted. Four were justified at the watchnight on new year's eve. Several also found pardon at the love-feast, and many witnessed a good confession; but the time of renewing of covenant exceeded all; fourteen souls were that day born of God; some at their classes, and the rest at the sweet, solemn season of the covenant. The house was truly shaken by the power of God . . . it was none other than the ante-chamber of glory to my soul.[1]

There could be no better introduction than this singularly powerful account of the three distinctive means of grace embodied in the life of

[1] *The Experience and Spiritual Letters of Mrs Hester Ann Rogers*: with a sermon preached on the occasion of her death by the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D. Also an Appendix written by her husband (Halifax: William Milner, 1855), 141-142.

early Methodism—beyond the preaching service and the sharing where permitted or desired in the sacramental life.

None of these worship acts buttressing deeper spiritual formation were the creation of John Wesley or his immediate cohorts. Wesley borrowed from a deep well of resources, but added features that were peculiarly his own. The intention of all three of the worship experiences to which Rogers referred was to offer further opportunities for believers to "build each other up" and the convicted to encounter transforming grace. The completed tapestry had a Wesley weave, but the cloth was extracted from the practice of the Apostolic church, later developments in both Eastern and Western Christendom, German Pietism, English Puritanism, the Reformed Covenantal tradition, Laudian and Caroline schools of high Anglicanism, and the Moravians. The Watchnight was envisaged as an evangelical manifestation of the vigils of the early church, made all the more powerful by the warmth of zeal and commitment. The Lovefeast was seen as having its vital roots in the *Agape* of the New Testament, revived by the *Unitas Fratrum*. It was to be the Methodist feast of Christian love, testimony and song, preferred by so very many to the Eucharist itself. The Renewal of the Covenant had the fullness of biblical authority and perfectly expressed that covenant of grace that Christians must appropriate constantly.

That many within the Wesleyan/Methodist stream of faith today have never even heard of Covenants, Watchnights, and Love-feasts is sad but nevertheless true. British Methodism and her daughter churches around the world retain the Covenent, but it is now a far cry from three hours of penetrating self examination. The imperious majesty of the awesome words of the original form have given way to something considerably more accommodating to the tenor of the twentieth-century spiritual climate. Yet even this accommodation remains too challenging for many. Worship on the first Sunday of a new year is frequently set amidst plentiful empty seats. The Watchnight lingers, but many churches no longer open their doors for the midnight service on the last day of the old year. Christmas eve Eucharist has largely replaced it, but Evangelical Anglicans have adopted it in many places. The Love-feast suffered from neglect, followed by almost its total loss after the 1880s. Happily, here and there it is having a resurgence, both as a Wesleyan/Methodist expression and, in a more liturgically orientated form. almost as a neo-sacrament at ecumenical gatherings. A few places have maintained a continuity of practice extending more than two hundred and fifty years.[2]

It would be a tragedy if these distinct expressions of God's people in deep encounter with Christ were ever to be confined to short paragraphs and brief footnotes in standard historiographical studies. The very glory that so frequently surrounded them has the right to demand some attention. They might well ask of us who seek to serve the present age whether their decline has been to our great loss.[3]

The Love-Feast

The Christian fellowship meal which heightened the concept of love among believers was from its foundation closely related to the Eucharist. Precisely how and in what form is a matter of some historical dispute, but the coupling of the two is beyond question.[4] That it degenerated into squabbles over food allocation and took on the status of something of a charitable deed towards the poor cannot be denied. Its spiritual content was never entirely extinguished, however, as vestiges of the Agape still appear in the rituals of the Eastern Orthodox churches. As late as 407, Chrysostom recalled "a custom most beautiful and most beneficial; for it was a supporter of love, a solace of poverty, and a discipline of humility."[5] Frank Baker sees a faint survival in England in the granting of especially

---

[2]A barn Love-feast at Alport, set in a remote part of the Derbyshire Dales has been held regularly under Methodist auspices for at least two hundred and forty years. Long before that the building was used by a Puritan conventicle. Frank Baker, *Methodism and the Love-Feast* (London: Epworth, 1957), 57; Leslie F. Church, *More About the Early Methodist People*, (London: Epworth, 1949), 238-9.

[3]The four-volume *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London: Epworth, 1965, 1978, 1983, 1988) sadly demonstrates this. In his exposition "The People Called Methodists, The Means of Grace," 1:259-73, A. Raymond George devotes less than a single page to the "institutions" of Love-feast, Watchnight, and Covenant Service. There are other scattered and brief references, but the Covenant, in spite of its current use, fares particularly badly. Love-feasts are given somewhat more attention.

[4]The most thorough study of the Love-feast remains that of R. Lee Cole, *Love-Feasts: A History of the Christian Agape* (London: Epworth, 1916), but it contains little on Wesleyan usage. Frank Baker's comparatively short study of 1957 is helpful, both historically and as a practical guide. See also Church, 237-42.

[5]Cited by Baker, 9.

minted coins to the "worthy poor" by the sovereign on Maundy Thursday. Since this once included foot-washing as a symbol of the humility that should ideally be a mark of regal power, the origins of the Maundy distribution probably belong elsewhere, largely in the traditions of early English Christianity.[6]

John Wesley was well aware of primitive practice, but made no claim to being a full restorationist. He first encountered the meal of celebration in Savannah, Georgia, on Monday, August 8, 1737. This was only ten years after its re-introduction by Zinzendorf among the Brethren in Herrnhut. Following Anglican prayers that evening:

> . . .we joined with the Germans in one of their love-feasts. It was begun and ended with thanksgiving and prayer, and celebrated in so decent and solemn a manner as a Christian of the apostolic age would have allowed to be worthy of Christ.[7]

It was the apostolicity of the practice that made a distinctive appeal to Wesley at this stage of his spiritual pilgrimage. The form existing among the Moravians in Georgia was ultimately to bear only a partial resemblance to the later normative Methodist pattern. Following his evangelical awakening Wesley visited the Moravians in Germany for three months in the summer of 1738. Here he formed somewhat mixed impressions, but remained totally convinced of the value of the Love-feast.

On his return to England and again taking up some responsible leadership in the Fetter Lane Society, it is hardly surprising that this largely but not entirely Moravian group should have adopted Rules which included the provision once a month of an evening ". . . general Love-feast, from seven till ten."[8] The simple and quietly devout feasts that he had encountered in America and Germany began to radically change. Whether it was by design or under the powerful leading and aegis of the Holy Spirit aiding the glow and fervour of people recently renewed, remains beyond present historical knowledge. The Rules became well nigh meaningless when on new year's day, 1738:

---

[6]Ibid.

[7]*The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, Ed. Nehemiah Curnock (London: Epworth, 1909), I:377.

[8]*The Works of John Wesley* (Jackson), reprint ed. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1979), I:93.

> Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles were present at our love-feast at Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power God came mightily upon us, inasmuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His majesty we broke out with one voice: "We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord."[9]

This record of an all-male assembly reads almost like the reunion of a large segment of the Holy Club. Something touched so vitally by God could not be restricted, and a Love-feast for women took place at Fetter Lane on February 18, 1739. Thereafter there were alternative feasts for men and women every two weeks in London. Bristol then followed where the first was for the women of the Society on April 9. The separation of the sexes had been a common practice among the Moravians, but this broke down quite early among the Methodists. "General" feasts became the norm even though that there was no mixed seating for several years. When this became common knowledge outside the Societies, it provided a platform for the salacious to accuse Wesley's people of carnality of the worst kind. The name Love-feast was alone sufficient to trigger wild imaginations and produce disgustingly scurrilous broadsides.[10] Well

---

[9]Ibid., 170.

[10]The unknown writer of *The Love-Feast: A Poem* (London: n.p., 1778) waxed lyrical on the supposed sexual orgies taking place in the Love-feasts:

> There Saints, *new born*, lascivious *Orgies* hold,
> Meek *Lambs* by *Day*, at *Night* no *Wolves* so bold,
> There the *new Adam* tries the *old one's* Fort,
> And *Children of the Light* in *Darkness sport*.. . . .

Revealing his ignorance, the author confuses the chalice used in the Eucharist with the Love-feast, and his lampoon does not stop at accusing the Methodists of incest:

> Together wanton pairs promiscuous run,
> *Brothers* with *Sisters*, *Mothers* with a *Son*:
> *Fathers*, perhaps with yielding *Daughters* meet,
> And *Converts* find their *Pastor's* Doctrines sweet;
> *Pure Souls* are fir'd with *Love's* divinest Spark
> And *Paradise* is open'd in the *Dark*. (p. 28)

For satirical attacks on Methodism, see Albert M. Lyles, *Methodism Mocked* (London: Epworth, 1960), especially chap. 5, "Satire of Methodist Practices," 82-95.

before 1740 came to a close the Love-feast had become an established feature on the calendar of all the major Societies. James Hutton, the Moravian book-seller, would occasionally lead the London gatherings, and this was a recognition that presidency at the Love-feast could differ from that demanded at the Eucharist.

Disputations over the stillness controversy broke out at a general Love-feast on April 13, 1740, at Fetter Lane. Charles Wesley was broken-hearted at "finding so little love, and so much dispute. . . . Our brother Hodges next began talking at random. . . . The women stopped his mouth."[11] The contention came to a crucial head on July 20, and John Wesley's chosen stage was a Love-feast. He presented his views with conviction, making it perfectly plain that it was strictly a "choose you this day" ultimatum. The quietists denial of the need for any of the ordinances, or even the reading of the scriptures before the full enlightenment of faith as they understood it, was declared an affront and "flatly contrary to the word of God." The atmosphere must have been electric as Wesley asked all those of the same judgment to "follow me." Only eighteen or nineteen did so, the majority of them women.[12] On Wednesday of that week, Wesley's "little company" met at the Foundery, and the first distinctly Methodist Society was born.

The popularity of the Love-feast was enhanced by the absence of the Lord's Supper, except in the larger Societies where the few ordained associates of the Wesley's were able to make a modicum of provision. This led to monthly celebrations in many places, but the more usual and later settled practice was to hold them quarterly.[13] John Wesley's own vivid description in his *Plain Account of the People Called Methodists* is strong on background but frail on detail:

> In order to increase . . . a grateful sense of all his mercies, I desired that, one evening in a quarter, all the men in band, on a second, all the women, would meet; and on a third, both men and women together; that we might together "eat bread" as the ancient Christians did, "with gladness and singleness of heart." At these love-feasts (so we termed them, retaining the name, as well as the thing, which was in use from the beginning) our

[11]*The Journal of The Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.* (Jackson), reprint ed. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1980), I:216-17.

[12]*Works* (Jackson), I:282.

[13]Frank Baker, *A Charge to Keep* (London: Epworth, 1947), 120.

> food is only a little plain cake and water. But we seldom return from them without being fed, not only with the "meat which perisheth," but with "that which endureth to eternal life."[14]

The food was no more than symbolic, a small portion of cake or bread. Cake was preferred so that there could be no confusion with the elements in the Eucharist. Water, or occasionally tea, was the chosen drink. Wine was never used for the same reason as bread, but there are accounts of it being introduced in some places by non-Wesleyans in the following century. It thus differed from the much fuller meals at Love-feasts served from time to time by the Moravians, the Dunkers (Church of the Brethren), and some other Anabaptist bodies. Large and often individually produced loving cups, with texts, figures, or the name of the Society on them, were passed from hand to hand rather than personally handled by the presiding preacher. The imagery of a common servanthood was thus allied to that of a common meal. Vital as this time of sharing was, most participants would consider it peripheral to the heart of the feast. By far the greater part of any Methodist celebration was occupied with open praise, singing, testimony, prayer, preaching, and calls for deeper discipleship. Brief reports on the Lord's work in other places might be given by visitors from other Societies. No set form was demanded and it was never circumscribed by the boundaries of liturgy. At the same time, it possessed all the necessary elements of a dynamic liturgy for it was truly "lay-work."

The hymnody associated with the feasts was carefully selected. Charles Wesley's *Love-feast*, first published in the 1740 edition of *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, has invariably been sung in some version to the present time. In the original form it had four distinct parts, each with four eight-line verses and a further part containing six.[15] Countless thousands

[14]*Works* (Jackson), VIII:258-9.

[15]*The Works of John Wesley* (Bicentenial Edition), vol. 7, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*, ed. Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, with James Dale (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 695-700 for textual and historical analysis of the hymn.This was Wesley's definitive hymn book of 1780. The 1875 edition, with the supplement generally known as *Wesley's Hymns*, retained the whole text but divided it into four distinct hymns (519, 520, 521, and 522). In the *Methodist Hymn Book* of 1933 the first verse was divided into eight four-line stanzas (748) and the third part of the original, "Let us join 'tis God commands," is set as a separate hymn (713). In the current British Methodist hymnal, *Hymns and Psalms*, the form is much nearer the original, being retained as a single hymn, but in two parts with a total of twelve four-line verses (756).

in the first eighty years of British Methodism would know the thrill of waiting for the opening of a Love-feast, always marked by the lining out of:

Come and let us sweetly join
   Christ to praise in hymns divine;
Give we all, with one accord.
   Glory to our common Lord.
Hands and hearts and voices raise;
   Sing as in the ancient days;
Antedate the joys above,
   Celebrate the feast of love.

Other Wesley hymns commonly associated with the occasion included "All thanks to the Lamb who gave us to meet . . ." and the still very familiar "All praise to our redeeming Lord, who joins us by his grace." Doddridge's "O Happy day that fixed my choice . . ." (from a non-Methodist source) was also popular, but the roof-lifting refrain was a later addition.[16] Testimonies were expected to be lively and current. It was said that men and women who could barely speak a sentence of reasonable English in their common speech would often find a fluent "prayer language" in Love-feasts. John Wesley's lines (adapted from Zinzendorf), "Unloose our stammering tongues to tell . . ." became a common reality.

The discipline imposed upon entry to Love-feasts remained in place for most of the first hundred years of Methodism. For a short period, only members of the select bands, the inner core of the Society who could testify to salvation and the attainment of or serious pursuit of perfect love, could be present. This very soon gave way to the admittance of all who were members of a Society, those who "desired to be saved from their sins. . . ." Stewards were appointed to ensure that an offering was taken for the poor fund and that none attended without producing a band or class ticket, or a written note by the itinerant. They were issued quarterly and had to be current. This practice was observed by all the branches of British Methodism, although only the Wesleyans retained the bands. The security notwithstanding, many slipped into feasts, sometimes on "borrowed" tickets, and found themselves under conviction. Two such became

[16]Frank Baker, *Methodism and the Love-Feast*, 17-24, for hymns associated with the Love-feast. He points out the link between these hymns and the singing of grace before food. It cannot be claimed that the practice entirely owes its genesis to the Love-feast, but there is certainly an association.

towering figures. William Clowes, powerful evangelist and co-founder with Hugh Bourne of Primitive Methodism, was told to "cover the name written on it with my thumb" at a feast in Burslem in 1805. The steward was of the zealous kind and:

> examined them minutely. . . . A puff of wind came and blew the door-keeper's candle out. I presented him my ticket . . . he called for another light, just as he was going to read my ticket, another puff came, and away went his light. . . . The man . . . hastily pushed back the ticket into my hand saying: "Move on." So I passed into the gallery of the chapel.[17]

Jabez Bunting, the imperiously magisterial power broker of the Wesleyan connexion for so much of the nineteenth century, often repeated: "Many attribute their conversion to their having attended a love-feast; I owe mine to having been shut out of one."[18] When the great Joseph Benson was the Superintendent preacher in Manchester, he was happy to relax the requirement of a ticket for those young people who might be won for the Lord. The youthful Bunting had attended feasts several times, sharing his mother's class ticket. When Alexander Mather succeeded Benson, traditional discipline was restored. Now shut out, Bunting was brought to the point of deep inner searching and "once for all renounced sin."

Revivals, both local and spreading over a wide area, frequently began and continued through Love-feasts.[19] Greatly used in these outpourings were figures on the revivalist wing of Wesleyanism, both lay and itinerant. Among the former were those who could be described as spe-

[17]John T. Wilkinson, *William Clowes 1780-1851* (London: Epworth, 1951), 18, citing the *Journals of William Clowes* (London: Primitive Methodist Book-Room, 1844).

[18]T. Percival Bunting and G. Stringer Rowe, *The Life of Jabez Bunting, D.D.* (London: T. Woolmer, 1887), 34.

[19]This was especially true of the great Yorkshire revivals which began in the 1790s and had an increasing influence well into the 1820s under men such as William Bramwell and others. Cornwall witnessed many revivals where Love-feasts played a highly prominent and frequently emotional role. Adam Clarke recorded several cases of divine healing in Love-feasts associated with a powerful revival in the the Channel Islands (Adam Clarke to John Wesley, July, 1789, cited in R. D. Moore, *Methodism in the Channel Islands*, London: Epworth, 1952, 55-56).

cialist practioners of the Love-feast, such as "Praying Nanny" Cutler, whom William Bramwell, the key man among the revivalists, believed was the main instrument in the great Yorkshire revival that began shortly after the death of Wesley.[20] Quaint Sammy Hick and William Dawson were also mightily used. All the leading ministerial figures who stood for revivals against the increasing opposition of the Wesleyan Conference to "exciteable religion" fervently believed in Love-feasts as instruments for the promotion of heart faith. Bramwell, a man as mighty in prayer as preaching, John Smith, David Stoner, Hodgson Casson, and Thomas Collins constantly called for them.[21] Expressions such as "irresistible," "the power of the grace of entire sanctification," "the power of God so fell," "with reluctance they departed," "voices could scarce be heard," and "I have got it!," abound in magazine accounts and biographies. Long after regular Love-feasts had given way to straight prayer meetings and "tea gatherings" in the major Wesleyan body and most of the smaller off-shoots, the Primitive Methodists retained the circuit quarterly celebrations.[22] With the exception of some isolated reports from Ireland, they were never associated in British Methodism with Quarterly Meetings.[23]

The Watchnight

The Watchnight had as much of an ancient lineage as the Lovefeast. The roots ran deep in the traditional nights of prayer in the early church and the watching and praying associated with our Lord in the garden.[24] The precise date of its introduction by John Wesley is uncertain. His account of its beginnings as a specific act of worship within the United Societies is clear enough, but, somewhat surprisingly, the *Journal* is silent

[20]For the work of Bramwell and Ann Cutler, and the effect both spiritually and bodily of Yorkshire Love-feasts, see Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol.II, *The Expansion of Evan-gelical Nonconformity 1791-1859* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), 65-67.

[21]The "Primitive Wesleyan" or Revivalist band of preachers, itinerant and lay, were totally convinced of the value of Love-feasts in the work of revivals, long after the rite had settled down in many places as a testimony meeting with bread or cake and water. This raised disciplinary questions because of regulations limiting attendance to those in Society, and the revivalists' conviction that Love-feasts, like the Supper of our Lord, could be a "saving ordinance."

[22]*The Methodist Recorder*, Winter Number, 1896, 49-50.

[23]Frank Baker, *Methodism and the Love-Feast*, 54, 62.

[24]Church, 241-2.

as to the day or even month. On March 12, 1742, what was probably the second Bristol Watchnight took place.[25] The first was very definitely in Kingswood, near Bristol, where the Methodist Watchnight was introduced to counteract the "wild carousals of the Kingswood miners" on Saturday nights. Many of the Methodist converts had participated in the crude and drunken ribaldry in former days.[26] Wesley makes no mention of this in his own account, but the known rough and miserable state of the Kingswood community gives it the ring of truth. Note:

> About this time, I was informed that several persons in Kingswood frequently met together at the school; and when they could spare the time, spent the greater part of the night in prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving. Some advised me to put an end to this; but, upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it. Rather, I believed it might be made of more general use. So I sent them word, I designed to watch with them on the Friday nearest the full moon, that we might have light thither and back again. I gave public notice of this the Sunday before . . . that I intended to preach; desiring that they, and they only, would meet me there. . . . On Friday abundance of people came . . . we continued till a little beyond the noon of night, singing, praying, and praising God. This we have continued to do once a month ever since, in Bristol, London, and Newcastle, as well as Kingswood; and exceeding great are the blessings we have found therein. . . .[27]

"About this time" strongly suggests the introduction of the Watchnight at or near the time of the beginning of the class meeting, for it immediately follows this account in the text. This can be confidently dated as February 15, 1742.[28] The school in question was that established by Wesley for the people of Kingswood and their children. As with the Love-feast, Wesley demanded the credibility that came from the practices

[25]Henry Bett, *The Spirit of Methodism* (London: Epworth, 1937), 57; John Bishop, *Methodist Worship in Relation to Free Church Worship* (Scholars Studies Press, 1975), 92-94; Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth, 1989), 411-412.

[26]*Works* (Jackson), I, 263.

[27]William Myles, *A Chronological History of the People Called Methodists* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, fourth ed., 1813), 56; Church, 242-243.

[28]*Works* (Jackson), VIII, 255-256.

of the "ancient Christians." It meant for him more than the authority of the forms of worship discernable within the New Testament. It had to include the total record of God's people as displayed in the writings of the Ante-Nicene fathers. Nothing could be rejected out of hand up to the reign of Constantine. By 1748, when he wrote his *Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, he was able to confront some of the criticism of Watchnights. Having asserted that "the word of God sunk deep into the heart, even of those who until then knew him not," he faced the accusers or the uncomfortable:

> If it be said, "This was only owing to the novelty of the thing . . . or perhaps the awful silence of the night," I am not careful to answer in this matter. Be it so: However, the impression then made on many souls has never since been effaced . . . allowing that God did make use either of the novelty or any other indifferent circumstance, in order to bring sinners to repentence, yet they are brought. If. . . either by the novelty of this ancient custom, or by any other indifferent circumstance, it is in my power to "save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins," am I clear before God if I do it not, if I do not snatch that brand out of the burning?[29]

John Bishop argues that Wesley shared in Moravian Watchnights in London long before the Kingswood event. That may be true, but the dates that Bishop gives to support his contention, namely the last day of the year in both 1739 and 1740, cannot be verified from the *Journal*.[30] On December 31, 1739, Wesley simply records the long and disturbing conversation with Molther, the leading protagonist among the Moravians for the "quietist" or "stillness" position. The last day of 1740 found him in Kingswood, where a powerful evening service took place, including the presence of many from Bristol. Wesley does not state that it was a Watchnight, and there was no Moravian connection.

Yet it cannot be doubted that, as with the Love-feast, the diet of Moravian worship had a profound effect on Wesley.[31] At the same time, it was no mere copying. Under his leadership it took on different characteristics. The Wesleyan spirit would inject fervour and fire into any frame-

[29]Ibid., I, 397.
[30]Ibid., VIII, 256.
[31]Bishop, 93.

work that was adopted. This was especially true of the crucial areas of worship and devotion. Wesley fused together in his heart and mind a rainbow coalition and tried and tested it in the life of the Societies. The colouring came from the *Prayer Book* of the English church, the preaching tradition of Puritanism at its best and most open, and radical continental Pietism as interpreted by the Moravians. It was from the last of these that Wesley gained the highest inspiration for Watchnights, but he was also wide awake to the knowledge that all-night prayer gatherings were a feature of Puritanism, both inside the established church and among the Independents. More important than any proven or probable modifications that he made from the traditions of a wider Christendom was the constant overriding preference for that which could be shown as established among the "ancient Christians."

Nights of prayer, or prayer and praise, while clearly having a kinship, must not be identified with the Watchnight celebration. Some of the early ones did extend well beyond the midnight hour, and especially if preceded by a Love-feast as was the custom in some areas. But this was unusual. The timing "at half an hour past eight . . . till a little after midnight" was the general practice.[32] Whole nights spent in prayer by the people of God can be stimulated by a constellation of reasons. Watchnights were for a particular reason and planned at a particular season. Following the Moravian practice, the first London Watchnights took place on Friday evenings nearest the full moon. John Wesley referred to it as a "solemn service," "a particular blessing," and that "generally there was a deep awe on the congregation, perhaps in some measure owing to the silence of the night. . . ."[33] Reviewing the Watchnights after several years of use, Wesley declared: "It has generally been an extremely solemn season; when the word of God sunk deep into the heart, even of those who

[32]J. H. Overton, *John Wesley* (London: Methuen, 1891), 30, from an Anglican perspective seeks to root not only Watchnights but also class-meetings in Wesley's admiration for apostolic practice, thus discounting Moravian influence. C. H. Towlson, *Moravian and Methodist: Relationships and Influences in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Epworth, 1957), 216-20, ultimately decides for Moravian origins, as do most commentators. Rack, 411, states: "The watchnight has been claimed, much less plausibly, as an importation from the Moravians," but he cites no reasons for this judgment. Obviously, the precedent of the early church cannot be discounted.

[33]*Works* (Jackson), I, 364.

till then knew him not."[34] The "Watching" in the Watchnight was the "watching unto prayer," the watching for the Lord's outpouring, and the watching of eschatological expectancy. This was largely understood in a realised sense; the Kingdom as here and now in the rapture of praise and the majesty of Christ's light symbolized by hundreds of candles challenging the night. Nor did this end when the service closed. After the Bristol Watchnight held on March 12, 1742, Wesley reported:

> The Lord was gloriously with us at the watch-night; so that my voice was lost in the cries of the people. After midnight, about a hundred of us walked home together, singing, and rejoicing, and praising God.[35]

Traditions peculiar to certain regions such as Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and the West, the Midlands, and the North, both on the East and West side, have always been part of the British Methodist heritage. The writer recalls from his first appointment in Yorkshire the post-Watchnight practice of joining hands around the outside of the church and lustily rendering a very localized version of "Hail shining Morn" to immediately welcome the new year. The church historian had found references to this practice as far back as 1833. Other Methodist and Wesleyan Reform churches in the area did precisely the same thing, except that they were not agreed on the choice of hymn.

As the monthly or quarterly Watchnights gradually gave way to a single annual celebration associated with the new year, the eschatological strand, as distinctive as in the Covenant, became ever more pronounced. The day and time encouraged such concepts, and the Watchnight hymns, so powerfully important in creating the character of the service, resounded with a cry for Christ's millennium. None personified this better than Charles Wesley's:

> Come, let us anew
> Our journey pursue,
> Roll round with the year,
> And never stand still till the Master appear.
>
> The arrow is flown,
> The moment is gone;

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., VIII, 256.

The millennial year
Rushes on to our view, and eternity's here.

O that each in the day
of His coming may say,
"I have fought my way through,
I have finished the work thou didst give me to do!"

O that each from his Lord
May receive the glad word,
"Well and faithfully done!
Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne."[36]

Joy, mingled with a measured solemnity and the final advent hope, feature prominently in a hymn which was the only one actually headed "Watch-nights" in Wesley's *Hymns*:

Join, all ye ransomed sons of grace,
The holy joy prolong,
And shout to the Redeemer's praise
A solemn midnight song.

Blessing, and thanks, and love, and might,
Be to our Jesus given,
Who turns our darkness into light,
Who turns our hell to heaven.

Thither our faithful souls he leads,
Thither he bids us rise,
With crowns of joy upon our heads,
To meet him in the skies.[37]

How incomparably glorious compared to so many weak and "meatless" ditties which all too many Wesleyan people now have sadly become accustomed to as their main sustenance. Those within the heritage who neglect the very best representation of our sung faith and creed are in peril of being absorbed within the somewhat mediocre orbit of much that passes for evangelical hymnology.

[36]Originally in *Hymns for New Year's Day* (1749) and *A Collection of Hymns for the People Called Methodists* (1780), 45. *The Works of John Wesley* (Bicentennial Ed.), Vol. 7, 136-137; *Methodist Hymn Book* (1933), 956; *Hymns and Psalms* (1983), 354.

[37]Not in the Watchnight selection in the 1780 collection. In *Wesley's Hymns* (1875), 976; *Methodist Hymn Book*, 960.

Other hymns linked to the Watchnight were Charles Wesley's "Sing to the great Jehovah's praise" and "Captain of Israel's host, and Guide."[38] Later in the nineteenth century, Frances Ridley Havergal's "Standing at the portal of the opening year" and "Another year is dawning" became firm favorites. Two and sometimes three preachers were used at Watchnights in some of the smaller Methodist bodies. Margaret Adams, who became an itinerant with the Bible Christians,[39] testified that she was "invited to a Watchnight at Goosham Mill, and out of curiosity I went. I took no heed . . . being careless, but when a third preacher began . . . he described my character . . . I gave myself to God." She fell to the ground, and cried so loudly that the preacher could not go on. She said that "the false curls under my bonnet felt they were on fire, and I would have cut off my hair if I had scissors!"[40] Watchnights served not only as an agency for mission, but also featured a degree of social control. August 1, 1834, was the vesting day for the absolute abolition of slavery in Jamaica. The island authorities feared rioting and disruption. Instead there was complete calm. Several thousands had gathered in the Methodist churches on the island, spending the final hours to midnight in great Watchnights. At the moment of emancipation, it was said the Doxology could be heard ringing throughout the night.[41]

[38]The former was the last of the seven hymns in *Hymns for New Year's Day* (Bristol: 1750), with a continuity in *Wesley's Hymns*, 979; *The Methodist Hymn Book (New)* (Wesleyan Methodist New Connexion and Wesleyan Reform Union, 1904), 931; *Methodist Hymn Book*, 959; *Hymns and Psalms*, 360. The glorious and all too short "Captain of Israel's Host" was first published in *Short Hymns on Select Passages of Scripture*, 1762. In the 1780 work, 317, and in every Wesleyan and Methodist post-1932 collection to the present. Amazingly, it is not in the *United Methodist Hymnal* (1989).

[39]A largely West Country and rural Methodist offshoot (as distinct from a schism) which existed from 1815 until 1907 when, with the Methodist New Connexion and United Methodist Free Churches, it became part of the United Methodist Church (Great Britain). In turn, this church entered the much wider Methodist union of 1932, with the Wesleyan and Primitive Mtehodists. The Bible Christian work was largely centred on the poorer classes. They were solidly Wesleyan in doctrine and highly revivalistic. Akin in ethos to the much larger Primitive Methodist Church, they also accepted women as itinerants from their earliest days. Again, like the Primitives, they abandoned the practice before the end the nineteenth century.

[40]Zechariah Taft, *Biographical Sketches . . . of Holy Women*, vol. II (Leeds: for the author, 1828), 256.

[41]Frank Baker, *A Charge to Keep*, 82.

The level of denunciation aimed at the Love-feast was more than maintained with the Watchnight. Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate, stormed: "The Watch-night was another of Wesley's objectionable institutions. . . . Mr Wesley disregarded the offence which he gave, by renewing a practice that had notoriously been abolished, because of the obvious to which it led."[42] John Baily, an Irish Anglican, felt threatened by "midnight assemblies" and considered Wesley to be a "harebrained enthusiast." He replied by asking Baily if he had ever read the *Prayer Book*, with its mention of vigils, and reminded him that he had "the authority of our own national church as well as the universal church, in the earliest ages."[43] Strong implications of sexual immorality were contained in the worst of the satirical lampoons. The anonymous writers of *Fanatical Conversion* and *Perfection* were particularly abusive. The former claimed that the length of the Watchnight service was to heighten the expectancy and anticipation of unspeakable doings involving "yielding saints," whom "John's Exorcists" would make "pregnant sinners."[44] The second author made his vulgar challenge in gross doggerel:

> *Preaching* LUBBERS, who have dropp'd their PACK;
> In *watch-night Labours* prove themselves not slack,
> Thro' *Calls of Love* to tender Scenes advance,
> And slide into *Adult'ry* in a Trance?[45]

Old as it is, the riposte of Abel Stevens is surely sufficient: "These meetings are public, and their supposed possible evils are unknown, except in the conjecture of writers who have never witnessed them."[46] It was true, as Charles Wesley wrote of the Kingswood miners, that "Oft have we passed the guilty night, In revellings and frantic mirth," but now:

---

[42]Robert Southey, *The Life of John Wesley*, ed. Arthur Reynolds (London: Hutchinson, 1903), 257.

[43]*Works* (Jackson), IX, 80-81; *The Letters of John Wesley*, ed. John Telford (London: Epworth, 1931), 3, 287.

[44]*Fanatical Conversion; or, Methodism Displayed. A Satire. Illustrated and Verified by Notes from J. Wesley's Fanatical Journals...* (London: 1779); and *Perfection: A Poetical Epistle. Calmly Addressed to the Greatest Hypocrite in England* (London: 1778), cited in Lyles, 91.

[45]"Lubbers," i.e., A lazy, clumsy, or ignorant fellow. One out of place, as in "Land-lubber," sailors' terminology for one unequal to the task. Reference to the background of many of Wesley's preachers.

[46]Abel Stevens, *History of Methodism* (London: James Hagger, n.d.), II, 189.

We will not close our wakeful eyes,
 We will not let our eyelids sleep,
But humbly lift them to the skies,
 And all a solemn vigil keep;
So many years on sin bestowed,
 Can we not watch one night for God?[47]

The Renewal of the Covenant

The origin, subsequent history, and "doctrine as worship" features of the Covenant are by far the most complex of the three distinctives examined here. At the same time, the Covenant has received more scholarly attention than the Love-feast and much more than the Watchnight.[48] John Wesley gave deep and long consideration to this penetrating and searchingly moving service before very carefully and with solid preparation presenting it for the consideration of the Methodist people. In his *Short History of the People Called Methodists*, completed in late 1781, Wesley traced the beginnings:

> August 6, 1755, I mentioned to our congregation in London, a means of increasing serious religion, which had been frequently practised by our forefathers—the joining in a covenant to serve God with all our heart and with all our soul. I explained this for several mornings following: And on Friday many of us kept a fast unto the Lord; beseeching Him to give us wisdom and strength, that we might "promise unto the Lord our God, and keep it." On Monday, at six in the evening, we met for that purpose at the French church in Spitalfields. After I had recited the tenor of the covenant proposed, in the words of that blessed man, Richard Alleine, all the people stood up, in token of assent, to the number of about eighteen hundred.

[47]First published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742); Bishop, 93-94.

[48]The best treatment of the Covenant is David Tripp, *The Renewal of the Covenant in the Methodist Tradition* (London: Epworth, 1968); an excellent historical and theological examination, but heavily analytical on liturgical minutia. Also, Frederick Hunter, "The Origins of Wesley's Covenant Service" (*The London Quarterly & Holborn Review*, January, 1939), 78-87; Frank Baker, "The Beginnings of the Methodist Covenant Service" (*The London Quarterly & Holborn Review*, July, 1955), 215-20; Rupert E. Davies, "The History and Theology of the Methodist Covenant Service" (*Theology*, February, 1961), 62-68.

> Such a night I scarce ever knew before. Surely the fruit of it shall remain for ever.[49]

John Wesley recorded some ten occasions when the service was held in the French church before the opening of the chapel in City Road, and there may have been others.[50] It has been argued that this was because of his sensibilities on the necessity of a consecrated building for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Wesley placed little or no store by such considerations, and it is far more likely that it was simply a matter of a building large enough to seat the congregation.[51] Preparation for the first Covenant was meticulous, and in an entirely different category than the Love-feast and Watchnight. It was by explanation and catechising in depth. Full-length preparatory services were a common feature, especially in places where they were to engage in their first Covenant. Fasting and prayer, the appeal to historical continuity, and the generating of expectancy were all significant for Wesley. The original Covenant service was long. The form set forth by Joseph Alleine, based in part on the work of his kinsman Richard Alleine and prepared by Wesley for inclusion in his *Christian*

---

[49]*Works* (Jackson), XIII, 337; the received opinion that this was the first Covenant service has not gone unchallenged. John S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Advance of Methodism*, London: Epworth, 1925, 97-98, took the exhortation to the Newcastle Society by Wesley on July 10, 1748, that they renew their covenant with God, and quoting Joseph Alleine, as the first such service. Frederick Hunter gives priority to January 1, 1748 (cited: 82), and likewise Frank Baker emphasises the events of December, 1747 to January, 1748, as "experiments with a simple form of covenant" (cited: 215-216); similarly, in his *Charge to Keep*, 121-122, he claims that in 1755 "Wesley crystallized another type of service which he had already used." With Tripp (12-15), 1755 remains by far the most likely earliest date of a Covenant service properly understood as such. Covenant themes were regularly applied by Wesley to his people in the 1740s, including calls to personal renewal of God's covenant. But a strong covenant theme does not a Covenant service make.

[50]At first, Covenant services were restricted to the larger Societies such as London, Bristol, Newcastle, Dublin, and Cork. Known French Church usage: August 11, 1755, April 11, 1757, February 29, 1760, January 1, 1762, December 25, 1762, January 1, 1766, January 1, 1767, January 1, 1769, January 1, 1771, and January 1, 1772; here the pattern changing to New Year's day is clearly discernable. Later, the first Sunday in the year became the norm. Tripp, 16-25.

[51]John C. Bowmer, "John Wesley's Huguenot Chapels" (*Wesley Historical Society Proceedings*, XXVII), 26, projects the view of a consecrated building. Wesley's convictions are best seen in *Works* (Jackson), III, 195.

Library, would occupy well over an hour in a worship context, quite apart from hymns, further prayers, and readings and an exhortation.[52] David Tripp rightly observes that it is difficult to find any significant event in the summer of 1755 which might have led John Wesley to conceive of such a service.[53] The awakening was in its seventeenth year, and Wesley may have considered that, while the breadth of the work was ever increasing, something was lacking in regard to its depth. Disciplined discipleship had to be evoked.

If we cannot trace the defining moment of Wesley's passionate wish to share the covenantal relationship of the believer with the beloved through a solemn affirmation, the sources that fed it can be identified. But perhaps more important is the need to recognise how vital covenant theology was for John Wesley.[54] Renewal of the Covenant defined something that had gone before. It was not a new relationship to be honored and marked, but one established by God, first with God's original people and now with the new Israel. It demanded particular reminder and renewal with gathered witnesses at least annually. The covenant of grace was operative from baptism; it was therefore a reinforcement of baptismal

[52]The service of 1780 contains five long sections and a ten-part Covenant Prayer. In all, there are approximately five thousand words.

[53]Tripp, 27.

[54]Ibid., 108-112; this aspect has received relatively scant treatment in Wesleyan doctrinal and historical studies. It has no prominence even in the strongest attempt to tie John Wesley within the Reformed tradition (George Croft Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*, New York: Henry Holt, 1935). Of the classical theologians, William Burt Pope is fairly typical in emphasizing the covenantal aspects of the sacraments, rather than in any wider context (*A Compendium of Christian Theology*, London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1879, III, 299-334). This vein has continued in sacramental studies such as Ole E. Borgen, *John Wesley on the Sacraments* (Grand Rapids, Francis Asbury Press, 1985), especially 136-139; Rob L. Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1991) where there is a strong recognition of covenantal connections throughout, and Gayle Carlton Felton, *This Gift of Water* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1992), especially 52-53. John Deschner, *Wesley's Christology* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1988) has perhaps the most incisive comments on Wesley's approach to covenantal thought in recent years, seeing the problem of overlap from time to time with dispensational terminology in Wesley (extended footnote 15, 112-114). The covenant theme is also strong in Howard A. Snyder, *The Radical Wesley* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 113-116, 136, 139, 149-150, 160-162.

vows.[55] It was also a renewal of all the limitless promises arising from the new birth, for baptism without regeneration had no permanent validity.[56] God's covenant with his people was therefore re-enacted firstly by initiation and then actualisation and made the contractural demand of being re-confirmed through individual and collective renewal.[57] In Methodist thought the strong association of both sacraments with covenantal theology and typology has raised problems, consciously or otherwise, in assessing the importance of such a singular and isolated act as the Covenant Renewal.[58] Its lack of use in the United States may not be entirely due to its omission from the *Sunday Service of the Methodists*, compiled by Wesley. Neither can it be totally explained by the long periods of anti-liturgical preference in American Methodism. There may well have been some recognition that the Lord's Supper had built within it such a recognizable motif of covenantal renewal that an added gloss such as the Covenant service could diminish that content.[59]

An element of mystery surrounds the means by which John Wesley distributed the text of the *Directions*. Apart from the form in volume 30 of

---

[55]This is made very clear in the text of the 1780 Covenant Service.

[56]*Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, ed. Edward H. Sugden (London: Epworth, 1935), Sermon XXXIX, "The New Birth," II, 242.

[57]For the strong association with renewing baptismal vows and the confirming aspect of the Covenant, see Tripp, chap. 5, "The Covenant and its Renewal in Methodist Thought," 106-131.

[58]For W. B. Pope, the sacraments are "seals of a covenant," *A Higher Catechism of Theology* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book-Room, 1880), 333-334; if the seal, what further sealing is necessary, one might ask. Benjamin Field logically would appear to make a service such as the Covenant Renewal unnecessary: "[Baptism as a seal], on God's part is a visible assurance of this faithfulness to His covenant stipulations; and on our part a pledge by which we make ourselves party to the covenant, promising to fulfil its conditions," *The Student's Handbook of Christian Theology*, ed. J. C. Symons (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1894), 308. Other examples could be cited.

[59]This is not to say that the Covenant service has been entirely unknown in the United States. Its presence (in a very slightly modified form of the British Methodist service of 1936) in *The Book of Worship for Church and Home* (New York & Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1952), 46-53, signifies some use. It is here alongside "a Watch-Night Service or on the First Sunday of the New Year," but there are no Watchnight features in the service as published. It was not within the official Rituals of the Church, but one of many "Orders for Occasional Use." It is not in the current Rituals of the United Methodist Church, where the Baptismal services are now titled "The Baptismal Covenant."

his *Christian Library*, a work hardly likely to be carried by the preachers or retained in many chapels, the text was not published until 1780.[60] David Tripp, while rightly identifying Wesley's motivation for the Covenant service as originating in a form of prayer devised by Joseph Alleine in about 1659, with additional directions and the Covenant Prayer itself extracted from Richard Alleine's *Vindiciae Pietatis* published in 1663, insists that there were further influences. The scriptural content is obvious, as is the more general Puritan emphasis on covenant theology and the practice of personal covenanting as a contract of faithfulness to God.[61] Somewhat less obvious is Tripp's observation that there is a Laudian or old-type High Anglican connection.[62] Such churchmen advocated no service in any way similar to the Covenant Renewal, but the principle ran strongly through both the Confirmation rite and the Communion order where both acts were envisaged as the renewing of the baptismal promises. Samuel Wesley seemingly made much of covenant theology in his work, *The Pious Communicant Rightly Prepared* (1700), insisting: ". . . because there are few who have come of age without being guilty of some breaches of this Covenant, we do, after we have taken it upon ourselves in Confirmation, renew it again at the Holy Communion."[63]

One should tread warily, however, in pressing this line of influence. Reformed theology as a whole is drenched with covenantal concepts, including its view of the sacraments. This is acknowledged by David Tripp who otherwise meticulously searches for origins in all manner of places: "It may fairly be said that the starting-point of Methodist dogmatic theology in the early nineteenth century, at least on the subject of the Covenant, is in chapters VII, XXVIII, and XXIX of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly, adjusted by the Methodist convictions

---

[60]Thomas Lee, one of the preachers published the Covenant service minus for some reason the Covenant Prayer, prior to Wesley. It appeared as: *An Extract from the Thirtieth Volume of the "Christian Library" published by the Rev. Mr. Wesley* (Sheffield: 1779). He sent an advertisement to all his brethren. "Mr Wesley's reaction is not known.

[61]The writing of personal covenants was a common Puritan practice, as it was with many Methodists. Southey actually believed that some of them wrote in their own blood. This was vehemently denied by Jabez Bunting.

[62]Tripp, 63-68.

[63]Cited by Tripp, 8.

on God's universal love, on free will and on the peccability of believers."[64]

Wherever else in Wesley's reading and experience, apart from the Alleine Puritan devotions, he appropriated the design of Covenant Renewal, the Moravians played little or no part. He had been present at what J. E. Hutton describes as the practice of the "The Cup of Covenant" at Herrnhut in 1738, but it did not approach a Renewal as Wesley understood it. It consisted largely of a celebration of the covenant of faith between believers on the occasion of the sending out of missionaries, although they did sing a hymn described as the Brethren's Covenant Hymn.[65] Direct indebtedness to the Moravians has been claimed, but C. W. Towlson is surely correct in his judgment that ". . . it is improbable that Methodism owes anything to Moravianism in this respect."[66]

At least thirteen editions of the *Directions* appeared before 1812. Even so, as late as 1888 the service was not incorporated in the Wesleyan *Order of Administration of the Sacraments*. Emendations were frequently made to the text and surviving copies used by preachers consistently display much deletion and changing of words. This was always in the direction of a discernable softening of much of the awesome language of the original, and an obvious desire to shorten the pre-sacramental service by reducing the ten-part Covenant Prayer.[67] By the mid-nineteenth century, Methodists had problems with such language as: "O Most dreadful God . . . I beseech thee accept of thy poor Prodigal now prostrating himself at thy door," or "O blessed Jesus, I come to thee hungry, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked; a most loathesome, polluted wretch, a guilty, condemned malefactor."[68] Revisions were made by the Wesleyans in 1879

[64]Ibid., 112; Deschner, 112, also finds Westminster Confession structures in Wesley's thought. Whether free will in this period had such a prominent place in Methodist dogmatics (with the possible exception of a shift discernable in Richard Watson) is more conjectural.

[65]J. E. Hutton, *A History of the Moravian Church*, 224, cited in Tripp, 9.

[66]Towlson, 223.

[67]By comparison, the present service in *The Methodist Service Book* (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1975), 171-181, with Holy Communion, four or five hymns, and a sermon of average length (twenty minutes?) can be completed in a little over one hour.

[68]The 1780 service remained in use in some form for over one hundred years. Words here are from the opening lines and part five of the Covenant Prayer.

and 1897. British Methodists of all persuasions had some form of Covenant service, although they differed considerably in length and content. With the exception of the Methodist New Connexion and Wesleyan Reformers, it never claimed the same allegiance among the dissenting bodies.

The service for the Renewal of the Covenant is still held on the first Sunday in January in every Methodist church. Sometimes congregations will unite for the occasion. The once exceedingly long preamble is now reduced to quite short prayers of Adoration and Confession. The nature of the Covenant relationship is set forth, and the invitation given. The Covenant Prayer is a highly truncated version of the original, but both the spirit and content of its essential obligations remain. We might ask whether there could ever be a deeper consecration:

> I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.[69]

[69]Current Covenant affirmation, *Methodist Service Book*, 180.

A LITTLE HEAVEN BELOW: THE LOVE FEAST AND LORD'S SUPPER IN EARLY AMERICAN METHODISM

by

Lester Ruth

"I was as in a little Heaven below,
and believe Heaven above will differ more
in quantity than in quality."[1]

In addition to the well-known preaching services conducted by the nearly legendary circuit riders, early American Methodists participated in a variety of lesser known but equally important services. Foremost among these additional forms of worship were the Love Feast and the Lord's Supper. Each was an expression of fellowship, which was the dominant ecclesiological concept for early American Methodists. In each, Methodist fellowship was expressed both in the manner in which the services were conducted and in the way they were commonly interpreted.

Early Methodists designated these services as "private," that is, access was normally restricted, sometimes to the point of curtailing the ability of non-participants to see and hear the rituals.[2] For early Method-

[1]William Watters, *A Short Account of the Christian Experience, and Ministereal Labours, of William Watters* (Alexandria: S. Snowden, 1806), 75-6.

[2]"Private" worship was a common colloquialism among early Methodists. See Ezekiel Cooper, *Journal*, Ms., Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary Library, Evanston, IL, 7 August, 1791; [John Smith], "The Journal of John Smith, Methodist Circuit Rider, of his Work on the Greenbrier Circuit, (West) Virginia and Virginia," *The Journal of the Greenbrier Historical Society* 1, 4 (October 1966): 25. Preaching services were considered "public" worship.

ists, the necessity of restriction was a crucial feature rooted in their polity. Inherited from Wesley, the polity required that meetings of the societies themselves, the bands and classes, and the love feast be restricted to those who were active members. Individual exceptions were limited. After creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784 and the concomitant result of having Methodist preachers ordained to administer sacraments, the polity likewise included the Lord's Supper in this sphere of private—as opposed to public—worship.

But fidelity to polity was not the only reason Methodists gave for conducting private worship. The polity was often confirmed by the intense fellowship experienced in private worship. Struggling to find words adequate for their experience of themselves as church, Methodists frequently relied on eschatological explanations, expressed in the poetic, affective idiom common to their piety. Simply put, Methodists believed that what they frequently experienced in these restricted rituals was nothing less than a foretaste of the quality of life in heaven. While the eschatological focus could be on the act of worship itself or on the coming of God in power to save, very often early Methodist eschatological interpretation highlighted a quality of church fellowship which itself revealed heaven.

The contrast between private and public worship raises the issue of the relationship between worship and evangelism in early Methodism. Generally, private worship provided the larger context for overtly evangelistic activities, including the well-known preaching service. Specifically, the exhibition of Methodist fellowship in private worship made visible the goal of evangelism (inclusion in a worshiping fellowship), renewed the dedication of Methodists to evangelize, and, frequently, was itself the occasion for individual experiences of grace, from conviction through sanctification. This balance between and breadth of types of services offers suggestions to those imbued with recent emphases of the modern Liturgical Movement and to those flush with the excitement of seeker services and other forms of "contemporary" worship.

Privacy: The Love Feast

Perhaps the most visible aspect of love feasts was their restricted nature.[3] In its most basic form, an American Methodist love feast con-

[3]Important literature on love feasts—both British and American—includes Frank Baker, *Methodism and the Love-Feast*; John Bishop, *Methodist Worship in Relation to Free Church Worship* (Scholars Studies Press, Inc., 1975), 88-92;

sisted of a sharing of bread and water and a time of testimonies. This form was apparently little changed from its British roots. Because of the desire to limit participation to Methodists and a few exceptions, entrance into the love feast was normally closely guarded.

On an official level, polity set the criteria for admission to love feasts, even from the first annual conference held in America in 1773. At that time, the preachers affirmed that no one was "to be admitted into our love-feasts oftener than twice or thrice unless they become members."[4] After creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784, American *Disciplines* continued the restriction in specific detail. In response to the question of how often strangers could be present at love feasts, the *Disci-*

Emory Stevens Bucke, "American Methodism and the Love Feast," *Methodist History* 1 (July 1963): 8-13; Leslie F. Church, *More about the Early Methodist People* (London: Epworth Press, 1949), 237-42, 282-5; Richard O. Johnson, "The Development of the Love Feast in Early American Methodism," *Methodist History* 19, 2 (January 1981): 67-83; and C. R. Stockton, "The Origin and Development of Extra-liturgical Worship in Eighteenth Century Methodism" (D. Phil. diss., University of Oxford, 1969), 89ff. Generally, Americans conceived of the love feast as having essentially two parts, the food ritual and the testimonials. Summary references to a love feast, for example, often briefly mention these two parts or, in fact, only the testimonials. The exact order, allowing for some variation, was a little fuller than that. As Nathan Bangs, a preacher who first itinerated in 1802, summarily described a typical love feast (*A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3rd ed., New York: Mason and Lane, 1840, 1:249), it proceeded in this order: hymn, prayer, eating of bread and water, testimonies, monetary collection, hymn, prayer, benediction. American love feasts had nearly the same components as their British counterparts and their order was essentially the same, with one important exception: the location of the monetary collection. Whereas descriptions of British love feasts seemingly locate the collection between food distribution and testimonials, in America the collection occurred at the end of the testimonials. One consequence is that Americans frequently used the collection as the point to fuse administration of the Lord's Supper to the love feast, a very common occurrence. In those instances, the love feast was said to have "closed" with the sacrament. Love feasts could also culminate with an invitation to mourners or with an eruption of the "work of God," a period with shouting and exhorting by believers and crying by "mourners." Admission of new members was also a possible addition to the order.

[4]*Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, annually held in America: from 1773-1813, inclusive* (New York: D. Hitt and T. Ware, 1813), 6.

plines answered: only a very few times ("twice or thrice") and only with the utmost caution.[5]

Actual restriction of access was accomplished by a doorkeeper. Most frequently, the preachers—itinerant or local, singularly or in combination—assumed the responsibility for staying at the door and deciding who could enter.[6] If someone slipped by the doorkeepers, removal was not unknown, as in the case of one man removed by a "large, athletic" Irish Methodist who reportedly escorted the intruder to the door and ushered him out with the bottom of his foot while exclaiming, "There, go! and the blessing of the Lord go wid ye."[7]

Doorkeepers used a variety of criteria for admission. In love feasts held within a particular society, possession of a current ticket would guarantee admission.[8] Also common were special notes of permission which

[5]*Minutes of several conversations between the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D., the Rev. Francis Asbury, and others, at a Conference begun in Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, on Monday, the 27th of December, in the year 1784* (Philadelphia: Cist, 1785; reprint ed., Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 5; the 1787 *Discipline*: *A Form of Discipline, for the Ministers, Preachers, and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America* (New York: W. Ross, 1787; reprint ed., Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 32, added the reference to thrice. For the period through 1824, this provision had no other changes.

[6]Charles Giles, *Pioneer: A Narrative of the Nativity, Experience, Travels, and Ministerial Labours of Rev. Charles Giles* (New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford, 1844), 250-1; Benjamin Lakin, *Journal*, Ms. on microfilm, Washington University Library, St. Louis, MO, 14 April 1811; Nathaniel Mills, *Journal*, Ms., United Methodist Historical Society, Lovely Lane Museum, Baltimore, MD, 10 February 1811; John Littlejohn, "Journal of John Littlejohn," Ts., Louisville Conference Historical Society, Louisville, KY, 79 (11 November 1777); George Coles, *My First Seven Years in America* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1852), 181; William Colbert, "A Journal of the Travels of William Colbert Methodist Preacher thro' parts of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, and Virginia in 1790 to 1838," Ts., Drew University Library, Madison, NJ, 4:143; Jeremiah Norman, *Journal*, Ms., Stephen Beauregard Weeks Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, 26 February 1797.

[7]W. P. Strickland, ed., *Autobiography of Dan Young, A New England Preacher of the Olden Time* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1860), 105-6.

[8]Originally, these tickets, distributed quarterly by the senior itinerant in the circuit, were technically tickets of admission for class meetings. However, in America, their function and name changed. First in an unofficial sense, the class tickets became love feast tickets. In 1820 the *Discipline* updated its language about renewal of tickets to recognize this. See Frank Baker, "The Americanizing of Methodism," *Methodist History* 13, 3 (April 1975): 6 and the 1820 *Discipline*, 39.

allowed admission at a particular Quarterly Meeting's love feast, for instance.[9] Granting these notes was not a foregone conclusion, as in the case of a man who was required to follow the disciplinary provisions for holding his slave, namely, submitting facts of the purchase to the Quarterly Meeting Conference for its ruling on how long the slave could be held before manumission.[10]

Early Methodists offered a variety of reasons why love feast privacy was so important.[11] The most obvious was the desire to safeguard the atmosphere so participants felt able to speak freely in testimony. In some ways, personal testimonies were synonymous with the love feast itself, and so creating the best atmosphere possible for speaking was a self-justifying goal. As the bishops noted in 1798, including unawakened persons could "cramp, if not entirely destroy . . . liberty of speech" in love feasts.[12] A particular concern was preserving the liberty of women members since some non-Methodists opposed women speaking in the church.[13]

The freedom to testify to Christian experience openly—and the concomitant Methodist understanding that God's presence was experienced anew in these testimonies—was closely tied to a more explicitly theological reason for restricting access to love feasts. Simply put, early Methodists considered that God was uniquely present in their midst when they

[9]Coles, *First Seven Years*, 181; Norman journal, 20 September, 1800; Cooper journal, 2 January, 1787. Doorkeepers seemed to have had some level of discretion. Generally, doorkeepers had the discretion to admit members and those who were genuine, serious "seekers" of religion or, at times, members from other denominations.

[10]Norman journal, 16 March, 1799. The 1798 *Discipline* (*The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, with Explanatory Notes by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury*, 10th ed., Philadelphia: Hall, 1798, reprint ed., Rutland, VT: Academy Books, 1979, 170) required the Quarterly Meeting Conference to make this determination.

[11]Some Methodist preachers themselves felt uncomfortable with limiting access. This minority of preachers argued that exclusion would be an "insult" to non-Methodists. Typically this view was opposed by more traditional preachers. See Lakin journal, 13 April, 1811; Cooper journal, 11 November, 1787.

[12]1798 *Discipline*, 73. See also Colbert journal, 1:143.

[13]See the quote from the 1838 *Christian Advocate and Journal* in John H. Wigger, "Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Popularization of American Christianity 1770-1820" (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame, 1994), 266 and Johnson, "Development of the Love Feast," 75.

gathered as God's distinct people. Mixture with unawakened outsiders voided the condition by which God was present and revealed. Methodists restricted admission to their worship because there they experienced the glorious presence of God.

The strongest statement of this idea was in the bishops' commentary in the 1798 *Discipline*. Explaining limited access to the love feast and to meetings of the society itself, the bishops noted:

> It is manifestly our duty to fence in our society, and to preserve it from intruders; otherwise we should soon become a desolate waste. God would write Ichabod upon us, and the glory would be departed from Israel.[14]

The bishops' statement is interesting in that it refers to fencing the "society," not just "the table" or some other liturgical act or place. This reference implies that the bishops considered the pre-eminent place of God's revealed presence as the fellowship itself and secondly the liturgical acts of this fellowship. Moreover, the bishops' statement demonstrates the role of polity in their ecclesiology: The discipline existed not just as provisions for existing as an institution, but so Methodists could be a distinct people in whom God was uniquely manifest. In a special way, by following its polity Methodism showed itself as an exceptional fellowship in which God dwelled.[15] The symbol of and the occasion for this manifestation was often a love feast.

In connection with their restricted love feasts, Methodists used a variety of terms to distinguish themselves from those excluded. Faithful Methodists were, as one hymn put it, "faithful followers of the Lamb" who were "the same in heart and mind/And think and speak the same." When at love feasts "all in love together dwell/The comfort is unspeak-

---

[14]1798 *Discipline*, 154.

[15]I am indebted to the argument by Russell Richey that early American Methodism had essential unity between crucial elements of its existence, namely between its "structure and mission," "organization and life," or "form and substance." See Russell E. Richey, *Early American Methodism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 13, 19, and 71. Richey sees an important change occuring in Methodism during the nineteenth century as "sacrality eventually attached itself to the form, to the surface, to the structure—not to the religious life originally borne by those externalities," surely a rebuke to subsequent Methodism, including modern versions. See *Early American Methodism*, 16-7.

able."[16] Methodists were also the "good" in contrast to the "bad" or the "wicked."[17] These sorts of terms provided additional justification for the restricted rituals. One Presiding Elder, trying to answer why privacy was the best mode for love feasts, argued that the Scriptures taught not "to give that which was holy to dogs, or to cast our pearls before swine."[18]

The contrasting terms for the two groups reinforced the propriety of a love feast's privacy. If "thoughtless and profane" people were mingled with the "devout," as one itinerant argued, a love feast was that in name only.[19] How much better, the Methodists thought, to have congruence between the symbols (the bread and water), the symbols used (the love feast itself), and the loving fellowship symbolized (the assembled Methodists).

Privacy: The Lord's Supper

The manner of restricting access for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was more fluid than for the love feast. The precise manner in which admission to the Lord's Supper was restricted was directly tied to the setting in which it was administered.[20] When attached to a love feast, as was often done, admission to communion was much more restricted, synonymous with the level of privacy safeguarded for a love feast. In this situation, the criteria and method involved for limiting access were the

[16]Thomas Haskins, "The Journal of Thomas Haskins (1760-1816)," Ts., Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN, 22.

[17]Lakin journal, 7 April, 1811; [Richard Sneath], "Diary," in *The History of Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church, Gloucester County New Jersey, 1945*, comp. Mrs. Walter Aborn Simpson (No publisher, 1945), 66.

[18]James B. Finley, *Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley; or, Pioneer Life in the West*, ed. W. P. Strickland (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern, 1853), 287. His argument alludes to Matthew 7:6.

[19]Giles, *Pioneer*, 176.

[20]Methodists showed great flexibility in choosing the setting for and manner of administering the Lord's Supper. Attaching the sacrament to the end of a love feast was very common, especially at a Quarterly Meeting, itself one of the more regular settings for sacramental administration. See Lester Ruth, "A Little Heaven Below: Quarterly Meetings as Seasons of Grace in Early American Methodism" (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame, 1996). In addition, the Lord's Supper could be administered in the manner of a love feast, using a similar order with an extended time of testimonies. Finally, the sacrament could exist as an independent, floating ritual, perhaps attached to the end of a preaching service or a class meeting.

same as for a love feast. Admission to the love feast meant admission to the sacrament (and the reverse). When administered in connection with a preaching service, however, the restriction was often not as tight. Because non-communicants were not excluded from the space, such a Lord's Supper had a higher degree of visibility to a bystander than did the normal love feast.[21]

Nonetheless, early Methodism consistently maintained a sense that admission to actual communion should be limited, even though the rite was administered in a public setting. As the Southern preachers in 1779 formed a presbytery and began to anticipate their own regular administration of the Lord's Supper, their Annual Conference defined who was eligible to commune: "those under our care and Discipline."[22] After creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784, the *Disciplines* continued a similar concern, although the polity tended to weaken the direct connection to Methodist membership implied in the 1779 requirement. The provision in the 1785 *Discipline*, for example, presumes that non-members will be communing with the Methodists and thus establishes guidelines for admission: "Let no Person who is not a Member of the Society, be admitted to the Communion without a Sacrament-Ticket, which Ticket must be changed every Quarter."[23] In 1787 this provision was modified by adding a requirement for examination before communion and by changing the reference from "ticket" to "token."[24] After 1785, no mention is ever made of the eligibility of members in good standing to commune; their membership provided automatic qualification.[25]

[21]See, for example, the case of the itinerant who had planned to hold a "private" sacrament but, because the house was not immediately available in the morning, had to wait until after the preaching service to have a "public" sacrament. See Lakin journal, 25 December, 1809.

[22]1779 ms. minutes in Philip Gatch, Papers, Ohio Wesleyan University Library, Delaware, OH.

[23]1785 *Discipline*, 17.

[24]1787 *Discipline*, 29. Despite the fact that this passage remained unchanged in the *Disciplines* well into the nineteenth century, the exact nature of these sacramental tickets/tokens remains a mystery. The primary material for the period is virtually silent on their use and nature.

[25]Throughout this early period, very little mention is ever made of immediate sacramental discipline for Methodists in order to be eligible for communion. John Bowmer's assessment of British practice ("A Converting Ordinance and the Open Table," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 34 (1964): 111-2) that the ongoing accountability of Methodist membership was a sort of continual sacramental discipline seems likewise accurate for American Methodists.

A connection between membership standards and admission to communion continued in the polity, but the connection was always written in a limited way, preserving a presumption that non-members would commune under certain circumstances. In the 1785 *Discipline*, for instance, the polity disallowed communing anyone who had been expelled or voluntarily withdrawn for not complying with the rules concerning manumission of slaves. This *Discipline* also sought to prevent any such person from joining the Methodists or communing unless they had complied.[26] Although these passages were dropped in the following year's *Discipline*, a similar—albeit more general—provision was added in 1792: "No person shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our society."[27] This sort of passage presumes that non-members were communing. Rather than attacking this practice itself, the polity accepted it and tried only to define those instances when non-member communion would be inappropriate. The one disciplinary exception in the printed polity was the stipulation from 1788 onward that, if a member had been tried and expelled from the society, that person lost not only the "privileges of society" but also admission to the sacrament.[28]

Accounts of the Lord's Supper in open, public settings give hints as to some of the unofficial standards used. On one occasion, Bishop Coke granted permission to "any serious person of the congregation who desired it" to commune with Methodists.[29] At another, Bishop Asbury preached that "true penitents and real believers" were proper communicants.[30] Other itinerants used similar criteria. At an 1823 Quarterly Meeting, the invitation to commune was given "to the pious, & to all that were desirous."[31] At another time, the elder administered the sacrament "in an

---

[26]1785 *Discipline*, 16.

[27]*The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America*, 8th ed. (Philadelphia: Hall, 1792), 40.

[28]*A Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers, and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America* (Elizabeth-Town: Kolloc, 1788; reprint ed., Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 41.

[29]Thomas Coke, *Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America* (London: G. Paramore, 1793), 107.

[30]Francis Asbury, *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, ed. J. Manning Potts (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 1:728.

[31]Mills journal, 12 January, 1823.

open way & invited all Christians to come."[32] Such latitude did not mean, however, that the elders did not restrict access or that everyone in attendance did commune. At a 1793 Quarterly Meeting, for example, a preacher explained to the congregation "who ought, and who ought not partake of the supper of the Lord" before it was administered.[33] Occasionally, the same restrictive function was accomplished by sermons which sought to explain the Lord's Supper. Such sermons, preached immediately prior to administration of the sacrament, fulfilled this function by exploring the proper subjects of the sacrament.[34]

Sometimes, restriction was done on a more individual basis. At one Quarterly Meeting, for example, the Presiding Elder refused to admit a woman who had applied for admission but, upon examination, was disclosed to hold Arian views on the divinity of Christ, which the elder considered heretical.[35] Sometimes the restriction was voluntary. Alfred Brunson, newly a Methodist, was surprised at his first Methodist communion to see his class leader not commune. When asked why, the class leader responded that he had an unresolved conflict with other Methodists and thus he could not receive without disobeying Christ's command.[36] Therefore, even if the sacrament was conducted outdoors in a public setting with a large congregation from a preaching service, the number of communicants could be a minority of those in attendance.[37]

Accounts of the Lord's Supper in early American Methodism indicate that some things were usually not required. One was a previous con-

[32]William Ormond, *Journal*, Ts., William Ormond Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke University Library, Durham, NC, 11 April, 1802.

[33]Colbert journal, 1:150.

[34]For an example, see the account of the 22 May, 1814 Quarterly Meeting in John Early, "Journal of Bishop John Early who lived Jan. 1, 1786-Nov. 5, 1873," Ts., Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC.

[35]Giles, *Pioneer*, 240-2.

[36]Alfred Brunson, *A Western Pioneer: or, Incidents of the Life and Times of Rev. Alfred Brunson, A.M., D.D., Embracing a Period of over Seventy Years* (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden; New York: Carlton and Lanahan, 1872; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1975), 1:58-9.

[37]See, for example, the "Sacrament in public under the Trees" before a large congregation in Cumberland, Maryland in 1825 in Marjorie Moran Holmes, "The Life and Diary of the Reverend John Jeremiah Jacob (1757-1839)" (M.A. Thesis, Duke University, 1941), 325-6.

version experience. Serious mourners, whether or not they were members, were frequently welcomed.[38] Recognizing the gracious activity of God during a sacrament, even on the unconverted, was commonplace in eighteenth-century Methodism, which traced its belief that the sacrament could be a "converting ordinance" back to Wesley himself.[39] Accounts sometimes describe how a mourner's justification occurred at the very moment of communing. On one occasion, for example, Bishop William McKendree administered the sacrament to a mourner to whom "pardon was communicated" just as she tasted the wine.[40] Similarly, at a Delaware peninsula Quarterly Meeting, a mourner named Mary Broughten "was powerfully converted with the bread in her mouth" and fell to the ground.[41] Baptism also was not strictly required before admission to communion.[42] Membership in another church also did not disqualify someone from communing with the Methodists.[43]

[38]For instance, see Robert Drew Simpson, ed., *American Methodist Pioneer: The Life and Journals of The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson* (Rutland, VT: Academy Books, 1984), 130-1.

[39]See John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed. (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 1:279-80 for an early use of this concept. Some scholars' argument that the American Methodists no longer saw the sacrament as a converting ordinance because they restricted access is not persuasive since they typically overlook the fact that a conversion experience was never the threshold for membership. See Kenneth B. Bedell, *Worship in the Methodist Tradition* (Nashville: Tidings, 1976), 53. One could be a Methodist member in good standing and still be only a mourner. Thus, even if admission to the sacrament was restricted to members only, there would have been opportunity for some mourners to have experienced grace in it as a converting ordinance.

[40]Finley, *Autobiography*, 401-2.

[41]Colbert journal, 4:14-15.

[42]Gayle Carlton Felton, *This Gift of Water: the Practice and Theology of Baptism among Methodists in America* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 55, 74-9. For an example, see Ebenezer Francis Newell, *Life and Observations of Rev. E. F. Newell, who has been more than Forty Years an Itinerant Minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Worcester, MA: C. W. Ainsworth, 1847), 69-70.

[43]Indeed, the 1785 *Discipline* even allowed joint membership and privilege of communion. According to this *Discipline*, if a person would comply with the Methodist membership rules, she or he could still worship at another church and commune there. See 1785 *Discipline*, 47-8. This provision was omitted in subsequent *Disciplines*. Examples of intercommunion—particularly by Presbyterians and particularly after the start of the Second Great Awakening—are numerous and are found in accounts of administration of the sacrament in a variety of settings, including Quarterly meetings and Annual Conferences.

Notwithstanding the relative open admission to communion when administered in a public setting like a preaching service, there were always some—sometimes a sizable majority—who did not commune.[44] As in the case of love feasts, and perhaps with an even higher degree of visibility, two groups were created: those who participated and those who oversaw and heard the activities. For example, at one Quarterly Meeting the sacramental table stood in the green outside a barn where preaching was held. At the time of administration, the congregation was divided into two groups: those who communed and the "spectators" who formed a ring around them.[45] This same dynamic—spectators observing the gracious activity of God in the sacrament—occurred in other Methodist sacramental administrations. One early itinerant described such a scene:

> The disciples of Jesus came forward with boldness and owned their divine Teacher in this holy ordinance, whilst hundreds of spectators were looking on with amazement to see the mighty display of God's power, for many were overwhelmed with the loving presence of God during this season of commemorating one of the greatest events ever exhibited to human view.[46]

In such a case, the spectators were privy to a double manifestation of God's grace. They saw not only the symbols of commemoration of

[44]To some outside critics, the differing standards of restriction for the love feast and the Lord's Supper appeared to be backwards: the love feast was often more restricted than communion. One Methodist reply was to distinguish between the love feast and the sacrament as different types of means of grace. The love feast was classified as a prudential means of grace—one specifically given to Methodists and thus essential for Methodist nurture—whereas the sacrament was an instituted means of grace—one commanded of all Christians. See Johnson, "Development of the Love Feast," 77-8. See also the 1798 *Discipline*, 120, where the bishops' commentary uses this distinction in connection with limiting sacramental access. Compare James B. Finley, *Sketches of Western Methodism: Biographical, Historical, and Miscellaneous*, ed. W. P. Strickland (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern, 1854; reprint, New York: Arno Press & the New York Times, 1969), 81. For a fuller definition of the types of means of grace, see Henry H. Knight III, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace*, Pietist and Wesleyan Studies no. 3 (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1992), 3.

[45]Newell, *Life and Observations*, 135. An invitation was given to mourners after the sacrament, during which many "eagerly rushed forward."

[46]Nathan Bangs, *Journal*, Ms., Nathan Bangs papers, Drew University Library, Madison, NJ, 5 October, 1805. See also Finley, *Autobiography*, 304.

Christ's death—the bread and wine—but also a fellowship which revealed the present beneficiaries of this act of love.

Public testimonies by those communing only accentuated this witness. At one 1804 Delmarva Quarterly Meeting, for instance, "some bore (before a gasping multitude) a feeling testimony of their sins being forgiven by Faith in Christ, and love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost."[47] For receptive spectators, such testimonies made their social peers specific, visible representations of the grace Methodists said God shared in the sacrament.

Heaven on Earth

Early Methodists' understanding of their worship had a strong eschatological aspect. Among a myriad of images they used to explain their worship experience, this eschatological one was constantly recurring. What Methodists lacked in sophistication in their theology at this point, they made up in insistence. Specifically, Methodists referenced their worship to heaven; they understood their worship as manifesting heaven. Although they made this assertion about all their worship, not just the Love Feast and Lord's Supper, they often perceived a special heavenly intensity in relation to these latter rituals.

Methodists used several means to describe how heaven was manifested in their worship. For example, they emphasized the coming of God in saving power as being the opening of heaven. Often they referred to the opening of the "gate," "door," or "windows" of heaven. They also shifted the emphasis in this initial image in order to better focus on the human enjoyment of the gracious coming of God. To do this they talked in refreshment metaphors. If God opened heaven to pour out blessings on worshipers, then these worshipers could be said to have eaten of "heavenly manna" or to have been "refreshed with the Dew of Heaven." They could be said to have drunk of the "Sweet Refreshing Wine of Heaven's Eternal Love" or even to have fed on "Angels' food."[48]

Another way Methodists spoke of heavenly manifestation in their worship was to note the eternal quality of the act of worship itself. Wor-

---

[47]Henry Boehm, *Journal*, Ms., Henry Boehm Papers, Drew University Library, Madison, NJ, 17 June, 1804.

[48]Respectively, Boehm journal, 24 May, 1800; Richard Whatcoat, *Journal*, Ts., Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary Library, Evanston, IL, 15 November, 1795 and 22 February, 1795; and John Smith, "Journal," 34, 38.

shiping God is the essential, eternal activity of heaven.[49] Methodist worship anticipated the adoration that saints and angels continually offered to God in heaven, whether in specific acts or in the sheer vividness of the entire experience.[50] This eschatological interpretation was rooted in and sparked by an experience of Christian fellowship which anticipated and shaped their understanding of eschatological fulfillment. In their estimation, their fellowship, specifically in worship, revealed the power and promise of heaven; it was even a participation in heaven. Their language struggled to keep pace with the intensity of this experience.

Thus, Methodists especially explained heaven's manifestation in their worship by emphasizing the revelatory quality of their fellowship together. Specifically, they saw the unity they felt when they loved each other as being a participation in the life of heaven itself. As one noted, "how like heaven it is to be where Christians love each other."[51] Therefore, whenever the loving bonds of their fellowship became obvious, Methodists would speak of their vivid—even if proleptic—enjoyment of the fellowship of heaven. On August 9, 1789 in Baltimore, Maryland, for example, Ezekiel Cooper spoke of Quarterly Meeting participants in the Love Feast as approaching eternity, dwelling as it were in the "suburbs of heaven":

> Love-feast began at 8 o'clock, and a feast of love it was. The flame kindles through the church, as though every heart had brought the fire of love burning with them. . . . There seemed to flow words of fire from every mouth, while one after

[49]References to human participation with angels in worshiping God is a frequent feature in Methodists' dreams and visions of heaven. See, for example, the dream in Reuben Peaslee, *The Experience, Christian and Ministerial of Mr. Reuben Peaslee* (Haverhill, MA: Burrill & Tileston, 1816), 28-9.

[50]Jessop journal, 21 January, 1790; Thomas Mann, *Journal*, Ms., Special Collections Library, Duke University Library, Durham, NC, 5 August, 1810; Finley, *Autobiography*, 290; Colbert journal, 3:40-1; William K. Boyd, "A Journal and Travel of James Meacham," *Annual Publication of Historical Papers of the Historical Society of Trinity College* 10 (1914): 95. See, for example, James B. Finley's experience at his first love feast in a Quarterly Meeting (*Autobiography*, 186) and a two-hour discussion of sanctification by Bishop Francis Asbury at the 1804 New York Annual Conference (letter from William Thacher to Robert Emory, 14 December, 1840, Drew University Library, Madison, NJ).

[51]Sneath, "Diary," 92.

> another, full of rapture and love, arose and humbly declared the great goodness of God to their souls. It was as a Pentecost indeed, and like unto the very suburbs of heaven. We stood as on the top of Pisgah, and viewed the land of which the Lord had said, "I will give it to you."[52]

It was their love—it was a "feast of love indeed"—which had brought them to the suburbs of heaven. The loving fellowship's intensity demanded a point of reference beyond earth and normal human existence. Not surprisingly, very many of these types of references were linked to private Methodist services, the Lord's Supper and particularly the Love Feast.[53]

The pain Methodists often experienced in parting after worship served to sharpen their understanding of worship as eschatological in nature. Countless accounts exist of the pain they felt when they had to say farewell. Their honest tears at saying goodbye told them that the manifestation of heaven experienced in their worshiping fellowship was not yet permanent. In addition, the pain of parting served to sharpen the nature of their eschatological hope. Specifically, their worship experience caused them to envision heaven as a place where they would never have to part from their fellow Methodists again. The reunion they anticipated in heaven was not primarily portrayed as being with actual family—although this was a part—but with their Christian family, their society of

[52]Ezekiel Cooper, "A brief account of the work of God in Baltimore: written by E. C. in an Epistle to Bishop Asbury," Ts., Barratt's Chapel & Museum, Frederica, DE; George A., Phoebus, comp., *Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America* (New York: Phillips & Hunt; Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe, 1887), 95. Compare Ezekiel Cooper, "An Account of the Work of God at Baltimore, in a Letter to —," *The Arminian Magazine* (August 1790): 409-411. The scriptural allusion is to Deuteronomy 33 where Moses is shown the land promised to Abraham from the top of Mount Pisgah.

[53]An example of this sort of language for the Lord's Supper is the description of the sacrament in Abel Stevens, *Memorials of the Early Progress of Methodism in the Eastern States* (Boston: C. H. Pierce and Co., 1852), 57, quoting Jesse Lee: "Then we administered the Lord's Supper, and our good God was pleased to meet us at his table, and we did sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Additionally, this type of reference could be applied to other private meetings, like class meetings or even Annual Conferences. See Asbury, *Journal and Letters*, 3:363: "our [annual] conferences in general are as the anti-chamber of heaven."

friends.[54] "I never knew till now what Christian fellowship could do," Kentuckian Benjamin Lakin said after a 1795 Quarterly Meeting, concluding: "I was unable to converse . . . by reason of sorrow of heart to think of seeing them no more in time, may the Lord bring us to meet in heaven where parting is no more."[55]

The reunion in heaven would be wonderful, they thought. As one Methodist speculated on heavenly joys, the only thing he could think of which could add to the joy of communing with God was the joy of Methodist fellowship:

> I have thought that if any thing can add to the Joys of happy Souls above Except the Immediate presence of God & our blessed Redeemer it will be the delight of our souls to meet our departed friends, relations & fellow worshipers.[56]

Of special attraction to this Methodist was the purpose of this re-union: worship. The joy of this fellowship would be "Especially in that happy uniformity of mind which will then possess the whole heavenly Quire both of Saints & angels."

Thus, early Methodists understood their worship not as an individualistic experience of God, nor as narrowly focused on God alone. Rather, in this corporate activity God and heaven were made manifest. Consequently, they saw their worshiping fellowship as a true anticipation of the eternal worshiping fellowship of all God's people. They longed for the fulfillment of their proleptic experience:

---

[54]"Friends" was a frequently used term for other Methodists.

[55]Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier*, 4:209. See similar statements in J. B. Wakeley, *The Patriarch of One Hundred Years; Being Reminiscences, Historical and Biographical of Rev. Henry Boehm* (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1875; reprint, Abram W. Sangrey, 1982), 153; Colbert journal, 1:35-6; Cooper journal, 24 August, 1788, 15 November, 1790, 27 May, 1794; James Meacham,*Journal*, Ms., Special Collections Library, Duke University Library, Durham, NC, 27 March, 1789; Edward Dromgoole to Philip Gatch, 27 October, 1813; Philip Gatch Papers, Ohio Wesleyan University Library, Delaware, OH; and Mary Avery Browder to Edward Dromgoole, 2 December, 1777; Edward Dromgoole Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, NC. See also Asbury's statement after parting with Thomas Coke once (*Journal and Letters*, 2:118): "Strangers to the delicacies of Christian friendship know little or nothing of the pain of parting."

[56]Daniel Grant to Chisley Daniel, 27 October, 1791, David Campbell Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke University Library, Durham, NC.

Our hearts by love together knit
Cemented mix'd in one,
One hope, one heart, one mind, one voice,
'Tis heaven on earth begun.
Our hearts did burn while tears spake
And glow'd with sacred fire,
We stop'd and talk'd and fed and bless'd
And fill'd the enlarge Desire.

Chorus:

A Saviour let creation sing,
A Saviour let all Heaven ring.
He's God with us, we feel him ours,
His fullness in our souls he pours.
'Tis almost done, 'tis almost o'er,
We are joining them that gone before,
We then shall meet to part no more,
We then shall meet to part no more.[57]

Prose could express the same sentiments:

> Our love feast was one of the best I ever was in. We sat together in heavenly places; and to express myself in the words which I immediately wrote down, I was as in a little Heaven below, and believe Heaven above will differ more in quantity than in quality. Our eyes overflowed with tears, and our hearts with love to God and each other. The holy fire, the heavenly flame, spread wider and wider, and rose higher and higher. O! happy people whose God is the Lord, may none of you ever weary in well doing. May we after having done the work alotted us, meet in our father's Kingdom to tell the wonders of redeeming love, and part no more.[58]

The Usefulness of Private and Public Worship Designations

Private worship's effectiveness in creating and exhibiting Christian fellowship provides the broader background for early Methodism's evangelism. The regular rhythm between private and public services was a

[57]Untitled, undated hymn in the Henry Bradford, *Hymnbook*, Ms., Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, NC.

[58]Watters, *A Short Account*, 75-6. Watters was describing his last Quarterly Meeting on the Baltimore circuit in 1780.

basic context in which people experienced the grace of God in Methodism's evangelistic efforts. An important aspect of this context was that the experience of fellowship—particularly when it seemed to manifest a greater spiritual reality—made plain and visible one goal of salvation: inclusion in an eschatological people worshiping before the God of grace. Participation in private worship confirmed this vision for Methodists time and time again, re-awakening sensibility to their own graced status and providing the impetus to extend grace to outsiders.

At one Quarterly Meeting, for instance, preacher James Horton slipped into a vision as the bread and water were passed around at a Love Feast.[59] In his vision Horton heard God speak to him: "Behold, dear child, none but the pure in heart can come here." As he looked around in heaven, Horton saw a congregation of millions gathered around God's throne. When the vision ended, he found himself standing on his chair with his hands uplifted. Looking around at the Methodist fellowship in worship, Horton noted that to him "they looked like the shining ones in whose company I seemed to be the moment before in the heavenly world."

Horton could not be silent. First, he began to speak to the Love Feast participants. Then he went to the window and exhorted those outside. Given leave by the Presiding Elder to go outside to "do your duty," Horton continued his exhorting among the bystanders. His experience of fellowship provided the zeal and the content of his exhortation. He ministered against a vivid, visible backdrop of separated Methodist fellowship, of which the spectators were aware. To conclude his account of this episode, Horton noted that he would lean against the church whenever he felt exhausted in exhorting. His phrase has both a literal and figurative meaning: not only did he physically rest against the church building, but his reawakened sense of grace through the Love Feast fellowship provided support for his ministry to those outside the fellowship.

Moreover, the exhibition of this fellowship in private worship sometimes provided the immediate catalyst for individual experience. For some non-members, the plain fact that they were excluded from the fellowship's private worship created a dilemma about their own spiritual state. Sometimes the exclusion brought about a deep sense of conviction for

[59]The full account can be found in Horton, *A Narrative of the Early Life*, 85-6.

sin.[60] For some, this sense of separation from the people of God had a particular eschatological note, a realization of one's danger of being cut off from God's people at the upcoming judgment.[61]

For other non-members, a much coveted admission to private worship often intensified their longing to be part of the Methodists' fellowship and their desire to accept their God. For example, Benjamin Paddock's observation of private worship at a Quarterly Meeting staggered him by its seeming heavenly quality and angelic nature. His resulting attraction to the Methodist fellowship created a twofold resolve: the desire to be part of Methodism and the desire to accept the God the Methodists worshiped. The latter seemed dependent on the former based on the way Paddock expressed his resolve: "This people shall be my people, and their God my God."[62] The fellowship's centrality in Paddock's ongoing spiritual experience cannot be denied. Although most of his newly adopted Methodist brothers and sisters were total strangers to him, nonetheless Paddock insisted that "his soul was so knit to them that they were dearer to him than any earthly relations."[63]

---

[60]Coles, *First Seven Years*, 181; William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D., One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal church, South; Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1858), 81-2.

[61]See in comparison [John N. Maffitt], *Tears of Contrition; or Sketches of the Life of John N. Maffitt: With Religious and Moral Reflections* (New London: Samuel Green, 1821), 28-9.

[62]Zechariah Paddock, *Memoir of Rev. Benjamin G. Paddock, with Brief Notices of Early Ministerial Associates* (New York: Nelson & Phillips; Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, 1875), 48. His phrase is an allusion to Ruth 1:16.

[63]*Ibid.* Although Paddock does not include it in his account, others make specific reference to the role their observation of genuine love among the Methodists played in their attraction to this fellowship. See Billy Hibbard, *Memoirs of the Life and Travels of B. Hibbard, Minister of the Gospel, Containing an Account of his Experience of Religion; and of his Call to and Labours in the Ministry, for Nearly Thirty Years* (New York, 1825), 63, where Hibbard was especially attracted by the love Methodists showed each other and him, too. On a broader level, Methodists were not unaware of the connection between the quality of love to each other and resultant revivals. See, for example, [James Jenkins], *Experience, Labours, and Sufferings of Rev. James Jenkins, of the South Carolina Conference* (Printed for the author, 1842), 95, where love among preachers at an Annual Conference seems causally connected to a revival which attended that Conference.

For others, the vividness of loving fellowship in private worship often triggered the desired experience of grace. Admitted for the first time to private worship, William Keith, a New York State Methodist, was justified while attending a Quarterly Meeting Love Feast. As he saw and heard the Methodist fellowship exhibit itself in unity and love through Love Feast testimonies, he reported a tremendous experience:

> I went in to the Lovefeast, and while they were telling the feelings of their hearts, I sensibly felt a change in my feelings. My load of guilt was removed, and every thing about me seemed to be changed. . . . I saw such a sufficiency in the savior's merits that I thought I was not afraid to die. There seemed such a union subsisting between Christ and my soul, that I thought I should love and praise him if he sent me to hell.[64]

In the midst of the most intense manifestation of Methodist fellowship at a Quarterly Meeting, while acquaintances and others testified to the grace of God, William Keith reported that he had his own transforming experience. According to Keith, his journey in quest of a satisfying experience of God's grace and for Christian fellowship ended simultaneously.

This manner in which early Methodists both guarded and exhibited their fellowship in private worship perhaps offers some suggestions to various parties currently engaged in "worship wars."[65] On one side of the battle are those who consider themselves "liturgical" types, eager to appropriate the scholarship of this century's Liturgical Movement—especially accepting the normal status of a "Word and Table" order—and often eager to renounce seeker and other "contemporary" services. In an opposing camp are ardent promoters of the latter services, eager to use worship—all worship—to reach the unchurched. To both sides, the Methodist rhythm of private and public services offers some correctives.

To "liturgical" types, the Methodist distinction between public and

---

[64]William Keith, *The Experience of William Keith. [Written by Himself.] Together with Some Observations Conclusive of Divine Influence on the Mind of Man* (Utica: Seward, 1806), 12.

[65]For a perceptive and more detailed assessment of the battle being fought, see Thomas H. Schattauer, "The Clamor for the Contemporary: The Present Challenge for Baptismal Identity and Liturgical Tradition in American Culture," *Cross Accents: Journal of the Association of Lutheran Church Missions* 6 (July 1995): 3-11.

private worship serves as a reminder that the phrases “Word and Table” or “Word and Sacrament” describe not only a particular order of worship, but also distinctive modes of worship, namely, worship generally open to all and worship restricted in access. These categories help us see that there can be a variety in services and in their goals. Private worship—essentially sacramental and focused on creating a liturgical fellowship—should not negate the possibility of evangelistic activities involving the unchurched in large settings, that is, in public services. A distinction between private and public worship offsets making creation of a liturgical assembly the goal of every church service. As evangelism, seeker services have a usefulness and a kind of historic precedent within Methodism.

Promoters of seeker services and other forms of worship, driven by a desire to reach the unchurched, should not be too arrogant about citing Methodist precedent, however. The early Methodist category of private worship serves as a reminder that there needs to be opportunity for the church to gather separately as a liturgical fellowship for its own benefit. Private worship allowed Methodists to create and make visible themselves as a worshipping fellowship, using highly symbolic rituals and ultimately focused on offering praise to God. In most churches using seeker services, this goal seems to be not sufficiently addressed. The question “what is beyond the seeker service?” still begs to be answered in many cases.

Early Methodism's polity and practices—including distinction between private and public worship, use of mandatory class meetings, and rigorous membership standards—offer a possible answer here. Not only did private worship not detract from Methodism's evangelistic efforts, but it was a main contributor to its “success.” To conduct all worship as essentially seeker or unchurched driven is to lose the balance—and power—which early Methodism had.

WORSHIP, RELEVANCE, AND THE PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR IN THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT, 1880-1910[1]

by

Rodney L. Reed

Contemporary or traditional, seeker-sensitive or believer-oriented, choruses or hymns, keyboards and praise bands or piano and pipe organ, worship leaders or choir members, slides and transparencies or hymnals, multi-purpose facilities and converted office space or sanctuaries with stained-glass windows, dress down or dress up for church, shouting and fainting or reverent quietness, spontaneity or pre-written liturgy? The church today seems to be in "slough of despond" over what to make of these choices. With the development of new technologies and their introduction into the church's worship and the rise to power within the churches of the "baby-boomers," these seem like such new questions—quintessentially modern (or is it, "postmodern?"). But are they?

It is my contention that these issues are not new and that the heritage of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition speaks to them very well. Long before there was a debate over "seeker services," holiness folk were conducting them. Long before there was a question regarding contemporary choruses, holiness folk were singing and writing them. Long before the "Toronto Blessing," holiness folk were being "slain in the Spirit" and being nicknamed "Shouters" and "Jumpers." My thesis, then, is that the holiness folk

---

[1]When this article was presented to the Wesleyan Theological Society in November, 1996, its title included: "Why Should The Devil Have All The Best Music?"

of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries manifested, in continuity with the greater Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, a preference for ministry among the poor. This identification with the poor found expression in the preservation and development of a worship atmosphere, a hymnody, facilities, and special outreach methods that were relevant to the experience of that segment of society and around which swirled controversies remarkably similar to those we are experiencing today.[2]

Before we begin to blow some dust off the pages of holiness history, let me first stake out my understanding of the nature of true worship. Simply put, Christian worship is that interactive event in which God reveals himself to us and we respond to who God is.[3] From the perspective of a leader of worship, worship can fail at one of two points, if not more. It can fail to hold up an accurate vision of a holy God: the element of transcendence. Or it can fail to express that vision in a way the people can understand: the element of relevance. Good worship does both.[4] In short, good worship both lifts God up and brings God near.

---

[2]This is not to say all those who *today* sing contemporary choruses, who utilize "seeker services" and who worship in emotionally demonstrative ways are poor. Indeed, the church which has served as a lightningrod for the controversy surrounding the use of "seeker services," the Willow Creek Community Church, is a church whose overt target audience for those services is not the poor, but rather young and middle-aged professionals. I argue only that, in the late nineteenth century, holiness folk were aggressively trying to reach an "unchurched Harry and Mary" who happened also to be poor and that, in order to couch their message in a way to which their chosen audience could respond, the holiness people utilized these means and had to respond to many of the same criticisms being heard today.

[3]It is because worship is essentially this interaction between divine self-revelation and human response that I take exception to drawing firm lines of distinction between worship and evangelism. Good worship is naturally evangelistic and good evangelism entails worship. The orienting of any particular worship service toward "seekers" as opposed to "believers" does not mean a forfeiture of the right to call it "worship," unless God is not being worshiped there, in which case the "seekers" will never find what they are seeking. From the perspective of a leader of worship, the prime objective of evangelism and worship are the same: to lead the people to confess Jesus as Lord. With this in mind, the reader should be aware that in this paper I am using a fairly broad interpretation of what might be included in a "worship experience."

[4]Similarly, James F. White, *New Forms of Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971): 38, asserts the necessity of maintaining a clear understanding of both "The God Whom We Worship" and "The People Who Worship." "When we slight either," he writes, "we are not talking about Christian worship any longer."

Worship that fails at the point of transcendence is quickly undermined by poor theology and becomes merely a projection of human tastes and desires. Worship that fails at the point of relevance becomes meaningless ritual, whether "high church" or "low." The "accessories" (things which help give "access") associated with good worship will vary according to the culture and conditions of the worshipers. What constitutes good worship in one context will not necessarily be so in another. Consequently, a good worship leader will know both God and fellow worshipers and will seek to facilitate a worship experience that will be "meaning-full" to them.

The holiness people at the turn of the twentieth century, through their identification with the under-enfranchised of that day, were committed to maintaining and developing a worship experience that was *relevant* to the poor. This commitment and the need for it did not arise out of a vacuum. The larger story being played out in American Protestantism greatly affects the story needing to be told.

The Established Churches

The period 1880-1910 was one of unprecedented change in the history of the United States. Industrialization, urbanization, and the migration of people to and within the United States changed this country from an agrarian-based collection of small towns and villages to the leading producer of manufactured goods in the world. For many, the Industrial Revolution meant wealth—and lots of it. A growing middle class and a collection of immense fortunes by a few captains of industry were two of the results of this era. Unfortunately, another result was an explosion of the number of persons living in poverty, huddled together in the expanding urban centers. Extremes of poverty and wealth paralleled each other in ways not seen before in this country or perhaps in the world.

The churches that were well established by the mid-nineteenth century, the so-called "mainline" Protestant churches, were not unaffected by the changes which were transforming the greater society. William Sweet begins his discussion of this period with the following statement: "The most significant single influence in organized religion in the United States from about the year 1880 to the end of the century and beyond was the tremendous increase in wealth in the nation."[5] The mainline churches rose

[5]William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1930; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 345.

in their own wealth and prestige along with the bulk of their constituencies. Donald Dayton and others have coined the phrase "the *embourgeoisement* of the churches" to describe this phenomenon.[6] Quite naturally these churches tended to follow their upwardly mobile constituencies, moving out of the downtown districts. Aaron Abell notes the flight of the wealthier churches from the industrial quarters of the cities to the great avenues uptown.

> When the Civil War ended nearly a half-hundred important congregations had already deserted lower New York, and soon after Bostonians were leaving historic meeting houses for sumptuous edifices in the Back Bay. The new locations in New York did not result from mass removal of congregations, charged the anonymous author of Startling Facts, but "in every case originated in the change of residence of a few of the wealthier families." The plain churches, another critic pointed out, desired to "follow in the steps of the rich churches as fast as they dare. . . ." There was in the poorer parishes, he said, "the same extra attention paid to the rich . . . and the same thrusting of the poor into the nooks and corners."[7]

One of the key results of this *embourgeoisement* was the estrangement of the churches from "the new masses." The new urban poor no longer felt welcome in the established churches. The churches were well aware of this estrangement and often lamented it. Yet, their attention seemed inexorably fixated on the upper classes. Martin Marty quotes the celebrated article by Oscar Fay Adams which appeared in an 1886 issue of the *North American Review*: "Say what we may, the Protestant Church

[6]For the use of the term, *"embourgeoisement,"* see Donald W. Dayton, "Presidential Address: The Wesleyan Option for the Poor," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 26 (Spring 1991): 12.

[7]Aaron Ignites Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1943), 4-6. See also Adolphus R. Schauffler, "Church Life in New York City: The Present Condition of New York City Below Fourteenth Street, 1888," in *The Church and the City, 1865-1910*, ed., Robert D. Cross, The American Heritage Series, (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1967, 36. Writes Schauffler: "Now, as a matter of fact, the Protestant population—Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist, and Methodist—has very largely moved north. The churches that were down-town have moved up-town; the value of the property has increased, and they have moved out and gone north."

has no place for the poor within its pale. The wealthy churches snub him till he leaves them for unfashionable churches or omits to go to church altogether." And as for the middle class churches, even though they "lay no claim to being fashionable [they] are yet not overgracious to the poor worshiper who ought to be content with the religious cold victuals proffered his kind at the mission church." Even the Baptists and Methodists, once proud to be counted among the poor, "now displayed almost frantic solicitude for the spiritual welfare of the rich."[8]

Indeed, Methodism, rapidly becoming the largest Protestant tradition in the country, was perhaps preeminent among the churches in catering to the wealthy. In 1913 L. W. Munhall wrote a scathing critique of his own church entitled *Breakers! Methodism Adrift*. In it he devoted an entire chapter to the problem of "Rich Men." He wrote:

> With the incoming of wealth and the temptations that accompany it, many of our people became restless under our restrictive rules; and, gradually consenting to the world's allurements, took up with many of its follies, fashions, and fads; and, as a result, lost their spiritual power and distinctive character as Methodists. In societies where this state of affairs existed the congregations began to thin out and altars were soon deserted. Then they persuaded themselves that times had changed; and that the old methods, and Methodism with its asceticism, amens and revivals, were not suited to twentieth century conditions; and we must compete with other churches that never did believe and act as the Methodists. Therefore, fine churches must be built, with stained-glass windows and pipe organs, after the fashion of Rome; and paid choirs, in many instances composed in whole or in part of unChristian singers. All these things cost money; and, as Mr. Wesley put it—"Rich men become a necessity.". . .[9]

The change in socio-economic status of many Methodists was reflected throughout this tradition's life, especially in its worship. As the churches grew more prosperous they also grew more subdued in congregational participation and more ordered in "liturgy," a word scandalous to

---

[8]Martin Marty, *The Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York: The Dial Press, 1970), 169.

[9]L. W. Munhall, *Breakers! Methodism Adrift* (New York: Charles C. Cook, 1913), 180-81.

most holiness advocates. Congregational singing, long the predominant if not the exclusive form of music in worship, lessened in significance while large pipe organs, robed choirs, and operatic singers, divided pulpits and chancels or any chancel!) became expressions of the desire to worship God in a way more congruent with their now elevated social location. Chautauquas and summer resorts replaced campmeetings, while lectures and church fairs replaced revivals and class meetings. Gerald O. McCulloh sums up the changing patterns of worship within Methodism between the years 1876 and 1919 as the move "from freedom to form, from revivalism to ritual."[10]

The trend toward increasing formalism and high liturgy was not universally approved. Even some prominent Methodists lifted their pens in defense of the more exuberant style of worship which was passing from their midst. Bishop C. C. McCabe of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who attained prominence through his early career as a chaplain for the Union Army and for his invaluable service in the promotion of an aggressive church extension program within that church, wrote a lengthy article entitled "Shouting." In it he questioned whether those who are annoyed by shouting "are in a right spiritual condition . . . to make a competent judgment of the propriety of shouting the praise of God."[11]

Even more poignant were the remarks of Randolph S. Foster, Bishop of the M. E. Church, influential holiness writer, and former Professor of Theology and President of Drew Seminary. Foster lamented the growing worldliness of the churches.

> As a satisfaction for all this worldliness, Christians are making a great deal of Lent and Easter and Good Friday and church ornamentations. . . . Formerly Methodists attended class

[10]Gerald O. McCulloh, "The Theology and Practices of Methodism, 1876-1919," in *The History of American Methodism in Three Volumes*, ed. Emory Stevens Bucke (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), 627. See also James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 165-70. See also Charles Edwin Jones, "The Holiness Complaint with Late-Victorian Methodism," *Rethinking Methodist History: A Bicentennial Historical Consultation* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1985), 62. Jones argues that the real issue which ultimately divided the Methodist church from the holiness advocates was less the doctrine of entire sanctification and more the decline within Methodism of the zeal which attracted the masses.

[11]Charles C. McCabe, "Shouting," *Beulah Christian* (January 1898), 2.

> [meetings], and gave testimony of experimental religion. Now the class meeting is attended by very few, and in many churches it is abandoned. Seldom the stewards, trustees, and leaders of the church attend class. Formerly, nearly every Methodist prayed, testified, or exhorted in prayer meeting. Now but few are heard. Formerly, shouts and praises were heard; now such demonstrations of holy enthusiasm and joy are regarded as fanaticism. Worldly socials, fairs, festivals, concerts, and such like have taken the place of the religious gatherings, revival meetings, class and prayer meetings of earlier days.[12]

On another occasion, Foster wrote, "Is not the worldliness [of the churches] seen in the music? Choirs, often sneering skeptics, go through a cold, artistic, or operatic performance, which is as much in harmony with spiritual worship as an opera or theater."[13]

The *embourgeoisement* of the established churches was also reflected in their worship facilities. Martin Marty notes the revival of Gothic architecture which moved beyond Episcopalianism into "denominations which made much less of their medieval heritage." "The Gothic style," he writes, "was splendid, it was expensive, it evoked religious values in the midst of a materialistic world—and it was approved."[14] The Methodists built their first Gothic temple, Christ Methodist Episcopal Church, in Pittsburgh in 1855 despite the declaration of the church's *Discipline*, dating back to the famed Christmas Conference in 1784, which stated:

> Let all our chapels be built plain and decent; . . . but not more expensively than is absolutely unavoidable: Otherwise the Necessity of Money will make Rich Men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent upon them, yea, and governed by

[12]"Stop and Think," *Nazarene Messenger* 2 (March 1898): n.p.

[13]A. M. Hills, *Holiness and Power for the Church and Ministry* (Cincinnati, OH: Revivalist Office, 1897; reprinted in "Higher Christian Life" Series, edited by Donald W. Dayton, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1984), 24.

[14]Martin Marty, *Righteous Empire*, 172. Marty adds that the Gilded Age "was an age of progress and success, of boasting and excess in the Protestant churches, and churchmen did what they could to leave monuments celebrating their achievements. Church buildings are the most obvious evidence."

> them. And then farewell to the Methodist-Discipline, if not Doctrine too.[15]

The building of this church came only three years after the approval of "pew rental" as a means of fund-raising within the Methodist church. In the coming years, Methodist churches increasingly turned to "pew rents" as a means of raising the necessary income for such facilities. Several scholars have written on the effect which this fundraising method had on the churches. Suffice it to say that "pew rental" led to a caste system within the church which favored the wealthy and estranged the poor.[16]

In summary, the so-called *embourgeoisement* of the churches, especially the Methodist Episcopal Church, resulted in a new atmosphere in worship that reflected the changing tastes of their membership. The negative side-effect of this was the estrangement of the poor masses who were fueling the explosive growth of the new urban centers. As Arthur T. Pierson, a prominent proponent of the Keswick holiness movement on both sides of the Atlantic, wrote:

> It is a patent fact that for half a century there has been a constantly widening gulf between the Church and the mass of the people. . . . Church buildings are transferred to fashionable localities, and if any work is carried on in the deserted quarters, it is done in mission chapels, which suggest an invidious distinction, and foster a caste spirit. Churches that were once greatly blessed of God in gathering in the people, are even now consolidating and moving "up town," both decreasing the number of church buildings in proportion to the population, and removing from the quarters, where the greatest need exists. The fashionable church, with its rich surroundings, large-salaried pastor, costly choir, etc., is not intended for the poor, and they know it, and do not feel at ease, and will not come. . . . Can we blame the poverty-stricken multitudes for having the impression that they are outcasts, in the very nature

[15]Leslie R. Marston, *From Age to Age, A Living Witness: A Historical Interpretation of Free Methodism's First Century* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 348-49.

[16]See, for example, Howard A. Snyder, "To Preach the Gospel to the Poor: Missional Self-Understanding in Early Free Methodism (1860-1890)," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31 (Spring 1996), 11-24.

> of things, from these elaborate temples with their elegant garniture and furniture?"[17]

In other words, when it came to the poor, the worship of the mainline churches was falling short at the point of *relevance* (if not also that of *transcendence*). It was no longer communicating a vision of God with which the under-enfranchised of society could identify. The established churches had made a decision to be relevant—but to a segment of society other than the poor.

The Holiness Tradition

Enter the holiness movement. It is a widely accepted notion that the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition has had as one of its hallmarks a preferential option for the poor. This identification with the poor continued to be a calling card of the newly-formed holiness churches at the close of the nineteenth and opening of the twentieth centuries. In many cases filling the vacuum left by the upwardly mobile established churches, holiness people who were a part of or who would become a part of churches such as the Salvation Army, Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist Church, Wesleyan Methodist Church, Pilgrim Holiness Church, Pillar of Fire, and the Church of God (Anderson) reached out to and found their niche in ministry largely to the marginalized of society. They did so in numbers far in excess of what could be conceived as normal for churches their size.[18]

[17]Arthur T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century* (New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1900), 230-31.

[18]For examples of the literature documenting the historic concern for the poor and general social activism of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, see Rodney Layne Reed, "Toward the Integrity of Social Ethics and Personal Ethics in the Holiness Movement, 1880-1910," Ph. D. diss. (Drew University, 1995), 26-199; Snyder, 7-39; Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967); Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering An Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976); and again in his "Presidential Address: The Wesleyan Option for the Poor," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 26 (Spring 1991): 7-22; and numerous other articles by Dayton; Norris Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977); Paul Merritt Bassett, "The Great Reversal of the Great Reversal: The Church of the Nazarene and the Poor, to the Present," an unpublished address at the Ninth Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, n.d.; and within the greater Wesleyan tradition see Theodore W. Jennings, *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

This identification with the poor found expression in the development of a worship atmosphere, a hymnody, church facilities, and special outreach methods that were relevant to the experience of that clientele and successfully brought them into the presence of God. It will be worth our effort to explore the type of worship experience developed by many of the holiness forefathers and foremothers. Bear in mind the striking similarities between the issues with which they wrestled and our contemporary worship scene.

1. A Worship Atmosphere. The presence of enthusiastic and ecstatic religion among the socially marginalized and dislocated has long been noted by historians of religion and social scientists.[19] Viewed positively from a psychological perspective, such emotional expression serves as an "adjustment mechanism," enabling those so "moved by the Spirit" to better cope with the harsh circumstances of life. It becomes a means of catharsis. Thus, in the act of worshiping God, the believer experiences psychological and social adjustment as the natural by-product of placing one's life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and experiencing the "freedom of the Spirit." Viewed negatively, such emotionalism can lead to excess and self-deception. The history of worship in the holiness churches of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is replete with examples of both the positive and the negative. Nevertheless, these expressions of religious fervor indirectly vouchsafe the claim of the movement's identification with the marginalized. The following will serve as examples of the atmosphere of worship found within these holiness churches at that time.

The early years of the mother Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles nearly constituted a perpetual revival. Phineas Bresee, its leading figure, spoke often of "getting the glory down." E. A. Girvin records numerous notable services, with the following one adequate to show their character.

> Sunday, May 29, 1898, and the following Monday were devoted to the celebration of the anniversary of the Pentecost. The services on the Sabbath were peculiarly precious, and the

[19]See Robert Mapes Anderson in his seminal study of Pentecostalism, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1979), 10-15, 34-38, and especially the sources noted by him in his first chapter.

> outpouring of the Spirit in the morning was so blessed that songs of praise and shouts of victory burst out in the midst of the preaching of the Word, in such a way as to make it at times impossible for Dr. Bresee to go on with his sermon. The all-day meeting on Monday, which was really a continuation of the Sabbath services, was a scene never to be forgotten. At times the waves of glory were such that amid the shouting and singing and dancing one could easily recognize what it was that made the outside world think that the disciples were drunk.[20]

The worship of the Salvation Army, which came to America in 1880, was anything but formal or traditional. Army services were characterized by soldiers doing "knee drills" (praying), or being moved to "fire a volley" (to shout "Hallelujah") and to "fix bayonets" (to raise one's right hand in public declaration).[21] William Booth's Christian Mission, the original mission work from which the Salvation Army grew, conducted special services called "Holiness Meetings," accounts of which included persons falling "flat on the ground," remaining

> in a swoon or trance for many hours, rising at last so transformed by joy that they could do nothing but shout and sing in an ecstasy of bliss. . . . The floor would sometimes be crowded with men and women smitten down by a sense of overwhelming spiritual reality, and the workers of the Mission would lift their fallen bodies and carry them to other rooms, so that the meetings might continue without distraction.[22]

[20]E. A. Girvin, *Phineas F. Bresee: A Prince in Israel* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1916; reprinted 1981), 136. See also Timothy L. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness. The Story of the Nazarenes: The Formative Years* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962), 118-21.

[21]Edward H. McKinley, *Marching to Glory: The History of the Salvation Army in the United States of America, 1880-1980* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980), 45-46.

[22]Although at the time, and even more so upon later reflection, these services were acknowledged to contain elements of hysteria and "self-deception," no less than Bramwell Booth remained convinced, "entirely convinced, that something of the same force which manifested itself on the day of Pentecost manifested itself at those meetings in London" (Harold Begbie, *Life of William Booth, Founder of the Salvation Army*, 2 vols., London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1920, 1:410-13). Bramwell Booth himself testified to instances at these meetings of actual physical levitations, "people lifted from their feet and moving forward through the air."

Though these early holiness services appear to have been exceptional in their emotional demonstrativeness, later Army services were always characterized by joyfulness and spontaneous celebration. This was so much the case that one of Booth's biographers could write:

> Objection was made by the Established clergy to the excitement generated in the Army meetings. They did not like to hear the people yelling "Glory" and "Hallelujah." They did not like to see them jumping up and down or falling in a faint. They regarded some of these physical manifestations as an evidence of immorality. They just didn't know church history. They forgot that their own folk were doing the same thing a hundred years before in the Wesleyan Revival.[23]

A rather typical write-up in the *Wesleyan Methodist* of a campus revival at Wheaton College, which was still informally supported by the Wesleyan Methodists at that time, declared: "The sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost was poured upon many persons, and the great audiences, often crowding all the rooms of the church, were moved like swaying masts in the heavenward storm." Here too, in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, there were "excessive manifestations" of emotion sufficient to occasion articles calling on the believers to exercise moderation and some semblance of propriety.[24]

Alma White founded the Pillar of Fire in 1901 and it wasn't long until the press and public latched on to the epithet "Jumpers" to describe the Pillar of Fire people because of the physical demonstrations during their worship. When White and company conducted an extensive revival in England, the London press noted (and in some cases satirized) their

---

[23]William H. Nelson, *Blood & Fire: General William Booth* (New York & London: The Century Co., 1929), 179-80. For William Booth's own description of the services at the Army Shelters, see William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London and New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1890; reprint, Hapeville, GA: Tyler and Company, 1942), 105. See also McKinley, 36.

[24]"Revival at Wheaton, Illinois," 3. See also "Excessive Manifestations," *Wesleyan Methodist* (February 2, 1887): 4. The origins of Free Methodism in the "burned-over district" of western New York state, so-called because of the intense revivals which occurred there earlier in the nineteenth century, only served to insure that Free Methodist worship would not be a hospitable place for formalism. In fact, Free Methodists originally banned instrumental music in an effort to protest the trend toward increasing formalism within the larger Methodist tradition (Marston, op. cit., 329-39).

dancing in worship. The Metropolitan Church Association, which began as a result of a holiness revival in the Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago in 1894, also bore with pride the name "Jumpers." As part of their justification of it, in 1909 they reprinted George W. Henry's 1859 book, *Shouting: Genuine and Spurious, in All the Ages of the Church*, adding to it the new primary title, *History of the Jumpers*.[25]

While the debate continues over whether the exuberant worship among black holiness people, most of whom later joined the Pentecostal Movement, had its roots in the general (predominantly white) holiness revivalism of America or in African religious traditions, all are agreed that black holiness worship was characterized by "freedom in the Spirit" and physical and emotional demonstrativeness. In fact, the prospect of ascribing the emotional intensity of black holiness and pentecostal worship to an African heritage only serves to bolster the claim that the poor and disenfranchised of society found in the Holiness Movement a worship experience that was congenial to them. In other words, the very fact that the most consistently marginalized class of society, the black slave who tenaciously clung to that aspect of his or her past that provided some measure of solace in a dehumanizing world—namely emotionally demonstrative worship, later found a home in such large numbers among those who were promulgating holiness and pentecostal themes, provides a measure of independent confirmation that holiness religion was, indeed, a religion of the poor at that time.[26]

---

[25]Susie C. Stanley, "Alma White, Holiness Preacher with Feminist Message" (Ph.D. diss., Illif School of Theology and University of Denver, 1987), 83-85, 91-102; Susie Cunningham Stanley, *Feminist Pillar of Fire: The Life of Alma White* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1993), 49-58; C. R. Paige and C. K. Ingler, compilers, *Alma White's Evangelism: Press Reports* (Zarephath, NJ: Pillar of Fire, 1939), 64-67, 76-77. See also the Hannah Whitall Smith Collection at Asbury Theological Seminary under file entitled, "Pentecostal Dancers." For the data on the Metropolitan Church Association, see Stanley, "Alma White, Holiness Preacher. . . ," 84; and Charles Edwin Jones, *A Guide to the Study of the Holiness Movement* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press & American Theological Library Assoc., 1974), 235-37.

[26]For the debate on the roots of black holiness-pentecostal worship, compare Joseph R. Washington, Jr. *Black Sects and Cults* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), 75-76, and Leonard Lovett, "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism: Implications of Ethics and Social Transformation," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Emory University, 1978, 21-27. Washington notes the key difference that social location makes in determining the character of religious experience, regardless of whether one has an African or European heritage. See also, Melva Wilson Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 113-16.

These and many other examples demonstrate the emotionally charged atmosphere of worship in the late nineteenth century Holiness Movement and the apparently "user-friendly" nature of that type of worship for the under-enfranchised of society. Contributing to the kind of worship atmosphere that would be inviting to the poor was the holiness concern for plainness of dress. While the admonition regarding apparel often was shot through with "legalism," nevertheless, the strictures regarding dress frequently were justified by appealing to the needs of the unfortunate and condemning the desires of the rich.[27] This was clearly the idea behind the uniforms of the Salvation Army officers. Even so, in their slum work, the principle of identifying with the poor led their "slummers" to take off the uniform and dress in clothes that differed from those of their neighbors, but "only in cleanliness and neatness." Two reporters from the New York *World* investigating the ministry of these slum workers reported:

> These soldiers are not living under the aegis of the Army, however. The blue-bordered flag is furled out of sight, the uniforms and poke bonnets are laid away and they have no drums or tambourines. "The banner over them is love"—of their fellow creatures, among whom they dwell on an equal plane of poverty, wearing no better clothes than the rest, eating coarse and scanty food and sleeping on hard cots or upon the floor. Their lives are consecrated to God's service among the poor of the earth.[28]

In this way, by refusing to "adorn" themselves with costly attire or anything that drew attention to the flesh, these holiness servants of the poor were creating an atmosphere that said to those who could afford no better, "You are not out of place among us."

---

[27]Donald W. Dayton offers a personal experience along this line: "I remember when I realized that some inherited dress patterns were not just absolutizations of cultural patterns or quaint attempts to preserve 'modesty' but that plain dress was required by the central missiological intention of the movement—to welcome the poor. We dressed down to go to church so that the poor would not feel uncomfortable in our midst." See Dayton, "Presidential Address: The Wesleyan Option for the Poor," 15.

[28]Magnuson, 34; Julia Hayes Percy, "In the Vilest Slums," *War Cry* (March 1, 1890): 2.

These and many other examples underscore the point that holiness worship was worship designed for the poor. Initially, few understood that, in order to make worship meaningful for this class of persons, different tactics were needed. Consequently, holiness groups, especially the Salvation Army, were the subject of ridicule and persecution. Eventually, though, their mission to the poor came to be accepted and admired by others. For example, in 1890 a Catholic magazine out of Chicago, the *Citizen*, described the work of the Salvation Army "Slum Corps," waxing eloquent about Mrs. Maude Booth:

> She is as lovely in manner and appearance as she is earnest and plucky in her work of aiding and saving the unfortunate. Everybody who knows her, loves her, and there is not a woman in New York or Brooklyn to-day so popular with all classes as she. She stands as the practical and cultured exponent of the principles of the Salvation Army. When we listen to her powerful words, it is no longer the hurrah and hallelujah circus we once thought it, and we learn to have patience with the cymbals and the drums, and to understand that the inhabitants of the slums can never be reached by the usual priest and minister, or by fine rhetorical phrases and logical statements.[29]

Reverend J. E. Roberts of Kansas City surmised that the Army's ways "are the inevitable reaction from our methods in which passion is quenched by the executions of our hypercritical refinement, and the spirit and power of religion are sacrificed to the vain-glorious pride of decorum." Another commented that the success of the Army is in large measure "due to one great and yet very simple discovery . . . that in carrying the Gospel to souls one degree above the bestial you must use their language, express your feelings as they express theirs."[30] In short, the worship atmosphere and methods fostered by the holiness people came to be recognized by their peers as that which was *relevant* to the experience of the poor.

2. Worship Facilities. Not only was relevance the case with their worship atmosphere, but the very facilities used by holiness people for worship were intended to say, "Welcome!" to the poor. Protest against rented pews was pervasive throughout the Holiness Movement and was

[29]Eleanor Kirk, "Practical Charity," *War Cry* (March 10, 1890), 10.

[30]For quotes, see Abell, 123.

precisely an effort designed to protect the interests of the poor who could not afford to rent a seat in the sanctuary. Prominent in this protest against pew rents were the Free Methodists. Their 1866 *Discipline* stated their position strongly:

> All their churches are required to be as free as the grace they preach. They believe their mission is two-fold—to maintain the Bible standard of Christianity—and to preach the gospel to the poor. Hence they require that all seats in their houses of worship should be free. No pews can be rented or sold among them.[31]

This conviction was maintained through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries until pew renting was no longer in use.

Benjamin T. Roberts, the first Bishop of the Free Methodist Church and the primary shaper of the denomination's early identity, wrote in the *Earnest Christian* that the New Testament ethic is one characterized by self-denial, quoting Luke 9:23. Roberts saw as blatantly contradicting that ethic of self-denial the increasing tendency of the people of that time to spend their wealth on themselves and on churches which sanctified that effort.

> That religion which encourages its votaries to build for themselves on earth, splendid mansions, and adorn them with every luxury and elegance which wealth can purchase, and then, in order to be consistent, builds splendid temples and dedicates them to God; and then sells the right to worship him in these temples to the highest bidder, is, whatever it may be, not the religion of the New Testament.[32]

In October of 1895, the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles held its first worship service in a rented hall with eighty-two charter members. The church had to move from one hall to another, in large measure because of the complaints of neighbors that the services were too noisy. By the spring of 1896, not even a year later, a lot was leased and a plain board tabernacle was constructed which could seat up to 800 persons. "The Glory Barn," as it was affectionately called, was built in harmony

[31]Quoted from Marston, 262. See also M. H. S., "Free Churches," *The Earnest Christian and Golden Rule* 44 (November 1882), 140.

[32]B. T. Roberts, "Running Well," *The Earnest Christian and Golden Rule* 35 (January 1878), 5-6.

with the stated convictions of the early Nazarenes. Soon it was too small to house the growing church and in an 1899 article in *The Nazarene* we find the following:

> We need large and more commodious accommodations for the enlarging multitudes . . . but we do not desire anything finer. We want places so plain that every board will say welcome to the poorest. We can get along without rich people, but not without preaching the gospel to the poor. We do not covet the fine churches of our neighbors; we only long for the richer anointing with the Holy Ghost, that we may be permitted to reach the poor and the outcast for whom some care so little, but for whom our Redeemer lived and died. Let the Church of the Nazarene be true to its mission: not great and elegant buildings; but to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and wipe away the tears of the sorrowing, and gather jewels for His diadem.

Later, in the same issue, Bresee writes:

> What must [Christ who made himself poor for our sakes] think of His people today, spending their time and strength and money which would feed the hungry and clothe the naked and send the gospel to the unsaved, in placing stone upon stone, building massive towers, carving forms of beauty, adding elaborate and expensive adornments, putting thousands of dollars into grand organs, and all tending necessarily to drive the poor from the portals of the so-called house of the Lord?[33]

The identification with the poor by the holiness people at the time also found expression in their extensive city mission work. The Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist Church, Wesleyan Church, Pillar of Fire, Church of God (Anderson), and several other holiness groups, not to mention the Salvation Army, were significantly involved in city mission work at the turn of the century. Many of their churches began as city missions in rented halls, store-front buildings, taverns, dance halls, and theaters.[34]

---

[33]"The First Nazarene Church Building," *The Nazarene* 3 (July 1899), 2, 4. See also Donald P. Brickley, *Man of the Morning: The Life and Work of Phineas F. Bresee* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1960), 157-58.

The "conversion" to noble purposes of places of disrepute, vice, and sin was a source of great pride and joy to these holiness people, thus, making a virtue out of necessity. These facilities, by their very nature and environs were easily accessible, both geographically and emotionally, to the poor. Many of the urban poor, having frequented these places prior to their conversion, felt more comfortable in such places than in the stained glass sanctuaries being built by the established churches.

3. A Hymnody. Like Charles and John Wesley before them, holiness people were innovative in creating a hymnody adapted to meet the needs of the poor and despairing. The Salvation Army seemed to specialize in this, even to the point of setting the secular and vulgar tunes of the day to Christian texts. At first, General Booth was "dubious of these tactics," wrote one historian/biographer. But when he witnessed the "swelling roar" of approval from the congregation gathered in Worcester theater after they had listened to a converted sea-captain sing "Bless His Name, He Sets Me Free" to the tune of "Champagne Charlie is My Name," Booth was convinced. "That's settled it. Why *should* the Devil have all the best tunes?" he responded to his son, Bramwell. In another notable instance, the text "Storm the Forts of Darkness, Bring Them Down" was set to the tune of "Here's to Good Old Whisky."[35]

Other holiness song writers created their own tunes as well as text. Thomas and Flora Nelson were Free Methodists involved in rescue work. They reported to the *Free Methodist* on the General Holiness Assembly in 1901 at which they were received as rescue superintendent and rescue worker respectively. The Nelsons and Fannie Birsall composed and pub-

[34]Several city missions were begun in buildings which were formerly dance halls, theaters, saloons, etc. For example, the Five Points Mission was originally housed in an old Brewery, Jerry McAuley's Water Street Mission in a dance hall, and Martin Wells Knapp's mission in a Cincinnati saloon. The Salvation Army purchased the Eagle Tavern and Grecian Theatre and the Free Methodist's A. M. Chesbrough Seminary (later Roberts Wesleyan College) began in a converted ballroom and tavern. See also Seth C. Rees, *Miracles in the Slums*, 195-96, who describes how God got hold of a drunken outlaw who had been in prison twenty-seven times and "saved him and sanctified him wholly and healed his body." He then opened in a town an "old disreputable theater" where "God saved more souls . . . than in all the churches put together," and where the preachers "met again and again to discuss ways and means to reach the masses with the gospel."

[35]Richard Collier, *The General Next to God: The Story of William Booth and the Salvation Army* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1965), 69-70.

lished a notable collection of rescue songs, *Garden of Spices: A Choice Collection for Revival Meetings, Missionary Meetings, Rescue Work, Church and Sunday Schools*. Several of the song titles spell out the content: "Earth's Vanities," "Blighted Boy," and "Down in the Licensed Saloon" which was a companion song answering the question raised in "Where is My Wandering Boy Tonight?". Other songs in the collection included "Magdalene," "Prodigal Daughter," "Somebody's Boy," "Some Mother's Child," "Free Indeed, " and "The Prodigal Father."[36]

Perhaps the most popular city mission song was that of the blind song writer, Fannie Crosby, whose own wedding of personal piety and compassion for humanity exemplifies those now under our microscope. The song "Rescue the Perishing"—a song which still appears in many holiness hymnals—was, according Crosby, occasioned by her conversation with a despairing man in New York's Bowery Mission.[37] Other songs, such as "Diamonds in the Rough," spoke of the kind of people the holiness converts once were:

> I used to dance the polka, The Scottish and the Waltz,
> I also loved the theatre, Its glitter, vain and false;
> And Jesus, when He found me, He found in very tough,
> But praise the Lord! He saved me,
> I'm a diamond in the rough.
>
> *Chorus*:
> The day will soon be over, When digging will be done,
> And no more gems be gathered, So let all press on;
> When Jesus comes to join us, And say, "It is enough,"
> This diamond will be shining, No longer in the rough.[38]

Furthermore, we find a heavy emphasis on the subject of heaven in holiness hymnody, reflecting the desire for a "better world" than people were experiencing in the present.

---

[36]Flora Nelson, Fannie Birdsall, and T. H. Nelson, comps. and eds., *Garden of Spices: A Choice Collection for Revival Meetings, Missionary Meetings, Rescue Work, Church and Sunday Schools* (Indianapolis, IN: Grace Publishing Co., n.d.), passim.

[37]John G. Hallimond, *Greatheart of the Bowery: Leaves from the Life-Story of John G. Hallimond, Late Superintendent of the Bowery Mission*, with a Biographical Forward by George H. Sandison (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1925), 91-92.

[38]Benson, 49-50.

These songs were written with choruses which could be easily sung and memorized for the sake of situations where there were no song books to be had—a situation prevalent in mission churches. They were part of a larger, new genre of music which was revolutionizing much of Protestant worship, a genre which we might call "Gospel hymns." Fanny Crosby, Ira Sankey, and Philip Bliss were just a few of the names of song writers who were composing "texts of testimony" and setting them to catchy tunes which appealed to the common person on the street.

In contrast to the established church, the hymnody of the holiness people, like their style of worship and their worship facilities, reflected a decision to make the worship of the Holiness Movement relevant to the marginalized of society. The standard hymns of the church by Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, and Martin Luther were sung with great appreciation, to be sure, but to that was added music which was more immediately accessible to those on the lowest wrungs of society's ladder, music that arose out of their *Sitz im Leben* and reflected their experience.

4. Special Outreach Methods. In addition to the creation of an atmosphere of worship, worship facilities, and a hymnody that was relevant to the experience of the poor, the holiness people of the late nineteenth century also pioneered or re-tooled the use of other special methods of reaching the poor, some which the average church-goer looked on with disfavor. One such method was the use of street meetings. If the masses were not going to the churches, then it was believed by many in the Holiness Movement that the churches should go to the masses.

Street meetings or "open air" services were a part of the Salvation Army's arsenal from its earliest days as the Christian Mission. In 1868, Booth wrote:

> [Open-air work] we regarded at the outset, and consider still, our special sphere. It was the throngs in the great thoroughfares, roaming about on the Lord's day, thoroughly indifferent to spiritual and eternal things, that first woke our sympathies. It was these that God laid on our hearts. On coming to closer contact with them, we found that, though the aversion of the working classes to churches and chapels was as strong as could readily be conceived, yet would they eagerly listen to any speaker who, with ordinary ability, in an earnest and loving manner, could set before them the truths of the Bible in the open air. At any season of the year, in nearly all kinds of

> weather, at any hour of the day, and almost any hour of the night, we could obtain congregations.[39]

The Salvation Army band, first marching through the streets playing musical instruments in 1878, was the first and only image of the Army for many people. Known as "Hallelujah Bands," the early Salvationists were often thrown in jail on charges of disturbing the peace. In many instances the charge was accurate because of the impatience and lack of practice on the part of the new converts who took up whatever instrument was available with little regard for musical ability. So often were Army band members incarcerated for their marching that, at the time of the writing of *In Darkest England*, Booth could boast of "being at the head of the only religious body which has always some of its members in jail for conscience' sake."[40]

The Church of the Nazarene soon took a page from the same book. At Bresee's Los Angeles Tabernacle, visitation among the poor and a street meeting preceded every Sunday evening service. In the South, street meetings were regularly used by small groups of mission workers. In 1905, when the Holiness Association of Texas held its annual meeting, several of the services were devoted to city mission and rescue work among "fallen women." One of these meetings proved to be so stirring that the entire gathering of some two hundred left the hall where they were meeting and marched through the slums of Fort Worth, stopping in front of a theater and a saloon to hold a street meeting, using a beer keg as a platform. In the East, the ministers of the Association of Pentecostal Churches regularly helped each other by the use of "home campmeet-

---

[39]William Booth, *The Founder Speaks Again: A Selection of the Writings of William Booth*, Ciyil J. Barnes, ed. (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies LTD., 1960), 56-57.

[40]See Booth, *In Darkest England*, 181-82. One man, affectionately known as "Joe the Turk," took pride in having been arrested fifty-seven times while engaging in street meetings. Once the constitutionality of these meetings was established, he became well known as a sort of civil rights advocate and would often be called to wherever Army workers were being "persecuted" by the local authorities. He would then get himself arrested and in court would cite precedent after precedent, many involving himself, in which the courts decided in the Army's favor. See Collier, *The General Next To God*, 67-69, 170-74. See the picture on p. 81 as well. See also Frederick Booth-Tucker, "The Man in the Streets" in *The Salvation Army in America: Selected Reports, 1899-1903*, Religion in America Series (New York: Arno Press, 1972), n.p.

ings," which amounted to outdoor urban revivals under pitched tents. In Nashville, J. O. McClurkan gave the students of his Bible Training School on-the-job training, "teaching them to preach on the streets, in old stores, in tobacco warehouses and in tents."[41]

A press report from the *Denver Post* (December 12, 1903) indicates that twenty-four members of Alma White's Pillar of Fire were put in jail for their street meetings. Earlier reports to the same effect indicate that this was nothing new. These folk not only believed that their street meetings were constitutionally protected, but were a civic asset rather than a nuisance. As Alma White, the leading light of this holiness group, commented:

> Our work and our methods appeal to the floating population. I have often men tell me that they had been on their way to commit crimes—to rob or steal or go on a debauch in the slums, when they were attracted by our services and gave up their evil ways, and were shown the way to a better life.[42]

Typical of the holiness street meeting was that of the Penial Hall in California. In the words of Charles Edwin Jones:

> From its beginning the mission held evangelistic services every night. Preceding the regular service, workers conducted street-corner meetings, where by hymn singing, testimonials, and tract distribution they drew a crowd. At the end of the street meeting workers encouraged the street congregation to follow them to the mission hall where a second, more conventional evangelistic service was held.[43]

These street meetings and the ones that followed inside the mission doors were the "seeker services" of the poor a century ago, complete with their equivalent of a praise (marching) band and a heavy dose of testimonies.

---

[41]Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 118; J. T. Upchurch, "State Association," *The Purity Journal* (December 1905), 6-7; "Home Campmeetings," *Beulah Christian* (June 1898), 8; Benson, 55. See also Oscar J. Raisor, "The Street Preacher," *Nazarene Messenger* (July 30, 1908), 3; A.C. Dixon, "The Gospel in the Open Air," *Living Water* 15 (February 2, 1905), 1-2; William B. Riley "Street Preaching," Living *Water* 1 (February 22, 1906), 1, 4 (copied from the *Perennial Revival*).

[42]Paige and Ingler, 57-68.

[43]Charles Edwin Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1974), 75-76.

Conclusion: The Relevance of Relevance

What does the Wesleyan/Holiness heritage have to say with regard to the question of using overhead transparencies and slides instead of hymnals, or building sanctuaries with stained glass windows, chandeliers, and pews that are bolted to the floor, versus multi-purpose rooms with stackable chairs and retractable basketball goals? Three concluding observations are in order.

1. First, we can see that many of the controversies that come to mind when one surveys the worship landscape at the close of the twentieth century have significant parallels a century earlier—and that the holiness people of that era were very clear about were they stood on these issues.[44] They made use of new choruses that might have seemed vulgar to many. They worshiped in facilities that surely did not inspire a reverent and holy awe. They held "seeker services" nightly on the streets and in their missions, a practice obnoxious to many Christians of the time. They employed musical instruments in worship that were often the tools of night club performers. They fostered a worship atmosphere that was judged weird by many. Thus, when someone mentions the cutting-edge ideas of a Saddleback Valley Community Church, the novelty of worshiping in an office tower, the toe-tapping tunes being played by the praise bands, or the excesses of emotional expression, we can say as a part of the holiness heritage, "Been there, done that."

[44]Indeed, other parallels exist with other periods in the history of the church. For example, worship in the Holiness tradition grew out of the nineteenth century revival and campmeeting tradition, which itself found its clientele among the relatively poor, uneducated, plain folk of the American frontier. There too, we find ready examples of extreme emotional demonstration (including running, jumping, shouting, shaking, barking, jerking, and slaying); we find make-shift worship facilities, the emergence of a new hymnody for the benefit of the frontier clientele. There too, we find the proponents of "relevance" like Charles G. Finney (*Revivals of Religion*, The Christian Classics, Reprint ed., Virginia Beach, VA: CBN University Press, 1978, 260-290), defending the use of "new measures" and arguing that "Our present forms of public worship, and everything so far as *measures* are concerned, have been arrived at *by degrees*, and by a *succession of New Measures*." The same general features of this perennial dilemma can be found during Wesley's revival in the England of the eighteenth century, in the Quakers of the seventeenth century, and in the radical Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. In fact, it is probable that one could trace this phenomenon all the way back to the New Testament era itself.

These are not new issues. The context and "accessories" are new, but the central issues remain the same. The central issues do not revolve around the terms "contemporary" and "traditional," but around the phrases "human relevance" and "divine transcendence." *How relevant to human experience can we make our worship experiences without sacrificing the transcendence of God?* In other words, *how far can we go in tailoring our worship of God to fit our circumstances before we begin to tailor God to fit our circumstances?* This is a question with which the church has struggled down through the ages.

For better or for worse, the holiness people of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were willing to push the issue of relevance to the limit for the sake of marginalized. They became pioneers in developing expressions of worship and evangelism that would be "user-friendly" to the poor.[45] This is not to say that everything that happened in these young holiness churches deserves our approval. But it is to say that our holiness forefathers and foremothers were committed to couching the gospel message in a way that would speak to their constituencies, much like John and Charles Wesley did before them.[46]

2. The excesses within the history of the Holiness Movement and of some Christians today do not deserve commendation, but patience and

[45]In some instances the holiness people were merely conservators of the patterns of worship carried on by their frontier Methodist forefathers and foremothers. As Timothy Smith points out (*Called Unto Holiness*, 204), it was, first of all, the upwardly mobile established churches which changed their form of worship to match their new social location. Thus, the holiness people maintained many of the elements of their worship and life as part of their desire to remain in touch with those plain folk who, after their migration to the city, were becoming part of the new urban poor.

[46]Please do not mistake this for an apology for everything going on today that passes with the label "contemporary." If that is the impression I have left, then I have failed in making my point. Quite the contrary, what we find within the holiness heritage is *not* an uncritical acceptance of everything modern. After all, the established churches in many ways were being just as innovative and "contemporary" as the holiness people were, but for the sake of a different clientele. And as we have seen, our holiness forefathers and foremothers sternly criticized that expression of "contemporary worship." Thus, I am quite sure they would have some harsh words to say regarding much of the "contemporary worship" of the late twentieth century. Consequently, what we find in the Holiness Movement's preference for ministry among the poor is part of a theological rationale that critiques all worship in any age, whether it goes by the label "contemporary," "traditional," or any other label.

understanding. Before we pass a quick judgement on any worshiping community, whether it be the Willow Creek Community Church or the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church, we should be careful that we are not, in fact, playing the role of those who scorned and scoffed at our holiness forefathers and foremothers a century ago.

3. At a deeper level, we modern Wesleyan/Holiness people should ask and answer the question, "Is the preferential option for the poor, which we tend to find in our heritage, an essential part of our understanding of who God is (and by implication, who we should be), or is it accidental or contextual?" Did "the poor" simply represent the "homogeneous unit" or the "target of the marketing strategy" (to use the language of the modern church growth movement) of the holiness people a century ago, which may or may not be our "homogeneous unit" or "marketing target" today, or do the poor represent an essential part of every truly Christian mission, with important implications for where and how congregations conduct their worship?

We must think seriously about this question. I do not propose to give a definitive answer here. Many well-educated holiness people today are far removed intellectually and socially from the kind of people their holiness forefathers and foremothers were and were reaching out to. In fact, they (we) much more closely resemble the *embourgeoised* Methodists at whom our forefathers and foremothers aimed so many of their barbs and invectives. If left to natural social tendencies, the worship of the holiness tradition will become shaped in ways that will make it more difficult for the poor and marginalized of our society to feel "at home" within it. Such worship will be relevant to "us," but not to "them."

If the Kenosis passage in Paul's letter to the Philippians has any meaning for us who now are leaders within the modern Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, part of its meaning should be that we be willing, as occasion requires, to give up the "worship" that is rightfully ours, "not considering it something to be grasped," and "taking the very nature of a servant" (that is, one of lower estate), "humble" ourselves, and seek to preserve an expression of worship that is meaningful to those less fortunate than we. To do so would not result in a "dumbing down" of worship, *unless the incarnation is a "dumbing down" of God.* Nor would it result in a capitulation to a consumer society. Instead, it would be a recapitulation of the mission of Christ within the context of corporate worship. The "dumbing down" of our worship and its capitulation to the ways of the world *are ever* present threats; but if we truly believe that we have a special mission to the poor, we must be willing to take the risk of *relevance*.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WORSHIP IN THE PENTECOSTAL AND HOLINESS MOVEMENTS

by

Cheryl J. Sanders[1]

Worship in the African-American Holiness and Pentecostal churches involves song, speech, dance, and other ways of knowing God and verifying spiritual revelation. This tradition thrives on the integration of aesthetics (cultural authenticity), ethics (implementation of Christian norms), and epistemology (ways of knowing) in its characteristic verbal and bodily articulations of praise. Worship practices and experiences are continually interrogated with reference to specific aesthetic expectations and ethical standards. When a soloist or instrumentalist has pushed the congregation to the brink of ecstasy with an inspired performance, when the preacher has brought the sermon to a dramatic climax, when the gatekeepers of pulpit and pew usher the people through the experience of the shout, it is understood as the "witness of the Spirit," the much sought-after manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The underlying ethical and theological context of Holiness-Pentecostal worship is the corporate testimony of being "saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost."

Saved, Sanctified, and Spirit-Baptized

As used in this discussion of worship, "saint" is a term suggestive of both liturgical and ethical identity. The key testimony or confessional for-

[1]Portions of this present article are dependent on select material by Dr. Sanders that appeared originally in her book *Saints In Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), especially chapter three. Used by permission of Oxford University Press.

mula that characterizes the saints is "saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost." Each denomination among the Holiness and Pentecostal churches has specific doctrines and disciplines governing the interpretation of the meaning of salvation, sanctification, and Spirit baptism, but some generalizations will be ventured here in an attempt to characterize the liturgical and ethical self-understanding of the tradition as a whole.

To be *saved* means that one has repented and asked forgiveness of sins, and has confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This imparts a basic "entry level" of liturgical identity that distinguishes the saint from the unbeliever. To be *sanctified* is to receive some second form of blessing that conveys on the believer a distinctive ethical identity of being set apart for God, literally to be made holy. Some of the non-Wesleyan groups would not see sanctification as a separate process, but as an experience inherent in salvation. To be *filled* or *baptized with the Holy Spirit* is a declaration of liturgical identity which signifies that the saint has experienced total initiation into the worshipping community by a personal confession or manifestation of Spirit possession. The evidence of this is the major area of doctrinal difference that accounts in part for the vast multiplicity of denominations and church bodies within the Holiness and Pentecostal movements. Generally speaking, the Wesleyan-Holiness churches emphasize the infilling of the Spirit as manifested in a holy life, while the Pentecostal churches seek the pouring out of the Spirit in the ecstatic utterances of tongues.

James Tinney, for many years a professor of journalism at Howard University, testifies that he "got the Holy Ghost" during his adolescence in 1956, and offers a vivid portrayal of the experience of tarrying for Spirit baptism in the black Pentecostal context:

> So the seeker prays loud and long as hard and as fast as he can to get this power. He sweats and cries and screams and physically throws himself, demanding that God do what he wants. He commands the power of God as his own. It is a violent scene—one which is carefully hidden from the casual visitor. The seeker will work himself into a state of possession if it takes hours upon hours of struggling. Hair will become matted, clothes will become dirtied, the flesh will become sick and feint until "the power comes." . . . The result will be a total rejection of American mainstream values, coming back full circle to the African heritage of possession. And it will be sym-

> bolized by a break with rational thought and language and an utterance in unknown tongues, among other manifestations.[2]

Because Tinney's account is part of a political science dissertation, his understanding of Spirit baptism is couched in the language of power. The social ethical focus of his interpretation entails a ritual return to Africa, and a concomitant rejection of American mainstream values, presumably both religious and secular. It is important to acknowledge that this ritual is conducted in secret, or at least removed from the view of the casual observer, as Tinney suggests.

While water baptism is ordinarily required only once in the life of the believer, the baptism of the Spirit may be understood as a ritual of initiation that can be repeated, replenished, or re-enacted as often as the saint becomes possessed by the Holy Spirit in worship. The fact that the possessing Spirit is Holy mandates that the saints manifest holy living both inside and outside the sanctuary. Thus there is a vital connection between the ethical and liturgical identity of the saints, as expressed in the exhortation of the Psalmist: "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright" (Psalm 33:1).

African-American Holiness and Pentecostal Worship Practices

There are numerous articles, books, and dissertations that describe in detail the worship practices of the Holiness and Pentecostal churches. James Shopshire (1975), Arthur Paris (1982), and Joseph Murphy (1994) have written descriptive narratives of black Pentecostal worship based on participant observation.[3] Moreover, I have analyzed my own observations concerning worship based on data gathered from 1990-1994 during visits to 75 churches and 28 college campuses in 21 states (and the District of Columbia), representing 25 mainline Protestant, Catholic, Pentecostal,

[2]James S. Tinney, *A Theoretical and Historical Comparison of Black Political and Religious Movements* (Ph.D. dissertation, Howard University, 1978), 240-241.

[3]See James Maynard Shopshire, "A Socio-Historical Characterization of the Black Pentecostal Movement in America," Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1975, 170-183; Arthur E. Paris, *Black Pentecostalism: Southern Religion in an Urban World* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 54-70; and Joseph M. Murphy, *Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 158-169; and my book *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), esp. chapter 3.

and Holiness denominations. Based on this information, I have developed a composite portrait of worship in the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition, with attention to eight basic elements, as follows: (1) call to worship; (2) songs and hymns; (3) prayer; (4) offerings; (5) Scripture reading; (6) preaching; (7) altar call; and (8) benediction.

The ***call to worship*** includes acts which initiate the worship experience. It may be a simple and informal verbal signal to "stop chatting and settle down," or a formal combination of choral introit and litany recited by minister and congregation. The call to worship may be a brief reading from the Bible, the church's hymnal, or from some printed worship aid that encourages people to become focused on worship. In some cases it is preceded by a devotional service, including songs, prayers, and testimonies. Also, it may be immediately followed with a processional of the clergy and choir. In the church Paris describes, the devotional service comprises half of all that happens in the entire worship experience, if not also half of the total worship time. In the church Murphy depicts, there are no formal devotions as such. In all cases some verbal signal is given to invite the congregation to worship.

The ***singing*** of some combination of songs, hymns, choruses, and Negro spirituals is a vital part of all these worship services. It is difficult to denote the role music plays in worship with any degree of precision because music tends to undergird everything else that is done. Unlike some of the other elements of worship, music is interspersed throughout the service, and not at just one or two points in the order of worship. In the composite outline, however, the singing of songs and hymns represents a major component of congregational involvement in the worship experience. The sacred repertoire is inclusive of hymns of the mainline evangelical Protestant church, gospel songs, praise choruses, and Negro spirituals. Shopshire seems given to understatement when he judges that worship in the Pentecostal church he observes is much the same as "any of the Protestant denominational worship gatherings, with the probable exception that the singing was better than average."[4] The African-American Holiness and Pentecostal churches certainly are known for their enthusiastic singing and response, as worship finds expression across a broad range of sacred musical forms. The sung repertoire of the tradition includes classical anthems, arias, and oratorios, hymns, gospel songs, spirituals, shouts, chants, and lined-out common-meter sacred folk songs.

[4]Shopshire, 172.

The Hammond organ is the instrument of choice for the improvisational style of worship music in many of these churches. Murphy gives special attention to the importance of the organ in the worship, noting at many points in his narrative the manner in which the organ shapes the mood and expresses the energy of the songs, speech, and dance. The organ takes the lead in providing the rhythmic and tonal texture of the worship experience, and it is the principal instrument used to accompany the chanted sermon. Both Murphy and Shopshire describe the call and response between preacher and organist, which is actually a three-way conversation involving preacher, congregation, and musician. In the hands of a skilled and accomplished musician, the organ sings, speaks, and dances.

Prayer is an individual or collective appeal to God, which includes praise, thanksgiving, confessions, and various petitions. As is the case with music, it is difficult to fix one point in the outline of worship where prayer occurs, because it typically is done repeatedly throughout the service. Prayers are sometimes chanted in the Pentecostal churches in a manner not unlike the chanted sermon. They are seldom read or recited from a printed source, with the exception of the Lord's Prayer, which the worshippers may recite or chant from memory. The use of the Lord's Prayer represents a vital ecumenical connection with the prayer rituals of the universal church.

Offerings are taken by having the worshippers march to the front of the sanctuary to deposit their monetary gifts for the church in baskets, plates, or on a table. Also, the ushers may pass the offering receptacles up and down the rows of seated congregants in a precise, orderly fashion. Most of the African-American Holiness and Pentecostal churches emphasize tithing, and sometimes special prominence is given to the tithers by having them come forward individually to place their tithes in a special receptacle. The offerings can consume a considerable amount of time if the minister makes an appeal for a specific cause or if people are asked to bring their offerings according to the specific dollar amount, as is the case in the churches described by Murphy, Paris, and Shopshire. Usually some form of prayer and/or doxology is offered in connection with the offering, either before or after the monies are actually received.

Scripture reading is another indispensable element in African-American Holiness and Pentecostal worship. One or more texts may be read near the beginning of the service, or shortly before the sermon is preached. The Scriptures can be individually read from the pulpit, or read responsively by minister and congregation. The Bible is accorded the highest respect and regard in these churches, and in some cases there are special ritual procedures for transporting and handling the particular Bible from which the sermon is preached.

Preaching is a climactic event in this worship tradition because it is believed that the preacher actually speaks for God. Often the sermons are performed in the sense that the basic message and content are amplified through chants, moans, dancing, and other ecstatic behaviors. Each of the worship narratives analyzed here describes the interaction between preacher and congregation in multiple dimensions. Preaching is more than the simple verbal communication of the gospel of Jesus Christ based on some Scriptural text; it involves emotion, physical movement, various modulations of the preacher's voice, and is designed to bring the worshipping community into some form of climactic expression—shouting, tears, praise, repentance, and/or tongue-speaking. In some of the churches, specific provision is made for the preacher (typically male) to have an attendant (typically female) whose responsibility is to assist him with his liturgical cape, to administer juice or water as needed, to wipe the sweat from his brow, etc., adding to the dramatic impact of the preaching performance. Sociologist Harold Dean Trulear has described the ritual aspects of preaching as follows: "The use of robes, capes, etc., to enhance the preacher's appearance and the attendant nurse with her ever-present orange juice and fresh handkerchiefs are all part of the props or staging of the ritual drama where 'God speaks to His children.' "[5] Regardless of the size of the sanctuary, these churches all have electronic sound systems, some very sophisticated and advanced, and the preachers use hand-held and/or lapel microphones to enhance the modulation of the preaching voice. The sermon is always intended to elicit congregational response.

Altar call is a formal ritual of response to the preached word, which usually functions as an invitation to discipleship. Many African-American Holiness and Pentecostal churches adhere to the practice of issuing dual altar calls—the first an appeal for sinners to repent and receive salvation and the second an invitation for believers to receive sanctification or the

[5]Harold Dean Trulear, "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow: Black Worship and the Afro-American Story," *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, (Fall 1985):100.

baptism of the Holy Spirit. Altar calls may also include the ritual laying of hands upon the sick or distressed, and anointing with oil, with the purpose of achieving healing or deliverance. Prayer is always a key element of this ritual, which may occur at some other point in the service, even prior to the sermon. In some churches the major objective of the altar call is to invite the worshippers to have hands laid on them so they can be "slain in the Spirit." The dissociative experience of temporary loss of consciousness represents a form of ritual empowerment. The altar call may serve a variety of purposes in worship. It is used to invite sinners to repentance, new converts to church membership, hurting persons to wholeness, and saved persons to sanctification and other forms of spiritual empowerment and blessing. For some worshippers, the altar ritual is as pertinent and significant to them personally as the sermon itself, if not more so. There are preachers who invest as much time and energy in directing the altar call as in preaching the sermon.

Benediction is a prayer or formula of blessing signaling that the worship experience has ended. It may include a final exhortation or commission of the worshippers to implement some particular truth or principle that has been preached. The minister who offers the benediction may raise one or both hands, and in some cases the worshippers also raise their hands while receiving the benediction.

There are some additional aspects of African-American Holiness and Pentecostal worship that distinguish these churches from the white North American Protestant mainstream. The list would include: (1) the holy dance; (2) the "Yes" chant; and (3) the use of white uniformed liturgical attendants. Many or most of these marks and symbols can be found in traditional black denominational churches, and definitely in "neo-Pentecostal" Baptist and Methodist congregations. These aspects of worship are rooted in African cultural identity, and may be reflective of specific worship patterns and cultural practices associated with slave religion in the rural South. As each of these practices is defined and illustrated here, an assessment will be offered of the specific ethical and aesthetic meaning ascribed to them within the community of the saints.

The ***holy dance*** is best exemplified as the ritual of the shout, the climactic expression of individual and collective Spirit possession that is especially characteristic of the black Pentecostal congregations. In her article "Dancing to Rebalance the Universe: African-American Secular Dance and Spirituality," Katrina Hazzard-Gordon comments that dance serves as a "kinetic vocabulary" through which the needs, perceptions, impressions, and responses of African-American people are articulated.[6] Her description of the juxtaposition of the "chaotic, the uncontrolled, and the unconscious" movements associated with the onset of full possession with the "ordered, contained, conscious, and controlled" conduit step is reflective of the static/ecstatic dialectic in Holiness-Pentecostal worship.[7]

In this perspective, the concept of liturgical dance can be expanded to include choreographed choir processions and a whole host of bodily gestures by choir and congregation, such as swaying, patting of feet, clapping of hands, raising one or both hands, and spontaneous standing on one's feet. In the Holiness churches, there are saints who do not do the "shout step" associated with the Pentecostals but rather leap straight up and down when they "get happy."

In his worship narrative, Shopshire gives some indication of the aesthetic and ethical norms the saints associate with the holy dance. His account is illustrative of the tension that sometimes exists between the static and ecstatic in fulfillment of the expectations of the worship leader:

> Not being satisfied with the response, [the bishop] said in a scolding tone, "I can't understand how anyone can remain quiet and seated in such a spirit-filled gathering as this. Get up, and dance!" Speaking especially to the constituent members of the gathering, he took time to remind them that to dance is indicative of a meaningful experience in worship, and they "need not try to be cute" by not talking back and dancing. . . . As he talked he was moving back and forth across the length of the pulpit platform with a very agile gait, ever so often initiating a brief dance step and then stopping. By the time the point had been made about dancing being integral to meaningful worship experience he had reached a vocal peak, and performed a dancing frenzy for about 15 seconds.[8]

Clearly this bishop has mastered the technique of inciting the holy dance through measured demonstration. He seems to have a definite sense of the aesthetic requirements of the ritual dance. Moreover, he seeks to convince

---

[6]Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, "Dancing to Rebalance the Universe: African American Secular Dance and Spirituality," *Black Sacred Music* 7:1, (Spring 1993), 17.

[7]Hazzard-Gordon, 19.

[8]Shopshire, 180-181.

others of the ethical propriety, even necessity of ecstatic expression in worship.

Another of the salient marks of African-American worship in the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition is the ***chant of affirmation***, originated by Bishop C. H. Mason in the early days of the Church of God in Christ, and later written into an anthem by Dr. Arenia C. Mallory. Pearl Williams-Jones observes that the chant of "Yes, Lord" typically follows and brings closure to the shout:

> Shouts may conclude informally through the intuitive consent and feeling of tensions released by the collective body, or may give way to a chant in slow tempo such as, "Yes, Lord" which is an unmetered chant originated in the early days of the Church of God in Christ. . . . Bishop Charles Harrison Mason was heard to enchant, "Yes, Lord, Yes, Lord, Yes to your word. Yes to your will. Yes to your way." The congregation chants in heterophany.[9]

The chant of affirmation has already been cited above in the excerpt from Shopshire's narrative where the bishop exhorts the worshippers to say "yes" and dance. Murphy also describes the chant of affirmation in his narrative of worship in the Church of God in Christ:

> Mother Hall chants the Church of God in Christ national anthem, "Yes, Lord." In a sure, husky voice she asks the congregation to affirm the wonders of creation, the saving deeds of Jesus, and the power of the Spirit. With each pause the congregation affirms "Yes, Lord." As the enthusiasm grows, more and more people shout "Yes" and "Yes, Lord" as they feel moved. One woman comes out into the aisle to spin about with back bent, feet pumping in place, and hands raised high, fingers spread. "Oh Yes, Lord!"[10]

The chant of affirmation is sung with attendant gestures of submission such as lifting up holy hands, shouting, cries of "Hallelujah," "Glory," "Thank you, Jesus," or simply "Yes." Ethically speaking, there is a dialectic inherent in these signs of surrender—to say yes to God is to become empowered to say no to the world, and especially to the powers

[9]Pearl Williams Jones, "The Musical Quality of Religious Folk Ritual," *Spirit*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1977), 29.

[10]Murphy, 160.

of evil and deception that would hinder the believer from having peace with God. Thus, the worshippers are exhorted repeatedly to drop their inhibitions and release themselves to follow the lead of the Spirit in worship. This release requires the full assent of the individuals. In this light, the inhibiting factor is ultimately sin or self-centeredness or even class consciousness. To say or sing "Yes" to God is to affirm God's acceptance of the sacrifices of praise, and to signal divine approval of the saints' worship in all its culturally aesthetic concreteness and particularity.

A visually striking feature of African American worship is the performance of specialized liturgical roles by women, e.g., deaconesses, ushers, attendants, and nurses. These *uniformed attendants* almost invariably wear white, a color which signifies purity and consecration. Most ushers and nurses are women, and most preachers are men, but there is sufficient flexibility in fulfilling these roles to allow men to serve as ushers or nurses, and women as preachers, even in the churches that do not ordain women. Even so, the women more consistently wear white when performing the liturgical roles of deaconess, usher, nurse, and preacher. White is almost always worn by deaconesses, especially on those Sundays when they are responsible for preparing the Communion Table, and is typically worn by women preachers. Candidates for baptism by immersion usually wear white.

Women's Day, an annual observance first instituted in the churches of the National Baptist Convention by Nannie Helen Burroughs in 1907 "to raise women, not money," is observed today in almost all black churches.[11] It is the one Sunday in the year when all the women worshippers are expected to wear white. In no way is the wearing of white an indication of a preference for white culture or assent to the biased color symbolism of a racist society. In ethical perspective, it seems to be more indicative of a desire to surrender all marks of personal style and distinctiveness in order to become totally identified with the worshipping community and its God—white is the one color that makes it possible to achieve complete aesthetic uniformity.

Static and Ecstatic Forms of Spirit Possession

Spirit possession is an important feature of virtually all the diasporic religions of New World Africans. For example, devotees of Cuban *sante-*

[11]"Who Started Women's Day?" in Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, eds., *Women and Religion in America*, Vol. 3, 1900-1968 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 121.

ria, Haitian *vodou*, and Brazilian *candomble* enact elaborate rituals of possession and acknowledge a corresponding pantheon of possessing spirits and deities of African derivation. What separates the African-American Holiness and Pentecostal tradition from the others, however, is the belief that the possessing spirit bears the exclusive identity of Holy Spirit.

The perennial objective of Holy Spirit possession is achieved in some combination of ecstatic and static forms. Ecstatic worship forms have as their salient feature a trance resulting from religious fervor. Ecstasy literally means "out of place." In static worship forms, on the other hand, worshippers are at rest or in equilibrium. Static literally means "causing to stand." However, as is the case when the term is used to describe a form of electricity, it should not be assumed that static worship is necessarily dead or lifeless. Static electricity is electrical force produced and accumulated as potential energy; current electricity moves and flows in the form of kinetic energy. Static energy is stored, kinetic energy moves. The two are interdependent, because kinetic energy is the discharge of static energy through some conductor or channel. Yet, as anyone who has observed a thunderstorm can attest, static energy can be discharged at random, without conductor or channels, with a force that is not only impressive in magnitude, but frightening and potentially lethal in impact. On the other hand, the flow of kinetic energy can be entirely predictable and controlled. The two distinct forms of electrical energy suggest an analogy which can bring enhanced insights to the study of Holiness and Pentecostal worship, a dialectic of static/ecstatic worship structures and forms of spirit possession.[12] Along the continuum of Holiness-Pentecostal groups, the Holiness churches tend to favor the static forms and ideals of Spirit possession, while the Pentecostals insist upon ecstatic expression in worship.

To define ecstatic worship as worship "out of place" necessitates formulating some understanding of its dialectical opposite, worship "in place." Static worship is the state of equilibrium out of which the ecstasy flows; it is the requisite platform for the trance ritual to occur. In no way should this scheme be understood as indicative of the relative inferiority or superiority of static and ecstatic forms of worship. However, the fact

[12]See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1923, 1978), 12-13.

remains that practically every Christian worship tradition tends to favor one over the other, sometimes to the exclusion of the other. Yet, the two are neither equal nor mutually exclusive in this sense; ecstatic experience absolutely depends on static structures, but static structures may or may not produce ecstatic experience. In fact, static forms and structures can be intentionally used to deny or suppress spirit possession. The ecstatic state may be forthrightly suppressed, scorned, or forbidden. So there can be static worship without spirit possession in any state or form. But it is not possible to have worship of any kind without some static structure to initiate and organize the ritual interaction of the worshippers. In other words, to say that static structures sustain ecstatic forms of worship is merely to agree that one cannot dance without a floor, sing without a scale, or speak without a language.

Static structures are those elements in worship that represent a state of equilibrium or rest. They include: hymn singing, Scripture reading, corporate prayers (esp. the Lord's Prayer), offerings, sermon, altar call, announcements, benediction. These are designated here as static structures because they embody the potential energy of the worshipping congregation to explode into ecstatic expression—shouting or holy dance, tongue-speaking, spontaneous utterances, lifting holy hands. Most of these structures can serve as a platform for ecstatic movement. For example, people may shout during hymn singing and sermons, speak in tongues during or after prayer, and engage in call and response as the Scriptures are read. The call to worship and the benediction are also static structures that frame the worship ritual by marking the boundaries of sacred time. Generally speaking, the offerings and announcements do not support ecstatic activity or evoke ecstatic response.

Thus, worship has fixed and fluid forms, rehearsed and unrehearsed, scripted and improvised, prepared and spontaneous. To make matters more complex, it is clear that some forms and events in worship reflect both fixed and fluid elements at the same time. For example, the quintessential ecstatic expression in Pentecostal worship is the shout, or holy dance, which usually occurs as a spontaneous eruption into coordinated, choreographed movement. There are characteristic steps, motions, rhythms, and syncopations associated with shouting. It is not a wild and random expression of kinetic energy. Rather, there is a culturally and aesthetically determined static structure which sustains the expression of ecstasy in a definite, recognizable form, whose existence may not be apparent to the casual or uninformed observer. Similarly, speaking in tongues may appear to be a strictly spontaneous and unrehearsed verbal expression, but in reality the practice is evoked by "tarrying" or other repetitive patterns of activity designed to encourage tongue-speaking. Glossolalia is not the only ecstatic speech used in worship. The vocabulary of utterances spoken spontaneously in worship is not random or undefined. There is a definite lexicon for intelligible ecstatic utterances in the sanctuary, which may manifest cultural and regional variants, but is nevertheless known to the group. Usually, these are terms found in the Bible with reference to the praise and attributes of God: "Hallelujah," "Amen," "Glory," "Holy," and "Praise the Lord." In the ecstatic state, the worshipper may repeat one or more of these expressions many times, in a loud or subdued voice.

Alternative Styles of Worship

Among black Protestant churches in general, there are two basic orientations toward worship that set the tone for worship in particular congregations: quietistic and lively. The quietistic congregations give priority to static structures, while the lively congregations value ecstatic expressions in worship. Quietistic worship traditions may exclude or control ecstatic worship forms in several ways, for instance by insisting that everything in worship be scripted, read, and timed; by restricting rhythm and repetition, especially in singing; or by direct intervention or verbal rebuke by authorized figures such as ushers or preachers. Lively worship traditions may devalue static worship forms by making statements such as "We are not here for form or fashion, we are here to praise the Lord" or by vigorously exhorting persons to speak aloud, stand, raise hands, shout, etc., and subjecting them to verbal ridicule if they refuse, as in "You think you're too cute and too sophisticated to shout." The quietistic worship leader imposes silence and stillness upon the congregation; the leader of lively worship invokes noise and motion.

Interestingly, the task of setting the tone for worship, whether quietistic or lively, is not always totally determined by the minister, singer or preacher who is standing in the pulpit—leadership may be exercised indirectly, but to great effect, by the one who organizes, reproduces, and distributes the order of worship, or by some individual or group in the congregation to whom the worship leader looks for cues and approval. Or the congregation as a whole may be predisposed to one or the other style of worship, and collectively by their silence or their utterances indicate approval or disapproval of what is taking place. For example, if one individual is given to loud utterances in a quietistic congregation, the response may be staring, frowns, or hushing actions. On the other hand, in a lively congregation the individual who prefers to remain still and silent may feel uncomfortable and self-conscious, and may even attract unwelcome public criticism or ridicule. In his study of black worship, Trulear defends the integrity of quietistic worship in black middle-class churches as a legitimate ritual verification of a particular concept of humanity:

> If being human means to be dignified and intellectual, under control and logical, all patterns of behavior that this society has said Blacks are incapable of, then these congregations will model these ideas of human virtue in the context of worship. This is still a function of Black humanity. Those who would deny this as in some sense legitimate would have to eliminate people such as Du Bois and Daniel Payne from the Black religious world.[13]

In this perspective, it is helpful to bear in mind that competing ideals of black humanity may be at stake in debates between lively and quietistic worshippers concerning appropriate forms and expressions of black worship.

Gatekeepers

Static and ecstatic worship have their distinctive sets of gatekeepers. Ushers, nurses, deaconesses, i.e., uniformed attendants with some designated title and role, are the gatekeepers of the static aspects of worship. Singers, preachers, and to some extent dancers are the gatekeepers of ecstatic worship, the people who "usher" the congregation into and out of the ecstatic state. Ushers attend to the physical movement of worshippers in and out of the sanctuary, and demarcate the temporal and spatial boundaries that encompass the sacred space. In other words, as ushers greet and seat each worshipper they are defining and managing the ritual space; their tenure of duty spans the entire worship time, from prelude to benediction. The preachers and singers direct the emotional and spiritual dynamics of the worship experience, and ushers participate in this process by attending to the special needs and security of persons experiencing the transition from static to ecstatic worship.

[13]Trulear, 96-97.

With respect to gender roles, in general the African-American Holiness and Pentecostal churches tend toward a peculiar egalitarianism in assigning gatekeeping roles based on gender. The gatekeepers of static structures can be men, just as the gatekeepers of ecstatic expression, the preachers and worship leaders, can be women. Both men and women serve as lead singers and dancers, according to gifts and ability. For obvious reasons, the persons chosen as ushers, nurses, and attendants tend not to be easily and readily inclined to ecstatic spirit possession. Similarly, the other gatekeepers, including preachers, singers, and instrumentalists, are normally expected to know and honor the rules governing the static forms and structures of worship, and to maintain spiritual equilibrium whenever the congregation is swept into the ecstatic state. The biblical principle invoked as an explanation for the need for gatekeepers to maintain equilibrium is taken from 1 Corinthians 14:32, Paul's letter addressed to an early charismatic Christian congregation: "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

In the World, But Not of It

Given that the ultimate objective of worship in the African-American Holiness and Pentecostal church tradition is some form of Spirit possession, the aesthetic and ethical norms that govern movement toward this objective are derived from the Bible and black culture. The distinctive songs, speech, and dances of these churches symbolically "usher" the saints "out" of this world and into a more authentic one discerned within sacred time and space. There is a connection between the saints' rejection of the world and the world's rejection of the saints. The saints reject the world on the basis of biblically-derived ascetic commitments, i.e., the mandate to holiness; they are themselves "rejected" by the dominant host culture because of their race, sex, and class. When the saints sing "Holy" unto the Lord, lift up holy hands, do the holy dance, in effect they are expressing their allegiance to a world where God has determined who is accepted and who will receive power. Moreover, their worship shows that they believe God is accepting of the praise, performances, and aesthetic standards that are characteristic of Africans in diaspora. The Holy Spirit has freed at least some of them from the pressure to conform to the worship styles of the dominant culture.

The saints are "in" a world that is sinful, oppressive, and discriminatory; they demonstrate that they are not "of" this world by purging themselves of its secularizing influences through rituals that meet their own criteria for cultural authenticity and biblical interpretation. In worship, the saints replicate the “other” world, the place where the oppressed outsider can be at home. Ethically, their allegiance to this “other” world requires them to be loving, honest, and pure, even in relation to their enemies. Just as the sanctuary or temple is the place of ritual possession, their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Ritual purity in the sanctuary requires purity of body, mind, and spirit outside the sanctuary. By their worship the saints manifest the holy character of the God they serve; by clean living they demonstrate to the world that they possess the Spirit that possesses them in worship.

THE WESLEYAN/HOLINESS MOVEMENT IN SEARCH OF LITURGICAL IDENTITY

by

Steven T. Hoskins

To say that the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement has come to an identity crisis is perhaps an understatement.[1] Much of its identity has been defined outside the movement and its churches, and this often in the face of both theological protest and/or silence from within. After 150 years, the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement finally has come face to face with its past. As with most historical identities, the movement's history is often unflattering and somewhat difficult to unravel. However, if present identity is truly desired, then the past must be sifted through, gazed into, and allowed to have life again.[2] Here is a part of the story of a people, lost yet longing, and the faithful gesture of the liturgy, calling them into the ancient way of holiness.

I. Who Are You?

A. The Identity Crisis Examined. While there has been a recognized vacuum of identity in the Holiness Movement for some years, the

[1]See Keith Drury's presidential address to the Christian Holiness Association, "The Holiness Movement Is Dead." Available: http://www.goshen.net/tuesday.

[2]By identity I mean the "knowledge" and "experience" which allow one (a community, an individual) to operate as a "self" within one's world. I also mean theological/liturgical identity, that participatory knowledge and experience of Christian worship, the surrender to and acceptance of the God who informs life in the Christian community and brings obligations for life in the wider human community as well.

extent of the dilemma caused by this fact is finally being felt in virtually every corner of the movement. The prompting for this raising of consciousness, resulting in an accompanying discomfort for the groups within the movement, has come both from within and from without. It has come from within because a lack of precision has been a consistent historical and theological reality for the movement and such imprecision has become increasingly unsatisfactory to those within the movement.[3] It has come from within and without because of the desire to enlist the movement as an ally in recent theological and ecclesiastical debates in larger evangelical circles by certain forces, all in a particularly political and volatile religious climate.[4]

[3]For proof of this one need look no further than the current debate over the orientation for systematic theology being waged in the largest of the Holiness bodies, the Church of the Nazarene. Two major systematic theologies have been printed in recent years, both by the denominational press and each with a distinct theological orientation. Ray Dunning's *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* (1986) reflects a more "Wesleyan" approach while J. Kenneth Grider's *A Wesleyan-Holiness Systematic Theology* (1994) reflects a more "American Holiness Movement" approach. While the distinction(s) between the two approaches cannot be elucidated or appreciated fully in a short paper, I will attempt below to make clearer the historical implications and the questions the two approaches raise within the rubric of a single movement.

[4]Two particular books illustrate this fact, one from within the movement, the other from without. Within the movement Howard Snyder's *The Divided Flame* (1986) calls the Holiness Movement to align itself with the modern Charismatic movement based upon the fact that it spawned the Pentecostal movement at the turn at the century, but ignoring the fact that most, if not all of the groups within the Holiness Movement proper quickly cut their ties to these independent groups. In this work the author identifies John Wesley as a charismatic of the modern sort, while generally ignoring the issue of speaking in tongues, which Wesley never claimed to have experienced or promoted. For a better analysis of this problematic approach, see the Randy Maddox critique of Snyder in *Responsible Grace*, 134-136. From outside the movement there are numerous examples of religious organizations which have attempted to enlist various holiness groups within their causes: Focus on the Family, The National Association of Evangelicals, and currently The Christian Coalition. Perhaps the best example of this attempt to enlist the groups of the Holiness movement in a modern politico-religious debate is noted by Paul Bassett in his essay "The Theological Identity of the North American Holiness Movement," (72). The invitation came from Harold Lindsell in his *The Bible in the Balance* (1979, 110). Lindsell challenged the movement to come into the modern debate over inerrancy of Scripture and side with the inerrantists in order to prove their orthodoxy within the broader branch of evangelical Christianity in America.

Paul Bassett argues that with few notable exceptions, the Holiness Movement in general, while hoping to appear evangelically conservative and not suspicious or liberal, has resisted efforts at precise theological definition, restated its varied history in response to questions of identity or inner logic, and has often bungled attempts to define its own positions on certain issues ("The Theological Identity of the North American Holiness Movement," 72-75). This is true for several reasons. The main one is that the American Holiness Movement has almost completely concerned itself, both in doctrine and practice, with an emphasis on experimental religion. It has been fairly unconcerned (at least until recently) with working out careful patterns of theological definition for fear that such work might give the appearance of confusion within the movement concerning it primary and unifying aim, the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification. Further, since Holiness religion in America is a religion of the people, the Holiness Movement and its exponents have assumed that its evidence, definition, and therefore identity must come mainly from the way holiness has been lived and the way it has catalogued its lived religious experiences. Often such an approach almost precludes theological reflection and refinement. Well-developed theological statements and understandings have been viewed as suspicious at best and more often as unnecessary tools of confusion and (sometimes) evil. The churches within the Wesleyan Holiness Movement do not stand alone at this point. Mary Kelley and Sydney Mead postulate that such suspicion and lack of theological definition are qualities shared by any church on the American landscape that has used revivalistic techniques to propagate the faith.[5]

There are beginning to appear certain signs that the Holiness Movement is finally beginning the difficult process of self-examination in order to find out what ills the patient. One of the most promising of these signs

[5]Mary Kelley and Sidney E. Mead, "Protestantism in the Shadow of the Enlightenment" in *Soundings* 58(1975), offer the thesis that a lack of theological precision has been a constant characteristic of any denomination that makes much use of a technique of revivalism to propagate the faith. The result has been a consequent paradox pervasive in virtually every denomination where a heavy dose of revivalism was used: striking institutional/movement growth concurrent with theological stultification (349-375). Now that the identity crisis is being so strongly felt, the Holiness Movement's need for theological precision and its accompanying security of (theological) identity has finally hit home.

is the appearance of historical-theological attention being paid to the movement, its history, ideals, and cultural expressions.[6]

B. The Crisic Nature of Holiness History. While it may only be partially clear as to why there is a crisis and why it is occurring now, what is clear is that there are several causes of the current identity crisis. The Wesleyan/Holiness Movement in America has at least two, if not more, competing identities. Such an understanding becomes clear when the question of history and the historical identity of the movement is raised.[7]

While the Holiness Movement's beginning can be pinpointed with the organization of the National Campmeeting Association for the Promotion of Christian Holiness in 1867, its historical and theological roots go

[6]Donald Dayton argues that the scholarship of the Holiness Movement came into its own with the publication of Timothy Smith's *Revivalism and Social Reform* (1957) and *Called Unto Holiness* (1962), Charles E. Jones' *Perfectionist Persuasion* (1973), and Melvin E. Dieter's *The Holiness Movement of the Nineteenth Century* (1973) and the great number of tracts, essays, and other works that they spawned ("Whither Evangelicalism?" in *Sanctification and Liberation*, ed. Theodore Runyon, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981, 150). I argue against any such notion. While these works certainly mark the beginning of major publications concerning the Holiness Movement within religious studies circles and were necessary precursors to the coming wave of historical-theological scholarship, I contend that, because of their methodology and design and the limits of a purer attempt at a narrative historical approach, they only deepen the impression that the Holiness Movement is a theological and historical hodgepodge and that it lacks an identity and inner logic of its own. I argue that such questions crucial to the scholarship an identity of the movement have only recently begun to be taken up, notably by two scholars: Dayton himself (e.g., his "Pneumatological Issues in the Holiness Movement" in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31(1986): 361-387 and elsewhere) and especially in the work of Paul Merritt Bassett (e.g., his "The Theological Identity of the North American Holiness Movement: Its Understanding of the Nature and Role of the Bible" in *The Varieties of American Evangelicalism*, eds. Donald W. Dayton and Robert E. Johnson, Knoxville, Tn.: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991, 72-108). The approach of these two scholars reflects the use of an historical-theological approach to scholarship rather than a more constrictive narrative-historical approach.

[7]While I would not deny the current existence of several competing identities within the Holiness Movement (charismatic, fundamentalist, et. al.) with competing theological underpinnings, I will here concern myself with the question of competing and divisive historically formative influences which I believe have created the congenial atmosphere for such varied current identities to have a voice.

back much further. The Holiness Movement was the result of a mingling of American Methodism with the "new measures" revivalism of the Second Great Awakening (Dayton, "Whither Evangelicalism?" 150). This emergence began with a rising tide of perfectionist persuasion in American religion that began in the 1830s and lasted well past the turn of the century.

Virtually all denominations and groups within the NCAPCH and its current manifestation, The Christian Holiness Association, trace their theological roots back to John Wesley and the Methodist Revival of the 18th century. Wesley's formative influence on the movement has been so great that Timothy Smith (1957, 146) asserted that "every book quoted on the foregoing pages refers to Wesley; most of them quote him at great length," i.e., every major work written within the Holiness Movement shows the great formative influence that he had on the movement. Further, the historical statements placed at the heading of most of the bodies within the Holiness Movement show that they trace their ideological and spiritual roots to the 18th century Wesleyan revival (Oden, 1988, 127-131) and tend to show that these groups believe themselves to be the true heirs of Wesley. The impetus for their concern to carry on the experience of entire sanctification and to preach Scriptural holiness throughout the land identifies them in a direct way with John Wesley and the Evangelical Revival.

The other of the formative influences on the Holiness Movement was the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening in America led by Charles Finney. This influence was mediated to the movement through the evangelistic work of Phoebe Palmer beginning in New York during the 1850s and centering around the doctrine of entire sanctification and her new "shorter way" of receiving the second blessing (Palmer, 1987, 156-58). While the "new measures" methods used by Palmer were sometimes met with criticism, as the work of Finney often was in other Christian circles, Palmer's influence spread as many within the leadership of Methodism and other denominations experienced entire sanctification as the result of her ministry. Her importance to the movement should not be

[8]There has been a recent resurgence of interest in Palmer's writings and work, generating not only the reprinting of some her books, but also several excellent biographies and monographs on her life and witness. Cf. Harold Raser (1987) and Charles White (1986).

discounted.[8]

C. The Dilemma of Identities: Competing Origins of the Wesleyan Holiness Movement. It is at this point that the *nascence* of the identity crisis of the Holiness Movement comes into focus. While Wesley and Palmer agreed on their concern for entire sanctification and Christian perfection, it becomes increasingly clear under the close scrutiny of historical-theological examination that they agreed on little else in matters of theological and ecclesiological concern. In his excellent little book on how entire sanctification was propagated in American Methodism, John Peters points out that Palmer's disagreements with Wesley range across many topics, from epistemology[9] to the nature of Scripture[10] and most importantly to the experience of entire sanctification. Palmer believed holiness to be a state of attainment, something Wesley had clearly denied in his *Minutes of the Methodist Conference* (1771) where he maintained that holiness was a relation of loving God, i.e., dynamic rather than static (Peters 112). Wesley's view of the experiences of justification and sanctification was gradual, allowing for instantaneous crisic experiences and subject to the proof of experience and resulting fruits in the life of the believer (Maddox 151-154). Palmer advocated a "shorter way" insisting that the experience of either was always immediate and needed only the

[9]Perhaps the very root of this fundamental disagreement between the two can be traced to the "new measures" Palmer used in leading people into the experience of the doctrine. She was heavily influenced by the voluntarism of Finney, his mechanistic methods of attaining the experience of perfect love, and the idea of human volition and the written Word of God as the only proofs needed for conversion and sanctification experiences. Wesley was convinced, on the other hand, that knowledge of conversion was dependant on God and the witness of the Spirit and came about as God saw fit to work. Such knowledge was not the result of "the work of man" as Finney saw it and Palmer propagated it. Wesley argued that any experience was up to God to give and that Christians were to obediently seek such experiences. See his "On the Imperfection of Knowledge" where he states his classic opinion on the subject (*Works* , VI:348).

[10]Paul Bassett points out the fundamental disagreement between the two in regard to their view of Scriptural authority. Wesley was guided by the principle that the Bible is a book whose authority rests in its ability to inspire Christians to love God (1991, 92-95). Palmer, on the other hand, was an innerantist in her view of Scriptural authority, depending on the written word of God as proving an experience of God, i.e., the idea that the if Bible claims that God will do something, then if anyone claims such, God has to do it (Peters, 1991, 112-113).

testimony or claim of the one who had experienced it in order to be valid because of the witness of the "written word" of God (Palmer, 1987, 161).[11]

I contend that it is precisely within this divergence of understanding and approach that we can pinpoint the cause of the current crisis of (theological) identities in the American Holiness Movement. The Holiness Movement, since before its official beginnings, has been a movement with two identities: one of a Wesleyan origin and one of a Palmerian genesis.[12]

[11]Palmer's particular approach to the experience of entire sanctification, the *raison d'etre* of the movement, was divergent from that of Wesley. She propagated the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification in her parlor meetings by mixing Wesley's concern for holiness with Finney's "new measures" techniques of revivalism. Taking many of her cues from the work of Adam Clarke and John Fletcher, she emphasized the experience of entire sanctification as to its "universal and immediate availability to all who would cast themselves on the altar of consecration" (Dayton, 1981, 150). She simplified and modified Wesley's idea of the doctrine of entire sanctification and also the propagation thereof. Charles White (1987, 68) identifies six ways in which she did this: First, she followed John Fletcher in his identification of entire sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Second, she developed Adam Clarke's suggestion and linked holiness with power. Third, like Clarke, she stressed the instantaneous elements of sanctification to the exclusion of the gradual. Fourth, again following Clarke, she taught that entire sanctification is not really the goal of the Christian life, but rather its beginning. Fifth, through her "altar theology" she reduced the attainment of sanctification to a simple three-stage process of entire consecration, faith, and testimony. Sixth, she held that one needed no evidence other than the biblical text to be assured of entire sanctification. It is my contention that in this modification created the breach that has led to the current crisis of identity in the Holiness Movement. What Palmer did to the doctrine of entire sanctification Wesley would not have recognized nor agreed with. Randy Maddox points out that Wesley had taken exception with almost every area of her modification (Maddox, 136, 177).

[12]There is a striking similarity between the difference of Wesley and Palmer and the thesis offered by William McLoughlin concerning the difference in approach to revivals between the First and Second Great Awakenings. Wesley is similar to the great representative of revivalism in the First Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards, for whom revivals were "a surprising work of God." Palmer's use of the model of Second Great Awakening revivalism popularized by Charles Finney is clear enough (McLoughlin, 1978, 113-117). Wesley, though possessing no love for Edwards' Calvinistic theology, was in agreement with him concerning the importance of experience in the life of the believer and abridged and published Edwards' *Religious Affections* in at least five editions during his lifetime. For the best recent treatment of the affinities between the two, see Richard E. Brantley, "The Common Ground of Wesley and Edwards," in *Harvard Theological Review* 83(1990): 271-303.

D. Analysis of a Two-headed Movement. What becomes clear as a result of this data is that, at least in terms of origins, there was clearly no one formative influence on the movement as a whole. Indeed, the history of the movement shows that the two identities which formed it have co-existed within the movement since its inception. The result has often been considerable tension between who would provide the theological impetus for a particular holiness group or for the movement itself, Wesley or Palmer (Bassett, 1991, 74).

While it is plain that many within the Holiness movement have recently called for an alignment on one side or the other,[13] considerable attention must be given to the current situation of the movement as a whole in considering what path to pursue in regard to its crisis of (theological) identity. Why the identity crisis now? Why the current move toward theological and historical precision, when it has heretofore been deemed unnecessary? How has the Holiness Movement been able to remain unified for so long a period of time? Perhaps the answers to these questions can be found in the current dirth of revival and evangelistic success throughout the movement, particularly but not exclusively in America. In the wake of its current lack of numerical and social gain, the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement has lost its way and turned its attention to the task of recovering its past in order to find a way out of its current identity dilemma.

An analysis of the past leads directly back to the two models of (theological) identity which formed the movement and to the questions that they raise. Is the Holiness Movement directly descended from Wesley and the Evangelical Revival in England or is it primarily an American phenomenon? Does/should the movement owe allegiance to one distinct part of its past over the other? Why use the past as a guide at all? If one examines the history of the Holiness Movement within the broader thesis of Kelley and Mead, noted above, it becomes clear that the crisis of identity is the result of differing formative influences coupled with 150 years of practice at the art of theological and historical imprecision.

After weighing all of the data, one may be inclined to side with one historical ideal over the other. One the one hand is the Wesleyan ideal, cer-

[13]Cf. Melvin Dieter, "The Development of Nineteenth Century Holiness Theology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20(1985), makes it clear that he believes that the Holiness Movement must either press on toward the open end of the Palmer/Pentecostal identity or be absorbed into the broader identity of the classic Reformation churches (73-74).

tainly more appealing to those within the movement who admire or require precision where it has been lacking.[14] Wesley more readily provides an inner logic of identity than Palmer, one that Paul Bassett has argued is that of love of God upon which the whole doctrine of entire sanctification rises and falls ("The Theological Identity. . . ," 95). Wesley was no paragon of consistency, however, making a choice to base an identity on Wesley problematic as well.[15] On the other hand, the practicality and success of Palmer and her followers holds its own validity for many within the movement who believe that such precision is to be found in the experience and not in theologizing. Choosing one path over the other is fraught with difficulties. In the wake of this confusion, many choose to ignore altogether the search for present identity based on any past model. Still, the question remains. What can be done about the crisis of identity within the Holiness Movement? Is there any way to recover (theological) identity and perhaps the influence of both Wesley and Palmer and others as well? Perhaps the answer to this question also comes to us from the past.

II. A Way Out?

A. The Holiness Movement in Search of Liturgical Identity. If all of the above is true, what is there to suggest that any attempt at identity

[14]Wesley's need for a kind of theological precision is well-known. His voluminous writings, letters, and diaries all cataloguing both experience and the theology behind them attest to the fact. He did not accept the thesis that a revival should stultify theology. Further, his was an English and not an American context. Palmer, however, did not believe that theological precision was necessary, committing her work and writing directly to the leading of the person into the experience. Theology was merely a byproduct of experience and not a necessary one at that. Perhaps this apparent unconcern for theological precision was as much a result of her context as of her theology. This would make sense considering the thesis of Kelley and Mead.

[15]Current Wesleyan scholarship points to a similar disagreement in Wesley himself. In his *Responsible Grace*, Randy Maddox points out that there were actually three Wesleys, each one coinciding with a particular period in his life, the two former periods (1725-1765) virtually agreeing with one another in terms of theological positions and the last period (1765-1791) showing fundamental disagreement with the other two (18-22). In the first two periods Wesley makes it clear that in no way was he an inerrantist in his view of Scriptural authority, while during the last period he said he believed the Bible to contain no errors (269). In light of such inconsistencies, it may actually be that the origins of the current crisis of identity are present in Wesley himself.

formation would be better than another? Why attempt to solve the dilemma at all? Why not attempt yet another systematic or biblical theology and a newly formulated evangelistic strategy? What is there to suggest a (re)turn to liturgy and worship?

Perhaps, there should be a turn to liturgy because the place the identity crisis is most evident is in the current revolution(s) in worship going on within the Holiness Movement.[16] As in many other churches today, much of what passes for worship in Holiness churches takes its cues and rules straight from consumer-oriented marketing strategies. While the merits of such approaches can be left for other discussions, what is clear is that many within the current manifestations of Holiness churches are ignoring the formative effects that such approaches have on the formation and practice of the faith.

Perhaps another part of the answer to "why liturgy?" is the hope of preserving Christian history—i. e., the broader story shared by all Christians and the particular Holiness history within that story. Perhaps there is yet the chance to save that yearning that I believe is woven into the very fabric of the Holiness Movement—the yearning to be a faithful part of the ancient procession of those who have trod the path of Christian faith that has followed the way of holiness. But such a yearning is being threatened by current "contemporary" worship strategies. They encourage an acute condition of amnesia, literally a loss of identity within the Holiness Movement. Is there a way out?

I suggest that we begin to search for the identity of the Holiness Movement in the most peculiar of places, in the one place that we have most often overlooked, that of the liturgy and worship of the Christian church. By liturgy[17] I mean not only the "work of the people" but the very

[16]Paul Bassett noted this in an unpublished essay, "Contemporary Worship and the Holiness Tradition" presented at the Nazarene Worship and Music Conference, Kansas City, Mo., June 1991. He also noted that when speaking of a revolution in worship in Holiness circles one must speak of revolution(s), for there are two going on at once, one Anglican/liturgical and one contemporary.

[17]I choose to emphasize "liturgy" rather than "worship" because worship has become a word too often coupled with the seemingly ever-attending term "praise." These words worship and praise have taken an all too contemporary "feel," it seems to me, that makes them a general blanket for feeling after God and so lack the kind of precision and definition that liturgy implies, particularly in relation to the historical liturgies of the church and the descriptive, regular patterns of ritualistic (recognized or not) behavior which constitute the expression of the Christian life of particular faith communities.

performance of the faith where the people of God realize, remember, and re-enact who they are. When liturgy functions as it should in the church, it provides a rule-governed way of understanding by which to establish identity and judge activity.[18] This is the meaning of the liturgical "rule" known as *lex orandi, lex credendi*[19] or the rule of prayer is the rule of faith. In the Holiness Movement we have ignored or been unaware of this dynamic, performative value of the liturgy. We have gone too long by the liturgical rule of *lex orandi, lex oblivisci* or the rule of prayer, the rule ignored. I dare to suggest, following the lead of Geoffrey Wainwright, that it is precisely in a (re)turn to the liturgy(s) of the church, liturgy as the "work of the people" and the living, vital expressions of our historically grounded faith, that we as the Holiness Movement should (re)form our identity and judge our activity—liturgically, doctrinally, and otherwise.

I now suggest a liturgical cure to the identity crisis based on: (1) liturgy as *anamnesis* or a cure for amnesia; (2) the very nature of liturgy and its ability to create identity; (3) one of the more neglected parts of John Wesley's theology, his approach to church renewal; and (4) a neglected fact about the Anglican liturgical context out of which the Wesleyan revival arose, that of an eclectic or *via-media* approach to liturgical formulation. It is hoped that, in providing such an approach, liturgy, even Holiness liturgy, will help to lead out of the crisis of identities and preserve our past.

B. Liturgy As *Anamnesis*, A Cure For Amnesia. When one surveys the current landscape of what passes as liturgy and worship in many evangelical denominations, it is quite easy to become cynical and lose hope. There is a mixture of worship styles, rubrics, marketing techniques, musical ditties or sweet-songs, etc., all of which seem to betray an attitude that says, for worship to be meaningful it must take its cues and rules

[18]Here I mean exactly what Wittgenstein suggests in his practice/performance of a "language game." While space is too limited to explore the ramifications of this idea fully, it is clear that liturgy can "perform" a "game" and do so in a variety of ways as long as its structure (and I would add spirit or *geist*) is a rule-governed performance that is an agreement of practice and thus true to its "game." Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968, Remarks 200-240, especially 201, 202, 216, 240.

[19]I am aware that this colloquial use of the phrase is actually a paraphrase of Propser's dictum *lex orandi legem statuat credendi.*

from an entertainment-oriented culture and from modern "mass-marketing" techniques.[20] Such an approach pays little, if any, careful attention to historically or theologically well-defined expressions of the faith and devalues liturgy itself as important, preferring rather a rootless freedom or something that is "contemporary" or "in-touch" with "where the people live."

Those who create such worship experiences have forgotten who they are, if they ever had any sense of historical identity in the first place. Liturgically, and almost in every other sense of the doctrine and practice of the Christian faith, such leaders are struck with amnesia, literally the loss of identity. They do not seem to find any need for a well (in)formed identity, much less an historically and theologically correct expression of the faith. Even those congregations who hope to create "seeker sensitive services" repeat the past mistakes of other churches in America where revivalism and revival/evangelistic measures are used to propagate the faith.[21]

Perhaps the basic reason why liturgy suggests itself as a cure to the present identity crisis is that it offers a cure for amnesia, such as the kind currently afflicting the Holiness Movement and its churches. *Anamnesis* is the active and participatory remembering of the formational events of the faith.[22] In the liturgy of the church worshippers are taken to the foot of the cross, the courts of heaven. In the liturgy there is a dramatized remembering of the death and the resurrection of Jesus and the quality of our

[20]It is interesting to note that just such an identity crisis as the Holiness Movement is facing is occurring in, of all places, the Roman Catholic Church in America. Thomas Day's *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (New York: Harper/Collins, 1990) is a wonderfully crafted lament to the loss of identity in a church which can be traced directly to its (ab)use of the liturgy.

[21]See the argument of Kelley and Mead above.

[22]The concept of *anamnesis* is generally applied directly to the performative aspect of the eucharistic meal within the liturgical structure, noting its ability to help the people actively remember and experience all that the "Do This" command implies. However, *anamnesis* carries with it a broader sense of what I believe is indicative of the liturgy as a whole. As Don Saliers notes in his *Worship as Theology*, the *anamnesis* of sharing bread and cup is "a present experience of all that God has given in creation and redemption" (95). While I do not intend to take away its eucharistic nature and function. I here use *anamnesis* in this broader sense, with the eucharist obviously the finest expression.

(re)new(ed) life and the life yet to come. Participants are (re)new(ed) and (re)formed according to the faith, the ancient way of salvation, the (primitive) understanding of God's creating a holy people. *Anamnesis*, the active and participatory remembering of the people of God, provides ability to cast a vision through which identity is formed, reformed, and affirmed in relation to the history of the church.[23] Such a remembering is dependent on a liturgy which is theologically and historically well-defined and defining, with rubrics and rules and acts which have proved to be appropriate expressions of the faith.

C. Worship and Identity Formation. What we see at work in the liturgy's ability to help cure our amnesia through *anamnesis* is a broader principle of liturgical function, one at the very heart of the liturgy itself. Geoffrey Wainwright argues that it is the very nature of liturgy to create identity by casting a vision of reality, a way of seeing and understanding (1980, 1-3). Such a liturgical vision of the church brings the whole of the Christian life to a ritual focus. Sometimes the ritual is complete and set and sometimes it is an informal pattern of behavior. It is always, however, the setting before the people of their identity: that of the people of God with the fullness of a history, a future, and a pattern of living which comes to ritual focus in the liturgy but is then allowed to enter in a value-patterned way into every area of the worship, doctrine, and life (1980, 8).

Such an identity is formed by the ritualistic retelling of the people's story. This story is available in a book, the holy Scriptures and also in a time-conscious and time-oriented approach to the living of the faith over the cycle of life, the calendar, in summary confessions through which to hermeneutically judge the faithful witness of any act or rubric and its fitting place within the broader identity, the historic confessions and creeds of the faith, and in other rubrics, songs, and expressions of the faith as are necessary and vital to the identity of the people as the people of God.[24] Within the liturgy is provided opportunity for theology(even systematic

[23]I do not mean in any way to discount the power of the epiclesis and/or the epiclectic power of liturgical expression. I am simply convinced that one of the more important parts of the role of epiclesis is to ask for the power to do *anamnesis* and so see it as an in-formed part of the greater anamnetic quality of the liturgy as a whole.

[24]This is just the plan of inquiry that Wainwright uses to form the structure of his *Doxology*, 5-8.

theology) to live and give life. Within the liturgy is opportunity for even spontaneous expressions of the faith—and, in the context of the Holiness Movement, one should anticipate such on a consistent basis. Liturgy does not preclude such expressions, but calls them to submit to their proper place in the formation and sustaining of identity within any Christian community.

What the liturgy provides is a way to form and adjudicate such experiences based on an expression which has as its aim both the broader Christian story of salvation and a particular history and set of expressions within that broader stream. The liturgy provides something we have needed all along, a way, a good way to see if our experience/expressions of the faith match true Christian identity. The liturgy brings the two together in way that is both salvific and true.

D. Where Next? A Journey Into the Past. This question must be asked: If liturgy is so good, then is liturgy good for the Holiness Movement, and if so, why? While such goodness is probably discovered only after the liturgy is employed as a way of church life, we are still left with the question, Why liturgy? One of the reasons I suggest for liturgy's significance is that it enables a faithfulness to our past and in so doing finds a way for its preservation. I am arguing for a specifically Wesleyan view of our past, one that does not deny that there have been and continue to be other formative influences on the movement, but one that judges the goodness and usefulness of other influences in the light of a "Wesleyan" allegiance and identity within the Holiness Movement. While such a move is not free from either historical or theological difficulty, I suggest that it is true to the heritage of the Holiness Movement.[25]

What a Wesleyan approach has to offer the Holiness Movement is a richness that is often left unexplored and unheeded. It is a treasury of the faith that John Wesley left that is also a necessary part of the cure for the current identity crisis. While it is clear that many within the Holiness Movement take their cues for liturgy and worship from movements and ideals outside the church, Wesley believed that the best way to (re)create identity within the church was to seek renewal from within the church itself. In his excellent book, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace*, Henry Knight notes that it is within

[25]See Timothy Smith's argument above on Wesley as the formative influence of the Holiness Movement.

this pathway of renewal from within the treasury of the worship of the church that identity is established, formed, and maintained. The gracious and grace-full means of the liturgy—the Lord's Supper, searching the Scripture, re-enacting and re-living the tradition of the church, praying and hymn-singing—"functioned to portray the identity of God and the resulting identity of the Christian" (159).

Knight makes two important notes which help clarify how the liturgy can be a cure for the identity crisis of the Holiness Movement. First, he notes that it is the function of the liturgy to create identity, to renew the church and establish within the people a sense of who they were. The liturgical actions and expressions are the re-enactment of the broader story of the faith. "By way of participation in narrative and imagery, the character and activity of God who is present is experientially remembered. . . . In the same manner God's eschatological promise is experienced, both as promise of the coming kingdom and its present realization in the gift of new life. The story of God's love in Christ is at the same time the heart of the identity of God and descriptive of the Christian life of love" (159). In the participation of the life of the liturgy the identity of God is firmly established, allowing God to act as identity-giver.

Second, Knight notes that, where Wesley considered and used the tradition of the church as a means of grace within the liturgy and life of his Methodist followers, it is clear that he "did not value all parts of tradition equally." He selectively chose some theological expressions of the faith over others, particularly in his use of the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*, so as to befit his view of the Christian life (163).[26] While some may view this activity of Wesley as censorship, I choose to use this as a model and an inspiration for attempts at liturgical expression(s) which are indicative of the (theological) identity of the Holiness Movement. Even in form, Wesley provides a lead which can be helpful to finding a way out of the identity crisis and establishing the life of the liturgy within the Holiness Movement and its churches.

[26]As Knight points out this makes great sense of Wesley's famous penchant for abridgement. Where he did not want to "throw out the baby with the bathwater," he simply abridged the work, writing to fit his theological viewpoint. Knight explains how Wesley did so with his liturgical use of the psalms. I would point also to his abridgement of Daniel Brevint's work which he attached as a preface to *Hymns for the Lord's Supper* as further evidence of how one does theology within the liturgy.

E. Wesley As Anglican Model. Wesley's approach to liturgical creation (and abridgement) shows him to be more of a classical Anglican than he is sometimes given credit for. While the depth of Wesley's commitment to the Anglican church during his lifespan can be argued at length, it can hardly be denied that his Anglican context influenced him to a great degree. I suggest that his approach to liturgy as noted above belies an Anglican approach to liturgical theology and formulation which clearly can also serve as an aid in curing the identity crisis of the Holiness Movement.

While the goal of the Anglican liturgy within the *Book of Common Prayer* is clearly religious and national identity, Anglican liturgy has always been eclectic in its approach to liturgical formulation. Anglican liturgy is best understood as a classical expression of the classically Anglican *via-media* approach to theology. The "Middle Way" in liturgy as well as theology is not to suggest any attempt to dodge the complex difficulties of reality and theological identity, but represents "an apprehension of the complexity and richness possible" in responding to and expressing them (Marshall, 127). The liturgical life of Anglicanism which coalesces in the *Book of Common Prayer* is the combining together of those best expressions of the faith for the life of the faithful. Cranmer, whose work is the best example of such an approach, in forming the first *BCP* (1549) took his psalter from Miles Coverdale, his Epistles and Gospels from the KJV, patterned the basic service after a Spanish Breviary, used the Anaphora from the liturgy of St. Chrysostom and various parts from the Sarum Breviary and other extant litanies (Proctor and Frere, 26ff).

A commitment to a liturgical formulation of identity should be eclectic and particularly so in the Holiness Movement. The strength of the Holiness Movement may actually be in its diversity or catholicity, and liturgical formation/formulation may be a way to preserve both Wesley and Palmer, Bangs, Bresee, B. T. Roberts and the host of other "saints" within the history of the Holiness Movement. Worshipping thoughtfully in light of the tradition of the whole church is a constructive and needed approach to maintaining Christian identity. Doing so in the particular light of the significance and complexity of the history of the Holiness Movement offers a way to authentic present identity for this tradition.

Conclusion

The renewed liturgical track suggested here will not be easy, but joyous work it will be. It will give complaining theologians a voice and a new sense of vocation to be shared with Wesley. We can begin to think and live theologically as an act of worship that arises out of and is a continued conversation with the worship of the whole church. This means that there is much more discussion to be done with the traditions of the church than we have heretofore done, including a conversation with our own Holiness tradition. This understanding of the theological life of the church may be a way of retaining some theologians. To study and understand them as members of the long line of those who have attempted to express the "work of the people" may keep some of them from virtual extinction.

This liturgical formation of identity must also be conciliar and broad enough to consider the value of the differing formative strands of the Holiness Movement. I suggest that this may be easier to accomplish than many might suspect. There has had to be a certain amount of "catholicity" and good will between holiness groups to have remained united for so long, despite such differing theological identities. Maybe this force alone will be strong enough to keep the Holiness Movement unified and also provide for a new understanding of its identity and open it to a more catholic (and hence more Christian and less sectarian) sense of historical consciousness.

Such an approach to identity may not make Holiness churches more "successful" or spread instant harmony among different Holiness churches. It may not answer the questions of choruses versus hymns or songsheets versus overhead projectors. But such an approach will encourage a community marked by a definite Christian identity, an identity that is faithful to its past and open to the promises of a rich future. It will provide an opportunity to explore the riches of the Holiness tradition, a tradition rich with the images, symbols, and experiences of a people who long to be made holy by God. Unfortunately, most such treasures are currently lying unattended, waiting and longing to be discovered by many Holiness Christians who live as yet unaware of them, bound by the rule of *lex orandi, lex oblivisci*. "The preservation and employment of such a life-giving treasure is what liturgy is all about (Pfatteicher, 89).[27]

---

[27]I am indebted throughout this section to Phillip Pfatteicher's *The School of the Church: Worship and Spiritual Formation*, chapter 5, "The Necessity of Continuity," 73-89.

Works Cited

Bassett, Paul Merritt. "Contemporary Worship and the Holiness Tradition." Unpublished essay delivered at the Nazarene Worship and Music Conference, Kansas City, Mo., 1991.

______. "The Theological Identity of the North American Holiness Movement: Its Understanding of the Nature and Role of the Bible." In *The Varieties of American Evangelicalism*, eds.

Donald W. Dayton and Robert E. Johnston. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

Brantley, Richard E. "The Common Ground of Wesley and Edwards." *Harvard Theological Review* 83(1990): 271-303.

Day, Thomas. *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste.* New York: Harper/Collins, 1990.

Dayton, Donald W. "Pneumatological Issues in the Holiness Movement." *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31(1986): 361-387.

______. "Whither Evangelicalism?" *Sanctification and Liberation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981.

Dieter, Melvin E. "The Development of Nineteenth Century Holiness Theology." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20(1985).

______. *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1980.

Drury, Keith. "The Death of the Holiness Movement." *GBS Gazette*, Spring, 1994.

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1986.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan Holiness Systematic Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1994.

Jones, Charles. *Perfectionist Persuasion*. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1973.

Kelley, Mary and Sidney E. Mead. "Protestantism in the shadow of the Enlightenment." *Soundings* 58(1975): 329-347.

Knight, Henry H. *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace*. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1992.

Lindsell, Harold. *The Bible In the Balance*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1979.

Maddox, Randy. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994.

Marshall, William. "Anglican Spirituality." *Protestant Spiritual Traditions*, ed. Frank C. Senn. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.

McLoughlin, William. *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.

Oden, Thomas. *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition.* Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1988.

Palmer, Phoebe. "The Shorter Way." *Voices From the Heart*, eds. Roger Lundin and Mark A. Noll. Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Press, 1987.

Peters, John. *Christian Perfection and American Methodism*. Nashville: Pierce and Washabaugh, 1956.

Pfatteicher, Phillip. *The School of the Church: Worship and Spiritual Formation*. Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1995.

Procter, Francis. *A New History of The Book of Common Prayer*, rev. ed. by Walter Howard Frere. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1905.

Raser, Harold. *Phoebe Palmer: Her Life and Thought*. College Station, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 1987.

Rattenbury, J. Ernest. *The Eucharist Hymns of John and Charles Wesley*. London: Epworth Press, 1948.

Saliers, Don. *Worship as Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

Smith, Timothy L. *Called Unto Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1962.

______. *Revivalism and Social Reform.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957.

Snyder, Howard. *The Divided Flame*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1986.

Wainwright, Geoffrey. *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life*. London: Epworth Press, 1980.

Wesley, John. *Works of the Rev. John Wesley.* Thomas Jackson, ed. 14 vols. London: 1831.

White, Charles. "The Beauty of Holiness: The Career and Influence of Phoebe Palmer." *Methodist History* 25(1987): 67-75.

______. *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1986.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Baswell Blackwell, 1968.

“LEX ORANDI, LEX CREDENDI”: CAUTIONARY NOTES

by

Charles R. Hohenstein[1]

Liturgical theologians frequently use the shorthand language of *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* in describing the relationship between liturgy and theology, the “law of prayer” and the “law of belief.” A considerable literature has arisen around these terms which goes back to Prosper of Aquitaine’s arguments against the Semi-Pelagians. According to Prosper of Aquitaine, *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, which is to say, “the law of prayer determines the law of belief” (Prosper used the equivalent term *lex supplicandi* in place of *lex orandi*). Prosper treats the church’s prayer as an authoritative source for theology in arguing that salvation must come entirely at God’s initiative since in the liturgy the church prayed for the conversion of infidels, Jews, heretics, schismatics and the lapsed who would not seek the true faith on their own. Among later writers Prosper’s words were truncated to the formula *lex orandi, lex credendi*, a formula which acquired a life of its own as a statement of general principles which Prosper perhaps had not contemplated himself.[2] As usually invoked, lex *orandi, lex credendi* stands opposed to any notion of

[1]Charles R. Hohenstein completed his Ph.D. in liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame. His doctoral dissertation was concerned with the history of the rites of baptism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was directed by Professor James F. White.

[2]See Paul De Clerk, “‘Lex orandi, lex credendi’: The Original Sense and Historical Avatars of an Equivocal Adage,” *Studia Liturgica* 24 (1994), 178–200, 182.

liturgy as a mere mouthpiece for beliefs which have their origins outside the liturgical celebration. Instead, the affirmations which we make within the Body of Christ, assembled together in worship, ought to serve as a starting point for theological reflection. We should teach what we pray.

Most liturgical theologians would subscribe to some version of "lex orandi, lex credendi" as a fundamental presupposition of their enterprise. The notion of liturgy as an authoritative source for theology is a congenial one for many in the Wesleyan tradition who have attached such significance to the sermons and hymns of the Wesleys that these have served not only as grist for theological reflection, but as a doctrinal standard. In our own time, the work of the Methodist theologian Geoffrey Wainwright[3] has been an outstanding example of theology grounded in liturgy.

However, it is clearly also the case that lex orandi is informed and determined by *lex credendi*. *Lex orandi* necessarily includes the beliefs which people bring with them to the liturgy, and thus the relation between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* has been a reciprocal (and sometimes problematic) one. Theological developments have often resulted in liturgical change. For example, as Jungmann has demonstrated, the ancient Christian liturgical convention of addressing prayer *through* Christ to the Father was found to leave room for a subordinationist christology, to the delight of the Arians, and to the distress of orthodox Christians who then addressed their prayers more and more *to* Christ.[4] This is a classic example of liturgy yielding to theological priorities, and many more instances might be cited where considerations of doctrine (not to mention polemics, church law and popular culture) have determined the shape and language of the rite. In many cases these influences have been salutary and fruitful. Thus it is wrong to assert that "the law of prayer determines the law of belief" in a simple and one-sided manner for much the same reason that it is wrong to assert that the egg came before the chicken. It has very often been the case that the law of belief determines the law of prayer. This general point may be considered the first of the cautionary notes I wish to raise against *lex orandi, lex credendi* in an oversimplified form.

---

[3]Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: A Systematic Theology* (London: Epworth Press, 1980).

[4]Josef A. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1989), originally published as *Die Stellung Christi im Liturgischen Gebet* in the series *Liturgiewißenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen* (Münster: Aschendorff, revised edition, 1962).

I wish to address myself more specifically to some of the problems of asserting “lex orandi, lex credendi” in the context of American Methodism, where liturgy has often played a subordinate and secondary role. I do not mean to suggest that the adage is entirely inappropriate within this tradition; as a matter of fact, I would affirm its validity, but only after giving due consideration to certain obstacles, some of which are described here. I offer these cautionary notes in the hope that they may assist us to keep our feet on the ground when asserting *lex orandi, lex credendi* as United Methodists.

Dealing with Texts

Without dwelling on methodology, I wish to ask two questions. Is there is a United Methodist *lex orandi*? What is this law of prayer and where is it to be found? It may be helpful to draw an analogy to secular law, where the law is referenced by consulting law books. The statutory law is written down. Even the more nebulous common law may be determined by consulting texts. Once the relevant texts are located, there may sometimes be a problem of applying the law to particular cases, particularly if conflicting laws seem to apply or if the facts of the case, as seen by different witnesses, are unclear. But it will be clear that the law resides in legal texts, and even the legal principles behind the law will be determined by consulting texts, such as the constitution, the written record of the intentions of the framers, and the remarks of various judges in building up a history of interpretation.

Likewise, the *lex orandi* has a textual basis, in the liturgical texts themselves, and in texts which serve to illuminate them. There is in Methodism, as in the other churches, a corpus of beloved prayers and hymns which has been carefully preserved and lovingly updated from time to time. It is certainly the general expectation that the sacraments and other rites of the church will be conducted according to the prescribed forms. For example, a pastor would be expected to conduct a wedding according to the official rite of the church and to instruct the bride and groom in the meaning of the marital relationship by way of explicating the vows they will take. A few weddings might involve departures from the official rite, as for example when original vows are written by the couple, but the substitution would instantly be recognizable for what it was, and the pastor might well overrule the use of vows which seemed too aberrant, based on a comparison with the normative text. Here we see the clear basis for lex orandi in the text of the rite. But the total picture in Methodist liturgy is not as simple as that. Are all texts equal, or is there a canon within the canon? What is the status, for instance, of some of the more esoteric and even pagan liturgical texts which have found their way into the latest *Book of Worship*?

The different uses and degrees of "ownership" of United Methodist liturgical texts complicate the issue of where to look for the basis of *lex orandi*. Love feasts, watch nights and covenant services are seldom encountered these days; one might still hear the classic covenant prayer "I am no longer mine, but thine" in a service for the giving and receiving of appointments at annual conference, but rarely in a congregational setting. Many United Methodists have never heard the text of the *Reproaches of Good Friday* because their congregations have not yet observed the new rite in which they are read. With their reception among the faithful unclear, do these texts really constitute a part of *lex orandi* for United Methodists? In both cases, I believe the answer is yes, but a qualified yes. The *lex orandi* is surely more than just a lowest common denominator to be established by something like market research. Nor is it, on the other hand, the exclusive property of liturgical scholars and church officials who may then trickle it down to liturgical consumers. As a matter of fact, the liturgy belongs to the whole church. This issue of reception is something we must consider. It includes the issue of how to relate the *lex orandi* as received among United Methodists to the *lex orandi* of the whole church—assuming there is one.[5] It also includes the issue of whether we receive liturgical texts according to our theological predispositions, which, once again, would rule out any picture of *lex orandi* as primary and *lex credendi* as secondary.

The hymnal raises its own issues about which texts have been received as part of *lex orandi*. The latest United Methodist hymnal, more than any previous edition, contains such a diversity of hymns and liturgical material that it may be described as a resource for several different "churches" (high, low, liberal, evangelical, English-speaking, Hispanic, white, black, and so on), all of which just happen to coexist within the

[5]See Paul V. Marshall, "Reconsidering 'Liturgical Theology': Is there a *Lex Orandi* for All Christians?" *Studia Liturgica* 25 (1995), 129–151. Marshall echoes De Clerk's warnings about reducing *lex orandi, lex credendi* to a simplistic slogan where primary theology is elevated above secondary theology.

United Methodist Church. No single constituency could reasonably be expected to claim the entire book as its own. Is, for instance, the Native American hymn "Daw-Kee, Aim Daw-Tsi-Taw" (no. 330) really part of a *lex orandi* widely recognized among United Methodists, or was it included in the Hymnal as a gesture of political correctness and in order to solicit additional support for the Hymnal's adoption?[6]

It would seem that, with the Wesleyan core of the Hymnal, we are on safer ground in finding a *lex orandi* to which Methodists would generally subscribe. The hymns of Charles and John Wesley have been seen as a treasure enjoying special status and much serious theological reflection, particularly (but not exclusively) among British Methodists, has made good use of them. Nonetheless, I must ask whether this rich inheritance still means what it once did.

Unfortunately, many United Methodists have come to find the hymns of the Wesleys stilted and foreign, while other categories of hymns have grown in popularity and have been rewarded with greater space in the Hymnal. The hymns of the Wesleys, with their traditional theology of divine sovereignty, grace, sin and redemption, run counter to the theological propensities of many modern United Methodists. The Wesleyan hymns are theocentric, even when describing the human response to grace, and that is their fatal flaw in appealing to modern Americans, who are preoccupied with discussing themselves and their personal feelings with anyone who will listen, and to Methodists, with their frequent bent for sentimentality. Many Methodists have long preferred Fanny Crosby over Charles Wesley, and many is the congregation where the gospel songs of a Sunday school hymnal supplement the contents of the official Hymnal, which itself has absorbed a number of items from this repertory.

The Christian community celebrates itself and its own "niceness" in at least two new additions to the hymnal, "We Are the Church" (no. 558)

[6]Signs of the fragmentation between the various constituencies of the United Methodist Church abound throughout the book. At the very outset, "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" is given three times—first in English with music (57), then without music in an extended presentation of seventeen verses, for Wesley buffs (58), then once more with music and Spanish text (59). The Spanish hymn "¡Canta, Débora, Canta!" (81) is immediately followed by the canticle "Gloria in Excelsis" in the old Scottish chant setting (82). *The United Methodist Hymnal: Book of United Methodist Worship* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989).

and "Help Us Accept Each Other" (no. 560)—which contrast sharply to the ecclesiology of earlier hymns—and in "Here I Am Lord" (no. 593) the community even gets to pretend that they are God.[7] For Charles Wesley the Christian community is not an end in itself, but is based squarely on "Christ from whom all blessings flow, perfecting the saints below" (no. 550). Samuel J. Stone prayed not for the pseudo-charism of acceptance, but rather for the deliverance of a church "by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed" (no. 545). With the Wesleyan corpus giving ground to hymns where people celebrate themselves and their good relations with their "pal" Jesus, which tradition is affirmed by *lex orandi*, the law of prayer? Or must we not look to the *lex credendi* to answer such a question?

So far we have been discussing the relation between *lex orandi* and the printed texts of the liturgy. At this point we must observe that United Methodists use "texts" in worship which are not part of the official liturgical rites as distributed in print, but which belong to oral tradition. United Methodist liturgical practice, along with that of other Wesleyan churches, includes a strong tradition of extemporaneous prayer. The instructions for what to say in these prayers and how to say it are not written down, but there is an oral "text" or prototype nonetheless. For example, Sunday worship might commonly include a "pastoral prayer" where a general pattern of intercessions is observed and stock phrases are employed; this prayer, while considered extemporaneous, is in fact highly predictable as to content, but as an oral tradition is not likely to gain the attention of liturgists more accustomed to an analysis of written forms.[8]

Indeed, for much of the history of Methodists, the greater part of Sunday worship has been conducted with little recourse to printed liturgi-

[7]In *Here I Am, Lord*, this "Voice of God" self-love leads to comic complications. In the verses of this song, the worshipers become God. They, the plural God, sing about how grand They are, how They divinely command the earth and sky, how They hear the supplications of those in distress. Then, in a miraculous transformation, the worshipers become human beings during the refrain ("Here I Am, Lord"). In the same song, the congregation is the loving God and the loved individual. Simultaneously, the congregation divinely offers and humanly gives love to itself" (Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste*, New York: Crossroad, 1990), 66.

[8]This is in much the same manner that the presider at the eucharist in the early church seems to have been free to improvise the eucharistic prayer within the limits of a certain pattern which varied somewhat on a regional basis.

cal texts, as a consequence of the abandonment of Wesley's *Sunday Service*. As Jesse Lee observed, it seemed that Methodists preferred to pray with their eyes and their books shut.[9] In the absence of printed texts, it is difficult to evaluate the content of non-eucharistic Sunday worship, camp meetings, revivals, prayer services, quarterly meetings, and so on. Few have attempted to study this liturgical history in all its actual complexity, giving due attention to the full range of liturgical and paraliturgical celebrations and to unpublished sources which shed light on these.[10] To confine ourselves to the history of official printed texts alone in our quest of *lex orandi* would be to misrepresent the reality of the United Methodist liturgical tradition. How do these non-print aspects of the tradition figure in the *lex orandi*?

Consider the extent to which United Methodist worship, even today, is only loosely based on official liturgical texts. On Sundays when the eucharist is celebrated, it is likely that the official rite will be observed, perhaps with some omissions or modifications, but the vast majority of United Methodist churches do not celebrate the eucharist on a weekly basis, and on those other Sundays, a diversity of practices will be encountered from church to church.[11] Non-eucharistic worship in some places may amount to the general pattern of the eucharistic rite, but with communion omitted, while in others one might encounter something approximating morning prayer with a concluding sermon, as favored in older Methodist orders of worship. In some places a pastor may have devised a more or less original pattern drawing on personal experience or borrowings from others. Prayers, hymns, and other items from nonofficial sources may have been introduced, and, although the period of experimental worship which peaked in the 1970s is mostly over, a few avant

[9]Jesse Lee, *A Short History of the Methodists in the United States of America* (Rutland: Academy Books, 1974, facsimile reprint of Baltimore: Magill & Clime, 1810), 107. See also William Nash Wade, "A History of Public Worship in the Methodist Episcopal Church and Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from 1784 to 1905" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1981).

[10]Thus the importance of the recent study by Lester Ruth, "'A Little Heaven Below': Quarterly Meetings as Seasons of Grace in Early American Methodism" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1996).

[11]Even in the consecration of the eucharist it unfortunately may be the case that a pastor recites the institution narrative from memory and omits some or all the rest of the eucharistic prayer.

garde congregations may still be experimenting with clowns, dancers, balloons, and the like.

How can the broad content of this diverse liturgical tradition, much of which is not based on official printed sources, be related to essential principles and norms? Can we identify a single *lex orandi* for Methodists of different times, places, ethnicities, and theological persuasions? Should it be identified by a descriptive method seeking to establish what Methodists *actually* do, or by a prescriptive method capable of distinguishing between things they *should* and *should not* do? The whole idea of a *lex orandi*, a law of prayer, would imply the latter, but according to what premises would the authentic strands of the Methodist *lex orandi* be discerned? Is there some sort of a higher *lex orandi* which stands behind and verifies the integrity of the run-of-the-mill *lex orandi* in its everyday operation—a constitution, as it were, behind the law? Is it the case, as I would argue, that this verification ultimately derives from the *lex credendi*, the law of belief?

Dealing with Church Law

One of the foremost problems of applying *lex orandi, lex credendi* to the United Methodist Church (or perhaps to any church) is that it relates liturgy to doctrine without taking a third "lex" into account, church law itself. Church law is a third entity which cannot be reduced to *lex orandi* or *lex credendi*, although to a great extent it determines both. Therefore a bipolar paradigm of *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*, from which church law is omitted, is bound to result in distortions, just as a two-dimensional rendering of a three-dimensional object will result in distortions. Church law is all the more important a factor in United Methodism, because of the enormous attention which United Methodists devote to polity and organization.

Roman Catholics have the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas and the Reformed tradition may point with pride to Calvin's *Institutes*, but if United Methodists were asked to name a magnum opus representative of their own ethos, the correct and honest answer would be the *Book of Discipline*.[12] United Methodists seem to enjoy poring over the Discipline and their conference journals, looking for details of interest and eagerly

[12]*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church: 1992* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992). The 1996 *Discipline* was not available when this paper was prepared.

anticipating their next opportunity to submit resolutions, motions, and amendments to motions. Given the choice between heaven and a meeting to set up a board for the administration of heaven, they would probably choose the latter. To Methodists of this mind set, the interesting question about liturgy is not the relation between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*, but rather how the worship of the church may best be organized and administered. In their juridical approach to liturgy (and arguably other matters as well), United Methodists sometimes resemble Roman Catholics more than Protestants.

Several of the Articles of Religion (¶ 67.3) deal with liturgical and sacramental matters and, under the Constitution, the Articles are protected within the terms of the restrictive rules.[13] They enumerate the sacraments of the Christian gospel as distinguished from other sacramental rites, require communion under both kinds, the use of the vernacular, and the retention of infant baptism, reject transsubstantiation (without addressing other specific theories of real presence), and discourage Corpus Christi processions (not an issue in most United Methodist congregations). Church law further determines theological principles governing the ministry of both the laity and clergy (¶¶ 104–114), rules governing church membership and membership records (¶¶ 207–243), local church worship committees (¶¶ 262.11), rules governing diaconal ministry (¶¶ 301-317), ordained ministry (¶¶ 401-459), and superintendency (¶¶ 501-534). The responsibilities of the General Board of Discipleship's Section on Worship (¶ 1213) include the authority to develop standards and resources for the conduct of worship, prepare future revisions of the liturgy, participate in the Consultation on Common Texts, and promote the use of the Revised Common Lectionary.

It should likewise be obvious that the Discipline's pronouncements concerning ordained ministry will have an enormous effect on the way in which the rites of ordination are understood, that its attention (or lack of it) to marriage and the family will influence the interpretation of the wedding rite, and that its provisions for defining and recording church membership will have a profound impact on Christian initiation. The 1996 edition of the Discipline reflects additional legislation adopted by the General Conference concurrent with the approval of the study document on baptism, "By Water and the Spirit," clarifying the relation of baptism

[13]Ibid., ¶ 16.

to confirmation and church membership, and including a prohibition of rebaptism, although its language was softened by the General Conference to make it more of a teaching statement.[14]

United Methodists who know the Discipline only from recent editions may be surprised to learn that the liturgy itself was a subdivision of the Discipline for most of its history. John Wesley prepared the *Sunday Service* to function as the service book for his American followers, but it was soon replaced by an abbreviated version entitled "Sacramental Services, & c.," which was appended to the Discipline in 1792. In the process, many significant features of Wesley's *Sunday Service* were dropped (including all provision for morning and evening prayer and for the church year) and the rites which were retained were revised. This portion of the Discipline was renamed the Ritual in 1848, and remained in the Discipline under that name until 1964. The Ritual was sometimes extracted from the Discipline and printed separately, but the official text was that approved by the General Conference and printed in the Discipline. Liturgy was almost entirely subsumed under the heading of church law, and, apart from the hymnal, and T. O. Summers' failed attempt to revive Wesley's *Sunday Service* in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, it can be said that the Discipline was *the* liturgical book of Episcopal Methodists from 1792 to 1945, when the first Book of Worship was published—a span of more than 150 years.[15]

Since changes to the Ritual went before the General Conference for approval, along with all the other proposed revisions to the Discipline, they were in this sense precisely *legal enactments*. Theoretically, the Rit-

---

[14]*By Water and the Spirit* (Nashville: General Board of Discipleship, 1996); "Baptism Statement Approved," *United Methodist Newsscope*, 3 May 1996, 2–3.

[15]*John Wesley's Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America, with an Introduction by James F. White* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1984). *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, Revised and Approved at the General Conference Held at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, in November 1792* (Philadelphia: John Dickins, 1792), L. Edward Phillips, "Thomas Osmond Summers, Methodist Liturgist of the Nineteenth Century," *Methodist History* 27 (1989), 241–253, *The Book of Worship for Church and Home: With Orders for the Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies According to the Use of the Methodist Church, for Voluntary and Optional Use* (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1945). In the unique and expanded edition of the *Discipline* in 1798, with explanatory notes by Coke and Asbury, the liturgical material was omitted.

ual might have been revised every four years, like any other part of the Discipline, but in practice the Ritual was usually left alone for years at a time, until the General Conference was prepared to execute a substantial revision. In the former Methodist Episcopal Church, such major revisions of the Ritual occurred in 1792, 1864, 1916, and 1932. Let us examine more closely the enactment of one of these revisions of the liturgy, that which received approval in 1916.

A proposal to revise the Ritual was presented to the General Conference of 1912, which referred the matter to a commission, expected to report to the next General Conference. This began a chain reaction of passing the buck, and the ultimate results say much about the impact of church law and the legislative process on both *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*.[16] The report which came before the General Conference of 1916 reproduced the existing and proposed texts of the Ritual in parallel columns for ready comparison. The entire report was presented and debated on the floor of the General Conference on an item by item basis, and soon the General Conference became bogged down in the details. It referred the whole report on the revision of the Ritual to the bishops, "with full power to consider, approve, amend, or disapprove, all or any part thereof and to print the Ritual, as they may finally approve it, in the next edition of the Discipline and of the Psalter." The bishops approved a few changes, certainly not all of those which had been proposed, and reported their version of the proposed Ritual back to the General Conference, which, reluctant to debate the Ritual all over again, reasserted that it had delegated the authority for final action to the bishops, adopted the proposed Ritual in the form approved by the bishops, and ordered it printed in the Discipline.

The new Ritual was attacked by Bishop Neely with regard to both its content and the legality of its adoption.[17] Neely raised several liturgical and theological objections to the new Ritual and decried the chaotic man-

[16] *Journal of General Conference* 17 (1912) 364, 438, 504-505, 512–513; Nolan B. Harmon, *The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1926), 59.

[17] *Journal of General Conference* 18 (1916), 330–334, 396–397, 1335–1341; Thomas Benjamin Neely, *The Revised Ritual of 1916* (Philadelphia: Yeakel, 1920).

ner in which the revision was adopted.[18] The bishops' report to the General Conference was not read, distributed, printed in the *Daily Christian Advocate*, or discussed. "With its eyes closed, and on blind faith, the chief representative body of a great denomination accepted a ritual containing most vital doctrinal teaching, to be used for the instruction of the Church and its congregations, presumably for generations, without knowing what it contained."[19] Note that Neely was very much concerned with the relation of *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*. But what he discovered was that church law and the exercise of ecclesiastical power were the determining factors. Perhaps Neely sensed this; in any case, he presented some compelling legal points in addition to his liturgical and theological arguments.

Neely observed that even a resolution might not be considered as legally adopted if the body approving it did not know upon what it was voting. But the Ritual was much more than ordinary legislation. Arguably, it contained doctrinal statements and implications which constituted part of the doctrinal standards protected under the Constitution by the first restrictive rule, which forbids the General Conference from establishing any "new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine." Neely notes that the same logic had recently compelled a commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to conclude that a simple majority vote of the General Conference was insufficient to approve changes to the liturgy, which called for amendment by the constitutional process.[20] Apart from writing his book, it does not appear that Bishop Neely ever formally pursued his case before his fellow bishops or the General Conference. Since there is no doubt about his sincerity in the matter, it seems probable that Bishop Neely—who had been retired since 1912—had calculated his chance of

[18]Bishop Neely's detailed analysis of the Ritual of 1916 runs to more than 100 pages. While some of his comments on the changes of wording proposed by the commission or adopted by the bishops might seem pedantic, he makes many telling points about the liturgical and theological agends of the revision. He summarizes the theological tendencies of the revised Ritual in a manner which reveals both his astuteness and his appreciation for the relation between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*.

[19]Neely, 90–91.

[20]Ibid., 91–93.

success to be minimal and decided not to expend his energies on a losing battle. Bishop Neely died in 1925.[21]

Another telling example of the entanglement of church law in *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*, and the impossibility of separating the three, has to do with the Discipline's treatment of church membership. It should be remembered that Methodism had its origins as a society within the Church of England, and that its original regulations concerning society membership were not intended to define membership in a church at all. Thus, in the Large Minutes we find the question, "How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating into the society?" To this the answers given were:

> 1. Give tickets to none till they are recommended by a Leader, with whom they have met at least two months on trial.
> 2. Give notes to none but those who are recommended by one you know, or till they have met three or four times in a class.
> 3. Give them the Rules the first time they meet. See that this never be neglected.[22]

The sectarian flavor of these rules is entirely understandable within their original context. But when they were absorbed into the Discipline as rules governing membership in the new Methodist Episcopal Church, their meaning was entirely different. Their development as rules governing

[21]"This is in response to your request concerning records relating to the 1916 revision of the MEC ritual and any challenges put to it. As the official depository for the United Methodist Church we would hold such records as they exist. There are no records of a challenge by Bishop Neely because none was ever mounted at the General Conferences of 1916 or 1920. . . . There is no mention of any challenge by Neely to the new ritual either in the Journals, the DCAs, or the committee records. Actual minutes of the General Conference committees no longer exist; all that is left are the petitions. Neely appears to have expressed his dislike for the new ritual only in his book" (Dale Patterson, unpublished electronic mail message, 12 September, 1996). Mr. Patterson is Archivist/Records Administrator for the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church. See also Jesse A. Earl, "Neely, Thomas Benjamin (1841–1925)," in *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, Nolan B. Harmon, ed. (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), vol. 2, 1707-1708.

[22]"Large Minutes," *The Works of John Wesley*, Thomas Jackson, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978; reprint of London, 1872), vol. 8, 307.

church membership was incremental. At first the language of society was left intact and the minimum period for time on trial was increased to six months. In 1816 the word "Church" was substituted for "society" in the opening question, and in 1836 the passage was revised again, to amplify the church context and to bring baptism into the rule:

> *Quest. 3.* How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves *into the Church*?
>
> *Answ. 1.* *Let none be received into the Church* until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, *and have been baptized.*
>
> *Answ. 2.* Let none be admitted on trial, except they are well-recommended by one you know, or until they have met twice or thrice in a class.
>
> *Answ. 3.* Read the rules to them the first time they meet.[23]

It must be remembered that John Wesley had suppressed the rite of confirmation in his *Sunday Service* and made baptism the single rite of admission to the church, restoring the practice of the early church and anticipating a reform advocated by liturgical scholars in our own century. Perhaps he did not reckon with the force of American voluntarism and the effect of the society rules when transplanted to a church context. By now Wesley's reform was already muddled, and baptism was explicitly referred to as a *precondition* for church membership to be conferred after six months on trial. It is possible that the Methodists of this time felt that there was no contradiction involved, on the theory that baptism establishes membership in the universal Church, the body of Christ, while the issue at hand in the passages we have been examining was thought to be that of membership in a local Methodist congregation. Of course, this does not really solve the problem. There is no universal Church except as composed of persons in local congregations, and to distinguish between those who are merely baptized "common" Christians and those who have qualified for the extra status of "advanced" Methodist Christians, screened by local congregations, is sectarian arrogance unworthy of a body which now understood itself—more or less—as a Church.

Back to the Discipline. In 1840 the critical part of the passage was reworded and greatly expanded, so that even greater prominence is given

[23]*The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Mason and Lane, 1836), 81. Italics added for emphasis.

to this reception into membership following baptism and the necessary forms of examination.

> Let none be received into the Church, until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized; *and shall on examination by the minister in charge, before the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church. Nevertheless, if a member in good standing in any other orthodox church shall desire to unite with us, such applicant may, by giving satisfactory answers to the usual inquiries, be received at once into full membership*.[24]

From 1840 onward, developments snowballed rapidly. In 1848 the crucial passage appears under the new and significant heading, "Of Receiving Members into the Church," to be followed, beginning in 1856, by a new section on baptized children and their relation to the Church which was contributed by F. G. Hibbard. By the General Conference of 1864, the lack of a formal rite to confer church membership after the completion of probation was remedied by the addition of a new item to the Ritual. When D. W. Clark moved its adoption, he remarked that "he did not know how it was with other brethren, but he did not know how he came into full connection in the Church. There had always been a blank at this point in his history. He hardly knew what was his relation to the Church." At this point the record indicates that an alert delegate called out, "You are on probation yet, Doctor." This prompted Clark to mention that he had already been using a service of his own devising to receive probationary members into full connection, that "the venerable Daniel Coe, a minister of some forty years standing in the Church," had been present when he used that form, and that he had requested to be received into full membership the next Sunday.[25] As such anecdotes illustrate, the nullification of baptism as a sufficient rite of Christian initiation was at this point practically complete.

---

[24]*The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Mason & Lane, 1840), 84. Italics added for emphasis.

[25]*Daily Christian Advocate*, 13 May 1864, 2–3. *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1864* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1864), 145–149.

In 1908 the Methodist Episcopal Church eliminated the fixed period of probation before membership for adults, although the Discipline still required that "no one be enrolled as a probationer unless he gives satisfactory evidence of an earnest desire to be saved from his sins." In 1916 this indefinite period of probationary membership was renamed preparatory membership. A ruling by the bishops in that year reminded the Church that the requirement was still in force, even if the length of the probationary period was unstated. This probably indicates that the preparatory membership of adults was already somewhat ignored. In 1912 the Discipline directed that baptized children should be enrolled as probationers, but not counted as such for purposes of preparing membership reports. In 1939 the newly formed Methodist Church eliminated preparatory membership for adults entirely, in keeping with the official action of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, many years before, and steps in that direction in the Methodist Episcopal Church since 1908. From 1939 to 1996, preparatory membership would be a category of semi-membership applying to baptized children only in the Methodist and United Methodist Churches; preparatory members were not counted as members for statistical purposes (for example, in the calculation of apportionments). In 1964, the rite of admission to membership was dignified with the title "confirmation."[26] Ironically, when discussion arose a few years later concerning the possibility of restoring a unified rite of Christian initiation, with the elimination of confirmation, many objected that the latter should be preserved as a worthy and venerable Methodist custom.

The liturgy of baptism adopted with the approval of the new Hymnal in 1988 revived the notion of baptism as full Christian initiation and before long the tension between the new rite and the 1939 policy on church membership was noticed. After a period of study, the General

[26]*The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1908* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1908), ¶ 48 (p. 47); *Journal of General Conference* 16 (1908) 325; Frederick Norwood, *Church Membership in the Methodist Tradition* (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1958), 34; *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1912* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1912), ¶ 51 (p. 49) & ¶ 88.6 (p. 73); *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1916* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1916), ¶ 48.2 (p. 51) & ¶ 90.7 (p. 78); *Doctrines and Discipline of The Methodist Church, 1939* (New York: Methodist Publishing House, 1939), ¶ 141 (p. 55); *Doctrines and Discipline of The Methodist Church, 1964* (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1964), ¶ 1714 (pp. 562–564).

Conference of 1996 attempted to clarify the situation in church law. Baptized children would be regarded as full members of the Church, including the local Church. However, the two-tiered approach to membership was perpetuated by providing for a separate category of "professing members" who have professed their faith and reaffirmed their baptismal vows, with the calculation of apportionments to depend on the latter category—more or less nullifying the effect of what was done for baptized children. The more things change, the more they stay the same. As ever, *lex orandi, lex credendi* and church law remain inextricably linked.

It remains to be seen whether these changes herald a greater regard for baptism throughout the United Methodist Church, or whether liturgists were simply successful in securing the approval of General Conference to new rites and legislation which are perhaps not widely understood or received among the clergy and laity. It is simply too early to tell.

Summary of Findings

The relation between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* would be complicated enough if we only had to account for the mutual interaction of fixed terms of reference, but as a matter of fact, each represents something of a moving target in itself. The history of the rites and theology of baptism in American Methodism, where permanence has been particularly elusive, well illustrates this. Among the few signs of constancy has been a continuing insistence, against Baptist and Campbellite objections, on the validity of infant baptism and of baptism by aspersion. Otherwise an astonishing and ongoing transformation has taken place, particularly over the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church. One might with considerable justification say that we have gone from Augustinianism to Pelagianism, and started our way back again.[27]

That there is a *lex orandi* in the United Methodist Church, and that it has often served to shape the *lex credendi*, we may take for granted. But greater caution must be observed about making any assertion that the *lex orandi* determines the *lex credendi* in a one-sided way. It is highly doubt-

[27]Developments in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, were somewhat more conservative. For a detailed treatment of the rites of baptism in the M.E. Church, with a summary of developments in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and since the merger of 1939, see Charles R. Hohenstein, "The Revisions of the Rites of Baptism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1784–1939" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1990).

ful that Prosper of Aquitaine's adage has ever meant simply that, except to those who have taken it up as a bludgeon with which to defend the liturgy's pride of place as a source for theological reflection. Such attempts, while well-meaning, can only do more harm than good. It is easily demonstrable that such a reading of *lex orandi, lex credendi* does not correspond with reality. Nor should we too blithely assume that *lex orandi* can be identified with official liturgical texts, at least not as United Methodists. The rites, prayers and hymns of our church include forms beyond the officially published texts, and they encompass strands of liturgical tradition which are diverse, sometimes disparate, and received as bona fide to varying degrees among United Methodists of different liturgical and theological orientations. The proper place and relative authenticity of these cannot be sorted out except by way of reference to criteria which will ultimately derive, to a considerable degree, from doctrinal principles, which is to say, from *lex credendi*.

Nor should we relate *lex orandi* to *lex credendi* without taking the more obvious "lex," church law itself, into account. I claim, at least for the United Methodist tradition, that there are really three major entities interacting here, each of which embodies the other two to a considerable extent, and that a two-dimensional analysis will result in inevitable distortions. Finally, both *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* are in a state of flux, and significant new developments in each are likely to arise more in fits and starts than gradually. In the United Methodist tradition, liturgical change has often followed the lead of theological change.

We should be wary of relating *lex orandi* to *lex credendi* as if either were a static thing. And, while a balanced interplay of *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*, where each anchors the other, may make an attractive picture, we should be careful about assuming that the facts will bear out any such worthy ideal. The worship life of the church today displays considerable fluidity and defies any simple analysis. To a significant degree, this is nothing new.

LITURGY IN NON-LITURGICAL HOLINESS-PENTECOSTALISM

by

Estrelda Y. Alexander

One of the commonly held perceptions of Holiness and Pentecostal worship is that it is a free-form spiritual exercise, devoid of liturgical structure, ritual enactment, or symbolic presence. Indeed, the Holiness—Pentecostal movement is commonly characterized as a "Spirit" movement—and its worship is assumed to be an emotional religious expression, centered around ecstatic experiences, lacking any recognizable liturgical pattern. It is true that standard concepts of liturgy, ritual, and symbolism typically are not used by adherents of this movement to define what they are doing in worship. Because of the primarily oral tradition of the movement, its adherents often askew attempts to develop codified definitions or formulations for what is happening in their worship. The thesis of this paper is that liturgy, ritual, and symbolism have been and continue to be consistently operable components of Holiness—Pentecostal worship, even though adherents often do not recognize or identify them as such. Liturgical concepts and practices do have import for what goes on in Holiness—Pentecostal worship contexts.

Using two churches with which I am especially familiar, I offer specific examples of how liturgy, ritual, and symbolism operate in two very different settings. The first is an urban, middle-class, African-American "oneness"[1] congregation, which is the mother church of a small denomi-

[1]The single unifying theological distinctive of this movement is the alternative baptism formula invoking the "Name of Jesus" rather than the traditional

nation. The second is a suburban congregation with a multi-racial history which is part of a large Southern, Holiness-Pentecostal denomination.[2] Finally, I draw some conclusions about the liturgical elements of Holiness—Pentecostal worship and what this liturgical presence means.

Holiness-Pentecostalism[3]

The most distinguishing feature of Holiness-Pentecostalism is the belief that the "baptism" or "outpouring" of the Holy Spirit on the believer is an essential aspect of Christian experience. This experience of Spirit baptism is understood as a direct fulfillment of the prophecy of the Old Testament passage Joel 2:28-29: "Afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,"[4] which was later depicted in Acts 2:4 as realized on the day of Pentecost when "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Peter's subsequent speech to the gathered crowd in Acts 2:38 is believed to be the confirmation that "this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel."

The two groups differ in two important ways on this central issue. The first difference is on the purpose of Holy Spirit baptism. For Holiness believers, this "in-filling" of the Holy Spirit endows the individual with a supernatural empowerment to live a "holy" life. For Pentecostals, the emphasis is on empowerment to accomplish "works of righteousness" on

Trinitarian formula. Within the movement there is wide disparity of theological stands concerning the place of Jesus in the Godhead, with some espousing a view of Jesus as at once the Father and the Holy Spirit. Others hold a more Trinitarian christology, but see the baptism is Jesus' name as being obedient to the command of Matt. 28.

[2]Holiness-Pentecostals trace their beginnings directly back to the Wesleyan-Holiness movement of the mid to late 19th century with its emphasis on conversion, sanctification, and later the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holiness groups initially did not have the later Pentecostal theological development of the concept of speaking in tongues as evidence of such Holy Spirit baptism.

[3]For a general overview of the classical Pentecostal movement, see: Robert Anderson *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1979); Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1972); and Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1971). For an excellent study of African-American Pentecostalism, see Cheryl J. Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[4]All scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.

behalf of the kingdom of God. Secondly, adherents of both movements seek to establish a personal communion with God through ecstatic religious experience. For Pentecostals, this necessarily includes glossolalia or "speaking in tongues" as an initial and objective evidence of that outpouring and in-filling. For the non-pentecostal Holiness movement, it does not. For both, a fuller understanding of key elements of worship will prove helpful.

Liturgy, Ritual, and Symbolism

Scholars of Christian worship differ on definitions of liturgy, ritual, and symbolism. However, some basic agreement exists among those in ritual studies about fundamental elements comprising each of these concepts. The working definitions for this paper synthesize those of such prominent scholars to capture the most salient points and provide a foundation for understanding what is going on in Holiness and Pentecostal worship.

Liturgy involves the collective actions of the gathered church as it goes about expressing its identity as a people of God and bringing it to a reaffirming and mediative experience of the presence of God. Within this context, liturgical ritual is comprised of those particular elements within the worship life of the congregation that involve repeated formal actions at specifically designated times and which articulate and impart particular meaning about the nature of the self, the church, and ultimate reality for the gathered church and its individual members. Symbol relates to the special meanings which particular objects, language, gestures, and actions convey, meaning generally shared by the worshiping community by way of either explicit or implicit understanding.

Studies of Holiness—Pentecostal Worship

Many scholars focus on the symbolic ritualization of the charismata (especially "tongues" in Pentecostal worship and other ecstatic expressions within Holiness worship).[5] Their studies have generally sought to find and identify liturgical parallels between worship within the Holiness and Pentecostal movements and the broader Christian church. Over the

[5]Excellent examples are Daniel E. Albrecht, "Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking Through the Lens of Ritual," *Pneuma*, 14:107-125, Fall, 1992, and Charles S. Gaede, "Pentecost and Praise: A Pentecostal Ritual?" *Paraclete* (Spring 1988).

last three decades, however, studies of the liturgical elements in Holiness—Pentecostal worship have been undertaken from the anthropological, sociological, theological, and ritual studies perspectives. One of the more salient findings of these studies is that these two related movements represent a primarily oral tradition. Any attempt to define what is happening in Holiness—Pentecostal worship must keep this in mind. As Walter Hollenweger points out: "Oral liturgy might be expected to be among oral people, whose main medium of experience is the oral form—the story, the proverb, the parable, the joke, the dance, the song. . . ."[6]

Daniel Albrecht attempts to identify elements of Pentecostal worship which function as iconic symbols. Pentecostal icons "are not painted altar pieces or works by pious artists . . . [but] a different sort, though [they] function within the ritual field similarly to icons of other Christians to [bring the congregation] to a sense of the Holy."[7] For Albrecht, examples of Pentecostal icons are sound, sight, and movement (Kinesthetic).[8] Within this schema, music becomes an iconic sound, for in Pentecostal worship services music is a constant. It not only accompanies the special and congregational singing, but it is played during prayer, during the collection of the offering, often punctuates and emphasizes strategic points in the sermon, and is an integral part of the altar ministry.[9] As detailed by Hollenweger, music is also used as liturgical symbol, to move the service from one point to another. Stressing the oral nature of the movement, most Pentecostals appear not aware of the liturgical function of musical icons. No formal sacramental theology exists that gives them articulated meaning. Even so, "their functions are clearly observable" and their primary function is as a signal to "indicate the transition from one part to the other of the service. . .and everyone in the congregation understands these signals."[10]

[6]Walter J. Hollenweger, "Social and Ecumenical Significance of Pentecostal Liturgy," *Studia Liturgica*, 8:209, 1973.

[7]Albrecht, 111.

[8]Ibid., 111-114.

[9]In the Pentecostal tradition, altar ministry is not celebration of the sacraments, but rather is prayer conducted with individuals or the gathered congregation at or in front of the altar railing. In Pentecostal understanding, the altar is a place of prayer rather than sacrifice.

[10]Hollenweger, 210-211.

Though Albrecht also identifies iconic sight as important, the Pentecostal ritual space is "quite austere"[11] when compared to the ornate art that adorns Catholic edifices or many other Protestant churches. There is a minimum of ritual furnishings. What does exist are the pulpit, the altar rail, the communion table, the baptistery, and the pews. Iconic sight comes from other sources. Albrecht suggest that the gathered people act as iconic sight.[12] Kinesthetic icons are integral to the Pentecostal worship service.[13] Not to move, not to raise ones hands, clap, sway, shout, or in some visible way indicate that you are part of what the congregation is experiencing is considered a sign of lack of spirituality or a sure indication that you are an outsider and might be a candidate for evangelism. Wilson and Clow confirm the importance of the body and body movements as symbols in Pentecostal worship.[14]

Kevin Ranaghan's work points out how the Pentecostal crisis experience of conversion and the ordinance of water baptism both function as rites of initiation involving the entire faith community.[15] He specifically identifies these as "rites of public worship . . . celebrated in the midst of the congregation."[16] In doing so, he identifies the parallels between these Pentecostal rituals and initiation rites in other contexts.

Other works detail the social implications of ritual within these contexts.[17] Bobby Alexander lifts up the anti-structural dimensions of Pente-

---

[11]Albrecht, 112.

[12]Ibid., 113.

[13]Idem.

[14]John Wilson and Harvey K. Clow, "Themes of Power and Control in a Pentecostal Assembly," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 20:242, 1981.

[15]Kevin Ranaghan, "Conversion and Baptism: Personal Experience and Ritual Celebration in Pentecostal Churches," *Studia Liturgica*, 10:65-75, 1974.

[16]Ibid., 74.

[17]See Bobby Alexander's works, including "Pentecostal Ritual Reconsidered: Anti-Structural Dimensions of Possession," *Journal of Ritual Studies,* 3:109-128, 1973, "Correcting Misinterpretations of Turner's Theory: An African-American Pentecostal Illustration," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 30:26-44, March, 1991, and *Turner Revisited: Ritual as Social Change* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, Academy Series, The American Academy of Religion, no. 74, 1991). Also, Walter J. Hollenweger, "Social and Ecumenical Significance of Pentecostal Liturgy," *Studia Liturgica,* 8:207-215, 1973, Jon Michael Spencer, "Isochronism of Anti-structure in the Black Holiness-Pentecostal Testimony Service," *Journal of Black Sacred Music*, 2:1-18, Fall, 1988, and John Wilson and Harvey K. Clow, "Themes of Power and Control in a Pentecostal Assembly," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 20:241- 250, 1981.

costal ritual and its effectiveness in giving Pentecostal adherents the tools to express their feelings of social dislocation. He challenges the view of the ecstatic "ritual" of "socially disadvantaged Pentecostals as symbolic rebellion . . . functioning as a catharsis, a safety valve, accommodating them to their condition.[18] Rather, he uses Victor Turner's concept of liminality to describe what happens in Pentecostal worship as "concretizing their opposition to the dominant society . . . and being the embodiment of full humanity and personhood."[19]

Jon Michael Spencer is another scholar who pays close attention to the kinesthetic elements of Pentecostal worship. He specifically focuses on such aspects as the shout or holy dance, which he identifies as "ritual dance."[20] Spencer also identifies the anti-structural dimensions of Pentecostal worship, especially as they relate to the testimony service, which he identifies as a rite of intensification. He sees these dimensions as having an identifiable superstructure embodying communitas, coherence, and elements of musical liminality, marginality, and seminality.[21]

Like Alexander and Spencer, Wilson and Clow also discuss Pentecostal worship as a source of self-empowerment for its adherents. But they go on to identify distinct types of ritual which are part of the Pentecostal worship experience and make specific assumptions about the symbolic meaning of these rituals. They see the aim of Pentecostal worship as "receiving and retaining 'possession' of the Holy Spirit"[22] and they differentiate between initiation rituals which call down the Spirit and confirmatory rituals (such as Pentecostal speaking in tongues or Holiness dancing in the Spirit) which affirm spiritual power.[23]

Others look at how specific elements which have been generally defined by Holiness-Pentecostals as inherently non-ritualistic have been ritualized.[24] Ruel Tyson specifically looks at the structure of the testi-

[18]Bobby Alexander, "Pentecostal Ritual Reconsidered," 3:109.

[19]Ibid., 110.

[20]Jon Michael Spencer, "Isochronism of Anti-structure in the Black Holiness-Pentecostal Testimony Service," *Journal of Black Sacred Music*, 5.

[21]Spencer, 5-7.

[22]Wilson and Clow, 244.

[23]Idem.

[24]Ruel W. Tyson, Jr., "The Testimony of Sister Annie Mae," *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 2:163-184, 1988, and Melvin Williams, *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1974).

mony service, and captures the essence of its significance as a rite of affirmation.[25] In his in-depth analysis, Tyson discusses how the enactment of the testimony functions to constitute a world for the speaker and the congregation, a world which then functions on several levels. He characterizes it as a "formalization of the religious practice and . . . understanding of the speaker."[26] He further looks at how words, and the physical gestures accompanying them, act as symbols and have transformative aspects within this setting.[27]

Cheryl J. Sanders deals specifically with liturgical elements of Holiness and Pentecostal worship in the African-American tradition. Some elements of her description of a "typical Sunday morning worship service"[28] in a progressive inner-city Holiness congregation (such as the up-tempo beat of the processional hymn or the wearing of white by women "liturgical attendants"[29] and the three-hour length of the service) are more common to the African-American context. However, several ingredients, including numerous prayers, the "praise and worship" portion of the service in which "several choruses and hymns are sung in succession" and the altar call, are recognizable in many Holiness-Pentecostal settings, irrespective of cultural framework.[30]

She then draws on her familiarity with this *typical* congregation, as well as her knowledge of other works on African-American Holiness—Pentecostal worship, to extract four schemas of the usual components of such worship. In comparing the four schemas (which average 12 elements each), seven recurring components were common to all four: a type of devotional, prayer, scripture reading, congregational or special singing, the sermon, the offering and the benediction. Additionally, three elements, the introit, announcements, and altar call, were found in three schemas. Though four elements, the recitation of a denominational creed, the "holy dance," testimony service, and reading of the sick and shut-in lists were

[25]Tyson, "Testimony," 170.

[26]Idem.

[27]Ibid., 171.

[28]Cheryl J. Sanders, *Saint in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1996), 42-46.

[29]Ibid., 68-69.

[30]Ibid., 42-46.

only found on one list each, other studies have shown that these are also common element of Holiness-Pentecostal worship.[31]

Richard Baer, a charismatic Episcopalian scholar, makes a direct analogy between Pentecostal tongue speaking and Catholic liturgy, seeing them as functionally equivalent. For him, although they and Quaker Silence, might appear on the surface to be dissimilar, they share the same goal. All three practices "allow the analytical mind to rest . . . thus freeing the spirit for a deeper openness to divine reality." He refutes Wilson and Clow and other scholars who describe Pentecostal worship (specifically tongues) and Holy Spirit baptism as a type of "possession." Baer also refutes casual observers who characterize such worship as uncontrollable expression of emotion, although he admits that the Pentecostal worshiper might be moved by deep emotion, as might the Quaker and the person involved in liturgical worship.[32]

Charles Gaede agrees with Baer that Pentecostal worship differs in form but not in substance from other Christian worship. He says that to define Pentecostal worship in terms of physical activity is "to substitute the form of praise for the substance of praise."[33] Gaede differentiates between ritual and ritualizing or ritualism (in which the ritual is the primary focus of the worshiper's attention).[34] While cautioning against overly ritualizing Pentecostal praise, he lifts up ritual as having a biblical foundation[35] and contends that there is a place for ritual in Pentecostal worship as a tool for providing the "orderly expression of praise."[36] He finally asserts that "method, ritual, and form are essential to the pursuit of God."[37]

Liturgy in Pentecostal Worship

From the start, Holiness—Pentecostal adherents have often objected to use of the terms liturgy, ritual and symbolism. They have associated

[31]Ibid., 49-51.

[32]Richard Baer, "Quaker Silence, Catholic Liturgy and Pentecostal Glossolalia: Some Functional Similarities," in Russell Spittler, *Perspectives in the New Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 152-153.

[33]Charles Gaede, "Pentecost and Praise, Pentecostal Ritual?" *Paraclete* (Spring 1988), 5.

[34]Ibid., 8.

[35]Ibid., 7.

[36]Ibid., 6.

[37]Ibid., 8.

them with the “unspiritual” and “dead formalism.” Early groups deliberately attempted to foster a sense of freedom from formalism and anything that smacked of “dead” structuralism. As such, they understood ritual as ritualism—restrictive, repetitive ceremonialism that inhibits the move of the Holy Spirit in their worship experience. Indeed, these terms are not used extensively by Holiness-Pentecostal theologians who prefer “services,” “distinctives,” and “practices”[38] for what they see happening in their worship.

It is evident however, that such worship contains specific elements of liturgical, ritual, and symbolic presence. Additionally, Baer posits that they are present in almost every aspect, even those which they themselves would declare most “open” to the immediate move of the Holy Spirit—such as Holiness shouting or holy dancing or Pentecostal glossolalia or speaking in tongues.[39] There is a tacit and systematic methodology for doing worship. As within every other ecclesial context, that methodology evolves and changes, has been adapted and modified as the movements and their individual denominations and congregations have redefined themselves over the history of their existence. The essential elements, however, have remained in place, perhaps over the entire life of the movement, though they have been passed down primarily through its oral tradition.

One of the more salient characteristics of the Holiness-Pentecostal movement to outside observers, especially those who have had very little direct contact with such worship, is the seemingly loose liturgical form. From its inception, the Pentecostal movement has defined itself as bringing about a return to apostolic simplicity in worship, and as such, it has continually proclaimed its disdain for anything that it felt may potentially rob worship of spiritual authenticity. Even so, many segments of the movement have moved from sect to church type institutions, they have incorporated more of the formal liturgical practices of their mainline and evangelical counterparts. Modern Pentecostal congregations resemble more and more the mainline or evangelical congregations of their detractors in their style of worship.

Kevin Ranaghan, a Roman Catholic liturgical scholar and observer of Pentecostalism, notes that “at the beginning of the Pentecostal move-

[38]See, for example, Charles W. Conn, *Pentecostal Distinctives* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1968).

[39]Baer, “Quaker Silence.”

ment the order of Pentecostal meetings was one of complete spontaneity in an atmosphere of intense demonstrative worship."[40] But he concedes: "As the Pentecostal churches emerged. . .and became distinct ecclesial communities with their own buildings, clergy, etc., the free-form. . .meeting began to be shaped into a definite order of service. This process, slow in some churches, rapid in others, has tended to regulate the elements of Pentecostal worship."[41] However, even within the most "primitive" sect-type Pentecostal bodies, and even within the earlier Pentecostal worship context, vestiges of liturgy, ritual, and symbolism are inherent in the worship. This is especially true when these terms are understood in their theologically broad meaning.

The modern Pentecostal movement is characterized by the variety of its expressions, and there is a certain openness to Pentecostal worship that lends itself to being easily adapted to various cultural and social milieus. A frequent prayer at the beginning of many Pentecostal services is for the Holy Spirit to "have his way," and participants are repeatedly reminded to remain open to the "moving of the Holy Spirit" and "whatever he wants to do" in them. But, as Hollenweger has correctly noted, the openness is only within limits since "the flexible oral tradition allows for variation within a framework of the whole liturgical structure, but only within that structure."[42]

Limited Liturgical Calendar

In general, Pentecostals have little appreciation for the liturgical year and the church-year calendar. Relatedly, though some seminary-trained ministers make limited use of lectionaries for sermon topics or themes, it is rare that a Pentecostal congregation's worship schedule would be based on a lectionary. Instead, preachers are expected to seek God through prayer for the specific needs of the congregation at any given time and to prepare a message specifically geared to meet those needs.

There are only four major events in the Pentecostal liturgical year which, with at least one major exception, are observed uniformly: Easter, Christmas, New Year's Eve, and Pentecost. The major holy day for Pentecostals is Easter Sunday. The most uniform rites of Easter are the Sunrise

[40]Ranaghan, "Conversion and Baptism. . . ," 68.

[41]Idem.

[42]Hollenweger, 210.

Service, the Easter cantata, and the Easter morning worship service. While there is no extended Easter season, and specifically no observance of Lent, many Pentecostal congregations do observe Good Friday in some way. Where Good Friday is observed, the "Seven Last Words of Christ"—a service in which seven speakers deliver short sermonettes or homilies related to the last seven recorded statements of Jesus prior to his crucifixion—is one of the more often used thematic motifs. But this is not a particularly Pentecostal form; many Protestant congregations, especially those within the Evangelical tradition, use this.

Christmas is the second most important event observed within *most* Pentecostal churches. There are some congregations and denominations, however, which do not hold Christmas as a significant holiday, arguing that, since no one knows the date of Jesus' birth, it should not be held as a Christian holiday.[43] Some even forbid observance of the day, seeing it as a pagan holiday. In both cases this is the minority. For those congregations which do celebrate Christmas, the main rituals may include a Christmas Eve service, a cantata, a Christmas play, and a congregational dinner or party which would include several elements of worship such as reading of the Christmas story, a short Christmas homily or drama, and the singing of carols. Though the advent season is generally not observed, throughout December, in the regular worship services, Christmas carols would be sung along with regular hymns and choruses.

New Year's Eve is generally commemorated with a Watch Night service during which the congregation "watches" in the new year in prayer, singing, testimony about what God had done during the previous year, preaching and feasting. Most New Year's Eve services also include communion and many include foot washing.[44] The central component of

[43]This is especially true among oneness Pentecostals and was the case at First United. There was no special consideration given to this holiday. There were no Christmas decorations, no Christmas cantata, no singing of carols, no exchanging of gifts. However, some individuals and families did hold secular celebrations in their homes, including decorating a tree and giving gifts, especially to children.

[44]For information on this rite of foot washing as practiced in the Church of God (Cleveland), see "Pediluvian Distinctive" in chapter 2 of Ray H. Hughes, *Church of God Distinctives* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1968) or "Ordinances" in Stanley Burgess, Gary McGee and Patrick Alexander, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 654.

the New Year's Eve service for most congregations is for all individuals to be kneeling and praying as the clock strikes midnight.

The day of Pentecost, coming seven weeks (49 days) after Easter, is a special time for most Pentecostal congregations since it commemorates the event of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the Christians gathered in the Upper Room. This is the event to which most Pentecostals point as the paradigm for their present mode of worship. However, it is observed with more or less formality within various Pentecostal settings. For some denominations this time is set aside for special meetings, with various congregations coming together for camp meetings or convocations. Others commemorate it with a special service emphasizing the "Pentecostal heritage." Some may make note of the day in passing remarks, but not center the service around that theme. Others ignore it completely.

Many contemporary Pentecostal congregations have started holding services to commemorate specific special occasions. For instance, the Church of God "Ministry Planning Calendar" is full of special days with "special preaching emphasis."[45] These include events such as Ministry to the Military Day, Pastor's Appreciation Sunday, Senior Adult Day, etc. Denominational offices sometimes provide resource materials or suggest general worship formats, but individual congregations generally have complete freedom as to whether they participate and/or use the materials.

Limited Use of Liturgical Resources

In entering the Pentecostal ritual field, what is probably most evident is that many of the usual liturgical resources are absent. There is no understanding or use of liturgical colors and no liturgical banners with highly stylized symbols or sophisticated art work (though some storefront churches do hang plaques or hand made banners with Bible verses). There generally are no stained glass windows; neither are there fabric coverings for the altar railings or pulpit, and no large, strategically placed crosses.

Classical Pentecostal congregations whose places of worship (as they would designate the ritual field) are ornately adorned are rare. As Albrecht states, the field is relatively austere, though the worship spaces are not actually stark and many of them are outfitted very comfortably. Indeed, many of the newer Pentecostal places of worship are quite elegant, but it is usually a contemporary, "utilitarian" elegance rather than "liturgical"

[45]Ministries Planning Guide.

beauty that they exude. As such, Pentecostals believe a ritual field should reflect a certain quality of dignity befitting the nature of God. The property of utilitarian elegance would be reflected in components such as quality building materials (i.e., brick or stone facades, comfortable pews, upgraded carpets, etc.), high-quality musical instruments and the finest sound equipment. What Pentecostals would generally disdain is ornately decorated ritual space and what many consider as liturgical "trappings" such as stain glass windows, liturgical art, or especially statuary.

Within this primarily oral context, there is no written Pentecostal rite. There is no prayer book or missal. There are no liturgists or liturgical committees. There are no trained lay speakers or readers. More importantly, many congregations provide no formal liturgical training for minsters. Rather, ministers generally learn how to preside over various rites and ordinances through hands-on training within the congregation. This learning starts at a very early age as children are called on to pray extemporaneously, read a scripture, lead a specific segment of the worship service such as the testimony service, or sing or play a song or chorus. The same is true for new converts. They are quickly grafted into the liturgical life of the community through incorporation into non-ministerial presiding functions such as praying for the offering, delivering the pulpit greeting to visitors, or duties similar to those in which children are used.

Even within "formal" ministerial training programs that some denominations provide, emphasis is on practical functions perceived to be pastoral rather than liturgical. This training primarily involves biblical scholarship and understanding, preaching techniques, and specific denominational history and administrative polity (i.e., how church government works, how to hold a church meeting, etc.). Formal courses in liturgy, liturgics, or even corporate worship theory or practice are negligible among offerings of Pentecostal seminaries. For example, the 1994-1996 course catalog of the Church of God School of Theology lists only one elective course related to this area, "Worship and Church Music." Essentially, as described below, the course accentuates the Pentecostal understanding of openness to the Holy Spirit in providing direction in worship: "*Sensitivity to the guidance of the Spirit is emphasized. Special attention is given to the crucial importance of music in Pentecostal Worship*."[46]

[46]Church of God School of Theology *Bulletin*, Vol. IX, 1994-1996 (Cleveland, TN: Church of God School of Theology, 1994), 81, emphasis added.

Minister's service manuals, available from some denominational publishing houses, suggest general formats for special services such as weddings, funerals, etc.[47] However, even here, none of these manuals published by Pentecostal denominations in America contain an order of service for regular congregational worship.[48] The greatest proportion of the materials in these manuals consists of suggested Scripture readings and lists of elements that can be included, without any scripting or detailed instruction on how to conduct each rite. Ministers, however, are free to utilize any aids they want. While some ministers might use worship aids in their personal preparation for worship, many would decline their use in the pulpit for fear of appearing "unspiritual" to members of the congregation.

The closest liturgical aid in Pentecostal worship comparable to those found in more formal liturgical settings is the responsive scripture readings found at the back of many hymnals. In actuality, these are primarily suggested scripture passages which can be read responsively by the congregation on any given Sunday, as the minister determines. The presider reads the first verse of the scripture alone, the next verse is read by the congregation in unison. They continue to alternate until the final verse, which is read in unison. In some cases these are a single scriptural pericope, in others they are composites of two or more passages, generally following a theme. They are fairly limited in number and scope, but, since one of the primary "rules" of Pentecostal worship is that everyone brings his or her own Bible with them to worship, this has not previously been seen as a problem. Prior to the introduction of newer translations into Pentecostal worship,[49] responsive readings were generally done directly

[47]For an example, see Clyde W. Buxton, *Minister's Service Manual* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1994). Though this manual was published by Pathway, the Church of God's publishing house, it was not prepared under the auspices of the church, but by a single individual. Use of the manual is not mandatory in any way.

[48]Ranaghan, *Conversion*, 68.

[49]Up until the last two decades, Pentecostal congregations generally relied on the King James Version as their text of choice in all worship services Many now also use the New International and/or the New King James. Some individual worshipers may also use paraphrases such as the Living Bible. It would be very rare, however, for a Pentecostal congregation to use the Revised Standard Version or the New Revised Standard Version or any of the other translations within a regular worship context.

from the Bible. Because of the variety of translations now present in the worship service, responsive reading has been replaced in many cases with an individual reader.

Even where responsive reading is not employed, each member of the congregation is expected to follow along in a personal Bible whenever scripture is read. This is generally done in at least two places in the service. There usually is at least one opening scripture passage following the call to worship. The preacher will also read the specific passage related to his or her message just prior to preaching. In addition, the sermon itself is often interspersed with short passages and the congregation is usually directed to turn to the respective passage and read along. Scriptural passages may also be introduced into worship in conjunction with other elements of the service such as raising the offering, communion, or baptism. Sometimes individual members of the congregation will read a scripture passage as part of their testimony.

The use of hymnals in Pentecostal worship is relatively limited. Though many Pentecostal denominations publish at least one hymnal,[50] many congregations (especially since the influence of the charismatic renewal) use hymnals only sparingly. Much of the singing is by rote. People generally know by heart the words of choruses and even complicated hymns.

Limited Sacramental Identification

The idea of "sacrament" is foreign to the Pentecostal self-understanding, either in the Wesleyan idea of an outward sign of an invisible grace that is already present in the believer or the Catholic tradition of sacraments as having transformational quality.[51] Instead, rites are viewed as "ordinances."[52] In this sense, they are understood as not having any "self-contained efficacy" as conveyors of grace in any dimension.[53] Rather, they are defined as obedient responses to biblical commands of

[50]The Church of God (Cleveland), for example, publishes two hymnals: *Hymns of the Spirit* and *Church Hymnal*.

[51]See the discussion of Sacraments in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, 910-922.

[52]Duffield and Van Cleave, 137, 375, 435-438.

[53]Burgess, et. al., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 653.

Christ[54] as relating to the life of the individual and the church. But, just as with a sacramental understanding of these elements, these ritual ordinances are public, participatory affairs. There are primarily two ordinances which all Pentecostal churches regularly observe, water baptism[55] and communion. Baptism does not take place in a private place. Communion involves all the gathered church.

Water baptism is reserved for converts (whether children or adults). Most Pentecostal congregations observe baptism by immersion only.[56] However, nowhere is an understanding of the symbolic nature of rites more evident within the Pentecostal milieu than in language of the following entry concerning baptism from a denominational statement of faith:

> We believe that water baptism in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, according to the command of our Lord, is a blessed outward sign of an inward work, a beautiful and solemn emblem. . . ."[57]

At First United, baptism candidates wear special white garments designed specifically for the baptism ritual. The women wear long white bloomers with robes over them and white swimming caps to keep their hair from getting wet. At Harvest Temple, the ritual is no less public, if less formal. In keeping with its less formal atmosphere, no special clothing is worn. People dress in their own casual clothing and bring a change of clothing from home. In both cases, baptism is held as part of the regular worship service. As with every other part of the service, singing is an important element, and the choir or congregation intones a variety of baptismal hymns and choruses as each candidate is immersed, stopping only long enough for the minister to ask the candidate for a confirmation of faith and to pronounce the words of enactment.

In the Pentecostal tradition, communion—also called the Lord's Supper—is observed strictly as an ordinance, an act of obedience to the

[54]Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), 435.

[55]As opposed to Spirit Baptism.

[56]The exception is the Pentecostal Holiness Church. This denomination allows members to choose between immersion, pouring, and sprinkling.

[57]Duffield and Van Cleave, 436. This Statement is from the Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

command of God. It is a time of remembering the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross and a looking forward to His return and reunion with Him in heaven. As Ranaghan states:

> The overwhelming majority of American Pentecostals adhere to a Zwinglian theology of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, espousing the bread and the wine only as tokens of a past event and only as symbols of a separate spiritual reality. Yet the universally deep experiences of the presence of the Risen Christ and the power of his Spirit . . . tend to infuse their Eucharist with an intense awareness of the actual presence of Christ in the sharing of the bread and cup.[58]

The schedule for communion is generally set by the individual pastors within a denomination. It is not rare to find a wide disparity in the frequency of communion, even within a single denomination. Church of God (Cleveland, TN) pastors, for instance, vary to the extent that some serve it monthly, some serve it quarterly, some serve it at no regular interval. But it is rare to encounter a Pentecostal church which serves communion on a weekly basis. There is also divergence on when communion is served. While some congregations serve it as part of a Sunday morning worship service, others serve it on Sunday evenings, and some set aside a week night for the observance. For some, it is conducted as a separate worship service, for others it is a part of a standard worship service. Many congregations also incorporate communion into special occasions such Christmas or New Year's Eve or Good Friday.

The observance of foot washing is considered to be the third ordinance by some denominations and is practiced at various times and intervals within local congregations. In the foot washing service, participants are seated in chairs set aside for the purpose, and basins of water are placed at their feet. Another individual kneels before a basin and proceeds to ritually pour water over the person's feet, using their hands to bathe them. They might also quietly pronounce some blessing or prayer for the one whose feet they are washing. Then they dry the feet with a clean towel. They then switch places and repeat the ritual. This process is done until everyone in the congregation who elects to has participated. Many churches incorporate foot washing as a regular part of their communion

[58]Kevin Ranaghan, "Liturgical Renewal at Oral Roberts University," *Studia Liturgica*, 8:122, 1973.

services. Some only incorporate it into special services such as New Years's Eve and Good Friday. Other congregations rarely practice the rite at all. There is also wide diversity as to whether participation is expected of all members or left to the member's election. Within some denominations all "baptized believers," regardless of age, are expected to participate in foot washing. In others, participation is completely optional, but is open to everyone who wants to participate.[59]

In addition to these ordinances, several other *rites* are regularly practiced by Holiness-Pentecostal congregations. Dedication of babies replaces baptism or confirmation as the major rite for children. Children—usually, but not necessarily infants—are presented to the church by their parents or a responsible adult to receive a special prayer of dedication and blessing by the pastor. At the same time, the parents, grandparents, and indeed the entire church are charged by the presider with the responsibility for the well-being and religious nurturing of the young child.

The "Right Hand of Fellowship" is a rite that is centered around the accepting of candidates into the membership of a particular congregation. This generally involves some form of public reading and accepting of the doctrines of the church by the new members, an official motion, an informal congregational vote of acceptance of candidates (raising of the right hand) into membership and a ritual greeting of new members by ministers and leaders of the congregation or the entire congregation.

Case Studies: Pentecostal Worship Expressions

Pentecostalism is not a monolith or a denomination with one central governing body. Rather, the Pentecostal community is made up of small to moderate size churches, including inner city store fronts, renovated former synagogues, mainline churches with lower to middle-class congregations, and modernistic suburban complexes with primarily working to upper-middle-class congregations. In sum, the Pentecostal movement is characterized by the variety of its expressions.

Many of the distinctions noted between the two congregations highlighted in this study can be explained by the two different points in time covered by this paper. However, when I initially moved from one congregation to the other in a short space of time, some of the differences were

[59]Burgess, et. al., 654.

already apparent. The communion and baptismal rituals as well as their modes of praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit are perhaps the most distinctive; the musical competency and variety was also generally more pronounced at First United.

1. High-Church Holiness-Pentecostalism: First United Church. Many large urban and suburban Pentecostal congregations, especially those whose members have attained some degree of educational and economic upward mobility or those whose leaders migrated into the Pentecostal movement from more upwardly mobile traditions, tend to practice a style of worship which is a mixture of "Old Time Religion" and more traditional Christian worship. Within these congregations, hymns, anthems, and organ music are mixed with impromptu choruses and the electronic keyboard. A robed choir fills the choir loft and the choir director may either have some musical training or is at least "gifted" in music.

First United Church of Jesus Christ (Apostolic) is a part of a small African-American denomination which operates primarily within an urban context. Because the congregation has generally used spaces purchased from existing congregations of other denominations, Albrecht's description of the liturgical space as austere does not apply here. For example, during the period I attended First United (from 1956-1978), its first worship space was an edifice built for a Greek Orthodox congregation, St. Sophia's. The sanctuary was adorned with stained glass windows. Brass pipes for a pipe organ lined the front wall.

When urban renewal forced the congregation to relocate, it did not attempt to build a new structure around its worship style. It located and purchased a facility vacated by a Methodist congregation. The building was all brick, with a large sanctuary, a rear balcony, a rolling green lawn, and stained glass windows. The important issues for the church were not liturgical presence, but whether the facility was large enough and whether they would have to move out of the city, since many of its older members lived in the city and depended on public transportation or car pools to get to and from church. It also had to be ample enough to reflect the middle class status of the congregation and the quality of graciousness that was apparent in the former facility.

The worship service at First United during the time I attended was a mixture of Pentecostal fervor (with spirited preaching, exuberant singing, extemporaneous prayers, and the characteristic ecstatic expression) and

Methodist order—represented by a robed minister and choir, a processional and responsive readings. For the several years I attended the church, both the Sunday morning and evening worship services began with a processional of the pastor, other ministers, and the choir. The processional litanies included reciting Psalm 1 for the Sunday morning worship service and Psalm 37:1-11 for the evening worship service, both of which every regular member of the congregation could recite by heart. Additionally, the morning worship service always ended with the same hymn:

> God be with you til we meet again;
> By his counsels guide, uphold you,
> Neath his wings securely fold you;
> God be with you, til we meet again.
>
> Til we meet, til we meet, til we meet at Jesus' feet;
> Til we meet, til we meet, God be with you til we meet again.[60]

Likewise, the evening worship service had its own format and always started with the same hymn:

> If I have wounded any soul today,
> If I have caused one foot to go astray,
> If I have walked in my own willful way;
> Dear Lord forgive.[61]

At the close of the evening worship service, just before the benediction was prayed, the same closing chorus was sung:

> God be with you, God be with you
> God be with you til we meet again.
>
> May God bless you, May God bless you,
> May God bless you, til we meet again.[62]

One of the most liturgical memories of First United is the communion service. The celebration of communion was held every fourth Thursday evening since a regular worship service was scheduled for that night each week. Even when Thanksgiving or Christmas or some secular holi-

[60]Words by Jeremiah Rankin, music by William G. Tomer, n.p., n.d.

[61]"An Evening Prayer," words by C. M. Battersby, music by Charles H. Gabriel (the Rodeheaver Co., 1939).

[62]Author unknown.

day fell on this day, it was still reserved for communion, and most people attended faithfully—not to take communion was a sign that there was something seriously wrong spiritually. Attendance at communion usually rivaled that of Sunday morning worship. However, this was never understood to be an "open" table. Only "baptized believers" could receive communion at First United. Young children were excluded unless they had been baptized. People from other congregations were allowed to partake only if they professed to be "saved," and this was made explicitly clear from the pulpit as the service started.

What was also made explicitly clear in this context was that communion was a solemn occasion, not a celebration in the general sense of the word. People were expected to have confessed to God and repented of all known sin in their lives and were not to approach the communion table unless such confession and repentance had been made. So there were some in the congregation on any given occasion who did not partake, though they attended the service. In fact, just prior to the actual serving of the elements, people were instructed to "examine yourself to see if there is any 'hidden' sin in your heart" and to make it right. This was the understanding of "eating and drinking unworthily and eating and drinking damnation to oneself."[63]

Communion was a major occasion and required a great deal of preparation. As the service began, all of the pulpit furnishings had been draped in white. The altar, the communion table, the podium, and the minister's chairs were all draped with white muslin sheets. The elements had been prepared before hand and were in the front center of the sanctuary on the communion table. They too had a single white muslin clothe covering them. All the females of the church were expected to wear white. Since women were expected to wear some type of head covering, most also wore white hats or chapel caps, and many had on white stocking and white shoes. The men wore dark- colored suits. This is the one setting in which color becomes a liturgical icon, signifying the purifying virtue of the blood of Christ. Though some question may be raised as to why only the women wore white, in a conservative congregation such as First United it might have been considered "worldly" or flashy for men to wear white. However, in many contemporary Pentecostal congregations

[63]This understanding is based on an appropriation of Paul's admonition to the Corinthian church in 1 Cor. 11: 28-29.

that still maintain this symbolism, men also dress in white shirts and white trousers, and sometimes even white shoes.

A regular worship service preceded communion with singing of hymns, testimony, and maybe a short sermon. But the serving of communion was the highlight of this service. It took up the greatest portion of the time. At the start of the serving of communion, the white-robed minister approached the back of the communion table from the pulpit area. Two "mothers"[64] of the church approached the table with him and lifted the white covering that had been draped over the elements. They held this panel between the minister and the congregation (as if to preserve some kind of mystery about what was going on),[65] and the minister proceeded to ritually wash and dry his hands, using a linen towel that had been folded neatly on the table. Once the ritual cleansing was completed, the minister signaled the choir to begin singing, and the serving of communion commenced.

Starting with the ministers seated on the rostrum, followed by the deacons and then the "mothers of the church," each row of pews was invited to the altar railing. Each individual knelt, waited and held the elements until each person at the altar railing was served. As they waited, the choir sang one of the hymns designated in one of the church's four hymn books under the subheading of communion. It would be a hymn like:

> There is a fountain filled with blood,
> Drawn from Emmanuel's veins
> And sinners plunged beneath the flood
> Lose all their guilty stain.[66]

Then they all partook of the elements together as the minister intoned the words, "This is my body that was broken for you and my blood that was

[64]"This designation is given older women in the congregation who function as deaconesses. Their main responsibilities included providing spiritual support and nurture to younger women in the congregation through instruction and example of good works, such as caring for the communion elements. The title would be used in addressing these women in the congregation or even in a church-related social setting (i.e., "Mother Jones is sick at home, so please give her a call this week").

[65]This action, in itself, seems incongruous with the non-sacramental, non-liturgical Pentecostal self-definition, implying as it does "mystery" while adherents, at the same time, deny that anything "mysterious" is going on.

[66]"There is a Fountain Filled with Blood," words by William Cowper, music by Lowell Mason, n.p., n.d.

shed for you. Take, eat ye all of it. As often as you do this you show forth my death, burial, and resurrection until I come. This do in remembrance of me." As he did, the choir continued singing softly in the background. Possibly they had changed to another chorus like,

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

O! precious is that flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know;
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.[67]

After all the kneelers had been served, a short extemporaneous prayer was said. This same ritual was repeated again and again until the entire congregation had been served.

The process of serving communion usually took forty-five minutes or longer, depending on how many congregants were in attendance. During this entire period, the choir and congregation continued to sing, changing hymns after every two or three pews were served. At the end of the service, after the pastor had made any special remarks he deemed necessary, the same special hymn, "Blest be the tie that Binds"[68] was sung and the same ritual performed:

Blest be the tie that binds, our hearts in Christian love;
A Fellowship of kindred minds, is like to that above.

As the first verse was sung, members of the congregation clasped their hands together over the front of their heads.

We share our mutual woes; our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows a sympathizing tear.

They would sing the second verse as they moved from person to person shaking hands or hugging each other, but never ceasing to sing.

When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.

[67]"Nothing But the Blood of Jesus," words and music by Robert Lowery, n.p., n.d.

[68]"Bless Be the Tie that Binds," words by John Fawcett and music by Hans G. Naegeli, n.p., n.d.

The final verse would be sung as people in the individual rows of pews throughout the congregation stretched across the aisles to link hands. Each time the service ended with the same words from scripture: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out . . ."[69] The pattern never varied.

2. Store-Front/Low-Church Pentecostalism: Harvest Temple. Liturgy within store-front Pentecostal churches is somewhat less obvious and more loosely structured. This is the form in which Pentecostalism is generally practiced. Here the disdain for anything that smacks of ritual will be the greatest. Many of these congregations and their leaders are fiercely independent. They rely on "nothing but the Bible" as their guide for every aspect of life and worship. Everyone in the congregation is expected to have a Bible with them. If not, there will be plenty of Bibles in the pews. These serve as more than sources for the preaching text. People often turn to a scripture passage and read it in the midst of whatever else they are responsible for doing in the service. Often simple choruses come directly from scripture and are put to simple tunes.

Many pastors and ministers within this segment of Pentecostalism have little formal seminary training. While some ministers do make extensive use of Bible study aids such as concordances and commentaries, and many make use of alternate training opportunities such as church training or correspondence courses, many have no higher education at all. In spite of this, Pentecostal ministers frequently can quote very long passages of scripture and can expound on them with detail. Within this context the truly oral nature of Pentecostal liturgy is most evident. These same "unlearned" ministers have generally internalized almost every segment of the Pentecostal worship service. They can be and often are called on to preside over a segment of the worship service with literally a moment's notice, and do so quite willingly, "depending on the Holy Spirit" to provide whatever is needed for the occasion. If there is a choir, instead of robes, they may wear specific colors or styles of dress such as white blouses and dark skirts for the women and white shirts and dark pants for the men. The pastor usually will wear a suit and tie if the person is male, or a suit or dress if it is a woman.

But a type of store-front Pentecostalism is operable in many congregations which are housed in less revealing structures. Many of the congregations have very contemporary and even sophisticated structures and

[69]Quotation from Matt. 26-30 and Mk. 14:26, KJV. Refers to Jesus' and the disciples' departure from the Last Supper, just prior to going to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane.

equipment, and the worship ritual is more refined than that found in true storefront buildings. And though these congregations may represent a somewhat higher social class than in a store-front congregation, even here the disdain for anything that smacks of ritualism is evident. It is enunciated in the remarks made by the ministers and presiders, as well as reiterated in the testimonies and exhortations of congregants. This disdain for what is perceived to be ritualism is also obvious in the very way many Pentecostal services are conducted. There is a struggle to maintain "decency and order" while not losing any of the "spiritual vitality" which makes Pentecostalism "Pentecostalism." Growing or transitional congregations struggle to maintain balance.

In many ways Harvest Temple Church of God in engaged in such a struggle. When I first attended Harvest Temple in 1978, it was housed in a structure that had been built some thirty years earlier using plans that were obtained from the denomination and a simple style which is evident in many of the denomination's churches which I have visited. It was a simple clapboard country church structure. It had no stained glass windows, and simple wooden pews. Even as the church was renovated to accommodate growth which had forced it to hold two separate Sunday morning worship services, the new space had a very simple, though much more contemporary, design. The lines of the worship space were very stark. The walls were white and unadorned. Lacking were any liturgical accouterments besides the pulpit, communion table, altar railings, baptistery, and the pews. Along with these were several musical instruments including an organ, piano, electric keyboard, and drum set.

Harvest Temple Church of God is a lower to middle class congregation located in a suburban community within a large metropolitan area. Over the last 18 years the congregation has seen a complete metamorphosis from an all-white, working class congregation to an almost completely African American lower-middle class congregation. Although now it is predominantly Black, it is part of a Holiness-Pentecostal denomination with a primarily Southern white heritage. So, while the congregation and its style of worship have changed considerably, the Southern white influence is reflected in many ways in the congregation's worship style. As Walter Hollenweger explains:

> In the structure of the Pentecostal "liturgy" one might find most of the elements of historical liturgies. Invocation, Kyrie, Confession, Gloria, Eucharist, Canon and Benediction. Yet, these parts are hardly ever so named and for most observers

> not recognized as such, since the element which structure the different parts of the service are not the rubrics and techniques, but the choruses, the short spontaneous songs known by heart by the whole congregation.[70]

The elements which Hollenweger identifies are found in the most obvious evidence of liturgical presence in Pentecostal worship—the "program," "bulletin," or "Order of Worship." Such orders of worship have been evident in almost every Sunday morning or evening Pentecostal worship service which I have visited (except in the smallest, most *primitive* store-fronts). They are also provided for many special services such as revival meetings or regional fellowships involving more than one congregation. Some are crudely composed on electric typewriters or personal home computers with minimal software. Others are professionally composed using the latest desk-top publishing techniques. All of them, however, represent an attempt to impose some order on Pentecostal worship. The order of worship generally lists the elements of the worship service in chronological order, as well as who will lead or be in charge of each element. The basic liturgical format for the Pentecostal worship service is contained in the order of worship—the call to worship, the pastoral prayer, the scripture reading(s), intercessory prayer, congregational and special music, the sermon, testimony, and altar ministry (individual prayer and laying on of hands). Whether the biblical readings are incorporated into the program varies from congregation to congregation. If the church does not have hymn books for everyone and a specific hymn is to be sung, it is usually xeroxed or the words are neatly typed out in the program.

Spontaneous response to the perceived presence of the Holy Spirit would be the characteristic that most identifies store-front Pentecostal worship. This element certainly is present at Harvest Temple. In such a climate, the order of worship serves as a guideline for conducting the service. Often, interspersed between these formal elements are extemporaneous testimonies, impromptu solos or congregational songs, prayers, and exhortations "as the Spirit leads." At all cost, Pentecostals believe that God's Spirit must have the freedom and the final say to direct the worship service in any direction.

What one would not find in the program or order of worship, but would be equally a part of a Pentecostal worship service, is the opportunity and expectation of the experience of the dynamic in-breaking of the Spirit of God at some point in the service. This is the time when congre-

[70]Walter Hollenweger, 210.

gants are most open to the experience of the direct presence of God through tongues and/or ecstatic worship. If the singing is exceptionally lively or exceptionally devout, or if the prayer is exceptionally fervent or moving, there is likely to be an extended period when several people “break out in a shout” or “holy dance.” Also, the presider (usually a minister or elder) will sense that there is a special need among the people (sickness, grief, a financial difficulty, emotional distress, or “someone in need of salvation”) and will break with the written order of the service, call for a time or prayer, and invite people to come to the altar. The pastor and/or several of the ministers might gather around those in need and proceed to “anoint them with oil” and pray for them individually or as a group. These moments are never seen as interruptions in the service. Indeed, as Wilson and Clow point out, they are experienced as opportunities for the congregation and the individual to reaffirm spiritual power.[71]

On one recent Sunday morning at Harvest Temple, during the time I was researching this paper, the congregational singing (designated “Praise and Worship”) was proceeding. Several people were moved by the Spirit. A prolonged session of dancing or “shouting” broke out. The congregation continued to sing chorus after chorus of up-tempo worship songs. Though the pastor had a prepared message, he did not attempt to interrupt, but joined in the worship celebration and sang, clapped, and danced with the rest of the congregation. After about 45 minutes, punctuated with a crescendo of raising and falling exuberance, the pastor moved to the podium to announce that, though he was prepared to preach, the Spirit had something else in mind and was leading the service another way. He did not mind yielding to the Spirit. At this point the celebration became even livelier and continued for several more minutes. At some point a message was given in tongues. This was followed by an interpretation. When the interpretation was completed, the people stood for a moment in reverence, then the celebration and praise began again—some praising God in English, some in tongues. No one was shocked by this occurrence, indeed it is expected. As Wilson and Clow observe:

> Pentecostal believers understand the Spirit as being imminently present in the worship service, and more importantly, imminently present within each individual believer who has been baptized in the Spirit.[72]

[71]John Wilson and Harvey K. Clow, “Themes of Power and Control in a Pentecostal Assembly,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 20:244.

[72]Ibid., 244.

Testimony as Liturgy[73]

In a primarily oral tradition, oral means will be the primary carriers of the tradition. Certain rituals will become highly developed instruments for carrying out this function. Several scholars, including Spencer, Williams, and Tyson, have identified the testimony as such an instrument. To an outsider the testimony service may seem like a free-for-all event. On the signal of the presider, individuals within the congregation stand and exhort each other about their personal experiences of faith. If you listen carefully, however, there is a definite, collective pattern to the individual testimonies. Although these testimonies are specific to the individual, certain themes are repeated, and these themes generally change and evolve as do other liturgical patterns.

The testimony generally starts with a greeting (or salutation) to the other members of the congregation and to the ministers: "First giving honor to the pastor, pulpit associates, saints and friends." This is almost always followed by an affirmation which attests to the individual's right to be included in the community based on specific, shared spiritual experience: "Thank the Lord, that I'm still saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost."[74] There are regional and cultural varieties to the patterns of testimonies and definite racial patterns[75] that can be discerned in the language and style of testimonies.[76] Even so, the basic elements of the individual testimonies have remained the same over several generations.

[73]For a narrative description of such a service see Melvin Williams, *Community in a Pentecostal Church* or Ruel Tyson, "The Testimony of Sister Annie Mae."

[74]Spencer, 8-10.

[75]For example, see Melvin Mitchell, *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church* or Cheryl Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 1996.

[76]One distinct racial difference is that Black congregations tend to have a separate segment of the regular worship service designated as the "testimony service" and may allow an extended period of time for as many people as want to "get a word in for the Lord." On the other hand, White and multi-racial congregations tend to have testimonies solicited from individual members of the congregation from time to time. Additionally, Black testimonies tend to be long narratives about the general goodness of God in every aspect of personal life and are sometimes interspersed with songs or scripture reading. In the White context, testimonies usually are about some specific evidence or event of God's blessing. For example, Harvest Temple had previously been a majority White congregation with a white pastor and testimony service was rare, although individuals were sometimes asked by the pastor before the service if they would "share" during the service. Since the congregation has become predominantly Black and has a Black pastor, testimony service is a part of every regular Sunday evening service.

Though active congregational participation is expressed throughout many segments of the service, nowhere is this more evident than in the testimonies and the sermon. There is often a call and response element to both the sermon and the testimony, as the individual preacher or testifier and the congregation affirm together their faith in the goodness and righteousness of God. As Albrecht notes, there is a "high level of mutual participation in Pentecostal ritual. Pentecostals are particularly interactive and social. It is expected that each believer will engage in the worship service; spectators are essentially outsiders."[77] As Hollenweger says, "the most important element in Pentecostal worship is the active participation of every member of the congregation."[78] Tyson alludes to the "living relationship between Sister Annie Mae and the congregation" during her testimony. The interplay provides a vital source of energy and community to the testimony during its enactment.[79] The individual asserts in the testimony that "God is good," and the congregation responds "All the time." During the course of the sermon, the preacher's message is peppered with "Amen" or "Hallelujah" or "Praise the Lord" from every corner of the sanctuary as strategic points are made.

Whatever the formula for the body of the testimony, they all share an important final element, an invitation to assent by the faith community. These testimonies are not solo spiritual journeys the speaker details for detached spectators. Instead, the victory of the testifier becomes the victory of the congregation. Individual loss becomes group loss. Nowhere is this more evident than in the closing admonition to the listeners, which goes essentially, "those that know the words of prayer, pray my strength in the Lord" or "I desire your prayers" or "pray much for me."[80]

Prayer and Conversion as Liturgy

Knowing the words of prayer is almost indispensable to participants in Pentecostal worship. These words, however, are not known in the precise sense; they do not represent a formed, written prayer or learned formulations. Rather, they are the individual's contribution to the concert of extemporaneous congregational supplication. They are a sense of what is

[77]Albrecht, 123.

[78]Hollenweger, 210.

[79]Tyson, "Testimony," 171.

[80]Spencer, 10.

appropriate to say to God on behalf of the desired spiritual or material results. The sheer number of prayers offered during the typical worship service gives credence to the vital role prayer plays in Holiness-Pentecostal worship. Ranaghan's composite order of worship, constructed from research involving material on several Pentecostal congregations and, he says, typical in its general outline, identifies five distinct prayer rituals interspersed throughout other elements of the ordinary Pentecostal worship service: (1) the opening prayer of invocations; (2) prayers first by the pastor and then by the congregation (pastoral or intercessory prayer); (3) prayer for the Spirit to anoint the preacher; (4) the altar call with congregational prayer and music in the background; (5) the altar service; and (6) the benediction.[81]

Most if not all of these prayers are extemporaneous.[82] In many congregations, everyone is expected to take part by praying together, simultaneously, but in their own words, out loud. Most worshipers will be praying in the vernacular of the congregation, but some may be praying in tongues. Others may be only offering sporadic "hallelujahs," "amens," "thank you, Jesus" or other affirmations. A few may be just raising their hands in praise or waving their arms, weeping softly or clapping. But everyone is somehow engaged. Even in the "altar service" there is major participation by the congregation. The altar service is a special part of the service set aside as a time when, "seekers meet the ministers at the altar railing before the pulpit to pray together for the [particular] experience sought. Often ministers will impose hands, altar workers from the congregation will counsel and pray, the congregation or part of it may come forward to surround the seekers with praise and intercession, the choir may sing, or music may be played in the background."[83] Altar ministry clearly is a vital part of many Holiness—Pentecostal worship services and is included at the end of many written orders of worship. The fluidity of the these worship services allows the altar service to take place at any point as the Spirit directs. In some instances there is more than one altar service in a single time of worship as the presider or minister senses is appropriate.

[81]Ranaghan, "Conversion," 68-69.

[82]Some congregations do use formal benedictions. These are usually familiar biblical passages such as: "May the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another" (Gen. 31:49).

[83]Ranaghan, "Conversion. . . ," 68.

At First United, the extended "altar call," as the altar service was called, was usually relegated to the end of the worship service and often became a mini-sermon. This altar call was a prolonged appeal, often taking as long as 10-20 minutes. The choir sang a hymn from the section of the hymn book under the salvation or conversion headings, as the pastor reiterated parts of the sermon which had just taken at least an hour to preach. He pleaded with those in the congregation who did not "know Jesus as your personal Savior" or needed to repent of some sin committed the previous week. They were urged to come to the altar and pray for salvation or forgiveness (in essence to "get right with God").

At Harvest Temple, the intent of the altar call was the same, but the appeal was more general and considerably shorter. People are instructed that "whatever you need from the Lord" will be found at the altar. Here again, the altar service was generally at the end of the service, but, in keeping with the freer form, it also was a setting in which the altar service could be inserted extemporaneously into other portions of the worship service, "as the Spirit leads."

Another special prayer emphasis central to the Pentecostal self-definition is the prayer for receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The mode for this type of prayer differs greatly from denomination to denomination and often between congregations within a denomination. The emphasis at First United was on "tarrying" for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Specifically, "tarrying meetings" were designated prayer services for the purpose of seekers praying to "receive" the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Much of the misunderstanding of Spirit baptism as "possession" might derive from the chanting style of the prayer which is reminiscent of a mantra. The seeker repeatedly invokes the name "Jesus" or the word "hallelujah" or a phrase like "thank you Jesus" in an attempt to free one's mind and spirit from earthly concerns and become completely open to the divine. Generally, seekers participated in several of these services before they actually spoke in tongues as a demonstration of the "initial evidence" that they had truly received or been baptized in the Spirit.[84]

Prayer for Holy Spirit baptism at Harvest Temple is a much less formal undertaking and occurs as part of the regular altar service. There is no tarrying. There are no special prayer meetings set aside for this. Converts

[84]For a brief theological overview of tarrying, see Duffield and Van Cleave, 317-319.

are instructed to pray for and expect to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as part of their regular worship experience.[85] In this context, specific praying for Holy Spirit baptism is usually relegated to revival meetings when the minister will ask if there are any seekers, call them to the altar, often lay hands on them and pray with them for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: Interpretation of the Findings

Two indispensable concepts are necessary for understanding how liturgy and ritual are present within Holiness and Pentecostal worship. The first is the self-definition of worship as non-liturgical. The second and equally important is the primarily oral tradition of these related movements. Despite this, several scholars have been able to document through ethnographic studies and theological reflection a distinct liturgical presence within Pentecostal worship.

The self-definition of these groups as non-liturgical does not speak to the reality of their worship. It is true that many Pentecostal ministers are reluctant to admit that their services follow a planned [liturgical] order,[86] and such elements as vestments and hymnology often have been dismissed as remnants of a dead faith and void of any signs of spiritual vitality. However, the foregoing gives some indication of the wealth and variety of liturgical presence in Pentecostal worship.

Within the primarily oral tradition, the primary elements of liturgy, ritual and symbolism are not always written—and even when written sources are available, they are not always used. Hymns, choruses and gospel songs are learned by heart and passed on by singing. Entire scriptural passages are committed to memory. The meaning of Pentecostal ritual and liturgical elements are internalized and take on a shared symbolic significance for all those who regularly participate in them.

[85]For some denominations such as Church of the Foursquare, this has always been the practice. Although this has been the case in the 18 years that I have been associated with the congregation in one way or another, it is probably because of the influence of the charismatic movement. As part of an older Holiness-Pentecostal denomination, the church probably did use the tarrying method at some point. See Duffield and Van Cleave or "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" in Burgess, Stanley, McGee and Alexander, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 40-48.

[86]Ranaghan, "Conversion," 68.

None of the definitions of liturgy, ritual, or symbolism used here indicates that participants must define what they are doing as liturgy. Neither do they incorporate a distinction between written and oral modes. As such, Pentecostalism's oral nature does not in any way preclude it from liturgical definition. As Hollenweger indicates, Pentecostals "demonstrate that their alternative to written liturgy is not chaos, but a flexible oral tradition which allows for variation within a framework. . . ."[87] As Baer contends, this happens in much the same way as Quaker silence and Episcopalian or Catholic liturgy. For example, there is shared meaning among all Catholics about certain meanings of Catholic ritual and symbolism, and there is a shared consensus among most Methodists about the meaning of certain Methodist rituals and symbolism. Yet, each individual Catholic and Methodist appropriates these rituals and symbolism in a personal way. Likewise, Pentecostal believers as a group share certain meanings concerning Pentecostal ritual and symbolism. Each Pentecostal believer, or at least each subgroup within the movement, appropriates these shared rituals and symbols in a way that is particularly meaningful to the specific social, theological, and ethical understanding and situation.

Hollenweger states correctly that the Pentecostal worship service is a "liturgy continually in the making."[88] The more a Pentecostal congregation grows from sect to church type or its membership gradually moves into the middle class, the more obvious in the presence of liturgical form. However, even within the most high-church setting, the hand clapping, shouts of "Praise the Lord," or quiet lifting of the hands in a reverent pose continue to be interspersed throughout the structured elements and serve as the kind of iconic sights and sounds which Albrecht identifies as so important to Pentecostal worship:

> The vitality of Pentecostal ritual has less to do with the structure of the ritual than with the embodied attitudes, or the orientation which the congregants engage in the rites as structured. Salient sensibilities appropriately applied can help to produce living, breathing, moving *ritual performance* rather than lifeless acts of ritual.[89]

The two congregations that served as the models for this study exhibited liturgical presence in very different ways. Yet each considers

[87]Hollenweger, 210.
[88]Hollenweger, 207.
[89]Albrecht, 120.

itself thoroughly Pentecostal.[90] What they see themselves sharing is a particular mode of spirituality. Because of this particular mode of spirituality within worship, Holiness—Pentecostal adherents need not fear the loss of vitality. And, in coming to terms with what they are doing in worship, they will be able to understand that order and form are not synonymous with deadness, but with what the Bible calls "decency and order."

The emphasis of the broader church's understanding of the Spirit's place and work in the church's life has been enriched by encounters with Holiness—Pentecostal spirituality. Such encounters have forced the broader church to renew its emphasis on the work and person of the Holy Spirit in the everyday life of the believer and congregation. Renewal groups now can be found in almost every Christian denomination.

If it is to gain an appreciation for liturgical presence in worship, the Holiness-Pentecostal movement must proceed from the broader ecclesiological understanding that has been unfolding over two thousand years of church history. Burgess suggests such a starting point with the possibility of adopting a broader definition of "sacrament" as "rites directed by Scripture and observed by the gathered people of God"[91] If Holiness—Pentecostal adherents were to adopt such a definition and lift up the elements of their worship which have common elements with the wider church, it might enhance meaningful ecumenical dialog. As Cecil Roebeck asserts, we need to change those [understandings] that stand between us and that which is truly spiritual.[92] Anything that divides the church and disrupts its true catholicity must be discarded. Otherwise this segment of the church will continue to be viewed as an anomaly or oddity.

What makes such change difficult, however, is that often the oral nature of the tradition brings about a historical disconnectedness with the broader church. Even when the language is similar, the understandings often are totally different from those held throughout the life and history of the church. I posit that what is at stake is a certain type of spirituality or way of experiencing God which is neither *essentially* different nor more or less "spiritual" than other ways of experiencing God. What Roebeck says about Pentecostal spirituality, that it is "no different from other forms of spirituality," is essentially true of Pentecostal worship. As he says, the symbols and rituals may differ, but they nonetheless are symbols and rituals. As Roebeck affirms, "the object is the same."[93]

[90]As opposed to neo-Pentecostal or charismatic.
[91]Burgess, et. al., 653.
[92]Cecil Roebeck, "Pentecostal Spirituality," *Pneuma*, 105.
[93]Ibid.

Bibliography

Albrecht, Daniel E. "Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking Through the Lens of Ritual," *Pneuma* 14:107-125, Fall, 1992.

Alexander, Bobby. "Pentecostal Ritual Reconsidered: Anti-Structural Dimensions of Possession," *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 3: 109-128, 1973.

________________. "Correcting Misinterpretations of Turner's Theory: An African-American Pentecostal Illustration," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 30:26-44, March, 1991.

Baer, Richard A., Jr. "Quaker Silence, Catholic Liturgy and Pentecostal Glossolalia: Some Functional Similarities," in Russell Spittler, *Perspectives in the New Pentecostalism.* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976, 150-164.

Burgess, Stanley, Gary McGee and Patrick Alexander, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Regency Reference Library. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988.

Buxton, Clyde W. *Minister's Service Manual*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1985.

Church of God School of Theology *Bulletin*, Vol. IX, 1994-1996. Cleveland, TN: Church of God School of Theology, 1994.

Delattre, Roland. "Ritual Resourcefulness and Cultural Pluralism," *Soundings*, 61:281-301.

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. Los Angeles: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983.

Gaede, Charles S. "Pentecost and Praise: A Pentecostal Ritual?" *Paraclete*, Spring 1988.

Gerlach, Luther P. "Pentecostalism: Revolution or Counter-Revolution," in Irving Zaretsky and Mark Leone, eds., *Religious Movements in Contemporary America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Grimes, Ronald L. *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*. Washington, D.C.: The University Press of America, 1982.

________________. "Defining Nascent Ritual," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 50:539-550, December, 1982.

Hall, Connor B., ed. *Hymns of the Spirit*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1969.

Hesser, Garry, and Weigert, Andrew J. "Comparative Dimensions of Liturgy: A Conceptual Framework and Feasibility Application," *Sociological Analysis*, 41:215-219, Fall 1980.

Hollenweger, Walter J. "Social and Ecumenical Significance of Pentecostal Liturgy," *Studia Liturgica*, 8:207-215, 1973.

Kelleher, Margaret M. "Liturgy, An Ecclesial Act of Meaning," *Worship*, 59:482-497, 1985.

Komonchak, Joseph. *The New Dictionary of Theology*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1986.

Land, Steven J. *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield University Press, 1994.

Ranaghan, Kevin M. "Conversion and Baptism: Personal Experience and Ritual Celebration in Pentecostal Churches," in *Studia Liturgica*, 10:65-75, 1974.

________________. "Liturgical Renewal at Oral Roberts University," in *Studia Liturgica*, 8:122-136, 1973.

Rappaport, Roy. "Verocity, Verity and Verium in Liturgy," in *Studia Liturgica*, 23:35-50, 1993.

Robeck, Cecil M., Jr. "The Nature of Pentecostal Spirituality," *Pneuma*, 14:103-106, Fall, 1992.

Sanders, Cheryl J. *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Spencer, Jon Michael. "Isochronism of Anti-structure in the Black Holiness-Pentecostal Testimony Service," *Journal of Black Sacred Music*, 2: 1-18, Fall, 1988.

Tyson, Ruel W., Jr. "The Testimony of Sister Annie Mae," *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 2:163-184, Summer, 1988.

Williams, Melvin. *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church: An Anthropological Study*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1974.

Wilson, John, and Harvey K. Clow. "Themes of Power and Control in a Pentecostal Assembly," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 20:241-250, 1981.

IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS: WESLEYAN THEOLOGY, WORSHIP, AND THE AESTHETIC

by

Kenton M. Stiles

Paul Tillich once commented, "I always learned more from pictures than from theological books."[1] While Tillichian scholars might debate the accuracy of this remark, there can be no doubt concerning his aesthetic sensitivity and his love for the fine arts. To this day, Tillich remains twentieth-century Protestantism's foremost spokesperson for theology and aesthetics.

The unfortunate problem for Wesleyans interested in theology and aesthetics is that John Wesley and his theological antecedents devoted few words to the aesthetic.[2] To announce that Wesley completely lacked aesthetic sensibilities would be premature and incorrect, however. Examples of his own aesthetic judgments and his thoughts on certain issues may be found scattered throughout his *Journal*, in certain poems, and in three short essays published in his later years.[3] Nevertheless, it is clear that

[1]Paul Tillich, *On Art and Architecture*, ed. John Dillenberger and Jane Dillenberger (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 151.

[2]To date, the issue has yet to be explored in publication, although I have attempted a preliminary introduction to the topic in my presentation to the Wesleyan Theological Society (November, 1996) and in an unpublished paper for a doctoral seminar at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA.

[3]These essays, "Thoughts on the Power of Music" (1779), "Thoughts Upon Taste" (1780), and "Thoughts on Genius" (1787), may all be found in the Jackson edition of *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 13, but the annotated Bicentennial edition (Abingdon Press) is still forthcoming.

beauty, the sublime, taste, and the senses were not a primary concern for Wesley; he was, after all, a man possessed by the tasks of evangelism and the organization of the Methodist societies. The matter of the relationship of Wesley's aesthetic sensibilities to corporate or personal worship is further complicated by the fact that he never left the communion of Anglicanism. By formally remaining loyal to the Church of England and its traditions, Wesley never had to formulate a Methodist liturgy or consider related matters such as the aesthetics of worship.

It is fortunate for this study, however, that a Wesleyan discussion of theology, worship, and the aesthetic does not begin and end with Wesley and eighteenth-century Methodism. The aesthetic has always been a component of the Christian worship experience and, I believe, of theology as well. Reconsidering the aesthetic and its numerous benefits and diverse dimensions may be beneficial for a large number of Wesleyans, including liturgists, professors, ministers of the arts, theologians, church historians, and artists. Although this discussion is ultimately directed toward exploring how greater aesthetic sensitivity can transform Wesleyan theology and worship, it is necessary to first consider why the aesthetic merits our attention and can be of value to Wesleyans.

Problematic Issues and Features of Aesthetics

"The aesthetic" is an unwieldy name for a subject with multiple dimensions. How the term is defined directly affects how we are able to understand the nature of the aesthetic and how aesthetic thinking and doing may be applied to or further encouraged in Wesleyan theology and worship. This section will thus attempt to meet two objectives: (1) to respond to problematic issues related to aesthetics, Wesleyanism, and worship; and (2) to identify some of the features and dimensions of the aesthetic.

One objection to an aesthetic approach to theology and worship is raised by asking another question: Why not the arts? Critical aesthetics appears to be too narrow a category, too parochial a discipline. The arts, on the other hand, would seem to allow theorists and practitioners greater freedoms. Indeed, aesthetics has traditionally been understood as the philosophy of the fine arts. In truth, this improper identification of aesthetics has resulted in two centuries of diminished influence as the area has been treated as a subcategory of the arts instead of as an independent but related critical methodology and subject area. Contemporary *theological* aesthetics fares even worse. The term is still unfamiliar in many theological circles and lacks adequate exposure through prominent advocates, publication, and curricular development. This situation in part may be because in the past theological aesthetics generally has been a European and Roman Catholic concern.

The arts, however, have played a significant role in the history of the church, offer a more familiar and tangible approach to worship, and have been the subject of many Christian studies in the last two decades. The general availability of material concerning Christianity and the arts stands as a ready resource for those individuals interested in these matters. One of the most helpful discussions is Wilson Yates' *The Arts in Theological Education* (1987), which examines the results of an extensive survey of theological school curricula. In his summaries Yates offers excellent theological and social rationales for the arts, information on institutional resources, and suggestions on how we may better utilize the arts in public and private worship. It is unfortunate but hardly surprising that no such study exists for aesthetics.

Closer examination reveals that aesthetics is *not* subservient to the arts. All art mediums, high and low, traditional and contemporary, are encompassed by the overarching philosophical category of the aesthetic proper. This distinction may be difficult to see, however, since "aesthetics" and "the aesthetic" often are nebulous terms. Part of the challenge facing aesthetics, both internally and externally, is the multivalence of these terms. Aesthetics and the aesthetic may encompass the following: types of objects, varieties of experience, certain topics, perceptive and organizational methods, and more. Aesthetics is, of course, a branch of *critical philosophy*. The aesthetic is also a category of *objects*—"aesthetica"—which stimulate aesthetic encounters and reflection, as well as a *quality* of experience, whether interpreted according to traditional or postmodern categories (e.g., beauty, the grotesque, and the sublime; or destruction, void, and disjunction).[4] The aesthetic may also be discussed as a type of *perspective* or interpretive framework, a hermeneutic that "refers primarily to a mode of apprehending the real, or primarily to a mode of articulating the real."[5]

[4]For an intriguing introduction to postmodern religious aesthetics and discussion of the latter group of aesthetic qualities, see Mark C. Taylor's *Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[5]James A. Martin, Jr., *Beauty and Holiness: The Dialogue Between Religion and Aesthetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 29.

At this point it would be helpful to consider the sublime, an aesthetic category that was extremely significant to eighteenth-century theorists, as a means for further expanding our concept of the aesthetic and for counterbalancing the twentieth-century aesthetic bias toward the fine arts. The sublime is also indispensable as a bridge from aesthetics to theology, in general, and to the doctrines of creation and revelation in particular. Like aesthetics, the sublime is a multivalent term or concept. It would therefore be helpful to consider at least four characteristics of the sublime. One aspect of the sublime is its communication through psychological effects, most notably awe, reverence, and a feeling of one's cosmic significance.[6] The fundamental awe produced in an encounter with *otherness* compares favorably with the religious experience of the Other in the "feeling of absolute dependence"[7] or awareness of "*mysterium tremendum*."[8] The natural world, which is frequently a catalyst of human feelings of sublimity, is another constituent element of the sublime. The natural sublime

[6]See, for example, Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), Part II, Sec. 1-3; and Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (1790; reprint, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987), Sec. 23-26. Kant carefully defines the sublime not as an observed act and its accompanying emotional response, but as the mind's agitated play with aesthetic ideas that escape conceptual—rational—explanation. The sublime is technically a created mental schema through which an object or phenomenon is judged to be "sublime" (Sec. 23: 245).

[7]Friedrich Schleiermacher asserts that "to be conscious of oneself as part of the world is the same thing as to find one's place in a universal nature-system. In every actual self-consciousness there is either an awareness of a relation of our being to some object opposed to it or the comprehension at one and the same time of a being and a having. That which is set in opposition to us must naturally decrease as our self-consciousness widens" (*The Christian Faith* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989], 138). Here Schleiermacher clearly relies on Kant's understanding of the moral implications of the "dynamically sublime. The dynamically sublime begins with the apprehension of awe-inspiring natural phenomena, including vast oceans, high waterfalls, thunderstorms, and natural disasters, but in the act of reflection the individual is able to realize that physical impotence is surpassed by human independence and the superiority of reason. Because the "sublime" is produced in the imagination's free play, "the mind can come to feel its own sublimity, which lies in its vocation and elevates it even above nature" (Kant, Sec. 28: 262).

[8]Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (London: Oxford Press, 1958), chap. IV.

was popularized by Romantic art and literature of the nineteenth century, but the awe-inspiring power of nature has also been made known to us by countless Christian poets and mystics. Another dimension of the sublime is the mathematical sublime, whose existence is signified by words such as "absolute" and "infinite." These terms are indicators of the mathematical sublime's duality which defies full comprehension: it exists simultaneously in theory *and* in reality.[9]

A final aspect of the sublime, implicit in Kant's discussion of the dynamically sublime, is the conceptual sublime.[10] This category of abstract ideas includes freedom, war, and love, as well as theological concepts like sin, grace, forgiveness, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Relationality is a significant and necessary addition to this list. Like their mathematical counterparts, the conceptual sublime is transcendental but nevertheless real. These *a priori* fundamentals and ideas are existential realities or human creations that also demonstrate a certain aesthetic nature or influence upon humans. According to Alex Garcia-Rivera, a contemporary proponent of theological aesthetics, such concepts and realities may be described as the "created invisible," a middle ground that exists between our uncreated and invisible God and God's visible and created partners, humanity and the world.[11] Although the language of the conceptually sublime might seem Platonic, this variety of the sublime is a collection of ideas, relationships, institutions, and emotions that exhibit both the appearance of transcendence and the ability to affect humans aesthetically.

The Significance of the Aesthetic to Wesleyans

Wesleyans may rightfully object that we lack a definite aesthetic tradition. This problem may be traced back to John Wesley himself, yet he

[9]Kant, Sec. 25. Barth's description of the gulf separating humans from God is one example of a theological adaptation of the mathematical sublime in natural guise. Another example might be Jesus' words about the unfathomable scope of divine forgiveness, whether on a scale of one thousand talents or seventy times seven transgressions.

[10]Ibid., Sec. 28: 263. By definition, however, in Kant's thought an aesthetic idea cannot be termed "conceptual" since this would mean that it could be fully grasped by reason rather than existing within the interplay of the two cognitive faculties, the imagination and understanding.

[11]Alex Garcia-Rivera, "Creator of the Visible and the Invisible: Liberation Theology, Postmodernism, and the Spiritual," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 3, no. 4 (1996): 37.

did not lack aesthetic sensitivity. The love of poetry and the ability for writing it was Samuel Wesley, Sr.'s legacy to several of his children, including John. Whether in his informal *Journal* entries or in carefully constructed sermons, quotations from Bunyan, Pope, Prior, and other famed poets appear frequently. The essays on taste, genius, and musical theory all attest to Wesley's later interest in aesthetic issues, while observations of natural and designed landscape, architecture, fine art, and musical performances are regularly recorded in the *Journal* over a span of more than four decades.

The primary problem with Wesley's aesthetic observations is the lack of consistency. Although the *Journal* observations rarely indicate that Wesley had any reservations about making aesthetic judgments, the quality of his comments indicate that aesthetics was one field in which this cleric was a layperson. Observations of the natural landscape reveal the simple perspective of a boy who was raised in a rural setting. Positive assessments of gardens and special trips to England's most famous Picturesque landscape gardens reflect the opinions and social status of a mid-eighteenth-century gentleman, as does Wesley's surprising appreciation for the elegant decoration of residences belonging to royalty, nobility, and the gentry. When speaking of church architecture, Wesley's recognition of aesthetic planning and building technique demonstrates a level of education and sophistication that would be expected from one who lived amidst the surroundings of Christ Church, Oxford's largest and most aristocratic college. But Wesley's comments about a Rubens painting depict him as more uncultured. Such inconsistency hardly provides a solid foundation for Wesleyans interested in the relationship between Christian faith and high culture.

Another disturbing feature of Wesley's aesthetic observations is the personal conflict that appears in the *Journal* entries. His affirmations, eloquent words, and the occasional use of poetry as a means to express his feelings clearly indicate that Wesley enjoyed his aesthetic encounters. Yet as early as 1738 he felt compelled to qualify his positive remarks by reminding himself of his evangelistic calling and God's higher spiritual priorities:

> But I seek another country, and therefore am content to be a wanderer upon earth. . . .
>
> It exceeds anything which I have seen in Great Britain. And yet the eye is not satisfied with seeing! It never can, till we see God. . . .

> But where will it be when the earth is burned up, and the elements melt with fervent heat? . . .
>
> And must all these be burned up? What will become of us, then, if we set our hearts upon them? . . .
>
> Nay, at present I must be about my Father's business: But I trust to meet them in a still lovelier place. . . .
>
> And must all these fine buildings be burned up? Yea—"Earth and heaven destroyed, Nor left even one in the mighty void."[12]

The *Journal* entries give the appearance of rationalizations for and emotional expurgations of the aesthetic pleasure that Wesley obviously received from these experiences. The fact that he attempted to distance himself from this pleasure when recording his later reflections cannot negate the fact that Wesley's senses and emotions were stirred. If we listen closely to Wesley's words, we can hear a sigh of appreciation escape his lips as he doffs his artist's chapeau to pull on the weather-stained hat of an evangelist who must return to more "important" spiritual matters.

It is unfortunate that positive responses to aesthetic worship experiences do not appear in Wesley's writings.[13] In part because of this lack of clarity, the aesthetic traditions which do exist within the history of the Wesleyan/Holiness movement are as diverse as the many groups which have come to populate its schismatic history. Unfortunately, the same may also be said of the traditions regarding worship in general. Neither aesthetic traditions nor worship liturgy may be cited as the cohesive force that provides this movement with its unique identity. Only Wesleyan theology can fill this role.

A story might help to illustrate the diversity of Wesleyan worship. Imagine, if you will, that the proverbial Martian visited our planet and

[12]*Journal*, entries of July 4, 1759; July 29, 1765; July 19, 1766; August 25, 1769; May 22, 1775; and March 3, 1790. The third, fourth, and final entries are paraphrases of the apocalyptic description of the Day of the Lord from 2 Peter 3:10. Wesley first referred to the verse in this manner on July 28, 1738.

[13]There is, for example, a distinct difference between the emotional tone of the announcement, "Nothing in the post-diluvian earth can be more pleasant" (*Journal*, July 21, 1759), Wesley's judgment of a pastoral setting in South Yorkshire, and the reserved recollection of how his heart was "strangely warmed" in his Aldersgate experience. A study of the relationship between Wesley's emotions and spirituality would be most helpful at this point.

began to randomly ask members of Wesleyan-Holiness denominations to describe worship in their churches. The responses to its survey might highlight some of the following influences on Wesleyan worship identity, liturgy, and worship styles: Anglican order and the *Book of Common Prayer*; Wesley's open-air preaching and efficient small group structures; Finneyite and frontier revivalism; nineteenth-century schisms, the holiness revivals, and the "come-outer" movements; African-American gospel traditions and experience; the Salvation Army's public ministry and unique terminology; Azusa Street and early Pentecostalism; the charismatic revolution of recent decades; and seeker services directed at the upper social classes. Our alien would also have to account for those demographic factors affecting congregational worship: mean age, racial and social composition, economic power, and education. This extraterrestrial would also need to be sensitive to geographic influences: urban or rural settings; regional culture; and national culture. And what would this visitor think when it visits churches that offer parishioners multiple services in differing worship styles? After processing all of the data, the Martian probably would arrive at one of two possible conclusions: (1) the worship of Wesleyan denominations is stylistically diverse but theologically unified; or (2) these people are severely confused, if not schizophrenic!

This whimsical story includes a moral for Wesleyans about their worship. Through illustration we rediscover that worship "in the Wesleyan tradition" ought to be about the former—being Wesleyan—than the latter—possessing a shared worship tradition. The actual practice of our collective faiths is marked by a diversity that is greater than the sum of our denominational parts. Yet, while Wesleyans lack a liturgical center, a unifying worship tradition, there is a *theological* center, a commitment to the basic doctrinal positions of John Wesley, that distinguishes his heirs and, admittedly, influences (or should) the theological content of worship as well.

The Wesleyan-Holiness movement's lack of a distinct aesthetic tradition and clearly defined relationships between aesthetics, theology, and worship does not mean that the movement is completely lacking traditions and roles for the aesthetic. What is missing are the theoretical and practical frameworks necessary for effectively situating the aesthetic within the whole of Wesleyan theology and implementing it in Wesleyan worship. The development of a distinctively *Wesleyan* aesthetic likely would be a positive advance,[14] but other solutions already exist or are being developed. Interest in the aesthetic is already increasing.[15] Wesleyan-Holiness universities and colleges do, of course, offer programs and courses in arts and aesthetics, and the publication houses continually offer new musical, dramatic, poetic, and other artistic materials. What still is needed is the presence of the arts and aesthetics in divinity school programs that demonstrates both a progressive acceptance of the need for aesthetic-theological dialogue and the direct application of theology and the arts to pastoral development and parish ministry equipping.[16] United Methodist schools have been leading the way for over a decade, and their examples hopefully will be emulated by other Wesleyan divinity schools in the near future.[17]

[14]I allow that one might identify or construct "Wesleyan" aesthetics for theology and worship and likely have positive results. A recent attempt to identify a Calvinist aesthetic (Daniel T. Jenkins, "A Protestant Aesthetic? A Conversation with Donald Davie," *Literature & Theology* 2, no. 2 [Sept., 1988]: 153-62) might serve as a case study for a discussion of Wesley's aesthetics. In this essay Jenkins explores the aesthetic applications of the themes "simplicity, sobriety, and measure," first suggested in Donald Davie's *The Gathered Church* (1978). Jenkins' own contribution to the worship aesthetic is the principle of "antithesis," which is reminiscent of the "Protestant principle," a crucial element in Paul Tillich's theological aesthetics.

[15]The current article and the presentation to the Wesleyan Theological Society on which it is based are examples in themselves.

[16]Holiness groups in general have not embraced the arts, which have been identified with the liturgical "high" churches of mainline Christianity in America, higher socio-economic and educational levels, secularity, and—at worst—carnality. To my knowledge, no attempt to prove actual data from original documents in support of this generalization has been attempted, although the need for such a study has been highlighted by Mark Noll's controversial yet prophetic book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

[17]All twelve Methodist divinity schools participating in Yates' study offered courses featuring significant use of art mediums, and seven listed more than ten such classes. Yates gives special attention to Candler School of Theology at Emory University for its combination of curriculum and community involvement in the arts, and to Wesley Theological Seminary for the addition of the Center for Religion and the Arts to an expanding program in the arts. Claremont School of Theology has also recently added an aesthetic focus to a program that has traditionally been strong in music (Wilson Yates, *The Arts in Theological Education* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987], 48). Examples of new interest in the aesthetic would include Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, which plans to offer its first course on aesthetics in the fall of 1997.

The Aesthetic and Theological Communication

Another objection to an aesthetic method is the unavoidable question of whether the aesthetic is truly necessary for theological discourse. The following discussion of "God-language" will follow the two forms of theological communication: primary discourse, the language of worship that is directed specifically *toward* God; and secondary discourse, the language or forms of theology that we use to talk *about* God.

The language of worship traditionally includes prayer, song, poetry, and praise, through which God is worshipped via verbal communication. Yet other "languages" communicate our worship, as well. Painting, sculpture, architecture, dance, instrumental music, and drama all create and articulate alternative symbolic languages which may powerfully express the thoughts and feelings of worshipping individuals and communities. Aesthetic forms of worship allow worshippers to represent and re-present God's glory and sublime nature, the mystery of divine activity, and the wonders of salvation.

It might be helpful to consider two forms of worship and their degree of aesthetic engagement as test cases. Both mysticism and rationalism, which are approximate opposites, might appear to exist as anti-aesthetic forms of worship. Mystical worship tends toward immediate and unilateral encounter, so it is difficult to speak of a communicative form or aesthetic mediation. On the other hand, the mystical perception of God's real presence occurs through the aesthetic experience of *glory*, the *sine qua non* of theophany, angelic visitation, and spiritual transfiguration in biblical descriptions.[18] When appearing in time and space, God's presence

[18]Hans Urs von Balthasar, in particular, recognizes the centrality of glory (*doxa*, *kabod*) as the biblical foundation for discussions about God's essential nature and theological aesthetics. For Balthasar the glory of the Lord is the central theme in Christian theology, perceived through the forms which reveal and give shape to our experience of God: "The mystery of God proclaimed by the Church is his *doxa* become visible [in Christ], and a beam of it, to be sure, falls on the ecclesial authority and proclamation, authenticating them. But the divine mystery, being the very glory of God, at the same time is majestically exalted above the serving office which mediates it: 'We do not proclaim ourselves, but Christ Jesus as the Kyrios.' . . . For the God who has said: 'Let the light shine forth out of the darkness'—he it is that has shone in our hearts . . . in order (through us) to make shine forth the *gnosis* of God's *doxa*, which lies on the face of Christ' (*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1, *Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982], 141).

[*Shekinah*] is manifested through glory. Ecstatic encounters with God's glory may be interpreted aesthetically through all of the senses: divine presence is seen, heard, or felt, and visitation may also be accompanied by fragrance and sweetness. Thus, whether as a form or for its sensual qualities, ecstatic encounter may be discussed in aesthetic categories. The aesthetic also contributes to the environment of mystical worship: physically, whether one is located on a mountaintop or in an austere room; bodily, through an individual's posture; olfactorally, through the use of incense; and aurally, through silence, instrumental music, or chants.

Rationalistic theological discourse and liturgical monotony cannot help but engage the aesthetic sensibilities as well. While these restrained forms of worship might discourage *emotional* responses, their solemnity does not impede the experiencing of the aesthetic. While the aesthetic is related to the emotions, it is *also* related to form and order. Thus the slow cadence of a sermon read without vocal inflection creates a certain aesthetic form, as does the weekly recitation of a memorized creed. Even if a congregation finds these events dull, that does not make the worship less aesthetic.[19]

The sensation of pleasure, another once-important theme that modern aesthetics frequently ignores, is an essential aspect of aesthetic worship. Yet, as a philosophical discipline, aesthetics is concerned with the question of pleasurable value—value which is not based on the True or the Good, but upon the Beautiful. Aesthetic gratification is one of the needs that compels Christians to worship, and certainly the desire for an experience of spiritual beauty causes affective forms and language to be used in worship. But it is not just the beautiful act of worship which gives pleasure, but the result. If the chief end of humanity is to glorify God, the completed act of worship will certainly have a *moral* value for the worshipper because the act accomplishes what is proper. However, the act also provides the Christian with *aesthetic* value through a sensation of pleasure or beauty derived from the process of worship rather than from conforming to an external requirement such as a Christian's spiritual duty.

Aesthetic pleasure may be gained whenever a Christian is engaged in the act of creating anything good. A precedent is found in God's own act of speaking, evaluating, and pleasuring at Creation. This is the point at

[19]Quaker or Calvinist aesthetics might be cited as appropriate examples. See note 14 above.

which, from a Christian theological perspective, aesthetic value is introduced into the world.[20] When viewed thus, those creations which are directed toward God, whether they take the form of worship, church architecture, sculpture, or the composition of a *Requiem*, assume the highest aesthetic values. It is important to remember, however, that this is a *spiritual* aesthetic value; the orientation of aesthetic creations toward God does not guarantee their quality.

Aesthetic pleasure may also be received when the human senses are fully employed in worship. Unfortunately, in numerous Wesleyan worship traditions the full scope of the affective domain is frequently ignored. The sense of hearing is relied on heavily, as is sight, albeit to a lesser degree, but the senses of taste and smell may only be used when the Eucharist is received. The use of dance, hand-raising, and other bodily movements may now be typical of only some African-American and charismatic Wesleyan-Holiness congregations, but the expression of worship with the body and through the sense of touch were common to many Wesleyan churches in the past. Those persons interested in discovering more creative and meaningful worship practices would do well to consider aesthetic worship experiences which engage more, if not all, of the five human senses.

Western Christianity's theological words *about* God, or theology proper, are dominated by reason, often at the expense of the aesthetic. Yet this was not always the case. Pseudo-Dionysius' understanding of theology as "dissimilar similitudes" accentuated the binary nature of all theological discourse: God is familiar, but is also Other. Over time his emphases on methodological unity and simultaneity were lost and theological language eventually assumed one of two forms, positive or negative statements about God:

> *Kataphasis* or affirmation is a matter of attributing to God all that is unrestrictedly good in human experience. We can thus speak intelligibly about God by predicating of him truth, justice, fidelity, and so forth, drawing on scriptural analogues, but

[20]Garcia-Rivera offers this suggestion, stating that "*Aesthetic value is an intrinsic reality of the cosmic order.* In other words, the contingency of Creation introduces value into the cosmos. This insight . . . follows from the nature of the contingency between Creator and creature: 'And God saw it was good.' Contingency in the context of an ultimate reality amounts to a cosmic aesthetics, a cosmos of values" (49-50).

> also on human observation. This manner of speaking enables us to convey something of the reality of God, but it needs the qualification of *apophasis* or negation to in order that the unconditionality of the divine being might be safeguarded. Apophatic theology refuses to predicate of God any quality which implies that he is limited or contingent. It delights in describing the divinity through words beginning with an alpha deprivative [-not] . . . and with terms elevated above human experience by the addition of the prefix *hyper-*. From this angle God is viewed as the utterly Other; he is outside space and time, without beginning or end, not subject to passion nor limited by any of the constraints that characterize human life.[21]

Both positive and negative statements are necessary if theology is to offer a balanced description of God. Western thinkers have neglected the possibilities that exist in the theological language which begins with the mysterious, intuitive, and aesthetic.[22] Integration of aesthetic experience and insight is necessary if our theological method and vision are to be balanced.[23]

To the historical and methodological foundations of the claim that aesthetics is necessary for theology we add the witness of contemporary theology's self-understanding. Theo-logos is the creation of imaginative language for and about God:

> Theology, in its attempt to analyze, criticize, and reconstruct the image/concept of God, is an expression of the continuing activity of the human imagination seeking to create a frame-

[21]Michael Casey, " 'Emotionally Hollow, Aesthetically Meaningless, and Spiritually Empty': An Inquiry into Theological Discourse," *Colloquium* 14, no. 1 (October 1981): 56.

[22]See Balthasar's "Introduction" to *Seeing the Form* (1:17-127) for a discussion of the history of aesthetic themes (e.g., glory, revelation, and beauty) in Christian theology.

[23]Aesthetics shapes theological language in three areas of integration: theological aesthetics, aesthetic theology, and theology and aesthetics. The first term refers to the perception and organization of theology methodologically; the second area considers aesthetic themes within God-language; the third domain witnesses the application of theological principles in aesthetic creativity and the historical relationship between Christianity and the arts/aesthetics.

> work of interpretation which can provide overall orientation for human life; *theology is, thus, essentially an activity of imaginative construction*.[24]

Many contemporary theologians, both biblical and systematic, approach theology and describe their work as metaphorical,[25] narrative,[26] imaginative,[27] and aesthetic[28] creations.[29] Since theological discourse is currently conceived of as creative writing or a work of art, theologians must therefore be aware of the philosophical implications and applications of aesthetic themes, concerns, and methods within theology.[30] One incidental benefit of approaching theology aesthetically is that it offers a productive

---

[24]Gordon D. Kaufman, "Theology as Imaginative Construction," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50, no. 1 (March 1982): 77. Emphasis mine.

[25]See, for example, Sallie McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) and *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); and Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

[26]See, for example, Michael Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982); Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones, *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); and George W. Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

[27]See, for example, John Coulson, *Religion and Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Julian Hartt, *Theological Method and Imagination* (New York: Seabury, 1977); James Mackey, ed., *Religious Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1986); Leland Ryken, ed., *The Christian Imagination: Essays on Literature and the Arts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), and *The Liberated Imagination* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Pub., 1989); and David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

[28]See, for example, Balthasar; Martin; Frank Burch Brown, *Religious Aesthetics: A Theological Study of Making and Meaning* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989); and Patrick Sherry, *Spirit and Beauty: An Introduction to Theological Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[29]Cf. Kevin J. VanHoozer, "A Lamp in the Labyrinth: The Hermeneutics of 'Aesthetic' Theology," *Trinity Journal* 8 (1987): 47, n. 105-107.

[30]VanHoozer offers an interesting interpretation of the contemporary situation: "I would like to suggest that the history of modern theology may fruitfully be construed as a 'progressive reading' of Kant's three *Critiques*: theology has passed through a speculative (eighteenth century) and a moral (nineteenth century) phase, and we are now in the midst of an 'aesthetic' stage which corresponds to Kant's third *Critique*, the critique of aesthetic judgment" (25).

response to postmodernism. The deconstruction of intellectual hierarchies has leveled the "playing field" between the sources of theology; the aesthetic is thus validated as one of the more meaningful forms of human experience and, in turn, for theological reflection.[31]

The aesthetic is indispensable to theology. The aesthetic provides a means for addressing transcendent doctrines, reaffirming divine mystery, and validating the sense of awe that God inspires in the faithful. Logic cannot transport beyond the limits of reason to faith-acceptance, but the aesthetic accepts, ponders, and even revels in the incomprehensible Trinity, the revelation of our *deus absconditus*, and the nature and being of Christ, who stands at the center of theological paradox and mystery.[32] And while the aesthetic cannot replace reason's crucial services to the discipline of theology, if the apophatic and kataphatic are to be in balance our theological words must be both rational and aesthetic. Like reason, the aesthetic performs a valuable service for theology:

> The aesthetic illustrates human theological interpretation of divine revelation. The aesthetic modality is a basic fact of experience. Aesthetics can describe religion, revelation, faith, and thinking-about-faith with a faith and clarity equal to the categorical style. . . . Theologians should examine the potentiality of an aesthetic description. For some time, the accepted

[31]Postmodernism accepts "the affective no less than the cognitive, the conative no less than the intellective, the cultural and artifactual no less than the natural. Indeed, postmodernism asserts that the realities of feeling, deception, and illusion are every bit as much a piece [of] our experience as are the realities of rational communication and order and sensible intrusions from the environment upon our experience." (John Deeley, *New Beginnings: Early Modern Philosophy and Postmodern Thought* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994], quoted in Garcia-Rivera, 40). A combination of the apophatic and the kataphatic within a dialectic structure would not be acceptable to a postmodernist: proper theology is *neither* the rational (left-brained) *nor* the creative (right-brained), but something "other." In *Disfiguring*, Mark Taylor suggests that the use of a "neither/nor" approach to meaning can avoid some of the problems associated with the "either/or of classical logic and the both/and of dialectical logic" (278).

[32]Balthasar's aesthetics revolves around Christ, "the centre of the form of revelation" and the ultimate theological enigma: "God's Incarnation perfects the whole ontology and aesthetics of created Being. Incarnation uses created Being at a new depth as a language and a means of expression for the divine Being and essence. . . . This incomparable paradox stands as the fountainhead of the Christian aesthetic, and therefore of all aesthetics!" (1:29).

> foundation of theology has been logic and reason and concepts and words which reveal ultimate structures of meaning. The aesthetic intuition of ineffable presence in reality, of subjectivity surrounding the object and penetrating to its depth, does not presume that theology or life is mainly word, syllogism, myth, or symbol. Theology can flow from an encounter with and a grasp of revealing mystery in a manner analogous to the production and appreciation of art. The human personality not only in religious expression but also in thoughtful reflection on belief in a revealing God perceives mystery in an aesthetic way, where insight and emotion strive for immediacy.[33]

The use of aesthetics allows us to lessen the "jarring" effects of revelatory paradoxes and logical inconsistencies by addressing them by means of a new "language" in which creative and experiential responses are justifiable.[34]

The Aesthetic Dimensions of the Divine

When an aesthetic perspective informs theology, it both *informs* by adding new insight and *in-forms* by giving theology a new structure. This section will therefore examine how the composition and shape of some areas of theology can be transformed by aesthetic method and content.

Christian theology attempts to make visible the invisible by providing us with meaningful metaphors and images of God. Throughout the history of the church, a significant number of aesthetic names and models have been used to describe the "Persons" of the Trinity. These have including the following: Beauty, Perfection, Glory, Light, Wind, Image, Representation, Revealer/Revelation, Mirror, Artist, Architect, Builder, Poet, Composer, Potter, and the Creator-Image-Inspiration model for the Trinity.[35] With each of these names the aesthetic vocabulary is able to communicate something of God's mysterious yet familiar nature. But the aesthetic is also one of the fundamental essences of God, Who continually

[33]Thomas Franklin O'Meara, "The Aesthetic Dimension in Theology," chap. in Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, ed., *Art, Creativity, and the Sacred* (New York: Crossroad Press, 1980), 205.

[34]T. R. Martland, "*Question:* When Is Religion Art? *Answer*: When It Is a Jar," chap. in Ibid., 250-61.

[35]See, for example, Sherry, 1-19; Martin, chaps. 1, 3; and Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, in *The Complete Works*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 47-131.

creates and inspires (i.e., both "animates" and "enlightens") creation and its living creatures.

Attention to the aesthetic reinforces the Christian doctrines of creation and the *imago dei*. The sublime and beautiful in nature affirm the goodness of divine creative activity.[36] God continually pronounces creation's goodness, and nature reciprocates this moral and aesthetic judgment by delighting in God's glory: seas resound with praise, trees clap their hands, mountains sing in joy, and all of creation awaits its release to glorious freedom (Psalm 98:7-8; Romans 8:19-21). The human reflection of God is found in the capacity to act as co-creators, whether biologically, ecologically, or imaginatively, and through this capacity humans are able—and morally obligated—to establish and maintain new relations on behalf of the created and the Creator. From revelation, the arts, and the sublime we learn of the value of natural and human creations, but it is only through experience and theological reflection that Christians are truly able to appreciate aesthetic goodness and the artistic dimension of human co-creativity.

The aesthetic may shape or provide an occasion for worship. This may occur at a cathedral, humble chapel, or an exposed mountaintop; before an altar, sculpture, or stained glass window; and while listening to a sermon, musical composition, or a drama. The power by which the aesthetic accomplishes this is its ability to create, to bring into existence that which was formerly unseen and unheard. The aesthetic gives substance to idea, extends reality to image, finds life in rhythm and tone. In a word, the aesthetic is incarnational: Word is made *flesh* (John 1:14), the invisible is born as *divine image* (Colossians 1:15), and glory is transformed to exact *representation* (Hebrews 1:3). In aesthetic making-into-being there is a new means for communicating and appreciating the wonder of the Incarnation, whose metaphysical mystery transcends aesthetic enigma just as the aesthetic transcends rational conceptuality.

[36]Aesthetic creation as *actual* creation is emphasized in opposition to Benedetto Croce, this century's most influential aesthetician, whose focus on the presentation of aesthetic *ideas* devalues the actual production of works of art. Croce's aesthetic idealism can be traced back through Schopenhauer and Hegel to Kant. With regard to the value of aesthetic creations, we might say that value is inherent, but it is perhaps more accurate, at least from a Christian perspective, to say that it is *imbued*. Creations are good because as *creatio* their source may ultimately be found in God.

Although divine self-disclosure has reached its highest form of completeness through the incarnate Word, a final state of revelatory absoluteness in which God has exhausted all that can be communicated to creation has not yet been reached. As long as the worlds stand in relation to a Creator who lovingly speaks them into being and calls them toward reconciliation, God's revelation will continue. The dynamic power and radical freedom of divine revelation creates the possibility that many mediums may be used by God in addition to verbal communication. Indeed, God's self-disclosure occurs through the actions of individual persons or institutions, in the ministries of the church and other religious bodies, in the beauty and sublimity of the natural world, and through all varieties of aesthetic creativity. When the aesthetic becomes more than a thing of beauty or a simple symbol and begins to actually mediate or embody divine presence and grace, it is precisely in this moment, the point where the aesthetic is "grasped" by God, transformed through grace, and made transparent to divine Being, that we may speak of the revelatory power of the aesthetic.

If the aesthetic can become revelatory, it may perform any of revelation's other functions, as well. The aesthetic, for example, can extend divine grace. The natural world reveals God, sustains life, and provides pleasure and comfort; through these actions and as God's gift to us, we may therefore speak of creation as a means of grace. Creation is technically not a Sacrament; nevertheless, nature is *sacramental* because of its origin in God, its contingent dependence upon God, and its ability to communicate divine realities. God also speaks words of grace through human aesthetic creations when they are transformed by divine Presence. As revelation, the aesthetic also speaks prophetically. Paintings, sculpture, literary forms, and dramas can powerfully communicate divine judgments by exposing social evils, denouncing sins, warning against hypocrisy and abuses in the church, and reminding Christians of their moral obligations. As embodied judgment, these constructed criticisms are more concrete and confrontational than unaesthetic verbal communication.

The Aesthetic Dimension and Holiness

The connection between beauty and holiness, the aesthetic and moral ideals of art and religion, has been studied at length by James A. Martin, Jr. Unfortunately, the answers that he finds have little to do with the holiness that is a part of the Wesleyan theological vocabulary. In fact, few theologians other than Jonathan Edwards have given serious attention to divine or human holiness from an aesthetic perspective. This should be viewed as potential as much as a problem, however, since current Wesleyan understandings of holiness offer many possibilities for the integration and application of the aesthetic.

The Greek word ´ολοζ, the root of "holiness," the English translation of ´αγιασμοζ and ´αγιωσυνη, has a basic meaning of wholeness, completeness, or totality. While ´ολοζ may not adequately address the moral nature of biblical holiness and sanctification, it does introduce an aesthetic dimension to "holiness" that deserves greater attention. The harmony and balance of an aesthetic holiness has unique implications for the Wesleyan conception of personal holiness. The aesthetic nature of holiness may be observed in the description of holiness as a balanced God-self-world nexus[37] in Wesley's definition of Christian perfection as "the loving of God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength,"[38] and in the identification of the sources of Wesley's theology as a "quadrilateral" of Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason. Harmony and balance refer to o*rder*, one of the most important aesthetic categories. The thematic arrangement of theological ideas into a whole or "system" may be explained as a response to aesthetic needs as well as to the requirements of reason or scientific method.[39]

Inclusion of the aesthetic within a definition of personal holiness may begin with the modern psychological understanding of human beings as multilevel or multidimensional personalities. The aesthetic is one of the basic dimensions of human experience, as is demonstrated by the universal cultural expression of aesthetic sensitivity through music, art, and decoration (e.g., clothing, jewelry, and body art as well as architecture). Aesthetic experience must therefore be represented in Wesleyan explanations of personal holiness. One of the more helpful ways that this can be

[37]H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1988), 485-98.

[38]John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, vol. 11 (1872, reprint. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1986), 394.

[39]The introduction of scientific method/model as the basis for "systematic" theology cannot precede the Enlightenment. See Amos Funkenstein's discussion of theology, science, and scientific method in his *Theology and the Scientific Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), especially his Introduction.

expressed is by describing holiness as the transformation of and balance between all personal dimensions. Thus in multidimensional human beings the aesthetic may be listed alongside the physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of our existence.

The aesthetic should become holy in the Wesleyan theological imagination. This must occur on two levels. First, the sacramental value of nature and aesthetic creations should be recognized. Our holy God can grasp and transform any creation in order to communicate divine holiness or grace. Descriptions of holy living should next be expanded to include aesthetic experience. That is to say, we need to clearly communicate that part of what it means to be holy is that we must become aesthetically aware and appreciative of the goodness of God's and humanity's creations. Restoration in the image of God includes learning to delight in creation and to pronounce it "very good."

The relational nature of Wesleyan theology allows consideration of the place of aesthetics within the various dimensions of the God-self-world nexus. When holiness is described as the harmony or balance of these relationships, the biblical concept of *shalom* offers a striking parallel. Christian aesthetician Nicholas Wolsterstorff feels that *shalom* best characterizes the relational ideal, which Wesleyans may identify as holiness. Unfortunately, "peace" is a theme that is frequently overlooked in contemporary theology:

> The corrective needed is the introduction of another theme concerning man in creation, a theme as prominent in the biblical writers as the theme of man the responsible agent, yet a theme scarcely noticed in the Christian tradition. It is the theme of *shalom, eirene*, peace—of man dwelling at peace in all his relationships: with God, with himself, with his fellows, with nature. Shalom is a peace which is not merely the absence of hostility, though certainly it is that, but a peace which at its highest is *enjoyment*. To dwell in shalom is to *enjoy* living before God, to *enjoy* living in nature, to *enjoy* living with one's fellows, to *enjoy* life with oneself.[40]

Here, indeed, is a picture of what it means to be holy from an aesthetic perspective: to pleasure in or enjoy peace and balance in all relational and

[40]Nicholas Wolsterstorff, *Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 79.

psychological dimensions. One implication of this aesthetic understanding of holiness is that humans who live harmoniously in *shalom* before God, in nature, with others, and with oneself must also accept responsibility for maintaining the beauty and peace of an idyllic existence. Those who are holy must act as God's co-creators: we are called to create, name, and value our world in the same manner as our Creator.

New Directions for Wesleyan Worship and Aesthetics

The challenge facing those persons responsible for planning and leading worship is how to ensure that aesthetic experiences are a part of the worship encounter. The goal of the preparation for and active engagement in aesthetic worship is to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2, KJV). But how is this accomplished?

At the heart of the problem lies the nature of the aesthetic itself. While nurturing our parishioners' aesthetic sensitivity and providing an aesthetic worship setting are two excellent ways to encourage worship that is characterized by the beauty of holiness, aesthetic experience cannot simply be *produced*. While aesthetic experience can be encouraged, one cannot will or force it to occur. The aesthetic is not a quantifiable thing, but a quality of relational interaction. The aesthetic connects heart and soul with the senses, but it has, so to speak, a life of its own. The aesthetic breaks forth independently and ecstatically; like God's Spirit, the aesthetic blows where it will.

In many ways, the aesthetic and worship are similar. Both types of experience exist only within a relationship between humans and a transcendental reality—God or the Beautiful. Yet worship and the aesthetic both emerge out of definite forms. These forms, whether liturgies or aesthetic objects and events, are not transcendental but incarnate. Both experiences also require open and active participation. Neither worship nor aesthetic experience will occur unilaterally, caught like some object that falls from the heavens. It is also true that these types of encounter are not perceived in the same manner by all participants. Some persons will receive more enlightenment and others less. The interpreted intellectual content of the encounter will vary, as will its emotional impact. Some events or objects will encourage encounter, but others will not.

Since the aesthetic appears to lie beyond human control, we may well wonder if it is even possible to speak of aesthetic "new directions" for Wesleyan worship. The matter is further complicated by the diversity of Wesleyan worship styles and practices. Could these new directions be applicable in all worship situations? Perhaps not, but it is important to identify a starting point other than raising the aesthetic awareness of Wesleyan-Holiness congregations. One such point might be the language of worship.

As Protestants, Wesleyans are speakers, hearers, and doers of the Word.[41] It is in response to the divine Word that the words of worship are spoken, and it is through the expressiveness of human language that we can begin to transform our worship and rediscover how we may aesthetically sense God. Our words can make worship a flower fragrant to God. In songs, confessions, prayers, readings, and sermons, faith's eternal and invisible object is given Christ's flesh and Spirit's breath before our very eyes. If what our ears hear are beautiful words and sounds, then our hearts are more likely to feel and our minds know God's beauty. Soon our other senses will engage God's presence, as well.

When we name God, we engage in aesthetics. As we have seen, the use of metaphorical language allows us to image and give form to the One who is neither seen nor heard. Wesleyans may invoke the power of the aesthetic by creatively naming God. With every name and positive description of who God is and does there is, of course, an underlying negation to our statements. God defies verbal translation, and even the *definitive* Word of God, Jesus Christ, is shrouded in the mystery of the Incarnation. Yet many Wesleyan-Holiness churches do not even attempt to speak God's aesthetic names. The gravest situations exist in those congregations where the masculine pronouns "He" and "Him" are used constantly. The primary problem is not that such usage offends those who are sensitive to feminist issues, which it certainly does, but that it makes God seem too familiar. When the least imaginative names—mere pronouns—for our transcendent Creator are lazily used as the most common divine

[41]I am indebted to Michael Lodahl, my former professor, for suggesting that discussion begin with the Word and human words. However, it is ironic to identify Wesleyanism's Protestant heritage as the starting point for a discussion about improving aesthetic expressiveness. Many early Reformers were very aware of the power of the aesthetic, and the interiors of many churches were radically changed as decorated walls were whitewashed, statues were torn down, and high altars were dismantled. These iconoclastic responses were driven by the recognition of Scripture as the only true spiritual authority. Protestantism has yet to recover aesthetically from the subversion of music, architecture, drama, and visual arts to the written Word.

names, significant losses of meaning and reverence occur. The same situation exists with the Jesus of the old gospel hymns. This Jesus is a chum, a neighbor, a friend like no other. While Wesleyans rightly emphasize God's personal nature, Christ's love, and the Spirit's presence, the language used for all Persons of the Trinity should be spoken in awe and attempt to recover the missing sense of God's holiness and otherness. Both the lazy use of pronouns and excessive devotionalism impede the aesthetic naming of God.

God's aesthetic names may either be creative or sublime in nature. Creative metaphorical names like Architect, Mirror, Light, and Potter have been mentioned previously. Sublime names are also descriptive, but may seem more vague or philosophical: the Holy One, Creator, Lord of the Universe, the Transcendent or Ultimate One, Knower, and the Absolute. Every category of God's names, whether biblical, devotional, creative, or sublime, can be helpful for worship because all of them attempt to provide different visions of a God who can never be fully imagined or described by humans. Yet the unfortunate situation is that God's aesthetic names are overlooked most frequently despite their profound and unique ability to describe our Creator.

For those who speak the language of worship, the greatest challenge is not only to paint God's portrait with words, but to paint it well. How does one create a work of art whose beauty shines for all to see? How does one produce a new and alternate image which challenges us? An answer may be found in aesthetically creative preaching. Creative preaching is certainly not restricted to narrative preaching, but narrative is currently the homiletic method that most effectively re-presents biblical stories and exhibits them in the contemporary imagination. Good narrative preaching is art, and while talent helps, any minister may take painting lessons. Many homiletic tools are available to help individuals preach creatively, and mentoring is a great resource that has yet to be fully explored. However, what is most important is not *what* steps are taken toward learning new and more expressive means of communicating, but *that* the steps are taken. The imaginative naming of God must be attempted, and the aesthetic offers many suggestions.

Speaking in Other Tongues

Divine revelation occurs continually in our world and assumes many forms. God still speaks through the Spirit, Scripture, and the actions and worship of the church, but there are other languages in the divine vocabulary. God speaks to us in love through the beauty of nature. God also speaks to us through the arts, lifting human spirits and demonstrating that we, too, are co-creators whose work may be pronounced "very good." Wherever and however it occurs, God speaks to us from the beauty of holiness.

Wesleyans must learn to speak the aesthetic languages of nature and the arts effectively and hear them affectively. While some Wesleyans may speak them with greater frequency than others, all must learn to use them well so we can speak meaningfully to another dimension of human experience. The Divine Other speaks in tongues, and some of them are aesthetic. If we listen closely, we will hear sighs of appreciation escaping the lips of God, ourselves, and each other.

IN HONOR OF . . .
WILLIAM ARNETT AND CHARLES CARTER

William Melvin Arnett (1915-1995)

Funeral services for Dr. Arnett were November 29, 1995, in Wilmore, Kentucky. Son of Charles Edward and Frankie Viola (Sherbert) Arnett, William Arnett was born in Clay Center, Kansas. He earned an A. B. degree from Asbury College and degrees from Asbury Theological Seminary (B. D.), Princeton Theological Seminary (Th. M.), and Drew Theological Seminary (Ph. D.). His dissertation was titled "John Wesley: Man of One Book." He married Ruth Priscilla Little in 1940 and they had four children. Ordained a Deacon in 1944 and Elder in 1952 in the Kansas West Conference of the United Methodist Church, Dr. Arnett served student pastorates at High Bridge and Corbin, Kentucky. He was the Frank Paul Morris Professor of Christian Doctrine at Asbury Theological Seminary from 1951 to 1985, retiring in 1985. His service to the Wesleyan Theological Society included being a charter member and the Society's third president and its secretary/treasurer from 1983-1989.

Charles W. Carter (1905-1996)

Death came on October 21, 1996, to Dr. Carter, another charter member of the Wesleyan Theological Society and former Editor of its *Wesleyan Theological Journal*. He earned Th. B. and A. B. degrees from Marion College (Indiana Wesleyan University), M.A. degrees from Winona Lake School of Theology and Butler University, the B. D. from Asbury Theological Seminary, and an M. Th. from Christian Theological Seminary. Ordained by the North Michigan Conference of the Wesleyan Church, he was author or editor of more than 30 books, including General Editorship of the *Wesleyan Bible Commentary* and the two-volume *Contemporary Wesleyan Theology* (Zondervan, 1993). He served three terms as a Wesleyan missionary to Sierra Leone and was Chair of the Division of Religion and Philosophy at Marion College from 1946 to 1957 and at Taylor University from 1959 to 1971. He was Scholar-in-Residence at Indiana Wesleyan University from 1971 to 1990.

God is to be praised for the special gift of these two servants of our Lord. The Wesleyan Theological Society is especially in their debt.—Editor

BOOK REVIEWS

Norman H. Murdoch, *Origins of the Salvation Army*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994. 241 pp. ISBN 0-87049-858-4.

Reviewed by R. David Rightmire, Asbury College, Wilmore, KY.

Norman Murdoch's *Origins of the Salvation Army* challenges traditional interpretations of the Army's official denominational histories. As a response to Salvationist hagiography, this work represents a social historian's revisionistic assessment of the relationship between class and religion in the development of the Salvation Army. Murdoch brings a unique perspective to his critical analysis of the successes and failures of William Booth's ministry among the poor. The author traces the lives and work of Booth and his wife, Catherine, from their beginnings as Wesleyan evangelists in the 1850s to their inauguration in 1890 of the social scheme presented in the book *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. The work includes appendices, a bibliographic essay, and an index.

In the opening pages of the book, Murdoch provides a helpful discussion of the impact of trans-Atlantic revivalism on Salvation Army origins. The Booths were especially influenced by the ministry of James Caughey, Charles Finney, and Phoebe Palmer (American holiness evangelists) in the 1840s. In effect, the Army adopted and then institutionalized revivalism's "new measures." Booth's founding of an urban mission in the East End of London (1865-79) is critically evaluated as a failure. Murdoch claims that such failure was due to "Booth's inability to reach across cultures" to the non-Protestant immigrant populations, failing "to impose an Anglo-Wesleyan culture on East Enders" (79). The stagnation of the work in the East End is presented as the catalyst for the focus of missional activity in the out-lying provincial towns. In fact, the author discerns a pattern of accommodation leading to failure at every stage of the Army's development.

Throughout the book, such “failure” is determined by statistical analysis and is contrasted to the so-called success of Booth, which the author deems “wishful thinking” (84). Murdoch interprets the reorganization of Booth’s movement along military lines (resulting in the emergence of the Salvation Army in 1878) as an attempt to revitalize a faltering mission. The author views the military metaphor as leading to divine-right absolutism, and being justified by Booth on pragmatic grounds. Murdoch maintains that the success of the mission-turned-Army had nothing to do with the military metaphor and authoritarian rule of a general (as Booth supposed), but was the result of “women’s ministry and the shift to the provinces” (100). This stage of the Army’s growth is characterized by the development of post-millennial revivalistic imperialism.

The author claims that Booth’s failure to gain a foothold in urban slums was somewhat obscured by the Army’s success in attracting the working class in the provincial cities. The Army’s phenomenal growth among the working class between 1878 and 1886 was followed by a period of stagnation, leading Booth to look for new mission fields. As a Christian imperium, the Army expanded during the 1880s beyond the boundaries of Great Britain, becoming international in scope. The explosive growth of the international Army, however, is said to have been mitigated by the failure of Booth to “read the signs of the times,” maintaining a centralized structure of governance amidst an age of increasing democratic idealism. Revivalistic failure in relation to the “heathen masses” and a growing concern for the wretched urban conditions are claimed to have led Booth to adapt his mission to social salvation. Murdoch further interprets the adding of “wholesale salvation” to the mission of individual salvation as a utilitarian means to salvage the movement in the late 1880s. Consciously deciding against the democratization of his movement as a way to hold on to the working class and their financial support, Booth adopted social service as a means of finding outside sources of support for his worldwide Christian imperium.

The author’s claim that “social salvation replaced evangelism as the Army’s mission” (147) is overstated, as is the charge that financial survival determined the Army’s agenda, causing it to temper its aggressive Christianity. As a reaction to Salvation Army hagiography, this author’s demythologization goes beyond an assessment of institutional bias to the point of charging early Army leaders with intentional falsification. Throughout the work, Murdoch’s economic, sociological, and psychological analyses of Booth’s motives, actions, and spiritual commitments provide a unique, if not controversial, interpretation of the historical evidence.

John W. Krummel, ed. *A Biographical Dictionary of Methodist Missionaries to Japan: 1873-1993* (n.p.: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1996). Pps. xiii, 342. ISBN: 4-7642-4019-X.

Reviewed by David Bundy, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN.

The first Methodist Episcopal missionaries arrived in Japan during 1873. Since that time, the Methodist Churches (Methodist Episcopal, United Methodist, Free Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Wesleyan) and the daughter churches of the Holiness and Pentecostal movements have played important roles in the development of Christianity within the context of Japan. A definitive history of this phenomenon has not yet been written, but the first step has been taken by the Christianity and Culture Research Center of the Research Institute of Aoyama Gakuin University.

The present bilingual English-Japanese dictionary provides thorough documentation on missionaries from churches that are part of the World Methodist Council or their predecessor denominations. The effort was made to locate biographical information on the present denominations as well as the predecessor denominations. Missionaries from these denominations who served either as "self-supporting" missionaries or on assignment with an ecumenical agency (WCTU, YMCA, YWCA) were included, as were visiting faculty who went to Japan under the aegis of the Japanese Methodist churches or the various mission boards. Thus, for example, Myrtle Anderson served at Osaka Christian College under the aegis of the Free Methodist Mission Board from 1951-1959 and returned to Japan (1962-1968) as a "self-supporting" missionary. She served as Professor of English at Kyoritsu Women's University.

The importance of this volume for Wesleyan/Holiness mission history can hardly be exaggerated. Individuals who work on two continents (and in two unrelated languages) are very difficult to document. Few scholars have the language skills or the financial resources to examine all of the available information. The method of presentation of the data is clear and concise. For each person, actuarial dates are provided, names of parents (including the family name of the mother when available), educational experience, denominational connections, and other relevant ministry status, including conference membership and dates of arrival in and departure from Japan. This is followed by a brief narrative of the ministry of the individual. These succinct paragraphs average about 50 words, with some up to as many as 150. The same text appears in Japanese. This remarkable feature of the volume makes the information available to scholars and/or families of missionaries working in either language. The data, where it can be verified, is remarkably accurate and complete. Access is facilitated through lists of abbreviations and a list of the schools and other institutions and organizations to which Methodist missionaries were assigned in Japan.

This *Biographical Dictionary* will provoke a number of observations and research projects. For example, one sees the significant presence of Free Methodist and Wesleyan missionaries in numbers disproportionate to the size of the denominations. Another observation is the frequent reference to "self supporting" missions and to the Wesleyan/Holiness institutions that were influenced by the Methodist who advocated that style of mission, William Taylor. A surprise is the minimal presence of Wesleyan/Holiness institutional references other than God's Bible School and Taylor University. Asbury College and Asbury Theological Seminary are mentioned occasionally. The overwhelming impression is of the diversity of the Methodist tradition as encountered by Japan. For example, the educational backgrounds of missionaries (and presumably their theological commitments) include Union Theological Seminary, Boston University, Southern Methodist University, Los Angeles Pacific College (now part of Azusa), Greenville College, God's Bible School, Harvard, and many state universities. One wonders what definitions of "Methodist" the Japanese churches may entertain.

One issue that arises is that of completeness. That claim (preface, p. ii) is dangerous to make! For example, it could be argued that Charles and Lettie Cowman and the E. A. Kilbournes should have been included in the dictionary because they were the first persons ordained and commissioned by the Pilgrim Holiness Church—which would merge with the Wesleyan Methodist Church to form the Wesleyan Church. That they would later found the independent interdenominational Wesleyan/Holiness Oriental Missionary Society (today OMS, Inc.) might bring all of the missionaries of that organization in Japan into the orbit of the *Biographical Dictionary*. As well, it appears that several Free Methodist short-term (VISA) missionaries were not included.

Another issue is the limitation of coverage to denominations related to the World Methodist Council. As seen above in the example of the Oriental Missionary Society, there are a number of ambiguous cases. Among these, the more problematic are the Salvation Army, Church of the Nazarene, and the Japan Evangelistic Band. Each of these have propagated traditional Methodist themes as articulated within the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. Each can trace its beginnings back to Methodist contexts.

These questions are not raised to cast aspersions on the work accomplished in the production of the *Biographical Dictionary*. Instead, they are only indicative of work to be done as one seeks to define the nature of Methodist influence in the definition of contemporary global Christianity. The present volume will long continue to be a standard resource for those interested in Methodist and/or Wesleyan/Holiness mission as well as for those interested in the transference of religious ideas from one culture to another.

Stephen L. Longenecker. 1994. *Piety and Tolerance: Pennsylvania German Religions, 1700-1850*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press. The sixth volume in the Pietist and Wesleyan Studies monograph series edited by David Bundy and J. Steven O'Malley.

Reviewed by Andrew Tickle, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

In this ground-breaking monograph, Stephen Longenecker has brought his outstanding skills as an historian to bear on a long neglected topic. Assuming that the religious beliefs of an individual or group have an impact on their personal and social lives, Longenecker focuses his attention on the shared theological beliefs of those Germans who settled southeastern Pennsylvania. By so doing he shows that these Germans made a far greater impact on American civilization than previously thought. Moreover, by shifting attention to the impact of the middle colonies on the American situation, Longenecker joins the ranks of those historians who wish to broaden the perspective of early American colonial history beyond the borders of Puritan New England.

In the preface of *Piety and Tolerance*, Longenecker sets forth his primary thesis: "If what marks American democracy is respect for the rights of all, then perhaps a more diverse area, such as the middle colonies, prompted the tradition of tolerance. *Piety and Tolerance*, therefore, looks to early Pennsylvania Germans to determine the influence of German Protestantism, particularly Pietism, in promoting understanding and cooperation"(xiii). In other words, Longenecker wants to argue that inherent in their shared pietistic theology was an egalitarianism that prompted a spirit of toleration and at times led to cooperation among the diverse German religious groups inhabiting southeastern colonial Pennsylvania. Thus, by choosing a path long neglected by contemporary historians, Longenecker believes that he has located one if not the source of the ultimate American value, toleration.

The chapters of *Piety and Tolerance* can be divided into three distinct groups. The first section recounts two factors that gave rise to the egalitarian and tolerant attitudes prevalent in colonial Pennsylvania. In the first chapter, Longenecker describes the theological concepts of spiritual rebirth through faith in Jesus Christ and the universal freedom to exercise such faith. These two concepts, he argues, are the heart of Pietism and inherent in these concepts is a propensity to produce an egalitarian climate. According to Longenecker, it is this shared emphasis on the unlimited availability of salvation for all persons which helped these diverse German groups to form cooperative relationships. Moreover, he argues that certain of these immigrant religious groups, i.e., the Brethren, experienced a reversal of their socio-economic status. In Europe these groups were in the minority and had suffered at the hands of Catholics as well as other Protestants. Upon arrival in Pennsylvania, the minority groups found themselves in the majority and in possession of more freedom. This reversal promoted a greater atmosphere of tolerance.

The second section of chapters examines the various German religious groups which settled in southeastern colonial Pennsylvania. Beginning with those he deems the “Radical Pietists,” Longenecker explores those religious groups which stood furthest outside the religious mainstream. They were characterized by their mystical tendencies, non-conformity, and anti-establishment views. In the chronology of immigration, the Anabaptists, among whom he includes the Amish, Mennonites, Moravians, and the Dunkers (who would later be known as Brethren) were the next to arrive. Longenecker highlights the religious and communal practices of these Anabaptist groups which best reflect their egalitarian spirit as well as those beliefs and practices which hindered it. He devotes the next chapter to probing the involvement of some of these groups in the revivals of the mid-1700s. Longenecker makes the point that the pietistic strains of the churches of these Germans—Lutherans and Reformed—became more obvious during this period of revivalism. He also addresses the failed unification efforts of the Moravian leader Count von Zinzendorf. The final chapter in this segment examines the campmeeting revivals of the late eighteenth century. These new revivals and revivalists provoked many troubling questions among these German religious groups about various revival practices and particular theological beliefs; however, the revivals also promoted many practices which were indicative of a spirit of ecumenism and cooperation among these same Germans.

In the final chapters of *Piety and Tolerance* Longenecker addresses the influence that Pietism’s egalitarian view of salvation had on these Germans as they confronted the issue of slavery. He argues that all groups with Pietistic tendencies believed that spiritual freedom was available to all—black and white. Nevertheless, they disagreed over the earthly status of those in bondage and were split over the alternatives of colonization, continued bondage, or complete freedom.

All of its reviewers to date have extolled *Piety and Tolerance* as an important ground-breaking contribution to the long neglected study of early Pennsylvania German Religion. Their criticisms have been minimal. John Frantz sees two problems with the work. First, he says the author "exaggerates the degree of cooperation that prevailed in the colony. Much of the evidence he presents constitutes exceptions to the rule" (John B. Frantz. *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, Jan. 1996, 217). Secondly, Frantz maintains that the subtitle is misleading in that it hints at a much more comprehensive study than the book really provides. Frantz points to the neglect of the Lutheran and Reformed churches "whose members constituted the majority of the Pennsylvania Germans" and rightly points out that Roman Catholics receive virtually no attention (217). Paul E. Doutrich criticizes the work for its lack of "probing analysis" concerning the effects of change on the various groups. Doutrich observes that Longenecker "often suggests ways that various German Protestant groups evolved, but rarely does he offer a completely satisfying explanation about the causes or consequences of change" (Paul E. Doutrich, *Journal of Church and State*, 38:1, 1996, 188).

The strongest critique of *Piety and Tolerance* pertains to its monolithic view of Pietism. Leonard Riforgiato makes the case in his biography of Henry Melchoir Muhlenburg that "Pietism . . . was a many-sided religious phenomenon and while Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg can with justification be considered a pietist, it is difficult to assign him to any one branch of the movement" (Leonard R. Riforgiato, *Missionary of Moderation: Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg and the Lutheran Church in English America*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980, 33). Continuing this line of argument, Riforgiato states that Longenecker "also assumes, erroneously, that all German American sects embraced the same variety of Pietism . . ." (Leonard Riforgiato, *Church History*, 65:1, 1996, 124-125).

During a public discussion of his work, Longenecker made several comments regarding the reviews of his work. He contended that most of the reviewers of *Piety and Tolerance* were biased toward their particular denominational affiliation. Furthermore, he stated that most denominational scholars have an aversion to the Pietistic strains within their denomination's history—an aversion that Longenecker also attributed to most of his reviewers. He describes Pietism as a "live" issue in most denominations, carrying with it a negative connotation. He cited as an example the Mennonite historian Beulah Stauffer Hostetler's review in which she states that Longenecker's treatment "becomes murky when he also regards Mennonites and other staid denominations as Pietist. While Pietist emphases no doubt pervaded all of the groups to some extent, it was precisely the resistance of these major groups to the strongly pietistic emphasis of the Pennsylvania German revival that resulted in members of their denominations leaving to form new religious groupings . . ." (Beulah Stauffer Hostetler, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 69, October, 1995, 543-545).

I find myself in agreement with the reviewers of *Piety and Tolerance*. Longenecker has made an important contribution to the study of German religion in colonial Pennsylvania. He effectively uses original sources to support his primary thesis and he does so in a readable narrative style. Moreover, he does not ignore those issues and situations that are contrary to his thesis. However, there are problems that have escaped the attention of the previous reviewers. As one progresses through this work it becomes apparent that it is more about cooperative efforts of clergy and church leaders than a discussion of the laity's attitudes toward other members of various groups. Longenecker does not make this differentiation. Initially, from the title and preface, one would have the impression that the intent of this work is to address both groups; that is to say, it is to be a comprehensive work. With the current historical interest in popular religion, Longenecker's analysis could have only benefited from such considerations.

Another problem is the mysterious appearance and disappearance of certain groups in the course of the narrative. The Radical Pietists drop completely out of the picture without explanation. At least two topics are introduced with little or no explanation. Although Longenecker does discuss the cooperative efforts of Methodists with some of these German groups, he provides no discussion, with the exception of Whitefield, of how or why Methodists came to be in this area of Pennsylvania, nor does he discuss how Methodism initially came into contact with these communities. He assumes that the reader will already be acquainted with the pietistic nature of Methodism.

Finally, by committing only five pages to a formal discussion of the history and theology of Pietism, Longenecker gives too little attention to the concept which provides the framework for his work. He argues strongly for the case that the theology of Pietism promoted the egalitarian attitude of these colonists and hence led to their tolerant attitudes. The older works of Lucy Bittinger (*German Religious Life in Colonial Times*, 1906) and Julius Fredrich Sachse (*The German Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania*, 1895) do a better job of introducing their readers to the German Pietistic tradition. Such a discussion may have averted Riforgiato's accurate criticism that Longenecker's presentation of Pietism is monolithic. Since German Pietism is the fulcrum of his argument, it deserved far more attention.

However, *Piety and Tolerance* is an important contribution to American religious history and to the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. It provides much needed background and insight into those immigrant German religious groups which had a vital part in shaping the history of this tradition.

Emilio J. M. de Carvalho, *OuÁo os passos de milhares: Etapas do Metodismo em Angola* (2nd ed.; Luanda: Igreja Metodista Unida em Angola, 1994). 200 pps.

Reviewed by David Bundy, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN.

The interaction of the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions in the United States and the Methodist churches that developed as a result of mission activity that self-consciously identified itself as Wesleyan/Holiness has been little studied. The volume of Bishop Emilio de Carvalho is an important contribution to that area of mission history. The focus of this study is on the developments in Angola, beginning with the work of William Taylor and continuing nearly to the present. The *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982) identified the *Igreja Metodista Unida* as the second largest non-Catholic church in Angola with about 70,000 members. Since that time there has been an upsurge in both the Pentecostal churches and the African independent churches, but the Methodists remain a significant part of the religious landscape of the country. De Carvalho argues that the character of the Angolan Methodist church was formed by the role of the Wesleyan/Holiness missionaries who served as part of the Methodist Episcopal Mission Board during the initial period of the Taylor-inspired missionaries in Angola beginning in 1885.

After a brief survey of the development of mission organizations within Great Britain (pps. 7-24), de Carvalho traces the efforts of Protestant missionaries to establish a presence in Angola. Special attention is given (pps. 25-30) to the treaties in Europe which forced the Catholic Portuguese colonial administration in Angola to allow European Protestant missions access to the population. What de Carvalho does not note is that the American missions were not explicitly included in the treaties. Therefore, William Taylor personally went to Lisbon, secured an audience with the King and obtained permission to develop a "self-supporting" mission in Angola which conformed to the criteria established in the European treaties. For that reason, Taylor's work in Angola was developed on a slightly different basis than in other areas of the world. It was focused more on developing farming and light industry, with less insistence on conformity to local cultural norms than, for example, in other areas of Africa, Latin America, India. Taylor's career and mission theory, see D. Bundy, "Bishop William Taylor and Methodist Mission: A Study in Nineteenth Century Social History," *Methodist History* 27:4(1989), 197-210 and 28,1(1989), 2:21; and *idem*, "William Taylor, 1821-1902: Entrepreneurial Maverick for the Indigenous Church," in *Mission Legacies*, ed. G. Anderson, *et al*. (American Society of Missiology Series, 19, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994), 461-468.

Four chapters (pps. 31-80) focus on William Taylor and the "self-supporting" mission which functioned in relative independence from the Methodist Episcopal Mission Board. Initial travel and capital funds were channeled through the Transit and Building Fund Society. The results of mission were organized as local autonomous Methodist churches and were designed not to be dependent on the Methodist Episcopal Mission Board in New York for funds, governance, or spiritual advice. The first of these chapters (pps. 31-39) describes the life and mission of Taylor. The second (pps. 41-49) describes briefly Taylor's relationship with two European missionaries to Angola who worked under and/or with the Taylor missionaries. These were William Summers and Heli Chatelain. In addition to the information provided by de Carvalho, it should be noted that Chatelain arranged for the publication of the exploits and theories of William Taylor in French-language mission journals, thereby giving Taylor another linguistic audience and complicating the study of the influence of Taylor.

The next chapter (pps. 51-76) traces the Taylor expedition to Angola from its January 1885 departure from New York with 44 persons, including Taylor's son Ross and wife. The hardships experienced by the group because of climate and disease are recounted. Few of the enterprises were able to achieve a "self-supporting" level of income. In addition to these difficulties mentioned by de Carvalho, there were problems with language learning. The groups of missionaries were too large and their discipline by Taylor into a large class meeting did not give the missionaries time or isolation to learn either the African or Portuguese languages. The children learned most quickly and initially served as translators for the adults, but their life expectancy was so short that few grew into the role of adult missionary. The Mead family met in these pages would eventually be in Los Angeles in 1906, participate in the Pentecostal revival, and contributed to the analysis of glossolalia by claiming to recognize African languages. The death rate was very high. Photographs of gravestones of several of this group provide a poignant counterpoint to the text.

Despite the difficulties, churches and various enterprises were begun in Dondo, Nhangue-a-Pepe, Pungo Andongo, Malange, and the capital Luanda. In a chapter which evaluates the Taylor mission theory and practice as applied to Angola, de Carvalho acknowledges the problems encountered and admits the success was less than anticipated. However, he counters the critics of Taylor and the sympathizers with Taylor's antagonists on the Methodist Episcopal Mission Board. Without the sacrificial work of the Taylor missionaries, there would probably have been no Methodist church in Angola. He asks (p. 80), "where was the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church?"

From 1885 to 1896, either Taylor or one of the self-supporting missionaries served as chair of the (Angola) District Conference of the Annual Conference of Liberia. Beginning in 1897, with the retirement of Taylor, Taylor's successor, Bishop Hartzell, brought the churches under the control of the Mission Board in New York by making the churches part of the new Missionary Conference of the Congo. This was changed in 1902 to the Missionary Conference of West Africa. In 1920, the Angolan churches were organized as the Missionary Conference of Angola. Taylor missionary H. C. Withey could serve as secretary to the Conference, but the visiting bishops and New York were clearly in control. It was not until 1950 that an Angolan Methodist was entrusted with the secretary's position and not until 1970 with the election of Bishop de Carvalho that someone from the church in Angola was again chair of the Annual Conference. The focus of the chapters which trace the history between Taylor and ecclesiastical independence (pps. 83-137) focus on the administrative, educational and evangelistic efforts of the church. There is frequent reference to Taylor in these sections and the subsequent events are evaluated in light of Taylor's vision. The chapter which narrates the development of the Annual Conference (since 1948) (pps. 141-192) contains important excursuses on the relationship to global Methodism, the roles of Black American Methodist missionaries, mission work in São Tomé, ecumenical relationships, theological education, and other ministries. The final chapter (pps. 195-200) briefly describes aspects of the present realities in the various regions of Angola.

This book is a remarkable achievement. It is probably not the last word on either Taylor's work in Angola or the history of Methodism in Angola, but it will be the essential starting point for all additional work. It is hoped that the correspondence and other documents on Angola preserved in the Methodist Center Archives at Drew University will be used in subsequent volumes. These would add significant texture to the narrative and help clarify the role of the Methodist Episcopal Mission Board and the Missionary Bishops in the development of the Methodist Church in Angola. It would be hoped that an extensive index might be appended to a subsequent edition to facilitate access to this magnificent detail-laden tome.

Richard B. Hays. 1996. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. Harper: San Francisco. 508 pp. ISBN 0-06-063796-X. Paperback.

Reviewed by John E. Stanley, Messiah College, Grantham, PA.

"Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2, AA). This text summarizes the task of New Testament ethics, according to Richard Hays, Professor of New Testament at Duke University Divinity School. Hays believes the church has been compromised by its commitment to nationalism, violence, and idolatry. The academy needs a comprehensive New Testament ethics which combines the descriptive, synthetic, hermeneutical, and pragmatic tasks. Hays' goal is to reform the church by showing how the church can read Scripture and how Scripture can shape the life of the church.

Because of the diversity of its witnesses, the New Testament is neither a cookie cutter for producing identical communities nor a rule book prescribing behavior. Instead, the church must engage in critical study which restates the diverse canonical texts while seeking a synthesis of the New Testament's ethical witnesses. The hermeneutical task of relating the text to the current situation requires an act of Spirit-led imagination. Pragmatically, New Testament ethics is unfinished unless the text addresses contemporary moral dilemmas facing the church.

After describing the moral visions of Paul, the later Pauline tradition, Mark, Matthew, Luke-Acts, the Gospel and Epistles of John, and Revelation, Hays synthesizes these diverse ethical voices into the three focal images of community, cross, and new creation. The church is said to be God's counter-cultural community of discipleship and constantly should ask, "What should we do?" The cross stands as the paradigm for faithfulness to God in this world. The new creation, based on the unique act of God in the resurrection, represents the eschatological thrust of living in the power of the resurrection amid a not-yet-redeemed world. These three images are Hays' canon within the canon, his lens that focuses the reading of the canonical texts. The hermeneutical strategies of Reinhold Niebuhr, Karl Barth, John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza are evaluated before the author states his own hermeneutical method—which stresses moral judgment as metaphor-making.

A strength of *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* is how Hays executes the pragmatic task by addressing the five issues of violence in defense of justice, divorce and remarriage, homosexuality, anti-Judaism and ethnic conflict, and abortion. He chose these five issues because the New Testament speaks to these five questions in decreasing amounts of specificity. The New Testament categorically rejects the use of violence. Hays claims, "there is not a syllable in the Pauline letters that can be cited in support of Christians employing violence" (331). Regarding divorce, New Testament texts share a common perspective but allow for pastoral modifications in specific contexts. The New Testament clearly opposes homosexuality, but that opposition needs to be weighed against other moral arguments. Regarding anti-Judaism, the New Testament contains texts which disagree and are in tension with each other. There are no New Testament texts that address the question of abortion directly. Thus, these five topics enable Hays to show how to use the New Testament whose voice on these matters ranges from a thundering unison to diversity to silence. Hays explains his deep personal involvement in each of these issues. For instance, the chapter on abortion emerged when close Christian friends in their forties became pregnant and learned that their baby would be born with Down's syndrome. Bill and Jennifer asked Hays how the New Testament could provide guidance for their decision on whether or not to terminate the pregnancy. Hays' personal conclusions are not always predictable.

Here is a comprehensive book on New Testament ethics because he shows how to reconcile biblical authority and diversity with the claims of experience and diverse traditions. He demonstrates how to perform the descriptive, synthetic, hermeneutical, and pragmatic tasks of Christian decision making. However, I have five debates with Hays. (1) Why did he omit Hebrews from his description of a New Testament moral vision, especially since he acknowledged Hebrews as a major ethical witness (202) and claimed he was confronting the full range of canonical witnesses? (2) How can a New Testament ethics not address sin as a theological and ethical reality? (3) Although I concur with Hays that the New Testament renounces the use of violence and calls Christians to love their enemies, the issue is more nuanced than he acknowledges. Hays rejects any just war theory and contends that "Christians have no place in the military" (400). His argument relates to his notion of the church as a countercultural community of discipleship. What happens when the church is not in a "Christ versus culture" typology, as in the Pastoral Epistles? Also, Paul used his

Roman citizenship to appeal to Caesar for protection. Is love the only way to resist evil? Must armed force always be rejected?

(4) Twice Hays addresses the matters of wealth, poverty, and the sharing of possessions. His call to share, although a valid and necessary response for affluent Christians, ignores the systemic nature of economic disparities. He should have suggested what type of economic system the New Testament envisions or allows. Elsa Tamez' Third World reading of James would instruct Hays. As it is, Hays takes a reactive rather than proactive approach. (5) His rejection of love and liberation as key focal images will draw debate, especially since liberation has been a key theme in the African-American tradition. I suspect that his desire to distance himself from liberation theology may have blinded him to the centrality of liberation as a theme in John, Luke-Acts, and Paul.

Wesleyan/Holiness readers will find golden nuggets scattered throughout Hays' exegetical mine. Some of these gems need further cutting and polishing, but their potential worth is obvious. For instance, Hays consistently emphasizes the Holy Spirit who not only informs the church but produces sanctification as a transformation of character and of the heart. Hays' affirmation that ethics and theology are united recalls Frank Staggs' observation on the centrality of ethics in the holiness movement. Hays highlights the New Testament's lofty vision of the church and he expects the church to act as God's new community. He affirms women and men as equal in office and opportunity in ministry and shows how 1 Tim. 2:11–15 conflicts with authentic Pauline teachings. He posits an inaugurated rather than a realized eschatology, even in the Gospel of John. In Matthew, Hays finds a community ethic of perfection. Thus, *teleios* in Matt. 5:48 should be translated as "perfect" rather than as "mature" to retain Matthew's intention. Love, rather than legalism, pervades Matthew. Hays reads Acts as a book about power and calls it early Pentecostalism rather than "early Catholicism." Regarding Romans, Hays notes that Romans does not end with chapters 3 and 7 because Romans 8 promises a realizable victory and power over sin. The Wesleyan quadrilateral constantly informs his appropriation of the New Testament. Like some Wesleyan/Holiness groups, Hays is a primitivist who values the past as the seed of the future. He wants to recapture the centrality of Scripture for a Spirit-endowed church.

The Moral Vision of the New Testament by Richard Hays is a major work that is must reading for the church and the academy. I read and discussed this work with John Stoner. Our conversations and debates enriched this review.

Current Officers of the Wesleyan Theological Society

President:	**Douglas M. Strong** Wesley Theological Seminary Washington, D.C.
First Vice-President:	**Albert L. Truesdale** Nazarene Theological Seminary Kansas City, Missouri
Secretary/Treasurer:	**William C. Kostlevy** Asbury Theological Seminary Wilmore, Kentucky
Journal Editor:	**Barry L. Callen** Anderson University Anderson, Indiana
Editorial Committee:	**David Bundy** **Barry L. Callen, Chair** **D. William Faupel**
Promotional Secretary:	**Stephen Lennox** Indiana Wesleyan University Marion, Indiana
Nominating Committee:	**Wesley D. Tracy** Editor, *Herald of Holiness* Kansas City, Missouri

ws