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EDITOR'S NOTES

The thirty-first annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society convened in November, 1995, on the campus of Northwest Nazarene College in Nampa, Idaho. The program theme was "**Sanctification and the New Creation**," planned under the direction of Dr. Kenneth Collins. Most of the articles appearing in this issue are revised and edited versions of select papers presented on this occasion.

The addressings of this significant theme range in setting from the ancient East (Michael Christensen) to the new South Africa (David Whitelaw). Theodore Runyon keynotes the theme, identifying it as a crucial Wesleyan distinctive. Other writers trace aspects of the theme (1) in the American Holiness Movement (Al Truesdale, Charles Jones, and Victor Reasoner), (2) in relation to other Christian traditions (John Culp and Steven O'Malley), and (3) in relation to the controversial issue of infant baptism (Stephen Blakemore).

Donald Thorsen's Presidential Address is also featured, along with another announcement of the new **Wesleyan Theological Society Endowment Fund**. Several important books related to the Wesleyan theological tradition have been published recently. Six of these are reviewed in this issue.

We read in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that "if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see everything has become new!" This is a promise, a possibility, the invitation of divine grace, the challenge of each believer and of the contemporary church as journeys of faith and efforts at mission proceed in the midst of our troubled world. May the contents of this issue bring insight and encouragement along the way.

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THE NEW CREATION:
THE WESLEYAN DISTINCTIVE

by

Theodore Runyon

Is it appropriate to speak of "Wesleyan distinctives"?[1] Does this not give the impression that we are about the sound the trumpets and attempt to prove the superiority of Wesleyan theology over all alternatives? My own commitment to ecumenism is too deep and too long-standing for that kind of chauvinism. However, I am well aware that ecumenical theology is not produced in a vacuum, nor does it originate out of whole cloth. It emerges from the creative confrontation of various historic traditions in interaction with the present needs of the church and the world. And this is possible only if the traditions are conscious of their heritages and seek to share them.

Therefore I ask whether there is a distinctive contribution that the Wesleyan tradition has to make to ecumenical theology and to the whole church? This is indeed my contention, and this is why I believe that we as Wesleyans have a responsibility to *retrieve* our tradition.

"Retrieval of tradition" is a rich notion first clarified by Martin Heidegger, then utilized by Karl Rahner, and more recently by David Tracy. "Human historicity is such," claims Heidegger, "that when we go back to a text [or a tradition] we unavoidably bring to it out of our cultural milieu questions which -force the text to yield answers not heard before. Some-

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[1] I am aware that most dictionaries do not allow "distinctive" to be used as a noun, but I was pleased to find this nounal use endorsed by the OED, which defines a distinctive as "a distinguishing mark or quality, a characteristic."

thing genuinely new comes to light. Granted that this occurs within human subjectivity, it is not subjectivistic because it arises out of the *sensus plenior* of the text [or tradition] itself."[2] The angle of our questions causes the light to reflect off the facets of the tradition in a new way. Retrieval is therefore not an attempt to repeat the past, nor to honor the past for its own sake, but to allow the past to confront us in the present as it provides a key to unlock a richer future. It is with this in mind that we approach the Wesleyan tradition, a tradition that we are convinced has resources that can benefit the whole church.

In pointing to the Wesleyan distinctives, however, we must remind ourselves that Wesley himself was an amazingly ecumenical product. No less than five distinct traditions informed his thinking: Puritanism, Anglicanism, Lutheranism by way of Moravian Pietism, Roman Catholicism, and Eastern Orthodoxy by way of the Eastern Fathers. What marks his approach, however, are the themes he drew from these sources, how he critiqued them, and how he combined them.

One of the more basic of the Wesleyan distinctives is the new creation, the very real transformation in the creature and the world which salvation brings about. The note of hope and expected transformation virtually sings its way through many of the sermons produced by Wesley during the final years of his long life. Listen to this passage from his 1783 sermon "The General Spread of the Gospel":

> [God] is already renewing the face of the earth: And we have strong reason to hope that the work he hath begun, he will carry on unto the day of the Lord Jesus; that he will never intermit this blessed work of his Spirit, until he has fulfilled all his promises; until he hath put a period to sin, and misery, and infirmity, and death; and re-established universal holiness and happiness, and caused all the inhabitants of the earth to sing together, "Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"[3]

In their latter days reformers often grow weary, disillusioned by the setbacks which erase the memories of early victories and the first flush of success. Wesley had reason enough to question the future of his move-

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[2] William J. Hill, *The Search for the Absent God* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 171.

[3] John Wesley's *Works,* 2:499. References are to the Bicentennial edition o the *Works,* unless otherwise specified.

ment. He had seen his followers divide and separate over issues that seemed to him of secondary importance. The increase in numbers of Methodists brought with it increased opposition from the Church he loved and to which he was deeply loyal. The sobriety and frugality of Methodists had led to their accumulation of material wealth, causing him to fear that within the movement lay the seeds of its own destruction. Yet, through all the negative signs on the horizon, this note of hope and sure confidence persists. In what is this hope grounded? What were its theological and experiential underpinnings? And is it a hope both accessible and viable not only in Wesley's time but today?

The Renewal of the Image of God

The new creation is cosmic in its overall dimensions and its implications, but for Wesley it is focused in the renewal of persons. "Ye know that the great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God."[4] This renewing *of the* image is what Albert Outler calls "the axial theme of Wesley's soteriology."[5] The renewing of the face of the earth begins, therefore, with the renewing of its human inhabitants. This is the pattern followed by the Eastern Fathers whom Wesley admired, linking cosmic redemption to human salvation. This is the renewal that Wesley saw beginning in the hearts and lives of those touched by his movement.

The distinctive that sets Wesleyanism apart from the predominant Protestant heritage, however, is Wesley's insistence that the renewal of the image of God involves the creature in actual transformation — in no less than re-creation. In "The Scripture Way of Salvation," Wesley describes it as a "real" as well as a "relative" change in the believer, the actual renewal of the image.

Of course, the image of God traditionally has been identified with those unique abilities or capacities within human beings which have set them apart from other creatures. Thus the Deists of Wesley's day identified the image with reason, and soon after Wesley the philosopher Immanuel Kant identified it with conscience.[6] Reason and conscience were viewed as capacities resident within human beings that can provide

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[4] 2:185.

[5] 2:185n.

[6] Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1963), 133.

access to the divine.[7] Wesley, by contrast, sees the image more *relationally*, not so much as something humans possess as the way they relate to God and reflect God in the world.

In an early sermon Wesley describes human beings as receiving the love of God and then *reflecting* that love toward all other creatures, but especially toward those likewise called to bear "the image of their Creator."[8] The image of God, then, was viewed not as a human capability or inherent possession, but as a living relationship made possible by divine, uncreated grace. In this he shared the understanding of image found in the tradition of the Eastern Fathers. They used the metaphor of humanity as a "mirror," called not only to mirror God in their own lives, but to *reflect* into the world the grace which they receive, and thus to mediate the life of God to the rest of creation.[9] It follows that the image is not understood as an independent agent operating out of its own capacities — a mirror does not possess the image it reflects — but as an agent who must constantly receive from God what it transmits further. It images its Maker in its words and deeds.

Therefore, the image of God as Wesley understands it might best be described as a vocation or calling to which human beings are called, the fulfillment of which constitutes their true destiny. Because it is not innate, the image can be lost, forfeited, or betrayed. It resides not so much in the creature as in the way the creature lives out relationship to the Creator, using whatever gifts and capacities have been received to be in communion with and to reflect God in the world. In order that the creature might do so freely and out of a heart responsive to the Creator, the human being has been "endued not only with sense and understanding but also with a will,... with liberty, a power of directing his own affections and actions, a capacity of determining himself, of choosing good or evil."

The tragedy of the human situation is that human beings have misused this freedom. They have revolted against their Creator, distorting the image relationship for which they were created. "By rebelling against

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[7] With his commitment to a Lockean epistemology, Wesley consistently rejected natural theology, a knowledge of God inherent within the creature. Cf. 2:570f., and note Albert Outler's strange interpretation of Wesley as a Platonist, in spite of the evidence to the contrary in the passage itself (n. 14).

[8] 4:295.

[9] John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas* (London: Faith Pres 1964), 120.

God [Adam] destroyed himself, lost the favor and the image of God, and entailed sin, with its attendant pain, on himself and all his posterity."[10] By turning from God to seek "happiness independent of God," he threw "not only himself but likewise the whole creation, which was intimately connected with him, into disorder, misery, death."[11] A cosmic and interrelated Fall, if it is to be reversed, requires a cosmic and interrelated recreation.

In referring to the Fall, Wesley assumes that he is describing a historical event and its far-reaching consequences. At a deeper level, however, he is describing the fundamental nature of the human predicament, the fact that a creature given freedom in order to be in a positive relation to the Creator has misused that freedom to turn away and construct a self-sufficient world.

Yet, God does not abandon this creature to the consequences of disobedience. To the question, "Did not God foresee that Adam would abuse his liberty? And did he not know the baneful consequences which this must naturally have on all his posterity?" Wesley espouses the classic *felix culpa* position: God permitted this disobedience because the divine remedy for it would far exceed in blessedness the harmful consequences of the fall. For humanity has "gained by the fall of Adam a capacity of attaining more holiness and happiness on earth than it would have been possible for [humanity] to attain if Adam had not fallen. For if Adam had not fallen, Christ had not died." Wesley goes on to say:

> Unless all the partakers of human nature had received that deadly wound in Adam it would not have been needful for the Son of God to take our nature upon him. Do you not see that this was the very ground of his coming into the world? ... Was it not to remedy this very thing that "the Word was made flesh"? That "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"? ... So there would have been no room for that amazing display of the Son of God's love to mankind. . . . There could have been no such thing as faith in the Son of God "as loving us and giving himself for us." There could have been no faith in the Spirit of God, as renewing the image of God in our hearts.[12]

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[10] 2:452.

[11] 2:399.

[12] 2:425f.

Note the Trinitarian character of this intervention by the Creator. Through Christ *and the Spirit* the possibility of restoring and renewing that relationship for which we were created is opened up again.

It is important to emphasize this Trinitarian nature of the renewal, because it is here that Wesley differentiates himself from the characteristic Lutheran emphasis on Christ alone, and it is here that he introduces his distinction between the *real* and the *relative* change which takes place in the believer's relationship to God. Both types of change are absolutely crucial. The relative change occurs with justification. It is important to note, however, that when Wesley calls the change that comes with justification "relative," it is not because it is less significant. He intends "relative" to be understood in its literal sense, as *relational*,[13] referring to the change in the nature of the relationship between the sinner and God which Christ effects. He takes our place, sacrificing himself for us and satisfying divine justice. God accepts this sacrifice, pardoning us and accepting us once again as his own children, transforming alienation into reconciliation. In lefting us God sets us in a new relationship which is basic to everything that follows. This is the first point that must be made. Justification as a new relationship provides the continuing foundation for the Christian life.

This is what Wesley learned from Luther through the Moravians. Justification provides the foundation necessary for genuine sanctification. This is why it is important to recognize that the position taken earlier in some holiness circles that justification is a preliminary stage, to be left behind as one goes on to perfection, was a fundamental misunderstanding of Wesley. Justification provides the necessary substructure of God's grace for everything else that is built upon it. This base is never outgrown or transcended. When Wesley says "justification implies only a relative ... change,"[14] he is not questioning the importance of justification, which he describes as God's work in Christ 'for us." He is — in contrast to those positions which emphasized *only* justification — making the case for the equal importance of God's work "*in* us" through the Spirit. It is this work of the Spirit which carries Christ's work forward toward its intended goal the new creation.

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[13] Mildred Bangs Wynkoop deserves the credit for opening up the undeniably relational character of Wesley's theology in *A Theology of Love* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972).

[14] 1:431.

Sanctification

Given the fact that the relative change is essential, the point regarding the *real* change must be made with equal force. The foundation of justification is laid in order *to be built upon*. This is the point that has been obscured in Protestantism whenever justification or conversion have been viewed as completing salvation. And this is the distinctive for which Wesleyans must make a clear case. Justification is intended not as the end but as the beginning of the salvation process. The *relative* change lays the foundation for a *real* change in the creature, and it is this real change that brings about the renewal of the image of God. This change begins with the new birth, which inaugurates sanctification. Justification, says Wesley, "restores us to the favor," sanctification "to the image of God." The one takes away the guilt, the other the power of sin.[15] By contrast, for Luther there is no goal higher than justification. In his "Lectures on Romans," Luther says:

> The whole life of the new people, the believing people, the spiritual people, is this: with the sigh of the heart, the cry of the deed, the toil of the body to ask, seek, and pray only for justification ever and ever again until the hour of death.[16]

Lutheran theologian Gerhard Ford defines sanctification as nothing more than "the art of getting used to... justification."[17] But Wesleyans are convinced that God is not content simply to forgive and reconcile the sinner. God's intention is a new creation. Therefore, to be content with justification alone is to *truncate the divine action and frustrate the divine goal. A* full doctrine of sanctification is necessary. Anything less will fall short of what Wesley calls the promise of "the great salvation."

Wesleyans are united, therefore, in insisting that salvation includes the transformation of the creature. Many would extend this transformation not only to the individual but to society. They find a peculiar affinity between Wesley's doctrine of sanctification and movements for social change. When Christian perfection becomes the goal on the individual level, a fundamental hope is engendered that the future can surpass the present. A holy dissatisfaction is aroused with regard to any present state of affairs-a dissatisfaction that supplies the critical edge necessary to keep the process of individual transformation moving. Moreover, this holy dissat-

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[15] 1:432.

[16] Martin Luther, "Lectures on Romans," *The Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), XV, 128.

[17] In Donald L. Alexander, *Christian Spirituality* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 13.

isfaction is *readily transferable* from the realm of the individual to that of society, where it provides a persistent motivation for reform in the light of "a more perfect way" that transcends any status quo.[18] So Wesleyans are united on both the possibility and the necessity for real transformation.

But Wesleyans divide when it comes to the interpretation of the *goal* of this process, *entire* sanctification. Just how complete can the transformation of the creature be? How new is the new creation? Wesley himself drew back from any notion of absolute perfection. He begins both of his sermons on Christian Perfection with disclaimers. And in "A Plain Account," after the introduction, he adds a section on "In what sense Christians are not ... perfect."[19] Finite creatures do not, with entire sanctification, suddenly become non-finite. "The highest perfection which man can attain while the soul dwells in the body does not exclude ignorance and error, and a thousand other infirmities. Now from wrong judgments wrong words and actions will often necessarily flow. . . . Nor can I be freed from a liableness to such a mistake while I remain in a corruptible body."[20] What then is the perfection that is possible in this world?

A case could be made that Wesley's concern was mainly for perfection of *intention.* If the intention is right, this is what really counts. "Intention" was a theme important to him from his 1725 self-dedication onward. He recounts the influence of Jeremy Taylor's Holy *Living*, and reports: "In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected; that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions."[21] And in his tract, "The Character of a Methodist," he describes a person whose "one intention at all times and in all places is, not to please himself, but Him whom his soul loveth. He hath a single eye; and because his 'eye is single, his whole body is full of light.'"[22]

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[18] Cf. Theodore Runyon, ed., *Sanctification and Liberation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 10.

[19] *Wesley's Works* (Jackson edition), XI, 374.

[20] 3:73.

[21] (Jackson) XI, 366.

[22] XI 372.

Purity of intention does allow for an interpretation of Christian perfection within the limits of human finitude. We all know what the road to hell is paved with. This is not a sufficient reason, however, to discount purity of intention as an adequate rendering, especially when we recognize that Wesley understood intention as "right tempers" and a "right disposition," a value-orientation of one's life which he could view not as simply subjective, but as a work of the Holy Spirit in the person. Nevertheless, this interpretation of Christian perfection does not seem adequate because it does not do justice to the trams-individual, to the social nature of sanctification. The renewed image is a witness in society and accomplishes the purposes God has for it in that context. This is why Wesley insists that "Christianity is essentially a social religion, and that to turn it into a solitary religion is indeed to destroy it.... I mean not only that it cannot subsist so well, but that it cannot subsist at all without society, without living and conversing with other men."[23]

To be sure, Wesley was here reacting to "quietist" elements among the Moravians and to William Law. But his point concerning the social context of perfection is well taken. "Ye `are the salt of the earth,"' he says in his Fourth Discourse on the Sermon on the Mount.

> It is your very nature to season whatever is round about you. It is the nature of the divine savor which is in you to spread to whatsoever you touch; to diffuse itself on every side, to all those among whom you are. This is the great reason why the providence of God has so mingled you together with other men, that whatever grace you have received of God may through you be communicated to others; that every holy temper, and word, and work of yours, may have an influence on them also. By this means a check will in some measure be given to the corruption which is in the world.[24]

If "purity of intention" is not an adequate rendering of Christian perfection, where should we go to find an alternative? My suggestion is to look again at Wesley's axial theme, the renewal of the image of God. One of his favorite Scripture passages was Col. 3:10: "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." When we look care-

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[23] 1:533f.

[24] 1:537.

fully at how Wesley defines this renewal of the image, however, we find that he allows considerable flexibility. Renewal *begins* with *regeneration.* This new birth quickens the "spiritual senses," the basic sensors the image of God needs in order to respond to and reflect the Creator. These senses, operating in a fashion analogous to the way the physical senses operate in Locke's empiricism, register impressions made on them by spiritual reality. Just as we have five physical senses through which we collect data from the physical world, we must have spiritual senses capable of receiving sense impressions from the spiritual world. However, the spiritual senses have been dulled by the Fall, sin, and neglect, and must be quickened or reawakened if they are to provide access to the realm of the spirit.

Macarius describes this quickening in the *Homilies* which Wesley edited for his *Christian Library*:

> "For if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." For our Lord Jesus Christ came for this very reason, that he might change, and renew, and create afresh this soul that had been perverted by vile affections, tempering it with his own Divine Spirit. He came to work a new mind, a new soul, and new eyes, new ears, a new spiritual tongue; yea, to make them that believe in him new men, that he might pour into them the new wine, which is his Spirit.[25]

Wesley could speak of the image of God being renewed, therefore, with this regeneration that inaugurates the process of sanctification. Regeneration of spiritual sensitivity opens up the communication between God and human beings that marks the continuing process of sanctification. However, Wesley could also speak of the recovery of the image as the *telos*, the goal, of the process of sanctification. As Outler puts it: "The restoration of our corrupted and disabled `image' to its pristine capacity is, indeed, the goal of Wesley's *ordo salutis.*"[26] In this sense, the renewal of the image functions in a way similar to the Eastern Fathers' doctrine of *theosis* which, whether it describes the beginning of the journey of faith or its culmination, is effective participation in divine reality which both guides the believer at every step along the way and culminates the journey.

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[25] *The Christian Library,* vol. I (London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1845), 123.

[26] 1:118n.

The recovery of the image also makes clear the social dimension of sanctification for Wesley, which is not as evident in the perfection-ofintention paradigm. When asked to summarize his doctrine of perfection, Wesley frequently quoted Galatians 5:6. "'Faith working by love,'" he says, "is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection."[27] He never tires of reminding us that perfection is nothing greater and nothing less than "loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves." Loving God involves "giving God all our heart; ... devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God." Loving neighbor involves having that "mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked," sharing his spirit in self-giving to others.[28] Again, he summarizes "the whole of scriptural perfection" as "pure love filling the heart, and governing all the words and actions."[29]

But how is such love possible? How can self-centered human beings aspire to this kind of dedication, this kind of service? This question Wesley answered by a literal translation of the Galatians 5:6 text when he asked, "Is thy faith *energoumene di agapes* — filled with the energy of love?"[30] On the basis of human efforts alone, this kind of self-giving love is impossible. But the source of the energy is the love of God received through the life-giving Spirit.

We must love God before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God till we know he loves us: "We love him, because he first loved us." And we cannot know his pardoning love to us till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit.[31] ... There is no love of God but from a sense of his loving us.[32]

The Perfection of God's Love

The starting point, therefore, of a re-appropriation of the doctrine of Christian perfection would be, it seems to me, the *perfection* of *God's love* which we receive from Christ through the Spirit. In the fast instance,

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[27] (Jackson edition) XIV, 321.

[28] (Jackson edition) X1, 444.

[29] XI, 401; cf. 394.

[30] 2:88. This translation of *energein,* usually translated "to work," as "energy" is probably the result of the Eastern Fathers' similar use of the term.

[31] 1:274.

[32] 1:191.

therefore, in rethinking the doctrine we need to focus not on a concern about our own perfection, but on the perfection of that which we receive. God's love is perfect. There is no more ultimate, more complete, more holy, more self-giving love than that which is directed toward us from the divine Giver. And this perfect love God shares with those called to be God's image. We receive and participate in perfect love.

However, as the image of God we are called not just to receive but to reflect this perfect love into the world, to share it with our fellow creatures-and to share it *perfectly*, that is, to share it in such a way that it can be received and appropriated by others. Now, what does this mean? It means that perfection is not for our own sakes but for the fulfillment of the vocation to which we are called, to image and reflect to others that which we have received from God. This is in accord with Wesley's emphasis on the renewal of the image as a key to God's redemption of the whole world. Obviously, there is no way to reflect and share God's love except by participating in it. This is what Wesley meant when he observed, "There is no love of God but from a sense of his loving us."[33] Love cannot be appropriated as an abstract idea; it must be participated in. It must be allowed to work its transforming power in the heart, at the center of human identity, where its affirmation is received and responded to.

This affirmation from our Creator is also the source of our love to our fellow creatures. In an early sermon Wesley disagrees with the Cambridge Platonist, John Norris, because Norris gives God exclusive rights to our love, claiming that God should be "not only the principal, but the only object of our love." Wesley counters, quoting Psalm 104:31:

> "The Lord rejoiceth in his works;" and consequently man, made after his likeness, not only may, but ought to imitate him therein, and with pleasure to own that "they are very good." Nay, the love of God constraineth those in whose hearts it is shed abroad to love what bears his image. And we cannot suppose any love forbidden by God which necessarily flows from this love of him.... The contrary opinion, that we are forbid to love any creature in any degree, supposes the all-knowing God to command our love of himself, and yet to prohibit the immediate necessary effect of it.[34]

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[33] 1:191.

[34] 4:334f.

This necessary effect is due to the nature of God's love which, when we receive it, opens us to all our neighbors. We are

> so to love God, who hath thus loved you.... that ye are constrained to love all men as yourselves; with a love not only ever burning in your hearts, but flaming out in all your actions and conversations, making your whole life one "labor of love", one continued obedience to those commands, "Be ye merciful, as God is merciful;" "Be ye holy, as I the Lord am holy;" "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."[35]

Such a love forbids us from limiting our love to those with whom we have common interests or the same social class. Instead we are to regard

> every man as our neighbor who needs our assistance. Let us renounce that bigotry and party-zeal which would contract our hearts into an insensibility for all the human race but a small number whose sentiments and practices are so much our own, that our love to them is but self-love reflected. With an honest openness of mind, let us always remember the kindred between man and man; and cultivate that happy instinct whereby, in the original constitution of our nature, God has strongly bound us to each other.[36]

Moreover, this same love must be extended to our enemies, said Wesley, and not only to our enemies, a task difficult enough, but to those we deem to be "the enemies of God."[37] Why? Because God loves them, and the heart of God yearns to overcome their distance from him. Hence, for those who are conduits of God's love, there is no separating themselves from sinners, because it is precisely sinners that divine love is seeking out. Contrast this with the account I heard from a Scottish theologian recently returned from Bosnia where, in a conversation with a Serbian Orthodox priest, he reminded the priest that Christ calls us to love our enemies. "Our enemies, yes," replied the priest, "but not the enemies of Christ."

Thus far the emphasis has been on the affirmative role of God's perfect love in sanctification. But is there not also a "negative branch" to sanctification, the negation of sin? This is undoubtedly true, but it is also

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[35] 1:428.

[36] *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, vol. I, Luke 10:37.

[37] 2:89.

implicit in the positive force of that love which we are to reflect into the world. The affirmation that wills the good of the other and readily sacrifices for the other abhors whatever is destructive of persons, society, or the good creation. God's perfect love is therefore a *critical principle.* It does not hesitate to fight injustice and falsehood wherever they are found. It forms and informs the Christian conscience with sensitivity to issues in heaven's war against the forces of evil. Thus the negative function of love, the prophetic and critical principle, does not compete with the positive principle of the steady increase of love in sanctification because both are part of the divine battle to reclaim the world and to enlist humanity in that struggle.

The greatest strength of the Wesleyan doctrine lies in its ability to mobilize the believer to seek a future that surpasses the present. It turns the Christian life into a project constantly open to new possibilities. As we have seen, it is not blind to the negative forces. However, it does not take them as the inevitable consequences of original sin in human existence, but precisely as that which can be overcome. It was this goal-orientation which Wesley did not want to give up to the critics of entire sanctification. If the conditions of life are fixed and sin is permanent, the future is robbed of the kind of hope Wesley is convinced is found in the New Testament.

In this Wesley is backed by the Eastern Fathers. A Lutheran commentator, criticizing the traditional Lutheran position, points out that the Eastern Fathers

> speak as easily as Paul [in Rom. 6] about free will and about the Christian's possibility of not sinning.... In this respect, many of these Eastern fathers could be more biblical than the fathers of the West. We must see once more that for the Christian sin has been extinguished, destroyed, forgiven.[38]

Summary

Allow me to summarize very briefly the four main points I have sought to make above:

1. The perfection of God's love is, I believe, the most viable starting point of any reinterpretation of the doctrine of Christian perfection today. This guards against the preoccupation with self that has hobbled some

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[38] Quoted in Dietrich Ritschl, *Memory and Hope* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967), 134.

past interpretations. And it keeps us constantly open to the only source of genuine sanctification, the love and grace o€ our Creator-Redeemer.

2. The "renewal of the image of God" was for Wesley a favorite way of characterizing sanctification, and lends itself to describing both the individual and social dimensions important to Wesley. Humanity renewed in the image not only becomes a new creation, it reflects into the world the perfect love which it receives.

3. The renewal of the image also does justice to the relation between justification, as Christ's work *for us,* and sanctification, as the Spirit's work *in* us. Both undergird this renewal and make it possible.

4. The renewal of the image also helps us to explain how sanctification is a process that begins with the renewal in regeneration but continues toward fullness of perfection, with ever-increasing possibilities of reflecting the perfection of divine love, driving out sin, and renewing the creature and the world.

Therefore, the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification is worth retrieving and rethinking, not for the glory of the Wesleyans, but for the contribution it can make to ecumenical theology and to the life of the church today.

COMPARATIVE PATTERNS OF CHURCH HISTORIOGRAPHY: NORTH AMERICA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

by
David P. Whitelaw

The thesis of this paper is that the two-party paradigm of church history on the North American continent offers a useful reference point for historiography of the church in Southern Africa. Presented here is a *pastoral-practical* (inter-relational) model of church historiography which bridges *presbyterian* (rational) and *pentecostal* (experiential) models. The point of entry and perspective is that of the Wesleyan theological tradition with its wellsprings of resource to inform and undergird this proposal.

This *metanoic model* of repentance and corporate redefinition in terms of the kingdom of God moves beyond christological or pneumatological readings of Christian history to overcome individualistic personalism and ecclesiastical institutionalism by its focus on trinitarian community. It requires both cognitive and intuitive elements; it goes beyond objective scientific reporting on the church as structure to subjective, compassionate exploring of human relatedness in living community. There is a shift in focus from the eucharistic community in the church to attend to "nascent covenant communities" in neighborhoods. It requires repentance (a *metanoic* mind change) from preoccupation with mainstream concerns and sectional/individualistic modes of thought and practice in order to notice the transformation of persons in community relationships, particularly on the margins.

Patterns of church historiography in North America will be described first, followed by patterns and models of the writing of histories

of the churches in Southern Africa. The story of the first has been described as a lively experiment. The second has been characterized by the symbol of a bitter almond hedge. Trends which are apparent in each, and threads in these tapestries which are less noticed, will be identified as a basis for a Wesleyan/Holiness reading and writing of church history where scientific historical objectivity is more intentionally supplemented by compassionate subjectivity, allowing voices of the marginalized to become more important. This model will take account of oral and poetic sources as well as written prose or narrative. It may be described as a pastoral-practical model of church historiography. It attempts to take human concerns seriously by paying more attention to intuitive awareness of what is emerging in the story of the people of God. Scientific strategy and skill in learning to recover the lost memory of the future reign of God are required.

Trajectories and Patterns of Church Historiography—America

R. Larry Shelton (1986) and Randy L. Maddox (1994) draw attention of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition to the defining trajectories and orienting concerns which give shape and direction to the tradition.[1] David Bundy (1995:69) notes that this tradition is usually relegated to the "sidelines of the historical trajectories." This is a significant defining mark of the tradition, which has important bearing on its role in the transformation of society. What are the broader lines of development to be discerned in the religious and church historiography of the North American continent?

Mark Noll (1992:1) says: "Fresh attention (is) being paid to the experiences of women, non-whites, the 'ordinary' people who did not leave extensive written records." He signals dominant trends and his own counter initiative when he claims: "This volume swims deliberately against the tide of recent scholarship. It is a history of Christianity, not a

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[1] R. Larry Shelton (1986:159-175) and Randy L. Maddox (1994:18) provide guiding principles for this present study. Maddox speaks of the "basic orienting perspective or metaphor that guides...various particular theological activities" as an "architectonic idea"; Shelton speaks of diverse tributaries of interpretation bringing new directions to be explored, and defines "trajectory" as "a complex and interwoven matrix of ideas and directions and forces which work together to form a pattern of movement." These concepts are distinctive in speaking of any Wesleyan contribution to theological discussion or to programs of reconstruction in society.

history of religion." Christianity should be studied on its own terms. The plot of his text centers on the rise and decline of Protestant dominance in the United States. He refuses, however, to identify the story of Christianity in America with the story of the United States, so he also can include citizens in the United States and Canada in "the worldwide story that had its origins in the era of the New Testament."[2]

John Wilson's thesis is important: *Religion lies at the core of American culture*. It is a means for understanding continuity and change on the continent. His claim is that church historians like Robert Handy have recognized the scope and sweep of dramatic changes but have been less attentive to the continuities. "Is there a core or focal point at the center of our culture?" Yes, "religion may be seen as the social location where the presuppositions of the common life are worked through, codified and transmitted" (1989:362-76).

American society and culture retain from Christian Europe the assumptions that the world is one, coherent, and ordered. Collingwood notes in American culture an emphasis on the Holy Spirit (in addition to the *logos* or Christ figure) as a "means of symbolizing the significance of change in relationship to structure, or of spirit in relationship to *logos.*" Richard Niebuhr extends this by claiming that millenarianism is critical to understanding America's development as a society (quoted by Wilson, 370-72).[3]

Wilson wants the question turned around. "Does the manifest preoccupation in America with the reign of God represent a working out of a set of metaphysical assumptions distinctive to that culture, in part expressed by that symbol?" He concludes that the first principles of American society and culture represent a projection, by an emerging peo-

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[2] Noll (1993:3) avers that "the Christian churches have nurtured a distinct set of convictions, practices, and institutions." By concentrating on Christian experience Noll is able to make "a more natural interpretation of events from standards of Christian faith than would an objective account of generically religious life." This approach also delivers him from the tendency to assume that "the story of Christianity in America is primarily a story about America." While his book deals extensively with "high culture" — public ecclesiastical, political, or intellectual aspects of religious history—it also attempts to "recover the experiences of common people."

[3] It is against similar received "Christian European" perceptions that the sobering challenges of the *Kairos Document* and other publications such as Nolan's *God in South Africa* (Capetown: 1988) should be understood.

ple, of a particular relationship between order and movement, form and flux, or continuity and change. This is specially evident in the increased emphasis placed upon the Holy Spirit (and the reduced scope of religious action identified exclusively with Christ).

The outcome is that, as in no other society, the "Holy Spirit, or its cultural equivalent, has become the animating principle of American corporate activity." Change (movement) is accorded primacy over form (order) as the foundation of life in this world. From its beginnings, Christianity in America has had a very particular texture or tonality that has set it apart from the great churchly European versions of Christianity. Preoccupied with the Spirit, it is able to make a relentless affirmation of change and a cultural embrace of unceasing movement.

How valid is Wilson's assumption that there has been such a pneumatological shift in the self-perception of American Christianity? For those in the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition an intriguing on-going debate between George Marsden and Donald Dayton highlights the possibility of dominant models of historiography in North American Protestantism, identified as *presbyterian* and *pentecostal* respectively.[4] This debate highlights the *christological* and the *pneumatological* components of these paradigms.

Marsden sees the origins of contemporary evangelicalism in the modernist-fundamentalist controversy, with its roots in Old Princeton theology. Dayton in turn proposes a *pentecostal paradigm* (the roots of evangelicalism lie in the revivalism, social reform, and pentecostal/holiness movements of the nineteenth century). He identifies Marsden's model as a *presbyterian paradigm.*[5]

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[4] *Christian Scholar's Review* has devoted a special issue to this in a symposium under the topic, "What is Evangelicalism?" See Donald Dayton, "The Search for the Historical Evangelicalism: George Marsden's History of Fuller Seminary as a Case Study" in *CSR* 1993,23(1):12-33, and George Marsden's "Response to Donald Dayton" *CSR* 1993, 23(1):34-40.

[5] Dayton identifies divergent paradigms involving contrasts, not absolute oppositions: (1) different source material is researched; (2) focus is on different chronological periods; (3) the phenomenon of "evangelicalism" is seen in quite different terms as a result; (4) classical evangelical traditions are seen as in *continuity* with or as a *corrective* to the Reformation traditions. This has theological implications: there is a movement away from forensic categories of justification to more organic and realistic soteriological categories that bring sanctification to the fore in the *pentecostal paradigm;* greater openness to *synergy* in divine-human relations (1993:14-15).

Dayton works with Sandeen's primary thesis (that *the* intellectual task of Carl Henry's generation was the repudiation of dispensationalism as a theological framework). He claims that the pentecostal paradigm highlights different dimensions in the development of evangelical institutions (for example, Fuller Seminary) in North America. Dayton's patterns involve seeing the evangelical currents "centrifugally move down the social ladder and toward the margins of society and then move centripetally back toward the center."

Other commentators suggest that evangelicalism is a complex movement which cannot be captured by any one interpretative model and that, rather than making a choice between these two interpretations, there is a dialectic between Reformed and Holiness models which need to be resolved into a "synthesis which transcends both" (Sweeney reply in Dayton, 1993:52).[6]

Jacobsen and Trollinger (1993:4-15) advance a related thesis. A two-party model of twentieth-century Protestantism has emerged since 1970 in academic circles in North American religious historiography. The names of these parties have changed over the years (e.g., fundamentalist-modernist; evangelical-mainline; conservative-liberal), but a dualistic picture of religious identity has helped "polarize the religious landscape and erode the viability of the middle ground where so many Protestants live out their faith." These writers trace the pathway by which the two-party paradigm came to prominence and then propose ways of moving beyond this. Like Dayton (moving beyond the solipsism of self-centered models of interpretation), Jacobsen and Trollinger suggest that one begin by recognizing one's own partiality and incompleteness to be free to concentrate on the constructive, multifaceted development of Christian faith in America.

Significantly, they commend the work of Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya in this regard. These writers describe *The Black Church in African American Experience* (1990:11-15) as involved in a constant series of dialectical tensions. The dialectic holds polar opposites in a constantly shifting tension between the polarities. There is no Hegelian synthesis or ultimate resolution of the dialectic. They work with a complex, multi-layered sextuplet of polarities.

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[6] Dayton continues: "Historically, in the nineteenth century such movements provided the space at the edges of the society for experimentation with the ministry of women and other 'disreputable' practices that have been abandoned in the *embourgeoisement* of the twentieth century." Other commentators include Joel Carpenter and Douglas Sweeney.

Sociologist Robert Wuthnow identifies the primary challenges for Christianity in the 21st century (1993, 1994). The critical question is, "Can the church sustain community?" The answer lies in the direction of exploring the possibilities of faith for constructing personal lives. Christianity has to contend with conflict in the public realm, and with pluralism, polarity, and the character of belief in the ecclesiastical and doctrinal arena.

Finally, a new approach to American religious history has recently emerged. Roger Fink and Rodney Stark (1992:4,18) claim: "The most striking trend in the history of religion in America is growth—or what we call the churching of America...accomplished by aggressive churches committed to other-worldliness." They analyze American religious history through a market-oriented lens which seems to result in a more orderly religious landscape (not skewed by the glaring systematic biases of generally received conclusions of religious historical studies). A dynamic, interpretative model is presented, one designed to explain rather than describe the history of American religion. American religion is market driven. Other-worldly needs of "customers" are met in culturally conditioned modes and strategies.

In summary, trends in historiography in North America include: (1) shift from the writing of *church* history to that of *religious* history; (2) move from a dominant *two-party Protestant paradigm* to the reality that religious pluralism and Roman Catholic presence now dominate society; (3) challenge to the historic phenomenon that *religion is the defining core* of American society; (4) recognition that American churches/religions are *market-driven*.

Projections and Models of Historiography—Southern Africa

Nicholas Southey reviews with sharp insight the current status of the disciplines of church history and general history in Southern Africa (1989:5-16). Church history has become increasingly isolated from the mainstream of history because of its preoccupation with theology rather than history. Theologians run the risk of decontextualizing the past and drawing superficial conclusions. A historiographical revolution has occurred in South Africa. History "from below" (focusing on the poor and marginalized, rather than on elite rulers and leaders) has become a major

concern. Southey recommends that church history be practiced in an open, integral fashion.[7]

What we find, however, is a highly apologetic, polemical, and partisan (denominational) writing of church history.[8] Polemical, culturally restricted, ethnically bound, and geographically based histories abound. James Cochrane (1987), by contrast, represents a major break from most earlier histories of the denominational church. His study, *Servants of Power*, seeks to demonstrate the functional dependence of the Anglican and Methodist churches (both in a material and ideological sense) on the capitalist and colonial political economy.

In the final analysis, formal separation of the disciplines of history and church history has led to isolation and stagnation of church history in the Southern African context. The call is to move from exclusion (which leads to the problems of introspection and polemicism) to open interdisciplinary work (without surrendering the church historian's function of testing Christianity's claims against itself). Southey concludes: "The history of the church remains integral to the history of southern Africa, and is best served within the mainstream of history."

Gerald Pillay deals with the interpretation and reinterpretation of the history of the Black churches in South Africa (1992). Black church history has formed a separate category precisely because it did not fit a white factional scheme. There was not only a black-white separation, but also a special category for "Pentecostal groups" and ethnic churches (like the Zion Christian Church) due to ecclesiastical imperialism which perceived these groups as sectarian and not strictly orthodox. Pentecostal churches were simply not heard. The social consciousness of a people directly influences its historical and hermeneutical activity.

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[7] The impact of this revisionist scholarship includes: (1) Traditional categories and paradigms have been fundamentally recast; (2) A diversity of approaches and methodologies are emphasized; (3) Increasing focus on the history of communities and "ordinary" individuals; (4) Stronger connections recognized between contemporary socio-political contexts within which historians function and questions about the past; (5) Continuity and coherence in historical writing have become far more daunting objectives to attain. Approaches have diversified enormously.

[8] F. A. van Jaarsveld (the historian) sharply critiqued Engelbrecht's *Geskiedenis van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika* on these grounds, claiming that he had his own agenda which conflicted with historical reality (*Van Apologetiek en Objektiwiteit in ons Kerkgeskiedskrywing.* Elsiesrivier: Human & Rousseau, 1953, quoted by Southey:10).

South African church historiography has been too open to ideological influences, leading to innocuous, conservative denominational histories rather than seeing South African Christianity in its ultra-relations and its ecumenical and catholic dimensions. Only with the emergence of Black and African theologies in the 1960s were reinterpretations sought which provided a more authentic historical picture of Christianity. Oral tradition and the need to hear the story told by the people themselves was recognized (Pillay 1992:122-7).[9]

Pillay counters the idea that it is the task of black people only to tell their own story. He also bemoans the fact that no adequate constitutive history writing has been produced in South Africa comparable to a work such as Enrique Dussel's *History of the Church in Latin America.* A comprehensive and insightful history of Christianity in South Africa cannot be a conglomeration of individual church histories, each self-contained and autonomous, nor can it be racially determined and divided. One prominent figure in South African church history (Andrew Murray) is cited as proving the necessity for a wider vision and more inclusive method. He was a leader with Scottish Reformed roots who influenced directly or indirectly Afrikaans, Dutch Reformed, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Holiness Movements, as well as indigenous African Independent Churches.[10]

Jurie le Roux's concern as a biblical scholar and historian is that South African church historians have by and large not immersed themselves in the theoretical aspects of history writing or the philosophy of

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[9] Professor Pillay's work is a good example of paying attention to the marginalized. For example: "Religion at the Limits? A Historico-theological Study of Pentecostalism within a South African Community" (Pretoria: Unisa, 1993). See also L. Japhta, "Grassroots historiography: a case for contemporary lyrics as oral history," unpublished paper read at the 1988 conference of the Church History Society of Southern Africa, quoted by Pillay:127.

[10] Pillay identifies the following important challenges for church historiography: (1) It is in the critical dialogue between black and white histories (aspects of one history) that a meaningful picture of the whole emerges; (2) An interperspectival approach is imperative for meaningful reinterpretation of church history; (3) Church history is a particular perception of the whole of history (not separate nor a subdivision of history); (4) The inter-connectedness of church history and general history is crucial and is exemplified particularly in the reinterpretation of the missionary enterprise and nineteenth century imperialism; (5) Church historians fulfill a theological function by testing Christianity's claims about itself against its own practice in the world—the critical assessment of words and deeds, theory and practice, orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

history (1993:35-63). He wants historical understanding to be sought not as an addendum or something secondary to theological studies, because history is a way of understanding life.[11] He counters the chronological precedence of *synchronic* (exegetical reading) over *diachronic* (historical study) work. The dominant South African model of exegesis has "undermined a historical reading of texts and minimized a (church) historical understanding of life." The call is to find an all-embracing view of life and an open reading of history, one which offers a way of understanding and giving meaning to life, not one which legitimizes certain doctrines, practices, or lifestyles.

The historian takes two "life contexts" into account, the historian's own and that of the document. Understanding of the past calls for a fusion of these two "life contexts." The historian is influenced by the context (particular tradition) in which the historian lives. These provide the *prejudices* which are a prerequisite for reading historical documents. We extract meaning because we have certain expectations of meaning provided by these prejudices.

In particular, we should be aware of the shift from the "individual" (Leopold von Ranke, Johann Gottlieb Fichte) to "society" (Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, the French *Annales School*). A sociological understanding of the past has become a dominant approach, for which most church historians are not ready.

An integral writing of history/church history is needed. No one perspective can provide the whole truth. Interperspectival inter-connectedness is needed. Historical understanding is basically a hermeneutical problem. History is shaped by theories about the past and is determined by questions pertaining to both individuals and their societies.[12] Church

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[11] Le Roux deals with the topic "Hermeneutics and History" in historical understanding. Church historiography is not a *Hilfswissenschaft der exegetischen, der dogmatischen und der praktischen Theologie'* which Karl Barth espoused.

[12] Very few church historians did more to enlarge the understanding of South African Christians than Ben J. Marais, professor emeritus of the University of Pretoria and of the University of South Africa. His *Colour: Unsolved Problem of the West* (Johannesburg: 1957) is but one example. His courageous stand against the tide of nationalist apartheid-ideology in the 1950s was rewarded by seven years of being silenced in the denomination he served as Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Pretoria. But he lived to see the day when both these universities awarded him honorary doctorates and recognized his stand as one of Christian principle.

historians must experiment with multiple-factor explanations and analyses and relate their work to that of historians in general. All these perspectives on the past must be brought into critical conversation with each other. Only so can denominational, racial, cultural, gender, or national particularities be transcended and something catholic (whole) be achieved (Pillay 1992:146). Church history deals with the human story and requires a human face. A convergence of these concerns in fact has emerged in a major inter-disciplinary event in South Africa in this decade.

The Anthropological Congress held at UNISA, Pretoria, January 21-22, 1991, had as its theme: *A Theological Contribution Towards a South African Society with a Human Face.* It was a joint effort of the six main theological societies of South and Southern Africa. It was designed to assist South Africans in entering a new phase in its history (Konig 1991). In more than one way this conference marks the current trajectory of the new South Africa: the search for a human face, the quest for humanizing a traumatized and divided society, the long road to healing of torn and broken communities. I quote Lutheran theologian Simon Maimela:

> Because for the people of African ancestry the focus in life is on the network of human interrelationships, African theologians should insist that the teaching of the Church should pay great attention to what in the past were referred to in theological circles as venial as opposed to mortal sins. The focus should be on the continuing sinfulness between ourselves and our neighbors. This would force Christians to begin to deal seriously with the wrongs they do to their fellows in society instead of focusing their gaze on the clouds in the sky, brooding about their future security in heaven.... African theologians should insist that the right belief (orthodoxy) and the right doing (orthopraxis) belong together; both are equally important tests of authenticity and integrity of the gospel.[13]

Comparing Two Historiographies

It is now possible to sketch five contrasts and comparisons of the historiography of Christianity on the two continents.

1. In North America the movement has been towards *atomistic individualism*: in Southern Africa there is awakening to *interrelatedness in community*.

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[13] Simon Maimela (1991,76:12-4).

2. In South Africa church historians are beginning to recognize the need to conduct their work in *openness to historians and inter-disciplinary methods* (without neglecting their unique function of critiquing the practice and profession of Christianity, see Hofmeyr, 1991, 1994). In America, by contrast, the shift has been to *religious pluralism* and church historiography is increasingly the *writing of religious history* (Mark Noll being an exception).

3. South African society is facing the stern task of *rebuilding the fabric and fiber* of human communities after serious and sustained violence, while American society is entering into an experience of escalating violence and the *breakdown of neighborhoods* after a century of reconstruction. (See Huber 1991, Villa-Vicencio 1990, Walker 1990).

4. In America the search for identity is expressed in the *new quest for community in support groups* (Wuthnow, 1994), whereas in South Africa the question is, does *Christian identity offer a basis for human community?*

5. In America the *role of religion providing for a core identity in society,* enabling positive response to change and diversity, appears in decline, while in South Africa ideological Christian underpinnings of existing apartheid structures and order have been torn down to make the way for change.

A Distinctive Wesleyan/Holiness Pattern?

My personal journey has called for a shift along three major lines (see, e.g., Whitelaw 1980-1993). This represents a personal model, but it is rooted in the ethos and practices of a Wesleyan/Holiness tradition in living encounter with other traditions. It calls for:

1. Developing a method and language of communication for church historiography which acknowledges first the *common ground of our humanity* before any other religious, or ecclesiastical, socio-political, or ethnic identities.

2. Adopting a model for church historiography which makes room for *nascent covenant—communities of the kingdom* as essential in describing and reporting church historical developments in society (Hawthorne & Whitelaw, 1990).

3. Recognizing a particularity of place as essential for historical and theological work. One's place, embodiedness, and neighborhood roots are important. Here reconstruction may occur in "nascent covenant-communities" towards trinitarian community. It poses a question: *Is humane and compassionate historiography possible?*

I propose that within the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition dispassionate and scientifically objective *church* historiography is likely to be impelled towards taking account of our more subjective common *human* history.

Why should this be so? Historically, the roots of the Holiness Movement have been nourished in a compassionate concern for those disenfranchised by the dominant forces and churchly traditions in society (Smith 1962:111).[14] This has engendered a willingness to become marginalized in dialectical tension with a strong desire to maintain connections with the fullness of the Christian tradition.[15]

There is a shared ethos (rather than a carefully articulated framework of systematic philosophical and theological thought) which pushes towards the acceptance of the intuitive and experiential rootedness of the human condition. When one bridges (by entry into a marginalized ecclesiastical tradition) privileged space (where calm, abstracted reflection can take place) and painful space (where the voice of those who cry in silence is heard), a choice is offered for the selection of "love as an epistemological principle" (Whitelaw 1993:134). This love "enables us to know what otherwise would remain hidden." Without it an historian is partially blind to the realities and events she observes. Love works by providing a "deeper understanding of concepts, images, and symbols with which one is already familiar—a greater ability to distinguish concepts or see connections between them" (Gaybba, 1988:27-38).

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[14] Dr. Widney proposed the name "Church of the Nazarene" for the new church. It immediately seemed to him to symbolize the "toiling, lowly mission of Christ." It was the name Jesus used for himself, he declared, "the name which was used in derision of Him by His enemies," the name which above all others linked Him to "the great toiling, struggling, sorrowing heart of the world...."

[15] Carl Bangs documents this in his recent biography of Phineas Bresee (1995). In a public lecture at Point Loma Nazarene College under the auspices of the *Wesley Center for Twenty-First Century Studies* (August 30, 1995), he pointed out that both Wesley and Bresee were at pains to seek authentic connections with the church catholic (albeit selectively chosen connections), but that they were willing to take steps to cross boundaries of accepted ecclesiastical practice and conformity in order "to do good" to the world at large.

The downside of this is that clarity of historical connections may be obscured if not specifically acknowledged.[16] An historian in this tradition is under greater (not less) accountability to the best historical research and practice. A superb example of such work is that of Jeff Guy (1983) in his life of Anglican bishop-missionary John Colenso (1814-83). Guy speaks as an outsider as far as religion is concerned, but he captures more honestly and sensitively than hagiographers or demonizers of Colenso what lay at the heart of Colenso's theology: "an awareness of man's spiritual existence, of love and brotherhood, of God" which linked all humanity irrespective of race (166-7).

Heiko Oberman, a formidable historian of medieval society and church, comes at this idea from a totally different perspective when he calls for the historian to combine the playsome freedom of *homo ludens* with the serious discipline of *homo quaerens intellectum* (see Whitelaw, 1991). The intuitive insight of the playful child who explores the past with delightful surprise at what is found (for a moment at least free of the tyranny of the *Zeitgeist*) may inform the "dialectics of precision" by which the scientific historian works. In a similar vein Schneidau (1976:19-20, 49) writes "in praise of alienation" and avers that our Western idea of knowledge moved away from the "shaman's vision toward the scientist's." To be "decentered" is a condition of insight, but the analytic, perspectival mode, tends to devalue this. It leads to a suppression of meaning because it attempts to be "scientific" by ignoring affective relations between observer and observed, and so becomes dehumanized and unfeeling.

Neither Oberman (internal connections) nor Gaybba (external bridges) represents the holiness tradition, but both point to the importance

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[16] My own work (1987, "A Crisis of Credibility") has succumbed to this lack of clarity and connection by the subjection of historical to theological concerns. Perhaps if I had made apparent the human connections that underlay the study of Colenso and du Plessis, important historical links would have become more clear. My mother was raised in the tradition of du Plessis. Her mother was educated and led to Christ through the life and ministry of Andrew Murray. My colleague at Unisa at the time of writing was Ben J. Marais who was a student of John du Plessis and skipped some classes in the late 1920s to sit at his trial, instigated by Dwight L. Snyman, du Plessis's pastor in Stellenbosch. On the other hand, my father's family was settling in Colenso's Natal during the 1870s. I am the inheritor of these two traditions, and the historical connections lie in our two families. We, and I, have had to come to terms with the historical and human connections and the crisis of credibility which this has imposed.

of taking a stance (as interpreters and communicators of society) which recognizes the need to bridge the intuitive (or childlike) and the rational (or scientific) and moves beyond this to discover that "love is the essential bridge linking all human beings."

Cognitive *and* non-cognitive factors influence knowledge. Social forces and human interrelationships structure the way we know. I suggest that communities which are willing to accept the stigma of moving on the margins in exploring both past and future may become the catalysts for new "emergent orders of the kingdom"[17] to appear.

What practical implications does this have for church historiography? First, the requirement spelled out by David Lotz[18] will have to be responsibly modified by a shift in focus from the centrality of ecclesiastical institutions and practices to the "marginal neighborhoods" which become incipient "sacramental space" for the generative emergence of new orders of the kingdom. For example, in South African church history, who has listened to the experience of the P L le Roux family in Wakkerstroom in the early part of this century other than Bengt Sundkler? Gerald Pillay poses the question acutely: "Why then a separate category for 'Pentecostal groups' when they included both Afrikaans and English, black and white?" (1992:123). Was this unwillingness to hear the story of the Christian tradition within the Wakkerstroom-Pentecostal axis motivated by a form of ecclesiastical imperialism which perceived these groups as sectarian and marginal?[19] How many such instances of not hearing because not seeing fellow human beings occur because they are perceived as "marginal"?

A humane and compassionate reading of history would discover in otherwise overlooked sources elements essential for the whole story to be told (e.g, the work of the Afrikaans poet and churchman, Totius; Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*, 1948; and in black and white African oral history).

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[17] Paul Bassett articulated this concept in the Wiley Lectures at Point Loma Nazarene College, January, 1994 (unpublished lectures).

[18] "The *church* historian is one whose distinctive vocation it is to know and to narrate just what it is that is always going on inside Christian gatherings that both makes and keeps them what they are, namely the church catholic" (Lotz, 1989:338-9).

[19] Professor Pillay is an example of a researcher who pays attention to "Religion at the Limits? A Historical-theological Study of Pentecostalism within a South African Community" (Pretoria: Unisa, 1993).

Andrew Greeley, Catholic sociologist, argues that it is the poetic elements that touch the human spirit (1995:52). It is the "responsibility of reflective religion to listen closely to imaginative religion" (1990:273). A basic thesis he proposes jointly with David Tracy is that the Catholic imagination is *analogical* while the Protestant imagination is *dialectical* (1990:45; 1995:229-255). Here is another dimension to the same proposition: humane and compassionate historiography will recognize the poetic and the scientific, the analogical and the dialectical elements in human descriptions of Christian and religious history. These call for new models.

A Practical-Pastoral Model for Church Historiography

I am inclined to accept Dayton's pentecostal paradigm as valid for describing the history of North American evangelicalism in many of its features and developments. Evidence suggests that the *pneumatological* stress is on empirical experience while the *presbyterian paradigm* of George Marsden works with a *christological* consciousness which seeks rational categories of expression.[20] The first emphasizes experience, empowerment, the Spirit, and the future. The second stresses classic texts of Scripture, the received tradition of the past, and rational, scientific exegesis.

Jüsto Gonzalez, Methodist church historian, describes the theology of Irenaeus as "eminently pastoral" (1989:31). Irenaeus, who lived as a missionary on the margins between east and west (Lyon, Gaul and Asia Minor, ca 130-200 CE) is a good model for historiography in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. His primary concerns were practical and pastoral rather than speculative or esoteric. His emphasis on humanity as a single whole, whose history has been recapitulated in Christ as the second Adam (Eph. 2:10), is a significant antidote for modern individualistic personalism.[21]

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[20] Henry Lederle, a South African coming from a Reformed background with both ecumenical and evangelical roots, had a "vivid charismatic experience" which caught him unawares theologically. His booklength study in response to this "upturned doctrinal apple-cart experience" provides fascinating and illuminating comment on the nature of the contrasts between such "charismatic/pentecostal" and "reformed" readings of the world and the Word (1988:ix).

[21] Sam Powell, whose work is in the field of nineteenth-century German Trinitarian thought, has recently written a lucid unfolding of the roots in individualistic personalism of most Nazarene theological thought and practice in this current century (to be published, 1995-6).

In addition, in a rediscovery of the church's future lies a fruitful field for historical research. The tradition which moves on the margins of life, neither isolated, ingrown, nor entrapped in cultural assimilation to the dominant trends of the day may be captured by an ecstatic rationality (reason that is moved, impassioned by a vision of how life may be lived in the light of God's kingdom). This can happen in neighborhoods which are off-center to ecclesial, institutional structures, where the nourishment of human persons in communion occurs.[22] There is a "forgotten strand of Anglican tradition" (Allchin: 1988, title) which offers its richness here. It holds to a harmonious synthesis between christology and pneumatology. Zizioulas (1975:83) puts it like this:

> Truth is the event of communion of persons. It is the Eucharist which brings together communion and community, history and eschatology, Christ and Spirit, institution and event. It is only in the eucharist that we transcend the conflict between history and eschatology. It is the Spirit who brings the eschaton into history. He confronts the process of history with its consummation, with its transformation and transfiguration.... The Church's *anamnesis* acquires the eucharistic paradox...the *memory of the future*.

The Orthodox church historian Frank (1994, 69-70) comments: "This community, the Church, is formed by a radical conversion from individualism to personhood.... In the Church humanity is transfigured to become one again." Focus may be shifted from pre-occupation with the individual, centers of structures and power and the past, to awareness of margins and community and the future. (See Zizioulas 1985, Frank 1992).

Human Connections in Christian Community—Neighborhood

Here is one important passage from the dramatic life story of Nelson Mandela (Mandela 542):

> I never lost hope that this great transformation would occur.... I always knew that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity.... Even in the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I

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[22] Numerous examples from the early Gospel records which can be interpreted as "neighborhood encounters with the reign of God" come to mind. For examples: Matthew 15: 29-39; Matthew 26: 6-29; Luke 24:13-35; John 1:35-51; John 21:1-23; as well as the interpretation implied in Hebrews 13:10-16.

would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going. Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.

Was the fragile fabric of a new order emerging in his marginalized neighborhood?

Two salient features have come into view: first, the basic importance of the fiber of our common humanity—community—where the real new creation is/is not occurring; second, the vital connection between our religious life and our sense of place and time—the *land*—where we are nourished at the roots of our being, in a neighborhood.[23] How may our sense of history reflect this?

1. Our historiography may be woven into a rich tapestry using the threads of our human diversity in a narrative that enshrines the *humane*. In other words, it affirms the dignity of ordinary human people and events, so that *dehumanization* may be noticed and redemptively touched by our writing.

2. Our historiography may celebrate the graced space/time of ordinary life in the created world when it allows the redemptive sense of the sacred in neighborhood to function in a *theology of place.* In other words, *displacement* from one's right and proper place may function methodologically in the way we conceive sacred space and time and in the way we write religious history.

For those in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition this may call for a conscious commitment to move beyond hagiography (of Wesley, of Bresee, of others like Schmelzenbach) and revisionism (of Wesley, of the nineteenth century Holiness Movement) to what Calvin Cook might call that "grace and truth" (1992:1-7) which counters dehumanization without ignoring it wherever it is found. Wesleyans, no less than others, tend to marginalize others who are different (within and without) even though experiencing marginalization themselves. This historiography may call

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[23] Andrew Greeley contends (Pasquariello 1988:63-5) that neighborhoods are sacred places (in part, because they are projections of the self) where one is important not for what one does, but "because of who you are." It is the place where "you come home to be renewed." You are known and loved for who you are. When people move into new communities, "they immediately try to set up ties, which is the essence of what a neighborhood is."

for the acceptance of *voluntary displacement* (Van Eck & England 1990: 60-66) from an entrenched denominational position of recognition to intentional functioning as a counter-culture marginal community[24] which is an emergent order of holy living.

A reference point outside both these narratives (that is, North America and South Africa) is provided by Enrique Dussel's Latin American historiography. Dussell's method of historiography may be characterized as one of "ecstatic rationality."[25] John Wesley has been called a "reasonable enthusiast."

I contend for three fundamental shifts (metanoic mind changes[26]) needed for a more integral writing of the story of the Christian community. The holiness tradition is peculiarly fitted to make these transitions because it can do so out of the wellsprings of its own being.[27] First, a shift

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[24] "If we are to adopt an orientation towards a creation that is in crisis, then we would want to suggest that it is an orientation of dispossession" (Petra van Eck & Frank England 1990, 73:65). Henri Nouwen provides the phrase "voluntary displacement" in various writings.

[25] Enrique Dussel's work is carefully examined and the sources provided in ""Ecstatic Rationality': Enrique Dussel's Latin American Church Historiography," *SHE* XIX(2):113-138. His work is a complex intertwining of historical, theological, and ethical concerns. It also illustrates what happens when too much is attempted under too broad a focus. Historical study becomes blurred and distorted under the weight of theological and socio-political concerns. Do Catholic *ecstatic rationality* from the Two-Thirds World and Wesleyan *reasoned enthusiasm* from the margins of First and Third Worlds in Southern Africa conflict or converge? Do we have hope and energy for reconstruction towards the reign of God emerging in the Latin American *Communidades de Base*? (Henry Rack's biography of Wesley is entitled *John Wesley: Reasonable Enthusiast).*

[26] Suggested by a sermon preached by Mark Trotter, Mission Valley United Methodist Church, San Diego, September 3, 1995, in which he quoted from "The New Management," Sloan School of Business Management, MIT. *Metanoic* corporations define success not only in terms of profit, but in terms of contributing something to the larger society through undergoing a *metanoia* = a "fundamental shift of mind."

[27] Gustavo Gutierrez (*Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993: 1, 13, 17) uses this expression [*fontano lugar*] to refer to Las Casas's basic intuitions. We can learn from him that history is the "teacher of life" and the "life of our memories." I am proposing that the holiness movement has imprinted into its ecclesiastical consciousness certain intuitive life experiences which powerfully influence its "orienting concerns." These afford it a predilection for concerns for humanity over institutional identity, for the margins rather than the centers of control and power, for the future in hope and expectancy rather than some absolutizing of past or present.

is called for from a focus on persons as individuals in communities of faith to a recognition of human "being in communion" (Frank 1994:66; Zizioulas 1985:15-20).[28] The second shift is from the dominance of ecclesial structures of hierarchy and central power towards supple engagement with humanity at the margins where intimacy and connection in neighborhoods occurs.[29] Thirdly, a shift should occur from preoccupation with the Christian past and present to a new awareness of an emergent history of the future.[30]

Adoption of a trinitarian model of writing church history embodies possibilities for achieving these shifts. Such a model is *practical*[31] and

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[28] I am following Frank and Zizioulas here in their understanding of "being" as "communion," an ontological category. I intend to use further their meaning of this term.

[29] Evidences for this are to be found in the *Communidades de Base* of Latin America as well as in the work of Nathan Hatch (for example, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

[30] This is suggested by readings in Irenaeus, the second-century bishop, successor to Pothinus and Polycarp. His pregnant phrase, the "recovery of the lost memory of the future" captures the idea that the story of the Christian church is told better in relation to "snapshots of the kingdom to come" than by recall of the photographs of past or present. See Justo Gonz‡lez, *Christian Thought Revisited; Three Types of Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1989:29-31, 44-9, 57-63, 71-5, etc.). Gonz‡lez prompts my suggestion of the pastoral-practical model of church historiography. Irenaeus speaks of the two hands of God, the Word and the Holy Spirit, implying a "hands-on engagement" with the human story.

[31] The term *practical* requires careful definition to distinguish its use and meaning from a contemporary one of "pragmatic, utilitarian usefulness" or "concerned with actual, not theoretical use." My use of the word is based on the Wesleyan understanding of "practical divinity" and "practical theology" as recently explored and expounded by persons such as Randy Maddox (see, for example, Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, Nashville: Kingswood Books [Abingdon], 1994: Index, "Wesley's Practical Theology"). Here *practical* means "useful" in a very specific dimension or ethos: that of "nurturing and shaping the worldview that frames the temperament and practice of believer's lives in the world." One may think of "cruciform practice" or "kingdom praxis" as alternative renderings of the word. Consult also Maddox, "Practical Theology: A Discipline in Search of a Definition," in *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 1991, 18:159-69 and "The Recovery of Theology as a Practical Discipline," in *Theological Studies* 1990, 51:650-72. Maddox is surely correct when he speaks of this "practical theology" as an "untapped inheritance" ("An Untapped Inheritance: American Methodism and Wesley's Practical Theology," to be published, 1995).

pastoral.[32] It focuses on the dynamics of human interconnectedness in community more than on pragmatic efficiency or effectiveness in multiplying Christian communities. It is concerned with the results of pastoral function in the well-being of human communities patterned after kenotic service more than with the history and development of doctrine or ecclesiastical structures.

These practical and pastoral outcomes are measured best by observing what happens in terms of accessing both oral and written records (that is, both poetic and prosaic[33]), what occurs in the partnership between women and men in Christian congregations (including ethnographic research), and finally what developments unfold in marginalized communities.[34]

There are real pitfalls in attempting to work with such an approach. One should avoid a *meta*-historical, ideological, or theological imposition on the sources. This danger may be overcome by intentional efforts to take seriously faith in the transcendent expressed in human practice without making it a category for interpretation itself. Another error is to underestimate the complex multi-layered nature of the model proposed. It is no simple combination of the rational and experiential models previously identified.

I would argue that a pastoral-practical model requires something like "ecstatic rationality" as a mark of Christian worship and community. Here

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[32] The term *pastoral* also requires careful nuancing and definition. I use it here to counter the contemporary trend or societal expectation in North America to view ministry as some combination of "entrepeneurial management" and "counseling therapy." Over against this, the patristic concern for the pastor, overseer, bishop (*episkopos*) to be the *guardian* of the flock of God, of the community of Christ, is suggested by the term *pastoral.*

[33] Note, for example, Andrew Greeley's work *Religion as Poetry* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1995) and also Steven Cooley's review of the piety and language of Holiness Campmeetings during the 19th century ("Applying the Vagueness of Language: Poetic Strategies and Campmeeting Piety in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in *Church History*, 1994, 63[4]:570-586).

[34] Evidence is fairly conclusive that this has been a seriously overlooked approach in North America. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark provide convincing data to support their thesis that the real story of the churching of America unfolds on the "sidelines" or margins, not in mainline religion, as is customarily accepted by such prominent church historians as Martin Marty and Sydney Ahlstrom. See their *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992:274-5).

a presbyterian mode of rational "cultural-linguistic" interpretation of Scripture as text functions in dynamic tension with a pentecostal mode of "experiential-expressivist" living encounter with the Spirit in neighborhoods which are hospitable to humanity (Hauerwas & Jones 1989:7).[35]

The first mode may be explained in terms of a *christocentric* model where center (doctrine), coherence (theology), structure (ecclesiology), and stability (society) are corollaries of such a view of Christian history. In turn, the second may be explained in terms of a *pneumatological* model where change (radical discontinuity in human experience), spontaneity, and intimacy (rather than structured institutional life), and inward, immediate authentication of the divine are what is considered essential in the writing of Christian history.

A *trinitarian communion model* would include and transcend both of these. Embedded in the corporate memory of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition lie strands of Eastern and Western spirituality, of presbyterian and pentecostal ordering of community life, of poetic and prosaic sources of Christian memory. Hope and confidence in the transforming power of grace were hallmarks of the early Church of the Nazarene one hundred years ago. Looking forward, where may one hope to discern signs of emerging communities with the mark of the kingdom of God?

Gary Frank (1994:66, 68), Orthodox church historian in South Africa, stresses that ecclesial experience rather than systematic reflection gave rise to the early creedal formulations (e.g., the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed). He focuses on the interconnectedness between the trinitarian life of God and the Church in the "neo-patristic synthesis" which has been occurring in Orthodox theology.

The significance of this for the holiness tradition is that both Orthodox and holiness traditions consider *living faith* central to Christian identity. Each contends with Western secularism, individualism and materialism. Both have to deal with post-Enlightenment Christianity and a fractured world-view where "spiritual" and "material" are dichotomized.

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[35] The work of Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) and of Stanley Hauerwas and L Gregory Jones, *Why Narrative?: Readings in Narrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) show connections between the understanding of Scripture as text and as experienced dramatic encounter in life, between Christian story as descriptive history and interpretative theology.

Frank claims that the category of "communion" is beginning to be applied fruitfully to issues that have historically divided Christians. Zizioulas documents a convergence of Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox theology where *koinonia* (in eucharistic communities) is becoming central in ecumenical discussion (quoted by Frank: 92).

It will be no easy task to generate a new consciousness and practice of *eucharistic communion* in Holiness churches. The key issue is the acceptance of the fact that transforming grace is both mediated and immediately accessible (both structured and spontaneous). Grace is not simply accessed by private religious encounter.[36] Churches in the Holiness tradition should approach this issue from the standpoint of marginalized communities rather than mainstream churches. Love to God and neighbor was historically expressed in the impulse to take the gospel to those neglected and sidelined by society. Therefore a recovery of *trinitarian communion* and *eucharistic ecclesiology* will probably come along the lines of a passionate thrust of evangelism which is the outflow of trinitarian worship of the Creator-Redeemer among those less visible as "target markets".[37]

Finally, a beloved colleague now deceased, David Bosch (in Louw Alberts, Frank Chikane, eds, 1991:129-39), has articulated a Reformed response to indicate how his tradition might help shape a new South Africa:

> If Liberation Theology concentrates on the *incarnation* of Christ, Catholics on the significance of Christ's vicarious death on the *Cross*, the Eastern Orthodox on the glory of

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[36] The work of Cooley and Hoskins is important in documenting connections between "personal grace" and "structured grace" in the sense of sacramental practice and understanding in the Holiness movement. See Steven Cooley, op. cit., and Steven T Hoskins, "Eucharist and Eschatology in the Writings of the Wesleys," in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 1994, 29(1, 2):64-80.

[37] Frans Jozef van Beeck articulates beautifully the relationship between evangelism and worship: "If [the Christian self-expression] is uttered merely as witness, it turns into proselytizing—no loving surrender to others, but a summons to others to surrender themselves; witness becomes party propaganda. Thus the Church's witness is not compelling unless she is *over*heard to worship Jesus Christ as she speaks to the world; the Church's worship is vacuous if she drops her witness and loses her confidence before the world" (from *God Encountered: A Contemporary Catholic Systematic Theology*, San Francisco: Harper, 1988:233).

> Christ's *resurrection,* Pentecostals on the coming of the *Holy Spirit*, and Adventists on the expected *return of Christ*, it could be said that Christ's *ascension* is of particular significance to Calvinists. The Ascension... (as) ...the symbol of the enthronement of Christ, of His lordship over all life and reality.

I suggest that the distinctive focus of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition is that of *holy living* (heartfelt religion expressed in Christlike character in community) embodied in the supple simplicity, spontaneity, and immediacy of a sacramental practice (mediated grace) which is encountered by ordinary people in daily life where women and men are full partners in the human enterprise. Where do I see this? By recovering a memory of the future. This is what we are called to be. This is the name of our becoming.

Like Calvinists, believers within the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition need to recognize and identify non-negotiable options if they wish to remain true to their own calling and history. In our case, I suggest that the option not open is that of surrendering a view of the optimism of responsible, transforming (as well as redeeming) grace where the courageous confidence exists of being made so far perfect as to do the known will of God, through voluntary obedience, now. This calls for the recognition that the tapestry and trajectory of human life unfolds in an intimate interconnectedness of humanity, caught up in worship and obedience.

Observe this act "on the margins" of *apartheid* South Africa in the 1960s. A white guard urinates on a helpless prisoner and forces him to eat and drink human excrement. By and large, white hands administer white wafers and red wine to white worshipers in mainstream South African churches. A guard who observes, and pays attention, James Gregory, undergoes a profound human transformation. He is to sit beside the prisoner in years to come, as he, Nelson Mandela, is inducted to the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa. Which event signals an emerging new order? What grace made this possible? The prisoner's openness to the horizons of a common humanity? The prisoner's roots in a religion of transforming grace?

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JTSA= *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa).

SHE= *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* (Journal of the Church History Society of Southern Africa, University of South Africa, Pretoria).

WTJ = *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Journal of the Wesleyan Theological Society, Wilmore, KY, USA).

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PIETISTIC INFLUENCE ON JOHN WESLEY: WESLEY AND GERHARD TERSTEEGEN

by
J. Steven O'Malley

It is the contention of this paper that John Wesley's contacts with the Pietists, members of that pervasive post-Reformation renewal movement within continental European Protestantism, stand in need of our closer scrutiny if the extent of their influence on his spirituality is to be adequately understood. There is extensive analysis of the Moravian influence on Wesley's early spiritual development.[1] Prominent attention has been given to Wesley's theological controversy with Zinzendorf, and with the Fetter Lane Society in London, as a basis for delimiting the Pietist influence as a whole.[2] Kenneth Collins has more recently explicated the ongoing significance for Wesley of Arndt and Hallensian Pietism, whose works, in an abridged English translation, were included in Wesley's course of study for Methodist preachers.[3]

Our attention will focus on a different stream of German Pietism, which may be identified as Rhineland spirituality. Its influence on Wesley

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[1] Among the more positive analyses of that relationship, we may cite F. Ernest Stoeffler, "Pietism, the Wesleys, and Methodist Beginnings in America," in *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1976), 184-221; and Leon O. Hynson, "John Wesley and the Unitas Fratrem: A Theological Analysis," *Methodist History* (October, 1979), 26-60.

[2] Hence, Outler asserts that the doctrine of assurance, in relation to justification by faith, is decreasingly emphasized by Wesley after 1738-Albert Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford, 1964), 209-210.

[3] Kenneth J. Collins, "The Motif of Real Christianity in the Writings of John Wesley," *The Asbury Theological Journal* (Spring, 1994), 49-62.

has been given only scant attention. The significance of its role will be examined in the light of the data which this paper marshals.

Wesley and the Rhineland Connection

Wesley's only visit to this region of the German states occurred during his travel to Herrnhut in September of 1738.[4] However, his acquaintance and even preoccupation with its spirituality had occurred during and after his Georgia mission of 1735-1738. The representatives of this tradition who influenced Wesley began with the Dominican mysticism of Johann Tauler (1300-1361), and proceeded to the distinctive Reformed spirituality of Gerhard Tersteegen (1697-1769).

It has primarily been non-Wesleyan scholars who have acknowledged Wesley's indebtedness to Tersteegen. Van Andal even asserted, without convincing evidence, that Wesley had taught himself German in order to read Tersteegen.[5] According to one Quaker scholar, Rendel Harris, Tersteegen "...influenced John Wesley, and through him whole masses of English-speaking people."[6] The most authoritative discussion of this connection is that of the former German Methodist bishop, John Nuelson, who, in a little-known German monograph, has argued with precision and elaborate support that the Methodist doctrine of perfection was "decisively influenced" by Wesley's study and devotional use of German hymns. Further, he argued that, of the thirty-three German hymns translated by Wesley, it is a Tersteegen hymn ("Thou Hidden Love of God, Whose Height") that has been most frequently reprinted in British, American, and Canadian hymnals.[7] One of three other Tersteegen hymn trans-

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[4] John Wesley, *Journal*, standard ed., Nehemiah Curnock, ed. (1909-1916), II, 3-63.

[5] Cornelius Pieter Van Andel, *Gerhard Tersteegen; Leben und Werk; Sein Platz in der Kirchengeschichte* (Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 250.

[6] Rendel Harris, "The Influence of Quietism on the Society of Friends; A Lecture Delivered at Bryn Mawr College. April 30, 1900," (Philadelphia: Leeds Press, 1900), 11. An abridged translation of Tersteegen's letters was published by Samuel Jackson-Jackson, *Life and Character of Gerhard Tersteegen with Selections from His Letters and Writings* (London, 1834), 2nd, ed.

[7] John L. Nuelsen, *John Wesley und das Deutsche Kierchenlied* (Nashville, TN: The Historical Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1938), tr. by Theo Parry, Sidney H. Moore, and Arthur Holbrook, as *John Wesley and the German Hymn* (Yorkshire: A. S. Holbrook, 1972), 38, 78. Nuelsen finds that this hymn appears in 33 hymnals of Methodist and other church bodies that were in use in 1938.

lated by Wesley is the beloved "Gott ist Gegenwärtig" that Wesley translates "Lo, God is Here, Let Us Adore!"[8] Wesley discovered the hymns of Tersteegen in his copy of the early Moravian hymnal (1735) that he obtained during his ministry in Georgia.

What was the overall importance of these thirty-three German hymns for Wesley? In the context of his early effort to achieve the goal of the holy life by a program of rigorous self-discipline, these hymns provided him with a "poetic depiction of his yearnings," and they spoke of a peace he had ardently sought that would assure him of his own personal life in Christ.[9]

Three questions that need to be addressed are, first, what was the context in which Wesley discovered the German hymns, in general, and Tersteegen, in particular? Second, who was Tersteegen and what were the distinctive aspects of his spirituality vis-à-vis the soteriology of Wesley? Third, what was the long-term impact on Wesley of the German Pietist hymns, and of Tersteegen in particular?

Wesley In the Context of Pietist Polemics

Among the thirty-three German hymns translated by John Wesley, four were from Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) and four from Johann Scheffler (Angelius Silesius, 1624-1677), both being transitional writers from the era of the confessional hymn, such as Luther's *Ein Feste Burg*, to that of the devotional hymn. The latter group, marked by a consuming love for Jesus, was represented by fifteen hymn writers whom Wesley translated.[10] Gerhardt and Tersteegen, the latter a member of the devotional group, are generally regarded by hymnologists as the most gifted in the entire group of seventeen German hymn writers.[11]

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[8] Nuelsen, *Wesley and the German Hymns*, 49.

[9] Nuelsen, 44.

[10] The other members of this group were Ernst Lange (1650-1727), Joachim Lange (1670-1714), Winckler (1670-1722), W. C. Dessler (1660-1722), S. C. Gmelin (1679-1707), L. A. Gotter (1661-1735), G. Arnold (1666-1714), Rothe (1688-1758), each with one hymn; C. F. Richter (1676-1711), G. Tersteegen (1697-1769), and Freylinghuysen (1670-1739), with two each. Among the Moravians: N. Zinzendorf (1700-1760), with eight, and Spangenberg (1704-1792), Anne Dober (1713-1739), and Maria Böhmer (d. 1743) with one hymn each-Nuelsen, 43.

[11] See Julius Smend, *Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Liturgik, Hymnologie und Kirchenmusik* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1925). Smend recognizes (99) the three greatest German hymnists to be Luther, Gerhardt, and Tersteegen.

In the group of devotional hymns, there is a division between the Halle and the Herrnhut camps, with each group represented by four hymn writers. At that time, tensions existed between these two centers in Europe, owing to Halle's "legalistic" tendencies (from Zinzendorf's standpoint). Some consideration of these points of tension will provide a context for evaluating the distinctively catholic, irenic, and even winsome spirituality of Tersteegen.

As the Moravian leader at Herrnhut viewed the disciples of Francke at Halle, those men were elaborating the "morphology" of conversion in such a way that excessive emphasis was being placed on a protracted "penitential struggle" (or *Bußkampf*), that was to be the precondition for one's climactic "breakthrough" (or *Durchbruch*) into the assurance of pardon and adoption in Christ. However, from the Halle viewpoint,[12] Herrnhut had surrendered biblical and theological orthodoxy in favor of a "quick" method of inculcating conversion to Christ by means of an immediate, imaginative, affective identification with the Savior.[13]

That Wesley was aware of these points of tension is evident from the detailed correspondence between the Oxford Methodists and Halle that began in 1733,[14] and from his personal conversation with Spangenberg in Georgia, with whom he had been favorably impressed on the journey to America, and with one of the two Halle pastors whom Halle dispatched to provide spiritual care for the Salzburgers in Georgia. These Halle missionary pastors were functioning under the auspices of the SPCK, with

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[12] Herrnhut is viewed from the Halle-viewpoint of its second generation leader, G. A. Francke, the son of A. H. Francke (d. 1727).

[13] See W. Reginald Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1992), 134-141: "Zinzendorf [and] the Conflict with Halle."

[14] "At a very early stage, certainly by the summer of 1733, the younger Francke had reviewed reports of what was afoot in Oxford, and the German community in London had sent translations of the first defense of that circle in print-*The Oxford Methodists* (London, 1733)-which was to have a longer run in Germany than in England" (Ward, 4). Ward cites numerous reports at Halle of the Oxford Methodists, including Wesley's mission to the Salzbergers in Georgia, between 1733 and 1740. For his part, Wesley received detailed information about the Halle-Moravian split from both sides of that conflict.

whom they were closely allied.[15] They provided Wesley with details documenting Spangenberg's notoriety: he had been ejected from Halle in 1733 after being charged with schismatic activity, and in particular with the accusation that Zinzendorf had "planted" Spangenberg there in order to introduce "separatist" (e. g., Zinzendorfian) notions of communion and confession.[16] These personality issues furthered the basic theological controversy between Halle and Herrnhut that had been developed by the 1730s.[17]

The focal problem for Wesley was that the perception of "the genuine fruit of a true and saving faith, wrought in their souls by the influence of the Holy Spirit," which the officers of the SPCK had seen in the Hallensian-led Salzburgers, came to be recognized by Wesley as present within the Moravians.[18] In short, Wesley's personal spiritual dilemma was compounded by the incompatibility (both theological and personal) between his Halle-leaning SPCK patrons and the Moravians. With these difficulties in view, it is instructive to notice that the two hymnals available to Wesley, whereby he was now assiduously learning German, was the Herrnhut hymnal of 1735 and the Hallensian hymnal of Freylinghuysen.[19]

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[15] With the massive expulsion of Protestants from Salzburg by the Catholic imperial rulers in 1731-37, leaders of the SPCK who had continental roots (Ziegenhagen and Samuel Urlsperger) raised funds and fashioned the organization that transferred the British party of Salzburgers to Georgia. The SPCK also committed to long-term support for the Salzburg pastors and to every party that sought to minister to them. John Wesley's acceptance of the invitation to share in the Georgia mission followed Governor Oglethorpe's plan to support the Salzburgers in the cause of their resistance as Protestants. See R. Wright, *Memoirs of James Oglethorpe* (London, 1867), cited in Ward, 309.

[16] For Halle, these "separatist" notions included the practice of the love feast and footwashing. Spangenberg's use of separatist language to criticize the Halle institutions stirred Halle's ire. These criticisms included its "legalistic Methodism," that included an elaborate method for converting American Indians in 25 stages - G. C. Knapp, *Beyträge zur Lebensgeschichte A.G. Spangenbergs* (Halle, 1884), 3-66, 93-119; see also *Zinzendorf Werke: Ergänzungsband*, IX, 90-91; these citations are discussed in Ward, 134 and 140.

[17] Zinzendorf had previously been closely affiliated with A. H. Francke, but relations had soured after Francke's death when his son, G. A. Francke, headed Halle with a more anxious, legalistic mentality. See Ward, 135, 136.

[18] Ward, 310.

[19] The two Tersteegen hymns translated by John Wesley were found by him in these hymnals, where they had been reprinted after their first appearance in Tersteegen's *Geistliches Blumengärtlein* (first ed. 1729).

Amid these attending personal, political, and theological struggles, it also appears plausible to observe, with Ward, that to an extent Wesley "...sought to work out his personal problem in terms of the thirty-three German hymns he translated while he was in Georgia."[20] While it may appear that Wesley made no preferential choice among this group of hymnists, he nevertheless abandoned the mission of the Halle-led SPCK that was directed to the Salzburgers in Georgia when he returned to England in 1738. In short, although he translated hymns of four Halle hymnists, his conversion was not to occur under Hallensian auspices.[21] The Moravian connection had initially been more crucial for him, his having been introduced by Spangenberg and his associates to the possibility and the urgency of an instantaneous conversion and the need for personal assurance of salvation. Nevertheless, Wesley used the greatest amount of editorial deletion and reworking of the content of the Moravian hymns, especially those of Zinzendorf. While their heavy soteriological concentration made them more appealing to him than the Anglican hymns in which he had been reared, his critical handling of the Moravian hymns presaged his personal disenchantment with Herrnhut, which he visited in 1738, following Aldersgate.[22]

Hence, for differing reasons, Wesley would find himself increasingly distant from the spirituality of the later Hallensians in the 1730s, as well as from major aspects of the Herrnhuters' spirituality, particularly as it was emanating from Zinzendorf and Molther. However, he found in the Tersteegen hymns a spirituality that, as we shall contend, was more congruent with his own spiritual aspirations, and that was singularly free of any trace of the adverse polemical implications that had by then tainted the spirituality of Halle and Herrnhut. [23]

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[20] Ward, 311.

[21] In its later phase, the Halle teaching on soteriology became highly structured in a legalistic manner, as is illustrated by the Halle tract cited above.

[22] When Wesley stated his admiration for the elder Francke while at Herrnhut, "...whose name is indeed as precious ointment," he was denied communion by the Moravians as a "homo perturbatus." -Wesley, *Works* 3rd ed.: T. Jackson, ed. (1829-31), *Journal*, I, 263-4.

[23] F. Ernest Stoeffler has referred to Tersteegen as "...perhaps the best loved spiritual advisor of his day, the writer of some of the most treasured hymns in Protestantism, and the author of edificatory books which have held their own in spite of the shifting moods of the modern intellectual climate" (Stoeffler, *German Pietism in the Eighteenth Century*, Leiden: Brill, 1973, 191).

The Legacy of Tersteegen: The Rhineland Resource in Wesley's Spirituality

Samuel Jackson, Wesley's early editor, commented on the importance of Gerhard Tersteegen for early Methodist spirituality in saying that Tersteegen's life exemplifies "the necessity of...entire regeneration, the means of attaining it, and the by-roads which lead astray from it."[24] He was following the lead of Wesley, who was the first to translate any of Tersteegen's hymns into English.

Although there has been a surprising lack of attention given to Tersteegen by modern Anglo scholars (including Methodists), he has nevertheless recently been lauded by the British Methodist historian W. Reginald Ward as being "...the most fascinating character in the whole history of religious revival."[25] This surprising assertion is embellished by the observation that Tersteegen's extensive literary legacy vividly conveys his winsome spiritual tranquillity and his skill in "...the imaginative exposition of scripture in a class-meeting context which has probably never been equaled."[26]

The cultural milieu in the Rhineland of Tersteegen's lifetime proved highly susceptible to his message. It was the same milieu that would welcome John Wesley on his continental tour of 1738.[27] Because of frequent, destructive French invasions that resulted in Catholic subjugation of the Reformed communities, those congregations had lost any political control of their future. Hence, the content of Tersteegen's hymns, as well as his sermons and letters of counsel, was to these people a message of hope.[28] He highlighted the theme of the Christian life as a pilgrimage in an alien world in which the joyous, saving Presence of God in Christ becomes an overwhelming personal reality. He also made provision for conventicles that were intended as waystations for godly pilgrims seeking comfort,

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[24] Samuel Jackson, ed. *The Life and Character of Gerhard Tersteegen* (London, 183), vii-viii.

[25] Ward, 230.

[26] Ward, 235-236. He also notes that, of the leaders of the awakenings of the eighteenth century, only Jonathan Edwards, Charles Wesley, and Gerhard Tersteegen have left a literary legacy that exceeds their pastoral and evangelistic ministries.

[27] Ward, 25.

[28] Ward, 236.

encouragement, and accountability in the pursuit of their vocation.[29] Tersteegen worked in the revivalist milieu that had been nurtured in the Ruhr/Rhine area since 1720 by the separatist preacher Ernst Hochmann von Hochenau (1620-1724).[30]

The lower Rhine region was also influenced by political and religious developments in the Netherlands, and Tersteegen, like Zinzendorf, received financial backing from his Dutch supporters. The theological atmosphere in the lower Rhineland (notably Herborn, Duisburg, Marburg, Bremen, and Tersteegen's home city, Muhlheim an der Ruhr) was deeply influenced by intellectual currents from the Dutch universities. The first Pietist in the Reformed Church of Germany, Theodor Untereyck (1635-1693), who had been pastor in Tersteegen's home congregation in Muhlheim, combined the precisionism of Gisbert Voetius with the federal theology of Johannes Cocceius (d. 1669). His aim had been to develop a congregation of family-based house churches that would be the fit bride of Christ in His coming return to this world. He and his successors sought to retain within the church community those persons who had been awakened to radical, separatist spirituality by the followers of Jean Labadie (1610-1674).[31]

Untereyck's legacy of church piety was anchored by his use of the irenic *Heidelberg Catechism*, and it bore fruit with the hymn writer Joachim Neander (1650-80), author of "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," and F. A. Lampe (1683-1729), the great Neo-Pietist pastor-theologian at Bremen, as well as with Tersteegen, in whom this heritage came into full

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[29] Tersteegen founded his first conventicle at Otterbeck, and remnants of these groups persisted into the early twentieth century, when they became obstacles to the advancing "German Christian" religious program of the National Socialists. S. K. Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, 2 vols. (London, 1987-88), II: 5, 13-14, 63, 160. Tersteegen's chief twentieth century critic, who was later allied to this Nazi influence, was H. Forsthoff, who was also one of his major biographers. See esp. Forsthoff's "Tersteegen's Mystik," in *Monatsheft Rheinischer Kirchengerchichte* 12 (1918), 128-191, 193-201.

[30] Tersteegen was converted under the preaching of the Reformed pastor Wilhelm Hoffmann. -Stoeffler, 194.

[31] Labadie had passed into separatism after serving in the Jesuit and Reformed traditions, and his followers constituted a radical social and political protest against the established religious patterns in France, Holland, and Northwest Germany. See T. J. Saxby, *The Quest for the New Jerusalem, Jean de Labadie and the Labadists* (Dordrecht, 1987).

flower. To this stream, Tersteegen added the influence of patristic and French Quietist ascetic theology, whose works he copiously translated and edited from Greek, Latin, and French into German. On the one hand, he had early been influenced by the "Inspired," radical Pietists associated with the English Philadelphians and the Berleburg Bible circle,[32] but he rejected their excessive ecstasy that he perceived could degenerate into idolatrous self-edification or even demonic torment. On the other hand, Tersteegen never counseled separation from the church and its sacraments; but he also did not regard their observance as being either necessary for salvation or ineffectual to that end.

In his personal life, Tersteegen has been aptly described as a "recluse in demand."[33] His parents' goal that he should become pastor in the Reformed Church in Germany was frustrated by his father's death in 1703. Although Gerhard received a thorough classical training in the Latin school at Mörs, he was apprenticed to a merchant and finally became a weaver of silk ribbons. He found that the latter trade enabled him to maximize his time for meditation. By 1728, he became an effective teacher in the conventicles of the Rhineland, and he gave himself to translating Christian ascetic writings, itinerant preaching in the Rhineland and Holland, establishing retreat houses, and maintaining an international correspondence of pastoral counseling with hundreds of persons of diverse social rank.

From 1730 to 1750 Tersteegen was forbidden by law to hold conventicles in Germany, though his ministry to Holland continued. During this period he preached from his home, and freely provided food and medicine for the poor out of his own meager income. Hearers would sometimes surround his house from sunrise to dusk, hoping for some spiritual insights from this humble figure who had become known throughout the Rhine Valley simply as the "Friend of God." He finally built a larger house that would be crammed with three to four hundred persons, jamming its windows and halls—thereby evading the prohibition against conventicles. That is, these were not stated meetings. He was simply leaving his doors and windows unlocked as he sang and meditated aloud!

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[32] The eight-volume radical Pietist commentary, the *Berleburg Bible*, was produced by this circle under the leadership of J. M. Haug, at their center in Wittgenstein-Berleburg. See Stoeffler, 211-216.

[33] See L. G. Harvey, ed., *Gerhard Tersteegen: Recluse in Demand; Life and Letters*; I (Hampton, TN: Harvey & Tait, n.d.).

Tersteegen never counseled separation from the state (Reformed) church, and his followers remained a vital leaven within it for generations after their mentor's death in 1763. He also anticipated Wesley's criticism of Zinzendorf, faulting him for his manipulative efforts to achieve his personal religious goals, and for confusing imputed justification and sanctification, thereby making room for antinomianism.[34] Tersteegen's most important publication was his volume of original hymns (his *Geistliches Blumengärtlein*),[35] as well as volumes of sermons, treatises, and letters published posthumously, and his monumental *Select Lives of Holy Souls* (1733-54). As in the case of Wesley, his interest in Roman Catholic spirituality was a rarity in that polemical age.

Areas of similarity and dissimilarity with Wesley become readily apparent in the perusal of Tersteegen's work. Both men drew from a breadth of Christian literature; both had a singular devotion to encouraging the operation of saving grace in the lives of the spiritually lost of all levels of society; both maintained an itinerant ministry of evangelism, coupled with organizing discipleship groups; both were gifted in hymnody, and both had a non-sectarian attitude toward their respective state churches. However, Tersteegen had a stronger mystical, and even quietist bent, and he placed less stock in the necessity of the ordained ministry and the sacraments, although he only was speaking against their misuse by spiritually indifferent clergy and members. What is more, Tersteegen remained a layman, while Wesley was an ordained priest. What seems to have most impressed the young Wesley was the spiritual power and unencumbered beauty of expression in Tersteegen's hymns, through which he clearly communicated the praxis of the biblical faith. Tersteegen's focus was on the daily goal of living in childlike simplicity in the presence of God. Hence, his spirituality transcended narrow confessional and cultural boundaries, commending it at once to the young, restive John Wesley.

Aside from the popularity of Wesley's translation of the Tersteegen hymn, "Thou Hidden Love of God, Whose Height," this hymn might be seen as one of the clearest reflections of Wesley's own spiritual yearning, a yearning

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[34] See the discussion of Tersteegen in J. Steven O'Malley, *Early German-American Evangelicalism; Influential Pietist Sources in Discipleship and Sanctification* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1995).

[35] Gerhard Tersteegen, *Geistliches Blumengärtlein* (1st ed., 1729). The original may also be found in the Herrnhut Collection (1727), 483.

that would soon find its resolution at Aldersgate.[36] Adapting its message, that had been lodged in the German idiom, to his own aspiration, Wesley wrote:

> Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
> Whose depth unfathomed no man knows,
> I see from far Thy beauteous light,
> Inly I sigh for Thy repose.
> My heart is pained, nor can it be
> At rest, til it finds rest in Thee.

Wesley admirably captured the sense of yearning for God's gracious Presence that Tersteegen expressed. However, the original contains nuances of meaning which Wesley overlooked. Tersteegen depicted the hidden love of God as a beautiful kingdom of peace (*o friedensreich so schöne!*). This love, that he addressed with the personal "You" (*Du*), had for Tersteegen a Christological focus: he is the Incarnate Son of God, as agape love personified, who is present now, no longer merely as the historical Christ, but rather as the indwelling Savior whom one is to receive through the Spirit-anointed "Name of Jesus."

The temple which Christ has chosen for His abiding Presence is no longer the transcendent realm of the Triune Godhead, nor is it Jerusalem's temple. Rather, it is to be the inward depths of the contrite soul that makes room ("Raum gebe")[37] for His incarnate, gracious Presence. Tersteegen hinted at that inward realm of the soul when he explained, "Ich seh von ferne deine ruh, und innig dahin sehne."[38]—"I see from afar Your beauteous kingdom of peace." It is cognitively manifested to one through the external reading of the gospel and through its proclamation in sermon, but it is only in the depths of one's inward soul, which he elsewhere called the "Seelengrund," that we are able to desire longingly for His indwelling Presence. This point is clarified in verse 8, where Tersteegen wrote: "herr, rede du zum Seelengrund, da gib mir dich zu hören."[39] Wes-

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[34] See the discussion of Tersteegen in J. Steven O'Malley, *Early*

[36] Nuelsen (pp. 38, 78) draws this inference.

[37] See the excellent discussion of Tersteegen's concept of *Raum gebe* in Hansgunter Ludewig, *Gebet und Gotteserfahrung bei Gerhard Tersteegen* (Göttengen: Vindenhoeck U. Ruprecht, 1986), 208-217.

[38] Tersteegen, "Verborgne Gottes-Liebe Du," in Nuelsen, 119.

[39] Nuelsen, 120.

ley imaginatively recreated this line to say, "Speak to my inmost soul, and say, ÔI am thy love, thy God, thy All!'"[40]

Both Wesley and Tersteegen shared basic similarities in their soteriology. Both based the saving operations of grace on the objective ground of Christ's atoning work on Calvary, from which flow the subjective streams of personal grace. For Wesley, the latter were presented under the rubrics of prevening, lefting (relational), and sanctifying (actual) grace.[41] Tersteegen, writing before Wesley's Aldersgate conversion, spoke of God's grace in Christ wooing the sinner, awakening a desire for saving fellowship with the Savior:

> *...hilff, dasz ich nimmer weiche nur*
> *von deiner reinen liebesspur,*
> *bis ich den schatz erreiche.*
> *Indessen zeuch zu aller stund,*
> *und mach mich zu dir kehren.*[42]

Wesley's paraphrased translation:

> O help, that I may never move
> From the blessed footsteps of Thy love.
> Each moment draw from earth away.
> My heart, that lowly waits Thy call.[43]

Wesley's prevening, wooing, grace of Christ (based on John 1:9) has a parallel in Tersteegen's *Grundneigung*[44] (or Òinward inclination"), which is the heart-softening, beckoning work of divine grace that, in the efficacious Name of Jesus, is ever seeking to turn our wayward beings from self to God. While the mind may have cognitive awareness of this operation, this *Grundneigung* (i.e., the love of Jesus) is only personally efficacious when its (His!)) habitation begins and is rooted in that inner domain of the soul that he calls the *Seelengrund*.[45] The latter term is

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[40] Nuelsen, 120.

[41] See Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," *Works* (1872 ed.), VI, 43-53, where he grounds all aspects of saving grace in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

[42] Nuelson, 120.

[43] Nuelsen, 120.

[44] See Ludewig, 292-308.

[45] Ludewig discusses these medieval precursors of Tersteegen's *Seelengund* in an introductory section, 89-94.

derived from Echhart and Tauler.[46] This realm of our "inner being" is where God "strengthens us in power through His Spirit," so that Christ may "dwell in our hearts through faith" and that the faithful may be "rooted and established in love" (Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV). The context in which Tersteegen develops his equivalent to Wesley's prevening grace is the federal (or covenental) tradition of the Reformed Pietists.[47] But his major interest lies in the subjective good (or benefit) of God's covenant of grace in Christ for souls that are awakened to a holy betrothal with Him.

Unlike the Rhineland Catholic mystics who preceded him, Tersteegen did not hold (in a semi-pantheistic manner) that God is inherently present in the depths of every soul, only waiting to be discovered and obeyed through a program of asceticism. Because of original sin, human souls are now bereft of that godly witness; they are closed to Him and darkened. Hence, it is only through the lefting grace of Christ that this inward "Temple veil" is rent asunder.[48] This indicates that Tersteegen is also in basic congruity with Wesley on the doctrine of lefting grace (pardon), as completed in Christ and appropriated by the gift of faith.[49] That grace is presumed in the hymn's third stanza, with the statement "You announce Your Presence unto me—I surely discover this only as grace; since I still cannot by myself follow You, I can only call this a just torment; I have only gazed upon Your grace from afar, O Beloved! could I, unswerving, simply implore the train of Your mercy!"

Dasz du in mir dich meldest an,
ich zwar als grad erkenne;
doch will ich dir nicht folgen kan,
ichs billig plage nenne:
ich hab von ferne was erblickt,
O Liebe! könt ich unverruckt
nur deiner spur nachgehen!"

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[46] Tersteegen also finds exegetical basis for the *Seelegrund* theme, *Weg der Wahrheit* (Stuttgart: Steinkopf, 1926), 174, 367-8.

[47] Leaders of Reformed Pietism included Johannen Cocceius, Campegins Vitringa, and Friedrich A. Lampe.

[48] See Gerhard Tersteegen, "Faith and Justification," in *Gerhard Tersteegen: Sermons and Hymns* (Shoals, IN: Old Paths Tract Society, n.d., tr. by Emily Chisholm), 66-73.

[49] Compare with John Wesley, "Justification by Faith," *Works* (1872 ed.), V, 53-64.

Wesley's translation:

This mercy all, that Thou hast brought
My mind to seek her peace in Thee;
Yet while I seek, but find Thee not,
No peace my wandering soul shall see.
O, when shall all my wanderings end,
And all my steps to Thee-word tend?[50]

Concerning sanctifying grace, Tersteegen, like Wesley, declined to follow Zinzendorf's conflation of justification and sanctification, emphasizing instead the need for steady, daily growth in the praxis of saving grace that *follows* justification. Tersteegen's view of sanctification that leads to the state of Christian perfection was more gradualist than crisis-oriented. The latter became dominant in the nineteenth-century holiness movement, thereby fully shifting the emphasis from gradualism (Tersteegen) to a balancing of gradual and crisis aspects (Wesley) to the second-blessing "crisis" emphasis of the nineteenth century.

In Tersteegen, the magnetic stirring of God's prevening grace in the soul (the "Grundneigung") that becomes efficacious by virtue of Christ's lefting grace in breaking the inward stronghold of demonic darkness, is of one piece with the ongoing, transforming grace of sanctification, whereby one is increasingly shorn of self-love and renewed after the image of God in Christ.[51] Tersteegen conceptualized somewhat differently than Wesley[52] the progress of grace in the life of the awakened Christian, referring to the depth dimensions of the soul over against its cognitive and volitional aspects. In Tersteegen's view, the living Christ seeks to inaugurate his resurrection life in the believer at the point of the "Seelengrund," and then, from that center, to expand His gracious influence to encompass the cognitive, volitional, affective, and relational aspects of one's existence. In turn, there is to be a communication of this Life with other awakened Christians, thereby forming the basis for a genuine, "unpartisan" (*unparteiisch*) communion in Christ that transcends

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[50] Nuelsen, 119.

[51] See Gerhard Tersteegen, "True Godliness," in *Sermons and Hymns*, 110-122.

[52] It is more characteristic for Wesley to allow his portrayal of the state of sanctifying grace to be guided by the descriptive language of Scripture. See Wesley, "On Perfection," *Works* (1872 ed.), VI, 411-423.

outward church divisions because it is based on the common ground (*Gemeinsamengrund*) of redemptive fellowship in the living Christ.[53]

Tersteegen depicts this course of sanctifying grace when he writes in verse four of his hymn (literal translation): "Is there something in all the world beside You that I want to love? Ah! Take it away, until there's nothing left in me, save You alone. I know I must let go of all things, before I can abide without wavering in Your peaceful bosom."

Ist etwas das ich neben dir
in aller welt wolt lieben?
Ach! nimm es hin, bis nichts in mir
Als du seyst Ôuberblieben:
ich weiß, ich muß von allem loß,
eh ich in deinem friedens-schooß
kan bleiben ohne wancken.

Wesley's translation:

Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with Thee my heart to share?
Ah, tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motion there:
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it has found repose in Thee.[54]

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[53] Furthermore, this understanding of the "unpartisan" nature of redemptive fellowship in Christ guided the thinking of the early followers of Otterbein and Boehm in the United Brethren in Christ, who identified themselves as an "unpartisan" (*unparteiisch*) fellowship, unlike the "closed" and socially stratified nature of other German church bodies (both state church congregations and sectarians). See Arthur Core, ed., *Philip William Otterbein; Pastor and Ecumenist* (Dayton: EUB Board of Education, 1968), 121.

[54] Nuelsen, 119. This aspiration for holiness of heart and life continues in verses 5-8 of the hymn, that Wesley freely translates:

Entdeck mir meine eigenheit	O, hide this self from me, that I
die dir stets widerstrebet	No more, but Christ in me may live!
und war noch unlauterkeit	My vile affections crucify,
in meiner seelen lebet:	nor let one darling lust survive.
soll ich erreiche deine ruh,	In all things nothing may I see,
so muß mein aug gerade zu	Nothing desire or seek but Thee!
dich meynen und ansehen.	

It may also be noted that Wesley produced two different translations of this hymn—one before and one after Aldersgate. In the earlier translation of the second half of verse four (*ich weiß ich muß von allem loß/eh ich in deinem frieden-schooß/kan bleiben ohne wancken*), Wesley had written: "From earthly foes I must be free/Ere I can find repose in Thee." The later translation shifts from saying that peace through faith is the result of being freed from earthly lusts to affirming that the peace attained through faith itself produces freedom from the earthly: "Then shall my heart from earth be free, when it has found repose in Thee."[55] The latter rendering also better fits the German original, which served as Wesley's model.

One other Tersteegen hymn that Wesley translated, *Gott ist gegenwärtig* ("Lo, God is here!") is regarded as the favorite hymn of all German Pietists within the German tradition.[56] However, it has had less usage in the English hymnals, and a nineteenth-century translation of this hymn

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O Liebe! mach mein hertze frey	O love, Thy sovereign aid impart,
vom überlegen, sorgen;	To save me from low-thoughted care;
den eignen willen, brich entzwey.	Chase this self-will through all my heart
wie sehr er steckt verborgen:	Through all its latest senses there.
ein recht gebeught, einfältig kind	Make me Thy duteous child, that I
am ersten dich, O Liebe, findt;	Ceaseless may, "Abba, Father," cry.
Du ist mein hertz und wille.	
Ach! nein, ich halte nichts zurück,	Ah, no! ne'er will I backward turn:
dir bin ich gantz verschrieben:	Thine wholly, Thine alone I am!
ich weiß es ist das höchste glück,	Thrice happy he who views with scorn
dich läuterlich zu lieben:	Earth's toys, for Thee his constant flame.
hilff, daß ich nimmer weiche nur	O, help, that I may never move
von deiner reinen liebesspur,	From the blest footsteps of Thy love!
bis ich den schatz erreiche.	
Indessen zeuch zu aller stund,	Each moment draw from earth away
Und mach mich zu dir kehren,	My heart, that lowly waits Thy call:
Herr, rede du zum seelen-grund,	Speak to my inmost soul, and say,
da gieb mir dich zu hören.	"I am Thy love, Thy God, Thy All!"
Ach! setze mit Maria mich	To feel Thy power, to hear Thy voice,
zu deinem füßen inniglich:	To taste Thy love, is all my choice!
dis eins will ich erwehlen.	

[55] Nuelsen, 63.

[56] On the wider influence of this hymn, see Ludewig, 99-308.

by Catherine Winkworth has had a wider circulation.[57] This hymn celebrates the theme that both Tersteegen and Wesley find central: the most urgent task is now not to seek God in His past actions nor in His future comings, but in His present appearing in the living Christ. “Let all within us feel His power, And silent bow before His face. Who know His powers, His grace who prove, Serve Him with awe, with reverence love.” (*Gott ist in der mitten! Alles in uns schweige, und sich innigst vor ihm beuge; wer ihn kennt, wer ihn nennt, schlag die augen nieder, kommt, ergebt euch wieder*.)[58]

A comparison of the eight Zinzendorf hymns that Wesley also translated with those of Tersteegen reveals the theological differentiation that existed between these two Pietists. Wesley clearly stood in greater theological proximity to the latter. For Zinzendorf, the great theme was submission to Christ as the crucified Lamb of God, but this theme was often embellished with a highly sentimental and even erotic bridal imagery that Wesley regularly deleted as he refashioned and ennobled these hymns.[59] By contrast, Tersteegen’s hymns convey more clearly the confessional aspect that bore witness to an inward appropriation of the “ordo salutisÓ (*or Heilsordnung*) that charted the growing Presence of the indwelling Christ in the life of the believer. Unfortunately, Nuelsen’s pathbreaking study of Wesley’s German hymns does not really identify this underlying theological difference between Zinzendorf and Tersteegen.[60] Zinzendorf

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[57] Within the United Methodist tradition, Winkworth’s translation (rather than Wesley’s) of *Gott ist Gegenwärtig* is found in *The Hymnal of the Evangelical United Brethren Church* (Harrisburg and Dayton: Board of Publication, 1957), 4.

[58] Nuelsen, 139, no. 19.

[59] Hence, Wesley translates Zinzendorf’s *Reiner bräutigam meiner Seelen* (“Pure Bridegroom of my Soul”) as “Jesus, to Thee, my heart I bow,” and he deletes 24 original verses, many of which exaggerate the bridal imagery, as in *schenken mir aus deiner Brüsten, gieb mir beyde milch und wein* (“give me from your breasts both mild and wine”), and *Mache mir zu gifft und galle, den gemengten huren-tranck* (“May the perverted drink of the whore be to me as poison and gall”). The latter verse is a reference to Christ in the six verses he retains. See Nuelsen, III.

[60] Although Nuelsen notes the excessive bridal mysticism of Zinzendorf, he does not acknowledge this distinction between the hymns of Zinzendorf and Tersteegen as a whole, and tends instead to speak of the German devotional hymns as being of one stream.

highly accentuated the Lutheran teaching that the righteousness established by Christ's righteousness is solely imputed to the believer by faith, although Luther's faith in the proclaimed Word is replaced by Zinzendorf's highly affective adoration of the crucified Lamb of God.

However, Tersteegen, like Wesley, emphasized that righteousness is first imputed to the believer (the *Christus pro nobis*), but is then to become progressively imparted through the indwelling Spirit of God (as the *Christus in nobis*). Hence, throughout his poetry and prose, Tersteegen typically spoke of the believer's progressive transformation by the indwelling Christ as the renewal of the *imago Dei*. As we have noted, these themes anticipated major aspects of Wesley's post-Aldersgate soteriology, although the idioms in which they are expressed are quite distinct. Despite the fact that Wesley's translation of the Tersteegen hymns predated Aldersgate, it is here contended that these hymns decisively helped Wesley to articulate for himself that transforming life in Christ to which he aspired, and which he would soon appropriate.

Wesley's Veneration of German Pietist Hymns, Tersteegen's in Particular

The fact that Wesley's spiritual crisis in Georgia had a felicitous ending must be attributed to his absorbing work on the thirty-three German hymns.[61] Prior to his encounter with these hymns and their singers, justification by faith was a theoretical doctrine not yet connected with personal life in Christ. Wesley had been scrupulous in carrying out his high-church Anglican principles and his impeccable adherence to its rituals, but to this was interwoven his growing taste for Christian mysticism.[62]

He was first awakened to the personal meaning of saving faith through simple German believers who showed him that faith is something living that transfigures all events of life. Then, to these contacts was joined his discovery of the German hymns, especially the joyous, confident, faith-confessing hymns of the German Pietists. Wesley could not sing all these personal hymnodic testimonies of lives savingly transformed through Jesus Christ nor could he try to find English words corresponding to theirs without his thought and life being transformed by

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[61] Nuelsen, 34.

[62] Concerning the latter, see Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., *Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: F. Asbury, 1989).

them. In his *Journal* entries for this period, he did not indicate which hymns he was studying nor which he prefers; he simply enters "German verses," or "translated verses."[63] He was at this task from three to five hours per day. These were not just beautiful poetic expressions; they became an active force in leading him toward saving faith. As he sang them day after day, they testified to that faith that, in Böhler's terms,[64] he was to preach although he did not yet possess. It also kept before him in more vivid terms the goal of Christian perfection that he had been actively seeking through full consecration since 1725.[65]

Was Wesley's interest in the German Pietist hymns only a passing phase, or did it have lasting impact in his mature years? First, there is a significant place where his debt to Tersteegen was later acknowledged. In his mature treatise "The Plain Account of Christian Perfection" (1766), a kind of spiritual autobiography, Wesley quoted passages from a sermon he preached in 1733 at Oxford on the "Circumcision of the Heart." In "The Plain Account" he underscored the convictions that he and his fellow Oxford Methodists had entertained by restating his version of verse four from Tersteegen's "Thou Hidden Love of God, Whose Height," that he had composed in 1736:

> Is there anything beneath the sun
> That strives with Thee my heart to share?
> Ah, Tear it thence, and reign also,
> The Lord of every motion there.[66]

Commenting on this verse, Wesley viewed Tersteegen's prayer as encompassing "awakened" seekers of salvation, such as he had been, as well as convinced believers. He wrote: "I never heard that anyone objected to this. And indeed who can object? Is not this the language, not only of every believer, but every one that is truly awakened? But what have I wrote, to this day, which is either stronger or plainer?"[67] Here was

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[63] Nuelsen, 36.

[64] Peter Bohler's well-known comment to Wesley in London was to "preach faith till you have it and then because you have it, you will preach faith." *Journal*, I, 442.

[65] *Works*, XI, 366-367.

[66] *Works*, XI, 369. Wesley also cites Paul Gerhardt's "Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me" in the same treatise on "Christian Perfection," *Works*, XI, 369.

[67] *Works*, XI, 369.

an acknowledgment of decisive influence from Tersteegen's hymn in Wesley's doctrine of perfection. Referring to this hymn, Nuelsen significantly concludes that here "John Wesley found the clearest expression of his teaching of salvationÓ and that it was "...a conviction he held before his conversion, which he never gave up afterwards."[68]

While he was under the scourge of the Georgia colonists who were anxious to be rid of their "tiresome soul warden," Wesley increasingly took refuge in composing English verses from the German hymns. In that setting, Wesley drew comfort from this composition, derived from the final stanza of Tersteegen's *Verborgne Gottes Liebe Du*:

> Each moment draw from earth away
> My heart, that lowly waits Thy call.
> Speak to my inmost soul, and say,
> "I am Thy Love, Thy God, Thy All!"
> To feel Thy power, to hear Thy voice,
> To taste Thy love is all my choice.[69]

Back in London, the German hymns continued to exercise an important role in Wesley's search for Christian assurance, and those upon which he relied were by no means limited to the Moravian hymns.[70] Nuelsen is probably correct in surmising that the reason why Wesley translated no more German hymns after 1738 was because it was no longer a practical necessity for him; his brother Charles was now exercising his considerable gift in hymn writing.[71] The long-term influence of the German hymn on his doctrine of justification by faith was acknowledged by Wesley in a sermon he preached in November, 1765, entitled "The Lord Our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6), in which he stated:

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[68] Nuelsen, (38) is here including, in addition to the Tersteegen hymn, the second verse of Paul Gerhardt's "Jesu, Thy Boundless Love to Me."

[69] G. Osborn, ed., *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Conference Office, 1868), I, 72-73.

[70] When Böhler presented John Wesley with four witnesses to the doctrine of Christian assurance, Wesley, moved to tears, responded by leading in singing "My Soul Before Thee Prostrate Lies," that he had translated from the verse of the Hallensian hymnist Christian Friedrich Richter. J. P. Lockwood, *Memorials to the Life of Peter Böher* (London, 1868), cited in Nuelsen, 40.

[71] Though Charles did not read German, he held frequent and sustained conversations with Moravians, including Zinzendorf and Böhler, and he was familiar with John's translated hymns, which had first appeared in print in 1737.

> This is the doctrine which I have constantly believed and taught, for near eight and twenty years. This I published to all the world in the year 1738.... The hymns published a year or so after this, and since republished several times, a clear testimony that my judgment was still the same, speak full to the same purpose.[72]

The fact that for fifteen years Wesley carried during his travels the thirty-three German hymns, plus some composed by Charles, in a handwritten manuscript,[73] indicates their personal importance to him in strengthening within him his disposition to walk in the presence of Christ. It appears as significant that the page most worn was the one containing Richter's *Ich habe nun den Grund gefunden* translated by Wesley as:

> Now I have found the ground, wherein
> Sure my soul's anchor may remain,
> The wounds of Jesus for my sin
> Before the world's foundation slain:
> Whose mercy shall unshaken stay
> When heaven and earth are passed away.[74]

In relying upon this motif, Wesley placed his major emphasis on the objective ground (*Grund*) of salvation in Christ's atonement that is counterbalanced by the Holy Spirit's subjective witness within the heart of the believer.[75] By comparison, Tersteegen's *Gott ist Gegenwärtig* (that Wesley translated as "Lo, God is here! let us adore") placed relatively greater emphasis on the *Seelengrund* (the inner ground of the soul) as the primary arena of God's redemptive activity in the present life of the believer. For Tersteegen, the historical Calvary is the necessary outward ground of our salvation, but this must now become the personal, existential Calvary within the most intimate part of one's inward life if God's redeeming Presence is to become an ongoing, vital reality.

Both men lived in the tension between the objective and the subjective grounding of Christ's redemptive work, although Wesley looked to

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[72] To illustrate his point, he cites the first stanza of his reworked translation of Zinzendorf's "Jesu, Thy Blood and Righteousness," *Works*, V, 241.

[73] Nuelsen, 47.

[74] G. Osborn, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, II, 279.

[75] This priority in the Wesleyan "ordo salutis" is expressed by Charles Wesley in the verses of "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" (Osborn, IV, 219).

the objective ground as the chief locus of meditation, while, for Tersteegen, it was instead the subjective ground.[76] At a deeper level, however, it is really not correct to refer to Tersteegen's piety as subjectivist, as, for example, in the sense of Schleiermacher's "feeling of dependence" (*Gefuhl*). On the contrary, in his letters of counsel Tersteegen frequently warns against the idolatry of introspection.[77] What he is advocating is an inward focus of the heart on the utterly transcendent "Name of Jesus Emmanuel" as the subject of devotion, whose inward worship effects the full-blown soteriological transformation of the grace-apprehended worshipper.[78]

Like Wesley, Tersteegen did not purport to be teaching unique doctrines, though he held to the evangelical doctrines of salvation more deeply than did the established Protestant churches. In words that reflect

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[76] To explain further, Wesley would place more emphasis on the historical presence of Christ, as mediated through the means of grace, while Tersteegen's emphasis fell upon the contemporary, immediately present Christ, whose ongoing royal residencies to be within the inner life of the awakened child of God. Wesley also placed greater stock in the ecclesial context of Christian worship, as seen in the third rule of his "General Rules;" but Tersteegen spoke of the "inner sanctuary of the heart, or the *Seelengrund*. He explains this in figurative terms: "The Name of Jesus is the altar, the flame that goes forth is God's love, which burns more brightly as the smoldering is purged, and the truth and sincerity, whereby, we now live, are the flames of that fire." That is to say, divine truth is not known to natural human reason; it is a gift of the living Christ, whose indwelling Presence reveals truth, that can then inform the mind and activate the will and the affections. See Gerhard Tersteegen, "Inward Prayer," in *Sermons and Hymns*, 35-37. Note: This quote follows my unpublished translation from the original German, as contained in Gerhard Tersteegen, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1843), 156.

[77] In his pastoral letters, Tersteegen advised, "I do not point you to yourself. I know, that like me, you are a child of Adam. You have not yet reached the end of this path, but your course is correct. The eternal love of God only wants that you and I let ourselves fall into its lap, just as we are, Amen. Let it be so!" Also, "...sweetly turn your inward eye from yourself. Fix it inwardly upon Him in whom is all your salvation" (Tersteegen, *Recluse in Demand: Life and Letters*, 125, 129.

[78] Tersteegen wrote on inward prayer as follows: "Our spirits thus become the temples in which the glory of God, as in the Holiest of Holies, is near unto us. The altar is the Name of Jesus; the sacrifice is our heart, our will, our all. The love of God which enflames our desires after Him, by means of His secret operation, is the eternal fire..." (Gerhard Tersteegen, *Sermons and Hymns*, (Hampton, TN: Harvey and Tait, n.d.), Vol II, 37.

Wesley's outlook, Tersteegen wrote: "My way is to preach the gospel quite simply—God was in Christ, reconciling the world Himself." Then he added: "This God and Savior is

> inexpressibly near to us, knocking at the door of our hearts, and entreating us to turn from our sins and be reconciled to Him. Every uneasy sense of our danger, every insight into our utter corruption, darkness, and powerlessness, every sorrow and lamentation on account of sin, are the work, wholly and solely, of this love of God in Christ Jesus near us and in us.[79]

Wesley had begun his search for this inward witness of God's gracious Presence while at Oxford and in the wilds of Georgia. Coming full circle, he would close his life on earth by paraphrasing the theme of Tersteegen's greatest hymn, when he confessed: "The best of all is, God is with us!"[80]

Conclusion

It has been our contention that the Rhineland spirituality of Tersteegen represents a significant aspect of the Pietist influence on John Wesley in his formative life stage. This influence has been insufficiently recognized and evaluated as a contributing factor in Wesley's own spiritual formation. It served for him as a complement and, to no small extent, as a corrective to the increasingly legalistic piety of Halle, on the one side, and on the other, to Zinzendorf's often unduly sentimental emphasis upon Christ as the Lamb of God, in whom our positional righteousness and holiness is appropriated as immediate and complete at the outset of saving faith.

Tersteegen's piety, that was also free of the mutual polemicism in which Halle and Herrnhut were then embroiled, assisted Wesley at the time of his deepest spiritual crises as he quested for gracious pardon and a transforming new life in Christ. The turning point in Wesley's quest was reached in the Moravian milieu of Aldersgate, but it was the Tersteegen hymnody to which Wesley later appealed in his mature treatise on Christian perfection when he sought to offer personal testimony and theological clarification on behalf of his early crisis of faith. Finally, Wesley's Tersteegen-imprinted last words further bear witness to the durability of this Pietist legacy.

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[79] Gerhard Tersteegen, *Life and Letters,* 28.

[80] Richard Rodda, *A Discourse Delivered at the Chapel on Oldham Street, Manchester, March 13, 1791, on Occasion of the Death of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (Manchester, England: J. Radford, 1791), 22.

THEOSIS AND SANCTIFICATION: JOHN WESLEY'S REFORMULATION OF A PATRISTIC DOCTRINE

by
Michael J. Christensen

> I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High..." (Ps. 82:6)
>
> Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" (Jn. 10:34)

Entire Sanctification (holiness, perfection), as understood in the Wesleyan tradition, refers to John Wesley's doctrine of spiritual transformation. It is understood as an experience of grace, subsequent to salvation, with the effect that the Holy Spirit takes full possession of the soul, sanctifies the heart, and empowers the will so that one can love God and others blamelessly in this life. One is justified and then sanctified-understood as communing with God with the result that the holiness of God is actually imparted, not just imputed on the basis of what Christ accomplished on the cross. The power of sin in the believer's life is either eradicated or rendered inoperative as one participates in the higher life of the divine.[1]

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[1] The doctrine of entire sanctification admits to at least two models of interpretation: (1) instantaneous and (2) progressive perfection, involving (a) eradication of sin or (b) a blameless walk with God. See "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" and "Farther Thoughts on Entire Sanctification" for Wesley's most mature conception of the doctrine.

Theosis (lit. "ingodded," "becoming god," deification) in the Eastern Orthodox tradition is a vision of human potential for perfection, anticipated in ancient Greece, witnessed to in both the Old and New Testaments, and developed by Patristic Christian theologians of the first five centuries after Christ. This vision survived the fourth-century purges of heresy and persists yet today in Eastern Christianity as a challenge to Western theology. According to Vladimir Lossky, we are nothing less than "creatures called to gods" (*The Vision of God*). In the words of Irenaeus (120-202): "If the Word was made man, it is that men might become gods" (*Against Heresies*, Bk. V. Pref. col. 1035). Or as Athanasius (293-373) said of the Incarnation of Christ: "God became man so that man might become God" (*On the Incarnation of the Word*, Bk. IV. par 65).[2] The idea of theosis is that God and humanity progressively achieve a *union* in Christ which in the end both blurs and preserves the distinction between Creator and creation, as in a mirror perfectly reflecting the source of its image.[3]

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[2] Plato had already defined theosis as "likeness to God so far as possible" (*Theaetetus*). *How far is possible* is what was debated in the Platonic tradition. The Greek idea of theosis was incorporated into Patristic theology as *theosis kata charin* (ingodded according to gift or grace). As a gift of God, according to capacity, a person can become a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). Just as God, as Creator, crossed over from the divine realm and became a human, so human beings (through progressive participation in the divine nature) may cross over from creaturehood into the uncreated realm—a grace which restores the *image* and appropriates the *likeness* of God, *as far as possible* in this life and the next.

[3] The Eastern Orthodox doctrine of theosis is understood to be grounded in Scriptures (Psalms 82:6, John 10:34-35, 2 Peter 1:4, 1 John 3:1-2) and in the Apostolic Tradition according to its principal proponents (Origen, Clement, Ephrem, Macarius, Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor). After the Orthodox acceptance of the views of Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) on the distinctions between divine energies and divine essence, the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of theosis became defined as a "union (of energies) without confusion (of essence)" in which the essential distinction between Creator and creature eternally remains. As Orthodox Bishop Kalistos Ware writes:"In the Age to come, God is 'all in all,' but Peter is Peter and Paul is Paul." Each retains his or her own nature and personal identity. Yet all are filled with God's Spirit and perfected as creature (*The Orthodox Way*, 168).

Two distinct interpretations of theosis—one a *union* and the other a *communion* model—can be identified in Patristic theology: (1) The *union* model envisions humanity literally becoming divine (i.e. gods and goddesses, perfected sons and daughters in the family of God; (2) The *communion* model

Parallel With Eastern Orthodoxy

Are the two conceptions-sanctification and theosis-theologically distinct or similar in thought? Historically, is sanctification as a doctrine derived from the older idea of theosis? Spiritually, are they independent visions in the quest for human wholeness or do they point to the same spiritual process and religious reality? If theologically distinct, how do they compare? If historically dependent, how is the one derived form the other? In posing these questions of similarity and derivation, I invoke the scholarly company of Albert Outler (*John Wesley*), Ted Campbell (*John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*) and Randy Maddox (*Responsible Grace*), intending to apply the problem of theosis as a test case for their assertions regarding Wesley's use of patristic sources.

Thirty years ago Albert Outler first alerted Wesleyan scholars to the influence of the Church Fathers on Wesley, especially the Eastern, Greek Patristic writers. It was his suspicion that Wesley's doctrine of sanctification was directly influenced by his exposure to the *Spiritual Homilies* attributed to Macarius of Egypt but actually written by a fifth-century Syrian monk under the theological influence of Gregory of Nyssa (*John Wesley*, 9). Syriac scholar David Bundy reportedly has spent much of his career exploring Outler's assertion on this point, as well as the influence of Ephrem of Syria on Wesley.

Orthodox theologian Charles Ashanin has pointed out that the classical Methodist doctrine of sanctification "is probably Wesley's adaptation of the Patristic doctrine of Theosis..." (90). Wesleyan theologian Randy Maddox agrees. Understanding the doctrine of sanctification in its therapeutic, soteriological context, he says, "has significant parallels with the Eastern Orthodox theme of deification (theosis)..." (*Responsible Grace*, 122). Building primarily on the insights of Outler and Maddox, and attempting to apply Campbell's thesis of how Wesley appropriated his patristic sources, this essay explores the theological parallels between theosis and sanctification and probable historical derivations.

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metaphorically imagines humanity becoming *like* God while remaining creature (i.e., perfected humanity may assume some qualities of divinity but never be divine in nature, always creature in relation to Creator). Variations on these two models of theosis include the ideas that one may spiritually evolve beyond human nature to become an angel, or become like an angel (i.e., restored angelic nature=perfected human nature). Theosis is a compelling mystical notion not easily grasped and clearly subject to various interpretations.

In his 1756 "Address to Clergy," Wesley commends the Church Fathers, "chiefly those who wrote before the Council of Nicea," as being "the most authentic commentators on Scripture, ...nearest the fountain, and eminently endued with that Spirit by whom all Scripture was given." Among the ante-Nicene theologians he commends as particularly worthy guardians of "the religion of the primitive church" are Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement and Origen. He also insists that his preachers have "some acquaintance" with such post-Nicene writers as Chrysostom, Basil, Jerome, Augustine "and above all, the man of a broken heart, Ephraem Syrus." In other references to his favorite authors, Wesley added "Makarios the Egyptian."[4]

The issue of Patristic influences, however, is not simply a matter of Wesley appreciating and importing or at least paralleling theological concepts from the 2nd to the 5th centuries Orthodox East and applying them in the 18th century Protestant West. As Ted Campbell documents in his *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, Wesley's use of Patristic sources was "programmatic"-by which he means that Wesley revised and edited his sources rather than preserving their original meaning, and did so with a pastoral motivation and agenda of church reform. Wesley was not an historian but a practical theologian whose mission was to reform a nation. His particular "vision" of Christian antiquity, more than the historical accuracy of his conceptualization, formed his sense of the Tradition. Thus, Wesley's "programmatic" (pastoral and polemical) use of Patristic sources can be distinguished from what his sources historically meant or taught (Campbell, 20). I suggest that Wesleyan scholars today accept Campbell's historical critique and follow Outler's theological lead by reading Wesley *with his sources*, and not simply reading back into his ancient sources Wesley's distinctive 18th-century vision of perfection or programmatic agenda for reform.[5]

What primary Patristic writers did John Wesley read and benefit from in his personal quest for holiness of heart and life? What did his

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[4] "Address to Clergy," *Works* (Jackson), Vol. 10, 484-492; see also Campbell, pp. 49-50).

[5] Much "holiness" doctrine today has elements of theological eisegesis—the uncritical and unhistorical reading back into both the biblical texts and the Patristic tradition of 18th or 19th-century Wesleyan conceptions of sanctification and then presenting this vision of holiness as scriptural and patristic (see Bassett, pp. 50-67).

sources actually teach about theosis, perfection, and related issues? Wesley learned from his father to appreciate the ancient pastoral theologians: Chrysostom, Basil, Athanasius and Cyprian (*Advice to a Young Clergyman*). At Oxford Wesley participated in the Patristic renaissance and idealized the Apostolic Age which he regarded as a time of authentic Christianity. Citing ancient authorities, he criticized then current ecclesiastical practices and longed for the Church of England to return to its liturgical roots, spiritual disciplines, and primitive purity.[6] Through the formative influence of John Clayton-a Non-Juror from Manchester and a Patristic scholar-Wesley was drawn to the ancient traditions as preserved in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and *Apostolic Canons*: "Fit books for you and every Christian priest," Clayton wrote to Wesley, "are all the Fathers of the first three centuries, whereby you may be enabled both to know and profess the faith once delivered to the saints, and to steer your course in the due medium between the monkish mysticism of the fourth century and the lukewarm indifference of the present age" (Campbell, 30).

Wesley's celebrated secondary source on Patristic thought was William Law who mentored John and Charles in the mystical path of total devotion to God. Wesley later rejected Law's theosophic mysticism and publicly challenged him. He also dismissed as "foxes" some of the Roman Catholic mystics he read. However, in many homilies Wesley assimilated Eastern soteriology with its *therapeutic concern* for healing the sin-sick soul and its synergistic, *responsible grace*.[7] Wesley's primary sourcebook for Patristic spirituality was William Cave's *Primitive Christianity*-a copy of which he took to Georgia. R. Flew notes the particular influence of the Christian Platonists (including Clement, Origen, Evagrius, and Nyssa) on Wesley (*The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology*). It was probably in Cave's anthologies that Wesley also discovered

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[6] Wesley became convinced of the necessity for ancient liturgical integrity (wine mixed with water, prayer for the decent of the Holy Spirit on the elements, exorcisms, abstaining from blood and things strangled [meat], prayers for the dead, stations of the cross, Saturday evening nightwatch services, turning East in reciting the Creed, full immersion and triple dipping at baptisms!) as well as for moral purity (through spiritual discipline) as taught by the ancient pastoral theologians in the *Apostolic Constitutions and Canons*.

[7] Randy Maddox makes the case that "Wesley is best read as a theologian who was fundamentally committed to the therapeutic view of Christian life, (and) who struggled to express this (Eastern) view in terms of the dominant stream of his Western Christian setting..." (Maddox, "Reading Wesley as a Theologian," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (Spring, 1995).

some of the ascetic writings of Syrian Christianity-particularly "Macarius the Egyptian" and "Ephraem Syrus."

After returning to England following his troubled mission in Georgia, Wesley was weary of trying to climb the ladder of perfection by spiritual discipline alone. Spiritually bankrupt, without peace and joy or the assurance of salvation, he embraced the Moravian approach to "faith alone" and "full salvation." Aldersgate became his benchmark for interpreting the biblical promise of perfection in light of the best insights of the early Fathers combined with his heart-felt Reformation faith of salvation by grace through faith.[8] "Thus it was," according to Outler, "that the ancient and Eastern tradition of holiness as *disciplined* love became fused in Wesley's mind with his own Anglican tradition of holiness as *aspiring* love, and thereafter was developed in what he regarded to the end as his own most distinctive doctrinal contribution" (Outler, *John Wesley*, 10). Although Wesley later rejected the ascetic emphasis on solitude, dark night of the soul, and spiritual mortification, he nonetheless remained in dialogue with these early mentors, edited and "corrected" them, and recommended them throughout his life.

In considering Wesley's use of Patristic sources for his doctrine of sanctification, I offer four sections of historical-theological background and analysis, and then a conclusion.

I. Theosis in the Alexandrian Tradition

Behind John Wesley's Anglican piety and Moravian *sola fide* were Patristic sources, principally the insights of Clement and Origen and their vision of theosis.

A. Clement the "Christian Gnostic." Wesley learned from Clement that there are three kinds of persons: the unconverted, the converted but immature, and the mature or perfect Christian. Each required spiritual instruction appropriate to their state. Clement's three principal works (*Protreptikos, Paidagogos,* and *Stromateis*) addressed these three classes of persons.[9] In *Stromateis*, which Wesley cites and adapts, Clement repeats a

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[8] See Wesley's sermon "The Almost Christian" as well as Campbell's interpretation of Wesley's personal assessment of his new experience (pp. 37ff).

[9] 1. *Protreptikos* (Exhortation to the Greeks)—addresses the unconverted and unenlightened pagan; 2. *Paidagogos* (Instructor)—addresses catechumens and simple-minded believers in need of recovery, moral instruction, and the milk of Christ; and 3. *Stromateis* (Miscellanies) addresses the true gnostic in need of the meat of esoteric initiation into the Christian mysteries and ancient (possibly Hermetic) wisdom.

Hermetic[10] (Clement would say gnostic) vision of theosis in which the soul ascends to God by means of contemplative knowledge and wisdom.[11]

In John and Charles Wesley's *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), a remarkable poem is included entitled "On Clemens Alexandrinus's Description of a Perfect Christian." It describes the vision of holiness as seen from a distance, and how the "mystic powers of love" can perfect the soul's intent to cross over into the "simple life Divine" (*The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, 35). Likewise, in response to queries about the meaning of the term "Methodist," Wesley in 1742 published a tract entitled "On the Character of a Methodist" based on Clement's description of the "true gnostic" in Book Seven of his *Stromateis*. Wesley's "entirely sanctified Methodist" and Clement's "perfect Christian gnostic" share common elements, according to Campbell: "Both stress prayer without ceasing, love of neighbor, obedience to God's commandments, freedom from worldly desires and hope of immortality as characteristics of the ideal Christian" (42).

There also are dissimilarities. For Clement, we pass from paganism to Christianity through faith. From faith we rise to God through gnosis. From gnosis we see God face to face, and we are deified: "Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons (i.e., children or heirs); being made ... (heirs), we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal, as the Scripture says 'Ye are gods...'" (*Stromateis*, ch. 6).[12] For Wesley, we are justified and sanctified by "faith

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[10] The Hermetic tradition, originating in ancient Egypt, was part of the eclectic theological mix of Hellenistic Judaism and Paganism which in turn helped shape the Greek understanding of Christianity in the Patristic period. The Egyptian god Thoth is the Greek god Hermes, who delivered a "revelation" which many Patristic theologians (e.g., Justin) understood as prophetic and which was fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

[11] Russian Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky compares Clement's gnostic content to certain passages in *Poimandres*—the collection of hermetic texts originating in Egypt "in which contemplative knowledge is presented as a deifying formula by which one is raised to the sphere of the fixed stars" (*Corpus Hermeticum, Bude's collection*, Vol. 1, Treatise X, p. 112f). Lossky says that "Clement mentions the writings of Hermes Trismegistus (see Strom. IV, 4, p. 9, col. 253), but he never quotes them." (Lossky, p. 54)

[12] Clement's exhortation in chapter 12 of *Paidagogos* is representative of the Alexandrian vision of theosis: "But let us, O children of the good Father—nurslings of the good Instructor—fulfill the Father's will, listen to the Word, and take on the impress of the truly

saving life of the Savior; and meditating on the heavenly mode of life according to which we have been *deified*, let us anoint ourselves with the perennial immortal bloom of gladness...."

filled with the energy of love" (not by works nor by gnosis). We enjoy *communion* with God as creatures, but not *union* with God as equals. We may become *like* God, Wesley hopes and prays, but we do not become divine! Such esoteric ideas for Wesley are "too mystical." Those who interpret the Scriptures in this way:

> find hidden meanings in every thing, which God never taught, nor the ancient children of God ever knew. They seek mysteries in the plainest truths, and make them such by their explications. Whereas the Christian Religion, according to the Scriptural account, is the plainest, clearest thing in the world: nothing stranger, or harder to be understood than this, "We love him, because he first loved us" (*Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles, A Christian Library,* Vol. I, vii-viii).

Thus, when Wesley appropriates Clement's gnostic vision, he "corrects" the assertion of *gnosis* as the means to perfection.[13] As Outler concludes: "It is almost as if Wesley had read 'agape' in the place of the Clementine 'gnosis'..." (Outler, *John Wesley*, 31).

B. Origen the "Christian Platonist." What Origen taught, and which eventually got him branded as heretical, was his doctrine of pre-existent souls on a cosmic transmigration from sin to perfection in successive lives and ages. His complex doctrine of theosis, found primarily in *On First Principles*, may be outlined as follows: God creates, without reference to time, rational beings/souls (*nouses*), which are incorporeal, equal and eternal. The Logos, the firstborn of all creation, is the exact image of God, and by God all things were made. Rational beings are reflections of the Image. As such, they participate in the divine nature through the Logos, as sparks of a greater Fire. The Father of Lights is the archetype of the Logos, who in turn is the archetype of rational beings. All souls, except the soul of Jesus, turned their attention away from God and suffered a cosmic fall. Redemption is made possible through the

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[13] In interpreting Wesley's appropriation of Clement, Basset admits that Clement "does speak of man's becoming God...in the language of the mystery of the Incarnation, of God having become man, not in the philosophical or everyday languages of metaphysics, logic, or sense-experience." But Bassett seems unwilling to call Clement a gnostic or to say that Wesley either misunderstood

Clement's intended meaning or simply corrected his source on the doctrine of theosis (Bassett, p. 57).

Incarnation of the Logos, which restores the image of God and awakens souls to joyfully participate in the divine nature, and ascend to their native land of Divinity. The universe, Origen imagines, is moving toward a restored and perfected state of integration and completion. After the final age, at the end of time, all souls (in human beings, angels, animals, stars and planets) are finally saved, sanctified, glorified, and unified in God.

Transcending Hellenistic cosmology, Wesley heard in Origen a compelling Christian message of the promise and possibility of perfection: "I beseech you, therefore, be transformed. Resolve to know that in you there is a capacity to be transformed."[14] The goal of the Christian life, according to Origen, is to see God face to face, and in so doing, to be deified. The means to deification is by *participation* in divinity: that is, by contemplation of God in the mirror of the soul which increasingly appropriates divine being. Thus "...nourished by God the Word, who was in the beginning with God (cf. Jn. 1:1), we may be made divine" (Origen, *Treatise on Prayer*, xxvii.13).

Human deification is possible, according to Origen, because of God's humanization in Christ. In the descent of divinity into the body of humanity, an historic mutation occurred - "human and divine began to be woven together, so that by prolonged fellowship with divinity, human nature might become divine" (Origen, *Contra Celsum,* 3.28). As the human soul partakes of divinity, the soul ascends to God in stages, purified in wisdom and perfected in love. Eventually the soul passes through the "flaming sword" of the cherubim guarding access to the Tree of Life, and returns to the Paradise of God.[15] Origen's platonic vision is one of gradual unification with God—- the soul possessed and progressively per-

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[14] Origen, *Dialogue with Heraclides*, 150 (in Chadwick's translation, *Alexandrian Christianity*, 446).

[15] Origen imagines the soul returning to God on eagle's wings. In its flight, the purified soul is allowed to pass the flaming swords of the cherubim guarding access to the tree of life: "And He (Christ) is with you to show you the way to paradise of God and how you may pass through the cherubim and the flaming sword that turns every way and guards the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24) ...But the cherubim will receive [only] those who by nature cannot be held by the flaming sword, because they have built with nothing that can catch fire; and they [cherubim] will escort them [deified souls] to the tree of life and to all the trees God planted in the east and made to grow out of the ground (Gen. 2:8-9) ("An Exhortation to Martyrdom," XVI, 52, XXXVI, 67-68).

fected in time until all is reconciled, time is no more, and "God is all in all" (*On First Principles*, XXXVI).

Wesley is selective in his approval of Origen.[16] As with Clement's, Origen's gnosticism is easily dismissed, his vision of theosis easily "corrected." For Wesley, the sanctified believer does not become *divine* in nature, but rather *perfected* in love and goodwill. Theosis in Wesley is a less esoteric experience and more practical, programmatically focused on what he deemed possible in this life. In substituting the 18th-century concept of "Christian perfection" for that of Alexandrian theosis, Wesley reconstructed his ancient sources.

II. The Syrian Ascetic Vision

According to Ted Campbell, Wesley "understood true Christianity after the age of Constantine to lie principally in isolated pockets of Eastern Christendom," particularly among the ascetics, of which Ephrem and Pseudo-Macarius of Syria are prime examples (Campbell, 50). Syrian spirituality emerged with strong biblical grounding, Hebraic connections, and poetic imagery. This illumination-driven and Holy Spirit-centered tradition represents a radical form of ancient Christianity with many interesting features, including: perpetual virgins (women and men) living together in Christian households; hermits perched high on meditation columns, transcending normal human life and spiritual boundaries; holy fools and vagabonds roaming the earth, begging for food, challenging social structures; and a diverse company of charismatic characters with supernatural charm and power, all informed by the *wild card of Platonism* or what Peter Brown calls "angelic freedom"—a capacity for transformation and readiness "to step out of the category of the human by making visible, among one's fellow-humans, the awesome freedom of angels" (Brown, p. 331). In this theological context, we meet Ephrem and Macarius.

A. Ephrem and the Luminous Eye. Ephrem, a fourth-century Syrian hermit, biblical exegete, and spiritual poet, consistently made Wesley's essential reading list. According to Outler, Wesley regarded Ephrem as "the most awakened writer, I think, of all the ancients" (Outler, *John Wesley*, *Journal*, October 12, 1736). Peter Brown cites approvingly a commendation of Ephrem as "the greatest poet of the patristic age, and, perhaps, the only *theologian-poet* to rank beside Dante," whose extra-

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[16] See Campbell (132) for Wesley's specific references to Origen.

ordinary poetic power is preserved in Armenian hymns (Brown, 329). Behind the legends, not much is known about the life of Ephrem. He lived in Nisibis, near the border of southeast Turkey and Syria, and served as a deacon and catechetical teacher in a local church under four bishops. During a famine he organized relief for the poor. He spent considerable time in the desert, believing that mystical union with God through practicing asceticism brought divine perspective on suffering and other temporal realities. Granted a relatively long life, Ephrem died in 373 at about the age of 70.

During their Oxford days and beyond, Charles and John Wesley were inspired by Ephrem's teachings on the purgative value of suffering, the original nature of humanity as a perfect being clothed in a "garment of light," spiritual illumination as a faculty for knowing, union with God as the fruit of contemplation, and how past and future realities are simultaneously and eternally present in God. Wesley called Ephrem "the man with a broken heart" and considered him an inspired teacher. Ephrem's model of theosis, according to Sebastian Brock (on whom I rely for this section), is one of eschatological return to Paradise where humanity's original, angelic nature is restored and perfected (Brock, 1992). Theosis in Ephrem is suggested poetically in successive images:

1. **The Chasm or Great Divide**: Aware of the sharp distinction between the uncreated One and the created many, Ephrem refers to this ontological gap as a great "chasm" or "divide." Citing Jesus parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, he says it is impossible for humanity to cross over the divide and access pure divine being without divinity first crossing over into the mortal sphere, putting on human nature, and showing us the way to Paradise.

2. **The Ladder of Divine Descent (*kenosis*).** How can God restore humanity to Paradise-the state of perfection? "God wearies himself by every means so as to gain us" (Faith 31:4). The whole aim of the divine descent is to draw humanity up into God. According to Brock, the concept of divine condescension and descent is basic to Ephrem's theology, and essential for understanding his concept of theosis (Brock, 62-66).

3. **The Ladder of Human Ascent (*theosis*)**. By what means can humanity be drawn up the ladder to God? How is progress made? Ephrem likens the divine ascent to that of a baby bird hatching from the egg, learning to sing, and then to fly:

A bird grows up in three stages,
from womb to egg,
then to the nest where it sings;
and once it is fully grown it flies in the air,
opening its wings in the symbol of the Cross. (*Faith* 18:2)

Similarly, the soul grows in stages into divinity: from human birth to spiritual birth (baptism); from milk at mother's breast to the meat of the gospel. The maturing child of God learns to sing (praise) and to feed on divinity (Eucharist); finally it soars in the air, opens its wings and flies to God-becoming in the process a Christ-figure in the form of the Cross.

4. **Garments of Light**. Adam and Eve (humanity) were created in an intermediary blessed state-neither mortal nor immortal, but with the potential of becoming divine. Had they obeyed the divine instruction, God would have rewarded them not only with the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, but also with the fruit of the Tree of Life. They would have grown up to be immortal. "Ye shall be gods" would have been a promise realized. As it happened, they disobeyed, shed their "garments of light, and were prevented from eating of the Tree of Life. Naked and ashamed, they found fig leaves to cover up their nakedness, their loss of light" (Gen. 3:7).[17]

5. **The Flaming Sword.** Once banned from the Garden, a Cherub with a sacred sword was assigned to guard the gate to the Tree of Paradise. Christ has now overcome the sword with the lance at his cross. By passing through the flaming sword with Christ and his lance, humanity can return to Paradise. Baptism anticipates this re-entry into eschatological Paradise-a state which is more glorious than the primordial one. Ephrem's poems are preserved as Armenian hymns, many of which are cited and translated by Brock as illustrative of Ephrem's eschatological vision of theosis. For example:

With the blade of the sword of the cherub
was the path to the Tree of Life shut off,

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[17] The image of the "robe of glory," also called "garment of light" in Rabbinic Judaism and semitic Christianity, is based on interpretations of Genesis 3:21 made near the beginning of the Christian era. There is only a single letter's difference in Hebrew between "garments of skin" and "garments of light." The Syrian tradition by Ephrem's time had identified the "wedding garment" of Matthew 22:1-14 as the "robe of glory" and connected it to the original "garment of light" of Genesis (Brock, 86-88).

but to the Peoples of the Lord of that Tree
has given Himself as food...
Whereas we had left that Garden
along with Adam when he left it behind,
now that the sword has been removed by the lance
we may return there. (49:9-11, Brock, 100)

6. **The Robe of Glory.** The purpose of the Incarnation is to reclothe Adam (humanity) in primordial clothing lost in the fall:

Christ came to find Adam who had gone astray,
He came to return him to Eden in the garment of light.

(*Virginity* 16:9, Brock, 87)

By "putting on humanity" in the Incarnation, God not only restores persons in "garments of light" but transforms them into perfect beings adorned in "robes of glory." This state of primordial and eschatological Paradise belongs to sacred time and space, ever present through faith and connected to the pattern of salvation (Brock, 32ff).

Blessed be He who had pity on Adam's leaves
and sent a robe of glory to cover his naked state. (*Fast* 3:2)

7. **The Medicine of Life.** Full salvation, as Ephrem envisions God's gift to fallen humanity, is spiritual restoration to the primordial state requiring radical healing by Christ-"the Medicine of Life." Christ in the Eucharist is the elixir of life eternal-the immortal drink of Fire and Spirit! In his compassionate descent, the whole of Him has been co-mingled with the whole of us, resulting in a new creation:

When the Lord came down to earth to mortal beings
He created them again, a new creation, like the angels,
mingling within them Fire and Spirit,
so that in a hidden manner they too might be of
Fire and Spirit. (*Faith* 10:9)

Divinity descends to humanity in the image of Fire (the Holy Spirit). Perfection is putting on the "garments of light." Theosis, for Ephrem, is crossing over the chasm that divides the Creator from the creation by means of "inter-penetration"—the mixing of fire and water and the human participation in the life divine.

The Divine Liturgy (Communion) for Ephrem is a deifying sacrament. Partaking daily is a key to the achievement of theosis. This conviction parallels Wesley's "Duty of Constant Communion." One receives the life of Christ in the Eucharist, according to Ephrem:

> Christ's Body has newly been mingled with our bodies,
> His blood too has been poured out into our veins,
> His voice is in our ears,
> His brightness in our eyes.
> In His compassion the whole of Him has been mingled
> in with the whole of us. (*Virginity* 37:2)

Literally, physically, spiritually, mystically-Christ is being formed in us. In partaking of the Sacrament, one should realize:

> We hold God in our hands...
> Once He has entered,
> He takes up residence with us...."
> (Armenian Eucharistic Hymn 47)[18]

8. **The Luminous Eye.** The prerequisite for theological inquiry, according to Ephrem, is divine illumination. Although universal revelation is available to all, the human cultivation of spiritual senses is required to access knowledge of divine things. Similar to the doctrine of *gnosis* in Clement and Origen, the inner "luminous eye" of Ephrem is a spiritual capacity to "see all things, even the hidden things of God," as his poetry on faith makes clear:

> Whenever I have meditated upon You
> I have acquired a veritable treasure from You;
> Whatever aspect of You I have contemplated,
> a stream has flowed from You.
> There is no way I can contain it:
>
> Your fountain [of truth], Lord, is hidden
> from the person who does not thirst for You. (*Faith* 32:2-3)

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[18] Brock, p. 113. A fruitful study could be made of the relationship between Ephrem's Eucharistic poetry and John and Charles Wesley's *Hymns for the Lord's Super* and *Hymns for Advent* (1745).

Ephrem's "luminous eye" is similar to if not the source of Wesley's doctrine of "spiritual senses."[19] In reading Ephrem's theological poetry, it is easy to see why Wesley was so attracted to "the man with a broken heart," and why he shared Ephrem's poetry with Sophy in Georgia.

B. Pseudo-Macarius and the Holy Spirit. Macarius of Egypt (301-391)-who Wesley assumed (incorrectly) he was reading in the *Spiritual Homilies*—-is one of the most revered of the desert fathers in Eastern Orthodoxy. Pseudo-Macarius, according to some scholars, was a Messalian monk (part of a sect condemned as heretical by a synod in 383).[20] Outler advanced Jaeger's notion that the author of the *Fifty Spiritual Homilies* was a fifth-century Syrian monk "whose conception of Christian spirituality was derived almost exclusively from Gregory [of Nyssa]."[21] If this be the case, says Outler, it means that Wesley was actually in touch with "the greatest of all the Eastern Christian teachers of the quest for perfection. Thus, in his early days, he drank deep of this Byzantine tradition of spirituality at its source and assimilated its conceptions of devotion...."[22] On board the *Simmonds*, Wesley read Macarius and learned about the stages of divine ascent, holiness of heart, progressive perfection, and the affective manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Orthodox writer David Ford critically compares Macarius' vision of theosis with Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection and finds that in

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[19] Wesley's epistemological assumptions, according to Randy Maddox, were based on the Patristic notion "spiritual senses" (Ephrem's "luminous eye") as a faculty of inward knowing. These awakened senses could provide "immediate perceptual *access* to such spiritual realities as the existence of our soul, angels, and the afterlife." Wesley also extended this sense of universal revelation to include assurance of salvation and perfection (Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 28-30). The person of mature faith, Wesley believed, sees with the eyes of the heart and knows in the soul the truth of God.

[20] See Peter Brown on the Messalian "heresy," *The Body and Society*, p. 333.

[21] See W. Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature.*

[22] Outler, *John Wesley*, footnote # 25, p. 9. After testing this hypothesis of his mentor, Ted Campbell found that "Wesley was attracted to the doctrine of sanctification expressed in the *Spiritual Homilies* attributed to Macarius," but that "Wesley consistently omitted references to ascetic life and to the notion of theosis" in his publication of twenty-two of the *Homilies* in *A Christian Library* (Campbell, x).

significant areas "Wesley departed from the spirit and the specific teachings of Makarios." Ford identifies six instances in which Wesley departs from an accurate interpretation of Macarius: (1) Wesley's tendency to regard both justification and sanctification as specific, identifiable experiences or works of grace to be sought for and definitely attained; (2) his emphasis on the "instantaneous" impartation of the state of entire sanctification/perfection/holiness; (3) his emphasis on one's own role of faith in gaining the experience; (4) his stress on the inward "witness of the Spirit" as assurance of salvation and perfection; (5) his encouragement of followers to testify of their own perfection to others; and (6) his conception of entire sanctification and its attainment as the highest goal of the Christian life, "rather than simply the seeking of God himself, and of participation in his life, which cannot be categorized."[23]

Concludes Ford, perfection according to Macarian is not a specific, identifiable experience, but rather a yearning after God and progressive participation in the divine nature which in the end presents itself as deification. The purpose of the Lord's coming, according to Macarius, was

> to alter and create our souls anew, and make them, as it is written, "partakers of the divine nature," and to give into our soul a heavenly soul, that is the Spirit of the Godhead leading us to all virtue, that we might be enabled to live eternal life. (*Homily* 44.9)

Macarius' reference to the gift of a "heavenly soul" or the "Spirit of Godhead," according to Ford, is an affirmation of Ireneaus' concept of the Holy Spirit as originally a constitutive part of Adam's nature which was lost in the Fall.[24] Before *original sin* there was *original blessing*. Since God became human in Christ, says Macarius, our original human nature can be restored and surpassed, our potential divine nature realized, in the dynamic process of theosis in which

> ….sin is rooted out and one recovers the original configuration of pure Adam. Humankind, however, thanks to the Spirit's power and to spiritual regeneration, not only measures

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[23] David C. Ford, "Saint Makarios of Egypt and John Wesley: Variations on the Theme of Sanctification," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 1988, pp. 288-89).

[24] Ford, footnote #84, p. 309. Cf. Ephrem's vision of humanity's original "garment of light."

up to the first Adam, but is made greater than he. *Man is deified*." (*Homily* XXVI)

For Wesley, perfection is not the return to the original angelic nature of Adam in the garden (as in Ephrem). It is the removal of the *power* of sin and the perfection of the *will* to love God and others, not in any absolute sense, but in perfect love, *without blame*. For Macarius, perfection is nothing less than the surpassing of human nature and becoming in some sense divine (the creature perfectly reflecting the Creator). For Wesley, a distinct work of grace is required for the attainment of entire sanctification. For Macarius, water baptism, regular Eucharist, and on-going in-fillings of the Holy Spirit are the means to, but never the end of, perfection.

Wesley urged his followers to testify to having received the gift of "full salvation" - the experience and assurance of love made perfect in the soul. According to Ford, Macarius did not urge Christians to seek or claim a specific state or experience, but to seek simply God. He did not teach any doctrine of "assurance" nor identify any single moment of perfection, but "warned repeatedly against ever making such a claim."[25] Wesley himself apparently followed Macarius' wisdom and humility in never claiming to have actually attained perfection or entire sanctification in his lifetime (Preface to "A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day of the Week" (1735), *Works*, 14, p. 72).

Despite these differences, Wesley commended Macarius as an excellent model of Christian perfection and stated in his preface to the *Homilies*: "Whatever he insists upon is essential, is durable, is necessary" (*A Christian Library*). Yet, according to Campbell, Wesley edited Macarius and "omitted references to ascetic life and to the notion of theosis-'divinization' or 'deification'-perhaps the most distinctively Eastern note in the Macarian literature" (Campbell, p. x).

III. Reformulation of Theosis: John and Charles Wesley

By whose authority, and by what criterion, did Wesley amend his sources, correct previous visions, and reformulate Patristic conceptions of theosis? It is clear that he both learned from his sources and altered his

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[25] Ford, p. 311-312. "I have not yet seen any perfect Christian or one perfectly free... (Pseudo-Macarius, 83). Cf. Basset's alternate interpretation: "So, entire sanctification is, for Macarius, a distinct work of grace, necessarily subsequent to conversion, but it is also totally dependent on it" (75).

sources on points he believed did not conform to the teachings of Scripture and the revealed order of salvation as he understood them. Wesley, in appropriating the idea of theosis and constructing his doctrine of Christian perfection, found that the Church Fathers required editing. Even ecumenical councils merited selective approval. The Tradition, for Wesley, was open to improvement and required amendment according to the tests of scripture, reason, and experience.[26]

As Outler suggests, the effect of Wesley's reconstruction of theosis was the turning of the Patristic ladder of divine ascent on its side to make perfection "into a genetic scale of development within historical existence" (Outler, *John Wesley*, 31). By dismissing the Platonic notion of "becoming gods according to grace" in favor of the less ambitious notion of becoming *like* God, by grace through faith, "Christian perfection" suddenly emerged as an attainable goal. As a volitional state, Wesleyan perfection is difficult enough to attain. Even so, compared to the high and lofty Greek and Syrian visions of theosis, Wesleyan sanctification appears almost a domesticated (or democratized) version of the more ancient doctrine.

Did Charles share brother John Wesley's vision of perfection, or did he retain the older Eastern view of theosis? According to A. M. Allchin's insightful study, Charles Wesley was committed to an earlier model of Patristic theosis. As a poet-theologian in the tradition of St. Ephrem, Charles expressed in hymns what is difficult to state in doctrine:

> He deigns in flesh to appear,
> Widest extremes to join,
> To bring our vileness near,
> *And make us all divine*;
> And we the life of God shall know,
> For God is manifest below.
> Made perfect first in love,
> And sanctified by grace,
> We shall from earth remove,

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[26] However justified this view may be theologically, from a historical viewpoint, Campbell concludes, "Wesley's notions of early Christianity were frequently incorrect both in detail...and in general..." and his programmatic use of his sources required selective adaptation of the early texts (Campbell, 4). For specific examples of how Wesley altered the Church Fathers, see Campbell, 39-40, 64.

And see his glorious face;
His love shall then be fully showed,
And man shall all be lost in God.

(Hymn #5, *Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord* [1745])

In the Advent hymn above, the truth embodied in the doctrines of incarnation, sanctification, glorification, and deification are all brought together in one cosmic vision which must be sung to be appreciated. Admittedly, such language may be read as virtually pantheistic, involving the objectionable notion of ontological absorption of humanity into God. However, says Allchin, Charles Wesley's intention "is to simply point in song to what cannot be categorized in discursive doctrine" (Allchin, 25). Charles is a mystic speaking "ec-statically" (in the original meaning of "standing outside oneself"). Caught up in the rapture of cosmic vision and praise, the poet seeks only to use language worthy of the experience. Charles' poetic vision is of a mystical union in which the soul of the Christian becomes divinized and "lost in God." At journey's end, Charles wrote in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), the sanctified soul will be

Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,
And lost in thine immensity!

The finest hymn by Charles Wesley hymn which points to the mystery of theosis, according to Allchin,Êis found in the 1750 *Hymn Book* under the section "Seeking for Full Redemption" (Hymn #379, Vol. 7, W. *Works, Bicentennial Edition*, 552):

Heavenly Adam, life divine,
Change my nature into Thine;
Move and spread throughout my soul,
Actuate and fill the whole;
Be it I no longer now
Living in the flesh, but Thou.

Holy Ghost, no more delay;
Come, and in thy temple stay;
Now thine inward witness bear,
Strong, and permanent and clear;
Spring of life, thyself impart,
Rise eternal in my heart.

Not all of Charles' theosis hymns, expressing his yearning for full redemption made it into John's published collections. Characteristically, John edited, revised or deleted Charles' hymns according to his own standards and sensibilities for Methodist audiences. This reflects, among other differences between the two brothers, the possibility of John and Charles at variance on the nature and extent of perfection in this life. According to John Tyson's study, *Charles Wesley: A Reader*, John expected to go on to perfection in this life, Charles at the threshold of death or in the next life. John affirmed a perfection of the will, a cleansing of the heart, and a divine possession of the soul in this life. Charles would settle for nothing less than sinless perfection, the full recovery of the *imago dei*, the achievement of divine *likeness*, and humanity's restoration to the angelic nature and beyond-the same vision of perfection John and Charles *both* shared during their Oxford years.[27]

This same theological tension is evident in the letters of John Wesley to his brother Charles as represented in Tyson's study. For example:

> *June 27, 1766*. Concerning setting perfection too high. That perfection which I believe, I can boldly preach; because I think I see five hundred witnesses of it. Of that perfection which you preach, you think you do not see any witnesses at all.... I verily believe there are none upon the earth; none dwelling in the body.... Therefore I still think, to set perfection so high is effectively to renounce it. (131)
>
> *February 12, 1767*. The whole comes to one point: Is there, or is there not, any instantaneous sanctification between justification and death? I say, Yes. You (often seem to) say, No. What arguments brought you to think so? Perhaps they may convince me too. (132)
>
> *June 14, 1768.* I think it is high time that you and I, at least, should come to a point. Shall we go on asserting perfection against all the world? Or shall we quietly let it drop? We really must do one or the other.... What shall we jointly and explicitly maintain, (and recommend to all our Preachers) concerning the nature, the time, (now or by and by?), and the manner

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[27] Tyson, p. 360. See also Wesley's sermon "The One Thing Needful" (1734) which he never published, perhaps because it did not reflect his mature views on the subject, but which was preserved by Charles (who retained this earlier view of perfection).

of it? instantaneous, or not? I am weary of intestine war; of Preachers quoting one of us against the other. At length, let us fix something for good and all.... (136)

IV. Conclusion: Back To Charles and Beyond John

In this study, we have examined the Eastern doctrine of theosis in the primary Patristic sources Wesley relied on for his own doctrinal construction of "entire sanctification." Building on the insights of Outler and Maddox, and attempting to apply Campbell's thesis, my own evaluation supports the notion that *what Wesley envisioned as Christian perfection, holiness, or entire sanctification is based in part on his personal vision of what his sources taught about theosis*. We have examined how Wesley selectively accessed the Patristic tradition (principally in the writings of Clement, Origen, Ephrem, and Macarius), and how he reformulated the doctrine of theosis "programmatically" according to his own vision of antiquity and contemporary concerns of what was practical and attainable by grace through faith *in this life*. We have also considered how Charles Wesley held more tenaciously to the native strand of theosis within the Anglican tradition.

Since the time of the Wesleys, a distinctively Wesleyan-Holiness pietism and theology (with both positive and negative psychological consequences) has emerged in the Western Christian tradition. It now may be in need of refinement or reformulation. Reclaiming a Wesleyan heritage today requires not only understanding Wesley's developed doctrine of Christian perfection, but knowing and appreciating his acknowledged theological sources. As Outler suggested, "Wesley must be read in light of his sources - and therefore within the larger ecumenical perspectives of historic Christianity."[28] Applying this method, I find him in continuity with the Patristic tradition, yet distinctive and limited in his willingness to appropriate fully either the promise or the process of what the Patristic writers meant by becoming "partakers of the divine nature."

Therefore, I find it fruitful to go behind and beyond John Wesley, affirming his ancient sources *and* appreciating his positive contributions to the tradition, invoking the early Wesley (as well as his steadfast brother Charles) to correct the middle Wesley, and then standing with the mature Wesley in his openness to new light of revelation. When John Wesley is

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[28] Outler, "A New Future for Wesley Studies: An Agenda for 'Phase III'" in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage*, p. 138.

read in tandem with Charles, and both brothers in conjunction with their sources, Charles' poetic vision of perfection can be reconsidered and re-incorporated into the tradition. Wesleyans can then go back to Charles and beyond John (and back to the Scriptures to exegete anew the theosis passages[29]) in order to construct a more biblical, global, Wesleyan spirituality for the Third Millennium. Such a re-formulation would incorporate the best of John Wesley's theological refinements of the ancient doctrine of theosis (i.e., appropriation by faith not by works, inward assurance over perpetual seeking, accessibility in this earthly life), while fully appreciating the Eastern emphasis on therapeutic soteriology with its biblical affirmation of original humanity and original blessing. In so doing, we may arrive at a progressive Wesleyan-Orthodox vision of theosis as part of the essential quest for human wholeness.

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[29] See Psalm 82:6, John 10:34-35, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Peter 1:4, and 1 John 3:1-2.

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REIFICATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION IN THE AMERICAN HOLINESS MOVEMENT

by
Al Truesdale

The most distinguishing characteristic of the nineteenth century American holiness movement, and the denominations born out of the holiness revival, was and continues to be the teaching that entire sanctification ("the second blessing") can be obtained by grace through faith as a distinct second work of grace. The doctrine and experience of entire sanctification, its proponents believe, is as normative for Christian faith as regeneration.

Because holiness-movement proponents of entire sanctification typically have taught that it occurs instantaneously, and that the Holy Spirit witnesses to the event in the consciousness of the entirely sanctified person (if not immediately, then eventually),[1] religious experience has played a pivotal role in the doctrine's formation and propagation. Indeed, experience has been at the center of the movement's exegesis, apologetic, and witness.

In light of the importance of experience in the holiness movement, one might expect that the existential diversity of human and religious life - the real and complex contexts of experience - would have received careful and sustained attention. One would think that proclamation of entire sanctification would be accompanied by sustained sensitivity to the

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1. As we shall see, for Phoebe Palmer the internal witness of the Holy Spirit was not a component of entire sanctification.

psychical, social, religious, and domestic histories of those to whom the promise was addressed. The religious substance of the grace of entire sanctification, not the accidental existential forms of experience, should have provided the movement's determinative center.

To be existentially faithful, as it would have to be in order to authenticate and replicate itself, the idea of entire sanctification would have had to safeguard the doctrine's salvific intent, its *decisiveness* with regard to experience the existential realities of the persons to whom the promise of perfect love was addressed.

Reification as a Fallacy in the Holiness Movement

While in notable instances holiness proponents attempted to ground experience existentially, their efforts did not characterize the movement. Predominantly, the leaders of the holiness revival produced what Melvin Dieter describes as a new blend of "the American mind, prevailing revivalism, and Wesleyan perfectionism" (Dieter 3). They characteristically stated the doctrine of entire sanctification in forms that fostered a *reification* of experience, rather than an existential fidelity to it.

I am using the term "reification" in the same way that Alfred North Whitehead used "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" in *Process and Reality* (1978, 18) and *Science and the Modern World* (1927, 64, 70).[2] The fallacy of reification and the fallacy of misplaced concreteness are the same. The fallacy consists of treating an abstraction as a substantive. Whitehead resisted the reification of scientific and philosophical categories.

Characteristically, the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification as it has been presented by the American holiness movement constitutes a reification in the formal sense. Popularly and predominantly, a particular form for experiencing entire sanctification has been made synonymous with the doctrine itself. Experience as reified, not experience as existentially faithful and diverse, became the norm by which the

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2. Whitehead said that the fallacy represents a failure by philosophy (or theology) "to base...thought upon the most concrete elements of our experience." A reification, he notes, is devoid of subjective immediacy. It exhibits "the accidental error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete" (*Science and the Modern World*, 64, 70). When practiced, the fallacy attributes objective substantiality to an idea or abstraction. It is the practical equivalent of "hypostatize."

promise of entire sanctification was offered, and by which one's personal appropriation of the promise was judged.[3]

No doubt many persons who sought entire sanctification under the influence of the holiness movement approximated the reification in their own experience without encountering existential dissonance. But this was not the case at all for many others; not only did the reification fall far short of existence, its imposition on existence was religiously harmful.

Whitehead's observation regarding the avoidability of reification in philosophy is equally true of theology: "It is not necessary for the intellect to fall into the trap [of reification], though...there has been a very general tendency to do so" (1927, 64). Predominantly, as can be amply demonstrated, the holiness movement did fall into this trap. In fact, Phoebe Palmer's paradigm for obtaining entire sanctification is best understood as an effort to *overcome* the discrepancy she experienced between the reification of sanctification to which she had been introduced and her own repeated failures to replicate the reification in her own religious experience (see Phoebe Palmer below).[4]

When describing the reification that occurred in the scientific scheme of the seventeenth century, and the "confusion" it fostered, Whitehead said that the error was "unintended." The same must be said of those who led the nineteenth century holiness revival and contributed to the reification it fostered. While I do not know precisely *why* the reification occurred, I think it is partly attributable to the polemical situation which either characterized the ecclesiastical context in which the holiness revival occurred or which its leaders believed characterized the context. The reification of experience is also attributable to the desire in the movement to safeguard "definiteness," to its commitment to unsophisticated biblical exegesis, and to its inadequate understanding of human psychology.[5]

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3. Although the reification of experience had numerous contributing elements, its center had principally to do with temporality, and secondarily with dispositional and behavioral considerations.

4. An important effort in the holiness movement to correct the fallacy of reification, and to establish existential fidelity while maintaining theological substance, was made by another woman, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop in *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Wynkoop 1972), a work praised by some, and condemned by others as an attack on the doctrine of entire sanctification.

5. An investigation into the epistemology of experience that marked the Holiness movement would also provide some answers.

Whatever the explanation(s), ironically, while the holiness movement staked its reason for being on the veracity of entire sanctification and on the doctrine's confirmation in human experience, the movement actually appealed not to experience in the concrete, but to experience as reified. Characteristically, the holiness movement was not existentially faithful.

If John Peters is correct, the holiness movement's reification of experience not only betrayed experience in many instances, but also departed significantly from what John Wesley thought regarding "experience" in the grace of "perfect love." "There is," Wesley said, "an irreconcilable variability in the operations of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men" (Wesley 298). Wesley was referring particularly to the manner of justification, but his counsel applies equally to the experience of perfect love. Although he thought there was a certain sequence associated with being made perfect in love, and that certain means were helpful, the pattern was always open to revision on the basis of experience.

Wesley insisted that "God is tied down to no rules."[6] He understood the danger of and stoutly rejected reification. As early as 1745 he advised, "Have this [perfect] love, and it is enough" (Peters 56). Peters says that,

> while Wesley was insistent on the pursuit of a definite goal - "holiness of heart and life"-he held no brief for orthodoxy of method. He found that the great majority of those claiming perfect love reported its reception as an instantaneous event. And so he preached it after that fashion. But if it could be realized in some alternative way, he had no intention of discounting it (Peters 56).

Peters concludes that for Wesley the nature and length of being made perfect in love "might well vary with the differences which are inescapable in human personality." The experience of perfect love was no "Procrustean bed into which all believers must be forced" (Peters 57).

Although the holiness movement relied in part on John Wesley, in clearly identifiable ways additional influences were expressed in this child, even though spokespersons for the holiness movement insisted that it had only one parent-John Wesley. Students of the movement now

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6. As quoted by John L. Peters (1956, 56). Peters does not cite his Wesley source. Peters' discussion of Wesley's breadth regarding experience is highly instructive (55-57).

know better. We have already noted Melvin Dieter's description of the holiness movement as a "new blend" (Dieter, 3). Relying on that phrase, William Greathouse observes that

> in being transplanted to America and growing up on American soil, the Methodist doctrine [of Christian perfection] has undergone certain modifications. Nineteenth-century revivalism sharpened the emphasis on "the second blessing" and stressed the urgency and possibility of being fully sanctified *now*. American pragmatism simplified the doctrine, stressing what "works" in Christian experience, sometimes at the expense of a more balanced scriptural presentation. Finally, theological concepts were introduced and incorporated that were not part of the original Wesleyan formulation. The resulting holiness message, while true to Wesley's teaching at most essential points, nevertheless has its own character and shape (Greathouse 292).

Americanization of the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection did not lead *necessarily* to its reification, however, as Methodist theologian Randolph Foster demonstrated.

Randolph S. Foster: A Shunned Alternative to Reification

Randolph S. Foster (1820-1903) was a staunch Methodist exponent of the doctrine of entire sanctification. Timothy L. Smith identified him as "a pronounced friend of holiness" (Smith 19). Foster served as professor of systematic theology and president at Garrett Biblical Institute, and later at Drew Theological Seminary as its second president. He was elected bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1872.

According to Harold Raser, Foster's influence on the American holiness movement was probably greater than that of Nathan Bangs. Although the influence of neither was determinative, Foster's writings fed more directly, and for a longer period of time, into the movement's formation. Raser describes the influence of Bangs and Foster as a "shadow presence" at best (Raser, 1995).

Foster's most complete statement regarding entire sanctification is *The Nature and Blessedness of Christian Purity*. After becoming a bishop, he also treated the subject rather extensively in *Philosophy of Christian Experience*, a series of eight lectures delivered at Ohio Wesleyan University. *Christian Purity* is a responsible and sustained apology

for the doctrine of entire sanctification. Foster clearly embraces the doctrine as a second definite work of God's grace. He says it is the Christian's "duty and privilege" (Foster 1891, 160). But his thought on the subject is characterized by catholicity and moderation. It is wholly lacking in polemicism and defensiveness.

According to Foster, sanctification begins in regeneration and progresses toward entire sanctification, which is "an immediate or instantaneous, and distinct work, to be attained by the agency of the Holy Spirit through faith, at any time when the requisite faith is exercised, and to be enjoyed during life" (Foster 1851, 46). The doctrine, he insisted, "must be so taught as not to reflect discredit on regeneration on the one hand, or excite fanaticism on the other" (Foster 1891, 160).

In both books, Foster passionately urges Christians to seek the grace of entire sanctification. Without naming Phoebe Palmer, he strongly opposes the "altar theology" she developed. "What a misfortune," he said "that so great, so dangerous an error" as teaching people to believe they are sanctified, and they will be sanctified, "should be taught, in connection with so important a subject!" Palmer's altar theology leads to "spurious though sincere professions" (Foster, 1851, 132-133, 207).[7] Contrary to Palmer's "altar theology," a Christian who hungers for "the perfecting of the soul in love" must not rest until the Holy Spirit witnesses that "the work is done" (Foster 1851, 132-133). "Let no one, at his peril, conclude that he has made [a] surrender [of all to God], and is consequently sanctified, without the requisite witness: he will only deceive himself, and receive no benefit" (Foster 1851, 130).

Before stating his position on entire sanctification, Foster systematically presents other Protestant understandings of sanctification. In each case he is fair and respectful, and attempts to show the continuities between his and contrasting understandings. He exhibits the disposition John Peters ascribed to John Wesley: "...that rare soul who could combine intensity of conviction with liberality of spirit" (Peters 56).

While urging Christians to enter the experience of Christian purity and not rest until the work has been done, Foster seems to avoid the fallacy of reification. In *Philosophy of Christian Experience*, regarding experience in general, he remarks that

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7. See Ivan Howard's discussion of Foster's assessment of altar theology, "Wesley Versus Phoebe Palmer: An Extended Controversy," *Wesleyan Theological Journal 6:1* (Spring 1971), 31-40.

> every experience is colored by the subject of the experience. I mean by this that precisely the same experience reports itself differently in minds of dissimilar temperaments, degrees of intelligence, antecedent habits, prejudices, preconceptions, education, and ruling ideas. This fact must be taken account of in dealing with Christian experience (Foster 1891, 17).

As if contemplating the reification of experience that occurred in the holiness movement, Foster urges:

> Let us beware that we fall not into the error of depending on forms and means. There is no doing without them, but in themselves they are nothing. They are to be received only as aids to saving, to sanctifying faith; as scaffolding about the firm wall of confiding trust. But our only help is in God, who gives efficiency to means (Foster 1891, 139).

Foster applied his rule to the experience of conviction, faith, repentance, pardon, regeneration, and entire sanctification (Foster 1891, 17). Further, even while urging Christians not to relent in their pursuit of "the higher grace," and after having given "advices" for seeking entire sanctification, Foster refuses to infringe on God's freedom to effect sanctifying grace in a manner most consonant with the seeker's dispositions. "The preceding advices," he says, "are only prescribed as means of assisting - as cooperating with the grace of God to bring the mind up to the point of faith - to prepare for this saving exercise.... With diligent application, and by Divine assistance, the work may soon be accomplished" (Foster 1851, 131).

Although the influence of a Methodist theologian such as Foster on the holiness movement should not be understated, the dominant understanding of entire sanctification advanced within the movement owed its origin much more to the holiness popularizers than to Methodism's systematic theologians. When one moves from Foster to the holiness popularizers, one notices that the existential sensitivity that marked John Wesley and Randolph Foster largely disappears. Characteristically, though not without significant exceptions, "the Procrustean bed" about which John Peters warned replaces the existential faithfulness that Wesley, Foster, and others exhibited. Instead, a constriction of experience replaces it. The word "characteristically" is an important qualifier. To indicate that reification was a monolithic phenomenon in the holiness movement would be erroneous. But reification, through the writings and preaching of many of

the movement's spokespersons, did come to dominate the popular understanding of entire sanctification.

In the interest of "instantaneousness," the dynamic qualities of human life and religious experience retreated to the margins. Harold Raser offers insight regarding some of the changes that might have allowed this fallacy to occur. He observes that, while some of the "holiness partisans" retained a strong sense of connection with Methodist theologians such as Foster, Miley, and Curtis, most did not. Those who did not became more influential in shaping the holiness movement than those who did. The "Methodist connection" was joined more to popular Methodist religious writers than to the established theologians. Predominantly, the framers of the holiness movement developed their own distinctive forms for understanding and articulating the doctrine of entire sanctification (Raser 1995).

Major Exemplars of Reification

Let us examine some of the major voices in the holiness movement who both fostered and exemplified the reification of experience in the doctrine of entire sanctification. Melvin Dieter's (1980) and Timothy Smith's (1962) surveys of the leaders of the movement identify many formative voices. At the risk of omitting one person more strategic than another, and with the advice of Stan Ingersol (archivist for the Church of the Nazarene) and Harold Raser, I have chosen five leaders who played major roles in shaping the popular understanding of entire sanctification. They are representative, not exhaustive. Their articulation of entire sanctification reveals a contrast to the way Randolph Foster framed the doctrine. The dynamic and existential fidelity Foster evidenced largely disappears and is replaced by a preoccupation with "the blessing" or "the experience."

Quite unlike Foster, in notable instances the apologetic for entire sanctification rests on a depreciation of the doctrine of regeneration. One also notices the frequent omission of the careful theological balance and catholicity that mark Foster's writings. The published sermons and other writings of our figures evidence a polemical atmosphere in which constriction and reification thrive.

1. Henry Clay Morrison (1857-1942). Henry Clay Morrison of Kentucky was among those leaders in the holiness movement who

refused to withdraw from the Methodist Church (in his case, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South) and opposed the formation of new holiness denominations. Morrison founded Asbury Theological Seminary and was twice president of Asbury College. He founded (1888) and edited the *Pentecostal Herald*. To provide identity for the holiness movement without separation from Methodism, Morrison led in establishing the Holiness Union (1904) which sought to unite the movement below the Mason-Dixon line.[8]

Morrison's *Open Letters* to the bishops, ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, voice strong opposition to what he believed to be a betrayal of Methodist doctrine by the denomination. Polemical in tone, Morrison addressed the letters to "a backsliding church" which he hoped would repent of its apostasy and return with fervor to the doctrine of entire sanctification. By failing to support the doctrine as he believed the church should, the M. E. C., South, had abandoned the "old Methodist doctrine and experience" (Morrison [no date] *Open*, 32). Without qualification, Morrison identified the doctrine of entire sanctification as taught in the holiness movement *with* what John Wesley taught regarding perfect love. It involves "entire consecration" and "a definite baptism with the Holy Spirit." It is nothing less than "the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost," salvation "from all sin." Entire sanctification is "a great heart experience of the perfect love of God," "full salvation from indwelling sin" and "the canaan experience" (Morrison *Open* 32, 45, 49, 86).

All of these themes continue in *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*. As at Pentecost, in the experience of entire sanctification the Holy Spirit "purifies believer's hearts and empowers them for service" (Morrison 1900, 4). The Spirit comes "suddenly upon...every humble, believing heart. ...tarry at the mercy seat in faithful prayer until you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (p. 18). The experience of entire sanctification comes as a "decisive, vivid, and clearly marked experience of the Spirit's enduement" (Morrison 1900, 18, 37).

In none of the Morrison material I have examined does he give attention to the impact one's psychical composition might have on how one

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8. In 1896 Morrison was briefly expelled from the Methodist Church for conducting a meeting at Dublin, Texas, in spite of protests from the presiding elder and the local pastor (Smith 1962, 42).

receives entire sanctification. His own experience seems to be the governing paradigm for all seekers: "At that instant the Holy Ghost fell upon me.... I received my pentecost" (Morrison 1903, 40-41).

Morrison thought that he had once lost the experience of entire sanctification because he had failed to testify immediately to its occurrence. So he insisted that those who receive the grace of entire sanctification testify immediately, lest they too lose "the experience of full salvation" (Morrison 1903, 44-45). Consequently, there is an absence of any appreciation for the diverse existential factors that would rightfully condition the modes in which entire sanctification might occur, or that might affect the readiness of one to testify to perfect love. If what I have read from Morrison is representative, then in him the process of reification had a strong exponent. In his writings the "experience" of entire sanctification seems to be characteristically stereotypical.

2. Beverly Carradine (1848-1919). Beverly Carradine, "a man of a singularly sweet disposition" (Harmon 416), was one of the most prominent Methodist holiness evangelists. His labors in the holiness revival ranged from coast to coast and border to border. Under his ministry, J. O. McClurkan, who figured prominently in the holiness movement in Tennessee, sought and found entire sanctification (Smith 181). Carradine, like Morrison, opposed forming new denominations out of the holiness movement: "No greater calamity could befall the holiness movement" (Carradine 1897, 20).

One of the more striking aspects of Carradine's teaching about entire sanctification is his depreciation of the doctrine of regeneration. He characteristically predicated the need for entire sanctification on what he judged to be a deficiency in justification. This is spelled out in his *The Better Way* (1896). In contrast to justification, entire sanctification is "distinct from the first, and [is] unquestionably profounder and more radical in its nature" (Carradine 1896, 3). For Carradine, entire sanctification is "a special salvation" that should be distinguished from mere salvation: "...to a great multitude, [Jesus] is a Savior, and, farther still, a special Savior to them that believe. The sanctified understand this special salvation" (1896, 11).

Carradine's understanding of entire sanctification lacks any substantial appreciation for the Wesleyan doctrine of initial sanctification, or of the organic relationship between the two so evident in Foster's *Christian*

Purity. Carradine seemed to miss completely the Protestant insistence that "justification by grace through faith alone" continues in Christian life as the sole warrant for acceptance before God. He was by no means alone among the holiness popularizers who departed from the Reformation on this score.

Carradine's depreciation of regeneration became a target of criticism in the 1896 Pickett-Smith debate that occurred in Terrell, Texas (both ministers were members of the M. E. Church, South). M. A. Smith saw Carradine's depreciation of regeneration as one good reason to question the theological foundations of entire sanctification. Smith provided withering documentation for what amounts to a charge of heresy against some of the holiness movement's advocates. He included Carradine (*The Smith-Pickett Debate*).

Also, the biblical exegesis Carradine uses to support entire sanctification often exhibited a carelessness that too often has plagued the holiness movement. For example, Carradine forces a distinction between "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1) and "the peace of God" (Rom. 4:7). The former, he said, describes justification and regeneration, while the latter describes and establishes entire sanctification (Carradine 1896, 30).

Astonishingly, Carradine associates justification with "the old covenant" and sanctification with "the new covenant" (1896, 24). Pardon can come through the writings of David, the prophets, and John the Baptist. "But a blessing called 'perfection,' a completing, perfecting work of grace in the soul, is brought to the church by the Savior." Christ brought to his people "the better covenant." Carradine even calls entire sanctification "the second covenant experience" (Carradine 1896, 17, 27). The "second covenant" experience is necessary because the old covenant could not make the worshipper perfect. "All of this is well understood by the regenerated man, who feels that, child of God as he is, yet regeneration is not the blessing of Christian perfection; that the 'old man' is not yet purged or burned out with the baptism of fire..." (Carradine 1896, 24).

In Carradine one finds reification running almost unbridled. His description of entire sanctification is largely a high and harmful abstraction from the plane of ordinary human existence. While he voices sensitivity to how "moods, affinities and impressions" affect those who are entirely sanctified, his sensitivity evaporates in the heat of zealous abstractions. As he describes it, life in "this blessed experience" (1896, 27) lacks any reference to the "wear and tear" of ordinary human life. According to him, those who are in the experience of entire sanctification

should never fret, doubt, or fear. If sanctification does anything, it "delivers us from fear" (1896, 188, 189). And when inbred sin is "burned out...we cease of course to worry" (1897, 184-199). Further, "in the better covenant of sanctification...there is a constant, conscious stream of life, strength, and health in the Spirit; a welling-up joy in the heart; freshness in the experience; hallelujahs in the soul and on the lip; and Christ and heaven everywhere." "Nothing," he says, "can disturb" the peace of one who is entirely sanctified (1896, 27-28, 30).

Though no doubt well intended, Carradine's description of the life of Christian holiness reveals a lamentable misunderstanding of both life and the grace of God. It is all too characteristic of the profiles of Christian holiness that came to dominate the holiness movement. Tragically, the misunderstanding led to widespread frustration over failure to reconcile psychological diversity and the complexities of human existence with the reification emphasis the movement generated.

3. Martin Wells Knapp (1835-1901). The name of Methodist minister Martin Wells Knapp figures prominently in the history of the holiness movement. He, along with Seth Rees, was co-founder of the Pilgrim Holiness Church. Perhaps he is best known as the founder of God's Bible School in Cincinnati. He was a strong advocate for the place of women in ministry and a principal supporter of the General Holiness League (1891). As was characteristic of most of the holiness movement, Knapp equated entire sanctification with the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Entire sanctification is the event of the "incoming and indwelling, and cleansing and filling of the Holy Ghost." The purifying fire of the Holy Ghost "eliminates all the dross of inbred sin, expels the seed of sin's disease, ejects the 'old man' of indwelling evil, and fully [and instantaneously] sanctifies the soul" (Knapp 1898, 16-17).

As was often true of holiness proponents, Knapp uncritically mixed insistence on the internal witness of the Holy Spirit as an unfailing concomitant of entire sanctification (Knapp 1898, 27)[9] with Phoebe Palmer's

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9. Knapp assured seekers that entire sanctification should not be separated from a clear and immediate witness to the purifying fire of the Holy Ghost (*Lightening Bolts*, 16-17). Ivan Howard makes note of the uncritical mixture of Wesley and Palmer in the holiness movement: "Wesley's and Mrs. Palmer's views are combined at times in preaching in such a way that the seeker is assured of the immediate witness of the Spirit if he comes and seeks, and after a rather brief season of seeking is told to take it by faith. Wesley never did this" (Howard 37).

altar theology. Palmer did not customarily associate entire sanctification with baptism with the Holy Spirit, and, contrary to Knapp, she did not believe that the witness of the Spirit is a direct and internal witness to the believer's consciousness (Knapp, *The Double Cure*, 74-75). But according to Knapp's mixture, seekers after holiness should "claim the double cure" on the basis of altar theology, and then anticipate with confidence the Spirit's internal witness at a later time (Knapp 1898, 16-17).

Like W. B. Godbey, Knapp completely missed the conflict between Wesley and Palmer regarding the witness of the Spirit in entire sanctification. Apparently they, like many others, uncritically identified Wesley's idea of the witness of the Spirit with Palmer's notion of assurance which, for her, was completely incidental to entire sanctification.

To confuse matters even more, Knapp, along with Beverly Carradine, taught that there is a sharp distinction between entire consecration and entire sanctification. He tells us that "men can be perfectly consecrated all their lives and never know the blessing of sanctification." Only in the latter is faith operative; apparently the former is purely a human accomplishment. More pointedly, as Knapp describes faith, it too seems to be a human effort. In any case, both "the battle of consecration" and "the battle of faith" must precede "the perfect victory of sanctification" (Knapp, *The Double Cure*, 75).[10]

Knapp shows some appreciation for the existential diversity among those seeking the grace of entire sanctification, for it is "preceded and followed by gradual unfoldings and enlightenments." But there are limits to diversity in experience, for entire sanctification is, in the very nature of the case, "wrought in an instant." Finally, after granting some place to dynamic, reification reigns. "Experience" means one thing, and one thing only: momentary, immediate and instantaneous, "always instantaneous" (Knapp 1898, 27). I have found no more unqualified expression of the reification of experience than the following: "...the experience of all believers in all ages, of all names and ranks, which have verified its reality [the baptism with the Holy Spirit, entire sanctification], like a mighty Niagara, unitedly and overwhelmingly testify to [its instantaneousness]" (Knapp 1898, 27).

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10. Perhaps all this could be consistently reconciled in Knapp's mind, but surely an anxious and frustrated seeker after entire sanctification could be forgiven if he or she were to lapse into confused resignation.

4. L. L. Pickett (1859-1928). L. L. Pickett founded one of the more influential publishing companies in the holiness movement-the Pentecostal Publishing Company-and moved it from South Carolina to Louisville, Kentucky, around the turn of the century. In addition to his influence as a publisher, Pickett was also a prominent holiness evangelist in the South. Next to his reputation as a publisher of holiness literature, he is probably best known for the debate, referred to earlier, between himself and M. A. Smith in Terrell, Texas, August 31-September 3, 1896. They debated the following proposition: "The Scriptures teach that entire sanctification is a work of cleansing wrought in the soul subsequent to regeneration" (Pickett 1897).

The debate provides excellent insight into the controversy over entire sanctification then occurring in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Smith's objection to "the second blessing movement" derives as much from his belief that the holiness proponents lacked theological balance as it does from his direct disagreement with the idea of entire sanctification. His attack goes straight to the exegesis he believes the "second blessing" proponents use to establish their position. He accuses them of establishing the doctrine (he says they have a "theory," not a "doctrine") of entire sanctification as a second definite work of grace on highly questionable exegetical deductions (Pickett 1897, 25ff).[11]

In the debate, Smith also excoriates Pickett and his peers for forcing regeneration to pay the price for entire sanctification: "The whole system of second blessingism," Smith charged, "is built upon the idea that the regenerate soul is unclean, impure, and unprepared for heaven: hence it needs this second work of cleansing" (Pickett 1897, 28). To establish his charge, Smith cites eighteen instances from the writings of Pickett, Carradine, and Godbey, all of whom display a clear departure from John Wesley and the Protestant Reformation by treating the new birth as inherently flawed or deficient. To the extent that Smith's attack is justifiable, the apologetic for entire sanctification rested on unstable foundations, foundations on which confusion and frustration in Christian life would predictably build.

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11. An example of what Smith objects to is located in Pickett's *St. Paul on Holiness* where he uses 1 Thess. 2:10 to teach entire sanctification. In that verse, according to Pickett, Paul unambiguously professed the experience of entire sanctification, just as Pickett taught it (Pickett, no date, *St Paul on Holiness*, 15).

Characteristic of the holiness proponents, for Pickett decisiveness with regard to entire sanctification (and justification) meant just one thing: momentary instantaneousness. The temporal factor was unambiguously constitutive of the doctrine's *sine qua non*: "Reader, do you know by happy experience what this entire sanctification is? If so, glory be to God for it! But if not, thank God it is your privilege this very moment" (Pickett, *St. Paul*, 26, 47).

In his description of "the sanctified heart," Pickett flirts with angelic perfection and marries reification: "The sanctified heart, being holy, is in perfect love and harmony with the perfectly holy law of the absolutely perfect and holy law giver. ...praise does not flatter, persecution does not discourage or deject" (Pickett, *Holiness*, 38).

5. William Baxter Godbey (1833-1920). No one in the American Holiness Movement was a more prolific writer (200+ titles), and few evangelists had more influence in the last quarter of the nineteenth century (Melvin E. Dieter, 117), than W. B. Godbey. Timothy Smith called Godbey "the quaint but scholarly evangelist of the holiness movement in the South" (Smith 156). Godbey was born in Pulaski County, Kentucky, then converted and called to preach while still a child.

In 1868, after having graduated from Georgetown College (KY), while serving as president of Harmonia College in Perryville, KY, and after having been ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Godbey professed the experience of entire sanctification. It came during a revival as an instantaneous "crisis" event (Hamilton 14). Thereafter, Godbey had no doubt about the doctrine of entire sanctification as an instantaneous, second definite work of grace, or about its biblical warrant: "Every New Testament writer is a perfectionist. The Bible is perfectionism" (Godbey 1886, 109).

For his teaching regarding entire sanctification, Godbey was chiefly dependent on Adam Clarke, Phoebe Palmer, and John A. Wood, whose selective treatment of Wesley regarding entire sanctification suited Godbey's dogmatic interests. According to Godbey's biographer, Barry Hamilton, Godbey caricatured Wesley's understanding of entire sanctification by developing a dogmatism regarding the doctrine that almost completely lacked dynamic (Hamilton 71).

Godbey's *Commentary on the New Testament* and his *Translation of the New Testament* provided widespread exegetical support for advocates

of the doctrine of entire sanctification. Quoting him was considered by many an unquestionably sufficient biblical warrant for the doctrine. Hamilton says that providing an exegetical foundation "was his most important contribution to the theological resources of the Holiness Movement." Godbey's biblical exegesis in support of entire sanctification, Hamilton judges, was largely a combination of "Greek jargonizing and Methodist theologizing." Godbey was not a theologian, but "a preacher with an oversimplified approach to biblical and theological studies" (Hamilton 75-77).

Godbey employed Palmer's "altar theology" as the method for obtaining entire sanctification. As soon as a Christian completely consecrates to God, then, on the basis of God's promises, that Christian can then testify that entire sanctification has occurred (Hamilton 73). After stating Palmer's altar formula, Godbey concludes: "As your faith is, so be it unto you. If you have faith to be sanctified, you are sanctified" (Godbey 1886, 15).

Probably no one in the holiness movement surpassed Godbey in devaluing regeneration to make room for entire sanctification. Although he seemed to have some appreciation for initial sanctification, saying that entire sanctification completes God's work begun in regeneration (Godbey 1886, 71), his view of entire sanctification was constructed on an emaciated estimate of regeneration. He insisted, for instance, that regeneration is an insufficient basis for entrance into heaven (Godbey 1899). He introduced hierarchical distinctions among Christians: "The Bible addresses three classes-i.e., the guilty, the justified, and the sanctified. The first [are] altogether evil, the third [are] altogether pure, and the middle class [is] in a mixed state" (Godbey 1886, 9). In the merely regenerated Christian there resides a mixture of fear and love (Godbey 1886, 11-12).

In Godbey's view of consecration and entire consecration, Pelagianism and voluntarism run free. He advises that you get the "old man out of your heart, and the Holy Spirit will fill you in a hurry. …be sure you are emptied of sin, and the Holy Spirit will do the filling" (Godbey 1886, 44). Even faith seems to be the result of human effort: "The Holy Spirit [sanctifies] through *your* [italics mine] faith" (Godbey 1899, 106). Godbey sends mixed messages regarding the relationship of Christ to entire sanctification. On the one hand, he indicates that Christ is unrelated: God established three distinct soteriological dispensations—Father, Son, and

Holy Ghost. Christ should be identified with justification and the Holy Spirit with entire sanctification (Godbey 1886, 9). On the other hand, Godbey is certain that Christ is the sanctifier (Godbey 1899, 106).

In Godbey's teaching regarding entire sanctification, reification is well developed. It is present as well-intended, but sterile dogmatism. Even though he gives notice that sanctified folk are not impeccable, not infallible, and can lose "the blessing," they nevertheless have a "complete Christian character." Once sanctified, Christians are to be like the apostles and disciples of Jesus after their Pentecost experience. In them there was never afterward "a trace of ambition, unbelief, or cowardice" (Godbey 1886, 19-20). Moreover, the "hallelujahs" of the sanctified have their "moorings so deep down in the soul that tempests may haul, thunders roar, cyclones sweep, and volcanoes blaze, but these hallelujahs just ring on" (Godbey 1886, 26). At no time since his entire sanctification seventeen years earlier, he says in commending his experience to others, has he undergone any "downs" (Godbey 1886, 82). The entirely sanctified will encounter "no doubt [and] nothing ambiguous or negative" (Godbey 1886, 26). Pushing reification even further, Godbey assures us that for sanctified folk "even disappointment, insults and all sorts of calamities" will give them "no sorrow" and they will "care nothing" about what people say about them (Godbey 1899, 110).

Throughout *Christian Perfection* and *Holiness or Hell?* Godbey offers as authentic only one experiential pattern by which to receive entire sanctification. Reification is never questioned (see especially *Christian Perfection* 26).

6. Elmer Ellsworth Shelhamer (1869-1947). Before turning to consideration of Phoebe Palmer, I take note of an influential holiness evangelist in the generation immediately following Morrison, Knapp, and Godbey. E. E. Shelhamer was a Free Methodist evangelist who was influential not only because of his preaching, but also because of his numerous books, a number of which are plentifully supplied with previously published sermons. Shelhamer appears here because his treatment of the experience of entire sanctification represents a noticeable departure from the reification of experience we have observed in Godbey, et. al. The departure is appreciable, but by no means complete. When Shelhamer discusses the normative dispositional and behavioral characteristics of those who are entirely sanctified, elements of reification are still obvious (Shelhamer, 1932, 155-56).

Shelhamer is also important because he points toward an alternative to Palmer's way of managing the existential frustration that reification breeds. He stoutly criticizes what he thinks are the errors associated with "altar theology," although he doesn't call Palmer by name.[12] "Altar theology," he charges, promotes a "cheap holiness" plagued by a faulty understanding of faith. It fails to confront fully the damage done to one's relationship with God by the "carnal nature." It prematurely terminates the process of dying to one's self-sovereignty. Perhaps most importantly, it does away with the need to wait patiently until there is unquestionable certainty that "the infilling of the Holy Ghost," "the fiery baptism," has occurred (Shelhamer 1932, 72).

Unlike the five holiness leaders we have observed so far, Shelhamer manifested appreciable caution and existential sensitivity when urging believers to seek the grace of entire sanctification In *Pointed Preaching for Practical People*, Shelhamer sounds a note that would have seemed strange to Godbey. "No one," he says, "should seek holiness of heart simply because there is such a grace." Nor should one seek entire sanctification simply because "others profess it," one's denomination teaches it, or an evangelist urges it. Prematurely urging a person to seek and profess entire sanctification will result in confusion and shallowness (Shelhamer 1932, 65-66).

Shelhamer was aware of and alarmed over, "certain tests" that some preachers use to help persons deduce that they have been truly sanctified. Pursuit of and testimony to entire sanctification apart from an internally compelling conviction usually leads to cycles of frustration. After the "hurrah" dies down it leaves in its wake "a dissatisfied soul. Then he concludes [that] he has lost the blessing, or goes against his inward feelings and professes more loudly than before." Persons who become frustrated because they cannot approximate the reification should never be cen-

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12. According to Stan Ingersol, the perspective of Robert Lee Harris, founder of the New Testament Church of Christ, was very similar to Shelhamer's perspective. There was the same blend of legalism on the one hand, and opposition to altar theology, on the other. "Harris published a handful of issues of *The Guide*, his paper, in which he copied plentifully from *The Free Methodist* and *The Earnest Christian* (the latter was edited as a privately published paper by B. T. Roberts, the Free Methodist founder). Among the Free Methodist sources reprinted by Harris in *The Guide* is a critique of 'altar theology'" (quoted from a letter to me from Stan Ingersol, August 1, 1995.)

sured. Instead, he says to those who perpetuate the reification, "censure yourself" (Shelhamer 1932, 65-66, 71).[13]

Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874): A Creative Detour

Without Phoebe Palmer's influence, the American holiness movement would not have achieved the significance it did as an American religious movement. As a theological formulator, and directly through her teaching, she was indeed one of the more important-perhaps the most important-figures.

In the mid-1840s,[14] Palmer began to teach what came to be known as the "altar theology," what Harold Raser calls a "theology of holiness." It was narrow in focus rather than comprehensive, but "systematically arrived at, and systematically communicated" (Raser 1987, 151). According to Raser, Palmer's "altar theology" was the development of two basic convictions: (1) "it is absolutely necessary that you should be holy if you would see God"; and (2) "holiness is a blessing which it is *now* your privilege and also your duty to enjoy" (Raser 1987, 151, 171-175).

Greathouse summarizes this way Palmer's "altar theology:" it began by "...using Paul's figure of placing oneself as a 'living sacrifice' on God's altar [Rom 12:1] to represent consecration. The altar, she believed, was Christ the Sanctifier himself. The New Testament declares that 'the altar sanctifieth the gift.' The Christian who is consciously 'all on the altar' may at that moment claim the blessing of entire sanctification" (Greathouse 299).

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13. I find Shelhamer's sensitivity somewhat surprising, and perhaps I should not. My reason is that Shelhamer was quite "legalistic" in his expectations regarding behavior and ethics. Bruce Taylor, retired district superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene, told me of his close observations of Shelhamer when Taylor was a student at God's Bible School. Taylor remembers Shelhamer as "rigid and legalistic" with regard to how "sanctified folk" should behave. On one occasion Taylor was serving food in the president's dining room. Upon offering coffee to Shelhamer, the evangelist answered rather gruffly, "No thank you, I'm sanctified." Seated next to Shelhamer was another well-known holiness evangelist, C. W. Ruth. No sooner had Shelhamer announced his reason for rejecting coffee than Ruth responded loudly, "Give it to me!"

14. According to Harold Raser, Phoebe Palmer's "altar theology" was present in "seed form" as early as 1841. It was "clearly in hand" by the mid-1840s (Raser interview, 1995). *The Way of Holiness* was first published in 1842, and *Entire Devotion to God* in 1845.

Palmer bore witness that, by "the most unequivocal Scriptural testimony," she "laid herself under the most sacred obligation to *believe* that the sacrifice became 'holy and acceptable,' and virtually the *Lord's property*, even by virtue of the sanctity of the *altar* upon which it was laid..." (Palmer 1848, 45, 87). She then concluded: "Tis done! Thou has promised to receive me! Thou canst not be unfaithful! *Thou dost receive me now!* From this time henceforth I *am thine - wholly thine!*" Palmer's certainty rested on her confidence in the promises of the New Testament, not on any consciousness of the Holy Spirit's having sanctified her.

According to Raser, Palmer is not always clear regarding the witness of the Spirit.[15] At least predominantly, her witness refers to unflinching confidence in the promises of the New Testament regarding entire sanctification. Rob Staples and Ivan Howard have pinpointed the important distinction between John Wesley and Phoebe Palmer in this regard. For Wesley, the witness of the Word cannot be separated from the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit; the Word has no "witness" apart from the Spirit. "There is," Staples says of Wesley, "no power or profit in reading or hearing the Scripture apart from the accompanying witness of the Spirit of God" (Staples 99). By contrast, in Palmer's altar theology the balance between Word and Spirit disappears:

> Whereas Wesley had taught that entire sanctification is evidenced by the witness of the *Spirit*, Phoebe Palmer taught that it evidenced by the witness of the *Word* (the *Word* meaning, in her case, a written statement found in the Scriptures...). The Word says "the altar sanctifies the gift," therefore when we

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15. Raser says that later in life (1850s), Palmer, in response to her critics, began to use Spirit baptism language. In the 1860s she spoke extensively of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. But Spirit baptism language refers neither to the "witness of the Spirit" in entire sanctification, nor to the incidental "assurance" of entire sanctification (Raser 1987, 186-191, 197-198, 271-274, 296-297). Raser suggests that, without Palmer's intending it, the baptism of the Holy Spirit began to sound like a third work of grace. Raser thinks that this development helped lay the groundwork for "the third work of grace" in the Pentecostal wing of the holiness movement (1995 interview).

Donald Dayton also makes note of Palmer's importance for the emergence of Pentecostalism. He remarks that in *The Guide to Holiness*, Pentecostal imagery, and even the identification of entire sanctification with Pentecost, occurs (*The Roots of Pentecostalism*, Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1987, 75).

> have brought the gift of ourselves to the altar we know that we are sanctified, without the need for any other evidence, either sensible or supernatural (Staples, 105).[16]

In the act of believing in the written Word of God, one "has the witness." The witness of the Spirit is "the internal *consciousness* that we do believe" the "communication of the Holy Spirit through the written word" (Palmer 1854, 242). Palmer thought that a feeling of assurance might come later, but it is not at all essential for entire sanctification, and it should not be identified as the witness of the Holy Spirit (Raser 1995).[17]

Palmer's theology of holiness may or may not be exegetically and theologically defensible. But this much Palmer does make clear in *The Way of Holiness*: the "altar theology" resolved the lengthy and intense frustrations of a diligent seeker after entire sanctification who had been unable to conform her own experience to the popularized "Wesleyan perfectionism" to which she had been exposed (Palmer 1848, 57).[18]

> The "Wesleyan perfectionism" in which Palmer had been nurtured was influenced to some extent by the formal theological tradition of John

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16. Staples concludes his judgment: "Thus with one bold stroke Phoebe Palmer had cut through the prolonged search and struggle which often characterized the early Methodists as they traversed the path toward perfection. She had shortened to 'nothing flat' the time one must wait for the assurance of his/her sanctification. No supernatural evidence, no 'inward impression on the soul,' no empirical fruit of the Spirit, lay across the threshold which one must cross to enter in to a state of entire sanctification. One only needed the Scriptural promise..." (105). Without using the language of "reification," Staples concludes that, among other consequences, Palmer's departure from Wesley "opened the way for the *structure* of the doctrine of holiness (or what Wesley called its "circumstance") to become prominent [in the Holiness movement], almost overshadowing the *substance*" (106).

17. Ivan Howard has traced the confusion in Methodism that followed Palmer's introduction of altar theology. Theologians John Miley, Daniel Steele, S. A. Keen and Hannah Smith agreed with Palmer. Randolph Foster, Nathan Bangs, and Miner Raymond thought "altar theology" to be spurious (Howard, 36-37). Bangs cited Wesley and Fletcher in support of his teaching that the believer must have the internal evidence of the Holy Spirit that the work of sanctification has been done (Raser 1987, 272).

18. This is an underlying thesis in Raser's biography of Phoebe Palmer, a thesis more explicitly set forth in my conversations with him (Raser 1995). Raser notes that as a child Palmer had been unable to gain certainty regarding regeneration. The absence of such certainty contributed significantly to her struggles regarding entire sanctification (Raser 1987, 34ff).

Wesley, John Fletcher, and Adam Clarke. But she was shaped mostly by an informal popularization of Wesleyanism that appeared in the teachings of Hester Ann Rogers (1756-1794), whom Raser credits as being the source of Palmer's "altar" principle (Raser 1987, 247), and William Carvosso (1750-1834), among others.

Raser's treatment of Rogers and Carvosso is most revealing. For prototypes of the holiness movement's reification of experience, one need look no further than to them (Raser 1987, 245-254). All of the primary and secondary constitutive elements are there: (1) a rigidity with regard to the temporal form for experiencing entire sanctification; (2) faith as an act of the human will, graciously aided by God to be sure, but in its very essence more a human response *to* the grace of God than a gift *from* God; (3) faith as belief in rational propositions (the reasonability of faith) from which predictable and contractual conclusions can be drawn; (4) absence of any sense of growth in sanctification leading up to entire sanctification; (5) a sense of urgency that takes no account of the seeker's religious and psychical biography; (6) unsophisticated biblical exegesis; (7) contrary to John Wesley, the insistence that one give immediate witness to entire sanctification lest it be lost; and (8) the absence of theological comprehensiveness (a reductionism with regard to theological interests).

Taken together, these eight elements largely formed the religious and theological atmosphere in which Phoebe Palmer struggled to gain certainty regarding her own entire sanctification (Palmer's religious struggle began before her marriage to Walter and endured "with intermittent intensity for over a decade," Raser 1987, 34). By following the path popular Wesleyanism then offered, Palmer could not gain the certainty others professed and told her she should have. A few years before the end of her struggle (1835), a frustrated Palmer wrote: "I am sure I would not knowingly keep back anything from God. But alas! There must be some hindrance..." (Raser 1987, 38).[19]

Palmer's anguished failure sent her in search of a "shorter" and more obtainable way. Only then was she able to see "her error regarding holiness as an attainment beyond her reach..." (Palmer 1848, 25). Happily, beyond her failure to appropriate the reified form of entire sanctification that she had inherited, there lay peace:

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19. Raser (1987, 38) quotes Rev. Richard Wheatly (who is quoting Palmer), *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer* (New York: Palmer and Hughes, 1876. No page given).

> It was not until [I] was enabled, through grace, to resolve on ceasing to have [my] mind influenced in its decisions by a reference to the experience of others, and determined, with a resoluteness not to be shaken, to take the Bible as [my] Counselor, that [I] was enabled to make much progress in the divine life (Palmer 1848, 57).

Palmer did not simply correct popular Wesleyanism. In important respects she replaced it by setting aside its reification of experience and inserting a predictable theological formula that minimized (if not negated) experience and could not fail to deliver certainty. In the replacement there were no experiential patterns to approximate and no hurdles to overcome. Her "shorter way" arose out of existential frustration and she eagerly offered it to other weary travelers.

Ironically, predominantly in the subsequent holiness movement, Palmer's "victory" over reification *and* the prevalent "reification" were often uncritically mixed. Most of the leading holiness popularizers seemed not to recognize any conflict between Wesley and Palmer over the doctrine of entire sanctification.

Conclusion

Stewards of a religious or theological tradition who believe that there were justifiable reasons for the tradition's emergence, and who believe that it can have a viable future, cannot afford the fatal luxury of embracing the tradition uncritically. The life of a good steward over a theological tradition will be marked by both immediacy and distance, both *sic et non*.

The American holiness movement arose out of an authentic hunger for holy living, in the church and in the world. As an expression of that hunger and confidence, the holiness movement was magnanimous. But in significant ways its foundations were not sufficient for the edifice that needed to be constructed.

For the doctrine of entire sanctification to have a healthy future, its friends will have to cast it in much larger terms—existentially, theologically, ethically, and ecumenically—than did most of the early shapers of the holiness movement.

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The Inverted Shadow of Phoebe Palmer

by

Charles Edwin Jones

> There are others who will receive far larger rewards of faith than myself. God has given me almost to walk by sight, so constant and large have been the manifest results of my service. There are others, equally faithful to the Lord, to whom He has not shown large effects from their work of faith and labor of love, and yet they have not flagged. Their crowns for faithful endurance will be above mine.
>
> —Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874)[1]

In the rush and notoriety of life, the diminutive Phoebe Palmer cast an exceedingly long shadow. In the stillness of death, she cast an even longer one. Her public power in her own generation was great, her influence, when death had cloaked her with anonymity, far greater. The historians and feminists, who during the last four decades in ever-increasing numbers have been drawn to this modest woman, have uncovered dynamics behind many facets of her remarkable life.

The purpose of the present inquiry is to uncover dynamics behind the even more striking impact of her ideas and methods on the Methodist-Holiness movement in the three-quarters century following her death in 1874. Her anonymity as the originator of popular beliefs and practices, it

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[1] Quoted in a letter of R. Pearsall Smith to Walter Palmer, Mar. 3, 1875. Published in *Guide to Holiness*, 67 (1875), 144. See Charles Edward White, *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1986), 236.

will be shown, exempted her from criticism as their author and proved to be a major factor in their acceptance and utilization in the movement which she had helped bring to birth.

Phoebe Worrall Palmer was undoubtedly the most influential Methodist woman of her generation. For thirty-seven years she served as co-convener of the much-copied Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness in New York. For more than a decade she also acted as managing editor of the extremely influential *Guide to Holiness*,[2] whose circulation during the years 1870 to 1873 equaled the most widely-read Methodist papers. Both the meeting and the paper were destined to survive her by over a quarter century. She wrote eighteen volumes of popular theology, poetry, and biography and was credited with having led over 25,000 into the higher Christian life in the United States, Canada, and the British Isles. She never, however, sought official standing even as an exhorter, the designation she gave to her own ministry. Eulogized at her death in 1874 by preeminent pulpit orators of the day - R. Pearsall Smith,[3] T. Dewitt Talmadge,[4] and Bishop Matthew Simpson[5] — she cast an immense shadow.

Soon, however, this shadow began to dissipate. In December, 1901, the paper (by then called *Consecrated Life and Guide to Holiness*) suspended publication. Upon the death in 1908 of Miles W. Palmer, her husband's brother and medical partner, the New York Tuesday Meeting also ceased. One by one her books went out of print. Possibly the last (for nearly seven decades) was an abridgment of *The Way of Holiness* issued by the Publishing House of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene in 1912. With the disappearance of these tangible reminders, the name of the formulator of the "shorter way" to entire sanctification faded from the collective consciousness of the movement. Though female disciples of Mrs. Palmer such as Amanda Smith and Catherine Booth occupied places in the Methodist-Holiness legend denied her, the disappearance of her

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[2] See Harold E. Raser, *Phoebe Palmer: Her Life and Thought* (Lewiston, N. Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), 71-73, 332 [note 183]; White, *The Beauty of Holiness*, 92-94.

[3] *Ibid*., 235-236.

[4] John Leland Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 111.

[5] Simpson, Matthew, ed., *Cyclopaedia of Methodism* (Philadelphia: Everts & Stewart, 1878, c1876), 691-692.

name from common discourse served rather to strengthen the hold of her ideas and practices on the movement she had helped launch.

An Immense Shadow

Several generations of Methodist-Holiness people, unconscious even of her existence, in fact came to maturity under her tutelage. Her paper had ceased publication. Her Tuesday Meeting had disbanded. Her books had gone out of print. Both explication and criticism of her ideas were nonexistent. Except in an occasional testimony or as contributor of "The Cleansing Wave,"[6] a song universally used among holiness people, the name of Phoebe Palmer had faded from the collective memory. How then, one might ask, could this Victorian woman exercise such power over the spiritual and material culture of the holiness movement so long after her death? Simply, it could be answered, by offering leaders, parents, and children of the second and third generations of the movement, frustrated by lack of emotional confirmation, a formula for assurance of entire sanctification and a means of renewing continually the consecration signified thereby.

This construct— the so-called Altar Covenant[7]– linked Scripture, sacred song, and physical setting into a representation of the way to full redemption. Worked out in Phoebe Palmer's own ministry, this unarticulated metaphor-used by both separatist Holiness folk and Methodist loyalists with whom they shared joyful fraternity-proved amenable to all situations faced by those striving to assist seekers after entire sanctification. Product of the New York Tuesday Meeting, the Altar Covenant lay at the source of most advice given by the saints in the after-meeting of every Holiness service in which there were seekers at the rail.

The altar sanctifies the gift, the consecration formula based on it, was to be the centerpiece of the Holiness quest for entire sanctification. Its utilization in practically every altar service over many decades caused the core of Mrs. Palmer's teachings to become the cornerstone of widely-

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[6] With words by Mrs. Palmer and music by her daughter, Mrs. J. F. Knapp, "The Cleansing Wave" appeared in Wesleyan Methodist, Free Methodist, and Pilgrim Holiness hymnbooks into the 1960s. It has been carried in hymnals published by the Church of the Nazarene from its beginning. *Sing to the Lord*, issued in 1993, included it.

[7] See "The Altar Covenant" in Thomas Oden, ed., *Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 107-130.

held belief. Unlike the defeat of spiritual assurance implied by the Half-Way Covenant of New England Puritanism, the collage of proof texts, spiritual songs, and physical accouterments which made up this symbol of personal consecration pointed the seeker after entire sanctification to the Altar of Sacrifice, the anteroom to assurance in the higher Christian life.

Nowhere in the Holiness mind is Mrs. Palmer's impact more apparent than in its visualization of salvation. The centrality of the altar as physical object and as spiritual symbol could hardly have been lost on the vast majority of American Methodist hearers. Stress on the altar of the heart sprang quite naturally from the material culture of the revivalistic spirituality in which they, like she, had been nurtured. The practice of kneeling for prayer[8] and for communion,[9] an inheritance from Anglicanism, was an integral part of Methodist worship. Relation of religious experiences was expected in every class meeting and every prayer meeting, and use of biblical metaphors, such as the Altar of Sacrifice and the Mercy Seat, were the stock in trade of common religious discourse. Phoebe Palmer required no illustrator.

Presentation of Mrs. Palmer's theology of self-sacrifice in such a context was destined to make the altar - represented by the altar rail rather than the communion table - the focal point of Holiness worship,[10] causing proponents of her Altar Covenant to regard as essential this accouterment of the nineteenth-century Methodist chapel both as conse-

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[8] Facing one's own pew rather than using a kneeler, as had the Anglican forebears.

[9] At the altar rail.

[10] Sometimes called the mourner's bench or penitent form. In the early nineteenth century, there had been a distinction between mourner's bench, which was reserved for mourners (e.g., penitents) and the altar, the former simply being a bench or front pew designated as a place where seekers might either sit or kneel to pray. Before the end of the century, however, the altar in common parlance denoted the rail (often indistinguishable from a bench) where seekers knelt in response to the "altar call." See "Mourners" in Simpson, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism*, 633-634; and Carl Bangs, *Phineas F. Bresee: His Life in Methodism, the Holiness Movement, and the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995), 31, 236. The Salvation Army preferred penitent form which indicated a bench, sometimes built into the platform in front of the pulpit stand. At least in some places, this area, cordoned off during the service, was opened only at the time of the invitation.

crated object and as sacred symbol. The altar rail was to be for the church at prayer the place where the physical and spiritual merged.[11]

Placed directly in front of the pulpit, the altar was the most revered article of furniture in tabernacle, chapel, and mission hall. Over many decades it was to stand both as a physical and symbolic representation of the Wesleyan way of salvation.[12] The scores of thousands who struggled during these years to surrender all and to die to self and sin while kneeling before it gave unconscious witness to the immensity of the shadow cast by this remarkable woman.

Dilemma of Second and Third Generations

The genius of Mrs. Palmer's message and methodology was that it spoke to the dilemma faced by many in the second and third generations who believed themselves incapable of realizing, in the same manner as their parents, the witness of the Holy Spirit that they had been made perfect in love.

Phoebe Palmer's father was a convert of John Wesley. From infancy she had been nurtured in Wesleyanism and longed for the purity and power she had seen manifested in her parents and others. With them she believed that entire sanctification was attainable in this life and that it was the will of God, even her sanctification. She had consecrated to the Lord her all. She had not, however, received the witness of the Spirit that the work indeed was done. Devoid of the tangible evidence she judged necessary, Phoebe wished she had been born in Old Testament times.

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[11] An exemplar of this attitude is the First Church of the Nazarene of Kansas City. In 1936, when the congregation moved from the former Beacon Hill Congregational Church, a building it had occupied for twenty-two years, to the former Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, it took the altar rail with it as a reminder of Shekinah glory at the former location. Although, when relocating again in 1955, the possibility was discussed, the church board decided against again moving the "Beacon Hill" altar. The consensus seemed to be that to do so would be to place too much significance on a physical object. Through three relocations, the congregation has retained possession of the "Beacon Hill" pulpit stand. During most of the time, however, it has not been used for its original purpose.

[12] The impasse reported in Bishop Marston's account of the debate in the 1955 General Conference of the Free Methodist Church over introduction of the divided chancel (which visually would undermine the Palmerian theology of the altar) gives eloquent, if oblique, witness to the depth of general commitment to the older arrangement. For context see 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), 348-351, 355-358.

> O had I lived in that day, how gladly would I have parted with every thing, however costly, and have purchased the best possible offering. All I would have to do, would be to lay it upon the altar, and know that it was accepted.[13]

Assurance was to come to her in the wake of personal tragedy, the death of a child in a fire caused by the carelessness and incompetence of a household servant. In her grief she did not chastise the servant who had added oil to an already lighted lamp, which in turn set fire to the netting on the baby's crib. Nor did she decide to refrain from entrusting the care of her children to others.[14] Instead, she concluded that she had made idols of her husband and children, causing them to become a barrier between her and God's perfect will for her. The way to peace, she believed, came rather in surrender.

Discovery on that "day of days," July 26, 1837, that God accepted all she brought Him proved to be the turning point. Then and there she came to believe that the only witness one needed was consciousness of having made a complete consecration to God of all that was near and dear and willingness to testify, on the basis of "naked faith" in the promises of Scripture, that the work of sanctification was complete. This confession was to become for her a talisman of certainty. With an out-of-context use of Matthew 23:19 (AV), the phrase "the altar sanctifies the gift" was to become so embedded in the minds of those raised in the Holiness movement as to appear to be the very heart of biblical teaching on consecration. The conclusion that the altar sanctifies the gift marked the point of resolution in Palmer's long struggle for assurance of entire sanctification. This conviction, so painfully gained, was to pervade Holiness teaching for more than a century.[15]

During the decades of anonymity which were to follow the formulator's death, this confession was destined to be the point of unmistakable confirmation for multitudes of seekers after the second blessing. For them, it was the gate of certainty at the end of the "shorter way" to entire sanctification. Such would be the case not only for children of the first

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[13] White, *The Beauty of Holiness*, 3.

[14] *Ibid*., 7-8.

[15] See Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), 125-126; and White, *The Beauty of Holiness*, 10-26.

waves of converts of evangelists sympathetic to the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness - an agency sharing Phoebe Palmer's insight which was formed during the last decade of her life - but also for constituents of independent bodies, such as the Church of the Nazarene and the Pilgrim Holiness Church, which were to spring from it.

At issue was transmission of the faith, especially to one's children. Phoebe Palmer herself exemplifies the dilemma of the second generation. If one projects 1785 (the death of John Fletcher, Wesley's designated successor and Methodism's greatest theologian) as the high point of the Wesleyan movement, and 1885 (date of the General [or National] Holiness Assembly, Chicago, the first comprehensive meeting of the movement in North America) as the high point of the National Holiness movement, the second Methodist generation could be assumed to have reached maturity in the decade centering in 1835 and the second Holiness generation in the decade centering in 1935. The symbolism of Mrs. Palmer's discovery, as developed in her ministry as a member of the second American Methodist generation, was to be vigorously applied a century later in the ministry of her followers in the first and second generations of the National Holiness movement.

Phoebe Palmer lived in an era of rapid change in American Methodism. She worked out her altar theology within the context of Methodism, but outside its official framework, adopting and adapting traditional structures and practices of the church to wider purposes. Even as with her sister, Sarah Lankford, she convened the trans-denominational Tuesday Meeting in her home,[16] the self-disciplining Methodist class meeting[17] was, in large urban places, being supplanted by a mid-week meeting of the local Methodist society as a whole. In cities where station appointments rather than circuits were the rule, preachers were reluctant to delegate pastoral functions to class leaders, and the role of the class leader as facilitator of self-examination among the faithful was gradually being

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[16] For commentary on the Tuesday Meeting and the controversy surrounding Phoebe Palmer's altar theology, see Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America*, 122-129.

[17] For an analysis of the purpose and structure of the class meeting, see "Discipline and the Rhetoric of Separation" in A. Gregory Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: the Domestication of American Methodism* (Bloomington, Ind.: University Press, 1993), 78-91.

phased out. This trend was to accelerate as the time limit on appointments was extended,[18] creating a vacuum in Methodist connectionalism into which Palmer's transdenominationalism moved with alacrity.

Loss of the class meeting as an instrument of collective reflection by those intent on fleeing the wrath to come was to be the source of widespread lament for more than a century. In its primitive form, the class meeting was never to be replaced. Its disappearance among Methodists struck the death knell to intimate small-group discourse without regard to differences in education, class, and wealth.

The focus of the quarterly conference of the Methodist circuit had for decades been shifting from evangelism to institutional housekeeping.[19] Its function of revival and outreach was fast being taken up by the quasi-independent Methodist camp meeting. As the Palmers (Walter Palmer joined his wife after retiring from a lucrative homeopathic medical practice in 1859)[20] emerged as popular camp meeting workers, it is not surprising that they should incorporate its usages into their other ministry as well.

The situation within the church and personal desires and needs were intertwined. Herself a class leader, Phoebe Palmer was one of a growing number of very prosperous Methodists[21] whose ties to like-minded and similarly-situated believers both inside and outside the denominational circle. Reluctant to bare their souls to servants and others less fortunate than they who might also be Methodists, they quite unconsciously adapted traditional Wesleyan practices to meet contemporary churchly as well as trans-denominational and status needs.

The Methodist-Holiness altar service was to subsume the catechetical function of the class meeting. The questions asked, advice given, and songs sung bound together seeker and worker in a symbiotic quest for holiness which at its best had characterized the class meeting itself.

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[18] The time limit on appointments was extended several times in the nineteenth century. In the Methodist Episcopal Church it was set at two years in 1836, at three years in 1866, and at five years in 1888. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, it was extended to four years in 1866.

[19] For an analysis of the replacement of the "protracted meeting" aspect of the quarterly meeting by the camp meeting, see Russell E. Richey, *Early American Methodism* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1991), 30-32.

[20] See White, *The Beauty of Holiness*, 43.

[21] *Ibid.*, 153-154.

Unspoken convention forbade the Holiness pastor—whose principal duty was to pray with and for the people— ever to leave an altar service, direction of which had the effect of making the pastor similar in many respects to the class leader of early Methodism.

This transition did not come easily. Mrs. Palmer's altar theology met a mixed response from Methodist critics - including the noted editor Nathan Bangs and others of her dearest friends and allies-who appear to have sensed in her concept of "naked faith" an implicit denial both of prevenient grace and the witness of the Spirit. As would be true of later Holiness critics of Fundamentalist formulas, to them her "shorter way" to entire sanctification appeared to be based on something like: On the basis of the promises of Scripture, believe and testify that you have been filled with the Holy Spirit and you will indeed be.[22] However meritorious the criticism on technical grounds, for her the validity of the altar theology depended not on the arguments of theologians, whom she regarded as hair-splitters, but on the discovery of its workability by the rank-and-file in the church. Biblical truth was exceedingly simple. It was embedded, she thought, in the essence of Methodist tradition and practice.

Possessing a mind-set close to the central consensus of the American church, Mrs. Palmer from the beginning couched the message in language which equated the biblical times with the mid-nineteenth-century. She portrayed ritual sacrifice in the Old Testament as an analogue of the believer's consecration, and the altar in the time of the patriarchs as an analogue of the Methodist altar. Though Palmer and her followers would undoubtedly have agreed with Bishop Simpson's statement that use of the word altar in this way had "no sacrificial sense,"[23] the unmistakable implication of the altar theology was that, in a metaphorical sense, it in fact did. That the Palmers insisted, prior to their engagement there, that the chancel area of the John Street Wesleyan Chapel in Glasgow be remodeled to provide for such an altar, is evidence that she understood this connection. It placed in

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[22] For an analysis of this controversy and its aftermath, see Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America*, 125-129.

[23] See Simpson, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism*, 30. Bishop Simpson said, "In Methodist churches, as the communicants kneel around a railing which partially encloses the pulpit, it is sometimes termed the altar, and in the services persons are invited to kneel at the altar of prayer. When employed in this sense it has no reference to any sacrificial offering, but simply expresses the presentation of the individual in a special service of supplication and prayer."

relief the complex interrelation of theology and setting necessary for effective presentation of her message. The uses made of the Methodist altar by unknowing holiness followers of Phoebe Palmer in the twentieth century demonstrate both the power of doctrinal metaphor and of personal anonymity in the transmission of spiritual tradition.

The theology of Phoebe Palmer - the core teaching of churches which in the new century emerged from the National Holiness Camp Meeting movement - was perpetuated by a succession of converts. Converts of the Tuesday Meeting and its organizational offspring peopled and led the National and state holiness associations. Their converts and constituents in turn peopled and led the new churches. Leaders of these groups, which derived their traditions from Methodism and the camp meeting, passed on to their people with little change ideas and arrangements already familiar to them.

Generations of seekers after assurance of entire sanctification might just as well have received instruction from Phoebe Palmer herself. The experience in 1908 of Arkansas teenager Altha Westmoreland (Moore) is representative. She recalled:

> Rev. [James Blaine] Chapman had spoken on the "eleven days' journey from the Red Sea to Kadesh-barnea where the Israelites *should* have crossed over into the Canaan land." Well, I went to the altar. I did everything they told me to do - prayed, looked up, told the Lord I was all given up, but I didn't settle it that night. I told myself I would fast and pray, not eat another bite until I was sanctified.
>
> Aunt Effie [Jobe] was one of the cooks, but was ill; so I had to cook in her place. But I did not eat a bite all day Saturday. I would go out into the woods and pray, go back, do my work, and then pray some more.
>
> That night at the altar, Miss Meda Burnapp (she and her sister were the Free Methodist pastors) was praying with and instructing me.
>
> She quoted, "If we walk in the light....the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." She asked me if I was walking in all the light.
>
> I said, "Yes."
>
> "What does the Bible say?"

I answered, “The blood cleanseth.”

“Do you believe it?”

“Yes.”

“All right, you are on the altar?”

“Yes.”

“The altar sanctifies the gift.”

“Yes.”

“Well, what about it?”

“Well, I’m sanctified.”

Miss Burnapp started the song:

> The Blood, the Blood is all my plea.
> Hallelujah, for it cleanseth me.

I arose and sang it and was peaceful.[24]

The theology of the Altar Covenant and the methodology of the camp meeting pervaded the Holiness movement. The preaching, buildings, furnishings, music, and government of the Holiness churches all bore marks of these origins. A forum more suitable both for perpetuation of the Methodist-Holiness camp meeting tradition and for evangelization of the already convinced could scarcely have been imagined. Phoebe Palmer had at the end of a long struggle made her discovery of the heart of her father’s faith. To whom then was the subliminal message of her “shorter way” to entire sanctification more likely to appeal than to the children and grandchildren of converts of the National Holiness camp meetings? Fearful that the precious secret they themselves had found would be lost to the church, it was to the second and third generations of the movement that the elders now appealed:

> You have longed for sweet peace, and for faith to increase,
> And have earnestly, fervently prayed;
> But you cannot have rest, or be perfectly blest,
> Until all on the altar is laid.

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[24] Mrs. J. E. Moore, *The Lord’s Leadings* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1949), 25-26.

Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?
Your heart, does the Spirit control?
You can only be blest and have peace and sweet rest,
As you yield Him your body and soul.[25]

The Shadow Inverted

The facelessness of the originator of the altar theology was not to last. Rediscovered in the 1950s by historians John Leland Peters and Timothy Lawrence Smith, themselves products of her tutelage, Phoebe Palmer's writings and work were to attract much attention among scholars and feminists during the following decades when, for some evangelical women, she became something of a professional icon.

The exact opposite, however, was to be the fate of her silent influence. Inadvertently, the renewed scholarly interest reopened questions posed a century earlier concerning Palmer's adequacy as a Wesleyan theologian. Ironically, in notoriety the apostle of self-abasement lost hold on the movement which posthumously her insights had shaped. In the decades which were to follow, self-sacrifice and rejection of fashion were fast being supplanted by self-fulfillment and the trappings of material prosperity. Both the prayer meeting, which embodied the *koinonia* or fellowship element, and the altar service, which embodied the catechetical and self-critical elements of the Methodist class meeting, seemed also destined soon to be abandoned.

Self-fulfillment now reigned as the defining motif. New spokespersons listened to contemporary voices. Academic and process theologians had caught the collective ear. Their siren voices now invited the sons and daughters away from the altar of sacrifice in much the same tone as Mrs. Palmer's had once invited their fathers and mothers in the gospel to it.

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[25] Copyright 1905. Words and music by Elisha Albright Hoffman (1839-1929), a minister of the Evangelical Association.

THE AMERICAN HOLINESS MOVEMENT'S PARADIGM SHIFT CONCERNING PENTECOST

by
Victor Paul Reasoner

John Wesley's concept of the baptism with the Holy Spirit can be determined by the connection he made between Spirit baptism and the sacraments. It is not my purpose to argue for specific sacramental rituals so much as to point out that the underlying premise for certain Wesleyan traditions was the connection Wesley made between Spirit baptism (initiation into the body of Christ) and water baptism (initiation into the visible church). The American holiness movement shifted the baptism with the Holy Spirit to a subsequent work of grace.

More is at stake than a hermeneutical debate over the proper interpretation of Acts 2. As the teachings of John Wesley are rediscovered, there is a return to a holistic understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit which transforms a sinner into a mature Christian.

I. The Wesleyan Connection Between the New Birth and Spirit Baptism

A. Affusion Illustrates Spirit Baptism. While Wesleyans have generally allowed any mode of baptism, they have tended to argue for affusion on the basis that it best symbolizes the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit. All of the classic Methodist theologians argued for affusion, against Baptistic doctrine, because of the connection they saw between the baptism of the Spirit and water baptism. Thus the historic Wesleyan concept of water baptism was influenced by the assumption that Spirit baptism occurred at regeneration.

John Wesley understood water baptism as the sacrament of initiation into the body of Christ and connected water baptism with Spirit baptism. In his comments on John 3:5 he noted that to be born of water and the Spirit meant "that great inward change by the Spirit" and "the outward sign and means of it" (Wesley 1754, 218). On Acts 11:47 Wesley taught that the baptism of the Spirit does not supersede water baptism: "But just the contrary: if they have received the Spirit, then baptize them with water.... If they are already baptized with the Holy Ghost, then *who can forbid water*?" (Wesley 1754, 305).

Adam Clarke taught that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is "represented under the similitude of water" and without it one could not enter into the kingdom of God (Clarke 1835, 255). Clarke's comment on John 3:5 was that "Christians are not only baptized with water, but with the Spirit" (Clarke, *Commentary* 5:531).

Richard Watson argued for pouring because of "a *designed* correspondence between the baptism, *the pouring out*, of the Holy Spirit, and the baptism, *the pouring out*, of water..." (Watson, 2:653, 659).

Samuel Wakefield concluded: "The manner in which the baptism of the Spirit is spoken of in the sacred Scriptures should settle forever the mode of Christian baptism." He argued that since the Spirit was poured out, the proper mode of baptism was by pouring (Wakefield, 2:589-90).

Thomas Ralston observed: "Look at the intimate manner in which water baptism is connected with that of the Holy Ghost—the *one* promised upon the condition of the proper reception of the *other*, and then following it in immediate succession.... That the baptism of the Holy Ghost was not by immersion, but by pouring, is put beyond a doubt; therefore the reasonable conclusion is that water baptism was administered in the same way" (Ralston 982).

S. M. Merrill, in his *Christian Baptism: Its Subjects and Mode*, included an entire chapter on "Spirit Baptism" in which he declared that under the new covenant the "one baptism" is the symbol of the Holy Spirit and the sign of regeneration, "the emblematic washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Merrill 289). Merrill said the *baptism* of the Spirit was the promise and the *outpouring* of the Spirit was the fulfillment; therefore, pouring is the proper mode of water baptism (Merrill 296).

Miner Raymond concluded: "Since in regeneration that which is signified in baptism, the Spirit, is said to be poured out upon us, it seems

appropriate that in water baptism that which is the sign of regeneration, the water, should be poured upon the persons baptized..." (Raymond, 3:327).

W. B. Pope favored pouring or sprinkling because it is the outward and visible sign of the influence of the Spirit (Pope, 3:322).

John Miley wrote: "Indeed, these terms of pouring and sprinkling, as thus applied to the work of the Holy Spirit ... are quite conclusive against the theory of the immersionists" (Miley, 2:400).

Even W. B. Godbey, writing his first book in 1883 to refute the Campbellite influence in Kentucky, argued for affusion on the basis that the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. Godbey objected to immersion because it detracted from the Savior's baptism: "For out of Christ there is no salvation, and no one can get into him but by the baptism of the Holy Ghost" (Godbey 1883, 22-23). When he dealt with Acts 2:38, Godbey argued that "water baptism here is the outward and visible sign of the baptism of the Holy Ghost" (Godbey 1883, 56). Further, "every time the Scriptures recognize baptism essential to salvation it is the baptism of the Holy Ghost" (Godbey 1883, 64). When Godbey wrote his autobiography in 1909, he included much of the same material on water baptism and again asserted, "The baptism of water symbolizes that of the Holy Ghost, without which we cannot be saved" (Godbey 1909, 207).[1]

Methodism historically has preferred affusion as the form of baptism because it connected the baptism of the Spirit with water baptism, and thereby with regeneration as well.

B. Eligibility at the Lord's Table. Wesley allowed the unconverted at the Lord's table provided they were conscious of their utter sinfulness and helplessness and were seeking God's grace. In his day many argued that the Lord's Supper was a *confirming*, not a *converting* ordinance and

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[1] However, when Godbey wrote his commentaries for the holiness people (Godbey 1909, 366), he taught two works of grace at Acts 2:38. The gift of the Holy Spirit was to be sanctified wholly (Godbey 5:65). In 1911 Godbey participated in a debate on water baptism and the baptism with the Holy Ghost. He argued at one point that the water ordinance is only a sign or symbol of the real baptism—the baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, at another point in the debate Godbey argued for two works of grace—the birth of the Spirit and the baptism with the Holy Ghost. He said Spirit baptism and sanctification meant the same thing. The context of the statement indicates he was referring to entire sanctification, when "the old man got burned up" (McWherter, 7-9; 15-16).

"that none but those who are converted, who have received the Holy Ghost, who are believers in the full sense, ought to communicate." However, Wesley pointed out that when the Lord's Supper was instituted the disciples were "then *unconverted*, who had *not* yet 'received the Holy Ghost', who (in the full sense of the word) were not *believers*..." (Wesley, *Works* 19:158; See also 9:112).

To this day the invitation to the Lord's Table in the Wesleyan and Free Methodist (but not Nazarene) disciplines call both those who are walking in fellowship with God and those who truly and earnestly repent of sin and intend to lead a new life (Staples 1991, 251-263). This is in contrast to the Calvinistic view that only those with a credible profession of faith should be allowed at the Lord's table (Berkhof 656-7; Saucy 229-31). While the Calvinistic position allowed at the Lord's table only those who professed saving faith, Wesley allowed those who were awakened and seeking God. This important distinction was based on his understanding that the disciples were unregenerate prior to Pentecost and yet they had received the Lord's Supper at the hand of Jesus. The basic premise on which this conclusion rests is that the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and became New Testament believers at that time. Therefore, Wesley connected the new birth and the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

II. The Connection Between Entire Sanctification and Spirit Baptism in the American Holiness Movement

John Fletcher should not be understood as contradicting the Methodist tradition. While he did connect the baptism of the Holy Ghost and Christian perfection (Tyerman 180-185), he also exhorted seekers, promising them: "You shall be baptized by the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins, and justified freely by faith" (Fletcher 4:115). He saw both regeneration and Christian perfection as accomplished through baptisms of the Holy Spirit. Fletcher concluded: "If one powerful baptism of the Spirit 'seal you unto the day of redemption, and cleanse you from all (moral) filthiness,' so much the better. If two or more be necessary, the Lord can repeat them" (Fletcher 2:632).

It was not simply Fletcher's emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit which created the nineteenth-century holiness movement. The holiness movement came about through an emphasis on a subsequent work of the Spirit coupled with a tendency to minimize initial sanctification, an

insistence that this second work of the Spirit must be instantaneous, and that it results in a permanent state of holiness.[2]

A. The Influence of Charles Finney. Although Charles G. Finney described his own conversion as "a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost," (Finney 1882, 20; see also Grider 66) his theology forced him to separate this experience from regeneration, even though it occurred the same evening as his conversion (Finney 1944, 9; see also Hills 21).

It is ironic that Finney had so much influence on Wesleyanism since he differed from Wesleyanism at so many points. Finney did not accept the doctrine of original sin (Finney *Theology*, 172). He believed humankind has the ability to repent and trust in Christ. Regeneration, according to him, is a change in the attitude of the will. However, after regeneration Christians find themselves falling back into sin and needing to enter into the state of entire sanctification. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is the means of establishing the believer in a life of permanent sanctification (Finney 1944, 37-9; see also Gresham 33-35).

Finney stated that he could not receive "the view of sanctification entertained by our Methodist brethren" (Finney 1876, 340). Yet, according to the evaluation of Timothy L. Smith, "the man chiefly responsible for the adoption by American Wesleyans of the terms 'filling' or 'baptism of the Spirit' to describe the experience of sanctification was Charles G. Finney" (Smith 1979, 23).

B. The Controversy over Phoebe Palmer. According to Charles Edwin Jones, "While the holiness movement always regarded John Wesley as its great authority, the movement owed many of its distinctive ideas and practices to Phoebe Palmer" (Jones 5). Palmer not only equated the baptism of the Spirit and entire sanctification, but taught that "there is a shorter way" to the blessing of entire sanctification (Palmer 15). This "shorter way" amounted to a three-stage process: entire consecration, faith, and testimony. She claimed that no one need any evidence other than the biblical text to be assured of entire sanctification. Nathan Bangs, bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, confronted Palmer about her teachings. Bangs warned against claiming the work was done without any evidence of the Holy Spirit.[3]

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[2] This is discussed in greater detail in Reasoner, *Spirit* 60-67; Reasoner, *Hole* 67-70.

[3] Stevens 396-402. This account has been reprinted as Appendix B in Stackpole 79-86. See also the critique by Foster 209-210.

In *Theological Transition in American Methodism*, Robert E. Chiles observes that one of the major shifts in emphasis was from free grace to free will (Chiles 144-183). Both Finney's concept of regeneration and Palmer's teaching on sanctification are based more on human works than on divine grace. Yet, through the combined influences of Charles Finney and Phoebe Palmer, the holiness movement began "at about the year 1835" (Grider 62). Timothy L. Smith reports: "So successful were they in identifying sanctification with Methodist orthodoxy that opponents were hard pressed to find ground upon which to stand without laying themselves open to the charge of heresy."[4]

C. The Solidification under J. A. Wood. The solidification of the holiness movement is seen in the career of J. A. Wood. In 1861 Wood originally published *Perfect Love* in which he quoted from some eighty other theologians. The original edition of *Perfect Love* was written six years prior to the organization of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness in 1867 and contains a breadth not found in his later writings.

Fifteen years later, in 1876, Wood wrote *Purity and Maturity*, which he claimed to be a defense of Wesleyan doctrine. Wood asserted that "it is necessary that we keep in mind the idea that GROWTH, PURITY, and MATURITY are distinct" (Wood 1876, 157). He contended that *purity* is a state arrived at by an instantaneous second experience. It cannot be obtained by growth in grace. After the crisis experience we then grow into maturity.[5] Wood, however, had little to say about maturity in *Purity and Maturity*. It was not until his 1880 revision of *Perfect Love*, which is about one-third larger than the first edition, that Wood "viewed entire sanctification as being wrought by the Spirit baptism" (Grider 22). Grider

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[4] Smith 1962, 21. In 1852 the Pastoral Address in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church issued a warning concerning "new theories, new expressions, and new measures." In 1878 D. D. Whedon, editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review* warned that the holiness movement was not Wesleyan in emphasis. In 1880 W. B. Pope cautioned against the modern trend to teach a pentecostal visitation superadded to the state of conversion. In 1894 the bishops' address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church warned about the divisiveness of the holiness movement. These citations are given in Reasoner, *Spirit* 71-74.

[5] The irony is that in *Perfect Love* Wood had written, "The approach to entire sanctification may be gradual" (Wood 1880, 19; see also p. 82). James Mudge reacted to Wood (Mudge 228).

also notes that in the second edition Wood is even more vigorous in his opposition to gradual sanctification (Grider 100).

While Wood compiled *Christian Perfection as Taught by John Wesley* in 1885, he tended to use only quotes from Wesley with which he agreed. For example, chapter 8 is entitled, "Sanctification Instantaneous, by Faith, and Not by Growth in Grace." Leo Cox observes that Wesley did not make the same distinction that Wood made, noting that "where Wood emphasized the instantaneous character of cleansing as in a moment, Wesley was more insistent on a gradual cleansing from the beginning of sanctification at regeneration to its completion in entire sanctification" (Cox 93).

However, by 1905 Wood could claim his distinction between purity and maturity "relieves the subject of entire sanctification of difficulties which have perplexed many good men.... It also harmonizes some conflicting items in Mr. Wesley's works on Christian Perfection" (Wood 1905, 73). With the passage of time Wood developed a more rigid doctrinal position which justified the existence of the holiness movement. This position was perpetuated through most of the twentieth century as "Wesleyan."

Under the section "Baptism with the Holy Spirit," *The Wesley Bible* states: "Entire sanctification is a second definite work of grace wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer subsequently [sic] to regeneration, received instantaneously by faith, by which the heart is cleansed from all corruption and filled with the perfect love of God" (Harper 1990). This, however, is not the teaching of John Wesley, but the writing of A. M. Hills, based upon the theology of J. A. Wood and others within the holiness movement, which was adopted by the General Holiness Assembly in 1885. This statement served unofficially as the "apostles' creed" of the holiness movement (Peters, 162), yet George Failing recognized this definition was not Wesleyan and asked, "Can any comparable definition be found in Wesley's works?" (Failing 23).

III. The Growing Discontentment with the Holiness Status Quo and the Rediscovery of Wesley

J. Kenneth Grider wrote that prior to the 1970s "perhaps not a single book was authored by a holiness scholar in the previous 100 years or so that had not taken the position that Pentecost was the time of entire sanctification of the 120 disciples" (Grider 89-90). Grider, no doubt, was

unaware of some of the growing discontentment within the Holiness movement because those who did not take the "party line" tended to be ostracized.

A. The Case of A. J. Smith. Aaron Jacob Smith (1887-1960) was brought up in a Christian home and professed to have been converted in 1907. Five years later he attended college at University Park, Iowa, and professed to be sanctified. He went to China as a missionary under the Church of the Nazarene. While in China he read John Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* and realized he had never been born again. He experienced the new birth in March, 1927. He wrote: "I had come to teach the Chinese the way of Life and how to live holy lives, and found that I was not converted nor sanctified myself." When he got honest before God and his co-workers, both Chinese and American church leaders began confessing sin and revival broke out in China (A. J. Smith 1929, 65).

Smith gave his testimony in *Twenty Years in the Dungeon of Doubt and How I Got Out*, stating: "I am convinced of the fact that there are millions of church members who are living merely on an intellectual presumption.... I believe there are tens of thousands of church members in the Holiness churches who either have never been truly born of God, or have lost out, and are today living merely on past experiences" (A. J. Smith, *Twenty* 25). However, Smith said that when he confessed to his denomination that he was born again in China, "my ecclesiastical head was cut off." He suffered no persecution until he was truly born again, but after his conversion he was a "speckled bird" among the holiness people (A. J. Smith 1953, 55).

Smith became president of Intercession City Bible College, then associated with the People's Christian Movement (later called the People's Methodist Church) and was dean of their school at Greensboro, NC, now John Wesley College at Highpoint, NC (Sawyer). Around 1948 he collaborated with Elmer Long to compile a twelve-page tract entitled *The Holy Spirit and the Born Again Man*. However, his teaching was opposed by John R. Church. A. L. Vess also wrote in response *Were the Disciples Born Again Before Pentecost?* The inferences by Vess fail to grasp the real meaning of regeneration and he makes no attempt to demonstrate that anyone received the Holy Spirit before Pentecost.

It is also ironic that John R. Church wrote a booklet defending sprinkling as a legitimate mode of water baptism. His purpose was to equip

Methodists who were baptized by affusion, but could not defend their baptism against the arguments of immersionists. He lamented, "There are many people in the Methodist Church today, who have no clear-cut conception as to why they have been baptized by affusion" (Church 6). He argued from scriptural example that affusion was practiced in the early church, but never explained its significance in relationship to Spirit baptism. He contended that the birth of the Holy Spirit and the baptism with the Holy Spirit were two separate experiences (Church 31), which actually weakened his argument for affusion.

A. J. Smith eventually received his Ph. D. from Harvard University and led an expedition in search of Noah's ark in 1949.[6] In 1951 Dr. Smith promised before a panel meeting in Greensboro "to refrain from making any further statements about the matter of the Disciples and their spiritual state before and after Pentecost." However, after studying the scriptures and the writings of Wesley, Clarke, and Fletcher, he retracted that promise (A. J. Smith 1953, 18-19). Smith was dismissed from the college, but the director, Jim Green, later apologized publicly to Smith at Camp Free near Valdese, NC.

Elmer Long was tried in 1947 for teaching that all believers had the Holy Spirit (Long 1995; see also Long 1993). His writings have also been banned at some Holiness camp meetings.

B. The Rediscovery of Wesley. When Zondervan reprinted the works of John Wesley in 1958, students within the Holiness movement began discovering the inconsistencies between Wesleyan doctrine and the Holiness movement. Rob Staples reported that he first became aware of the shift in the early 1960s (Staples 1979, 2).

I have interviewed several pastors who did not have the educational background Staples had, but nonetheless began reading Wesley for themselves in the late 1960s. As a result they experienced the new birth personally. Sometimes revival came within their congregations, but always they encountered intense opposition.

In 1979 a few concerned pastors formed the Fundamental Wesleyan Society in an attempt to proclaim the historic Wesleyan soteriology. Their purpose statement declared that "there has been among second-blessing

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[6] It is reported that A. J. Smith organized the first Western expedition to Mt. Ararat in postwar years (Tim LaHaye and John Morris, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, *The Ark of Ararat*, 1976, pp. 119-125).

holiness churches a serious deviation from the scriptural teaching developed by John Wesley and early Methodist writers ... [that] has led to a shallow preaching of the new birth and consequently, a confusion has developed concerning Christian experience ... [leading] many to profess salvation without victory over the power of sin nor a direct witness of the Holy Spirit; and others to profess entire sanctification without being made perfect in love" (Brown *Arminian*, 6).

Herbert McGonigle's 1973 article, "Pneumatological Nomenclature in Early Methodism," was a wake-up call in the academic community demonstrating that early Methodism did not emphasize the baptism with the Holy Spirit as the equivalent of entire sanctification. Subsequent articles in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* dealt with this issue both pro and con from either an exegetical, historical, or theological framework. While scholars were sometimes accused of debating an irrelevant issue, those at the grassroots level often laid their reputations on the line and were accused of ignorance.

C. The Holiness Paradigm. Far more is at stake than a hermeneutical question of how to interpret Acts 2. The holiness movement has created its own distinct method of exegesis. For example, W. E. Sangster's list of Wesley's primary texts for Christian perfection did not include even one text from the book of Acts (Sangster 37-52). As research for my dissertation, I surveyed the Inter-church Holiness Convention and asked a 5% random sampling of ministers within the movement to list the three main holiness texts they used in preaching on entire sanctification. The two most popular IHC texts were Hebrews 12:14 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3, neither of which will bear the weight placed upon them, but evidently were popular because they contain the word "holiness" or "sanctification." Four texts from Acts were on the IHC list (1:8; 2:4; 15:8-9; 19:2). The implication from their use of these texts is that believers do not yet have the Holy Spirit.

In comparing Wesley's list with the top seventeen texts listed from the IHC survey, only six texts were on both lists. Sixty-five percent of the IHC texts are not on Wesley's list. Wesley used 19 texts not on the IHC list. Between the two lists there is an agreement on only 17% of the texts.

The modern Holiness movement also tends to use Romans 7 to demonstrate a Christian needing entire sanctification. This exegesis depreciates the victory of the new birth and contradicts James Arminius,

as well as historic Methodism (Arminius, 2:195-453; Wesley 1754, 359; Clarke, 6:86,92; Fletcher, 2:529-537; Watson, 2:249; 451-2). A. J. Smith observed: "Only a small percentage of the holiness people know what Mr. Wesley taught. What the holiness preacher today holds up as the standard of entire sanctification and the conditions for its attainment, Mr. Wesley calls Holy Ghost conviction and conversion" (A. J. Smith 1953, 65).

The nineteenth-century American holiness movement developed a new emphasis which tended to discount initial sanctification, emphasize a second crisis experience without acknowledging progressive sanctification, explain Christian perfection in terms of a perfected state, not perfecting grace, and equated Spirit baptism with Christian perfection. Many have come forward to an altar of prayer and have been told they were born again. They left in an awakened state without the Holy Spirit, who gives victory over sin, nor any direct assurance of the Spirit. Realizing they needed something more, they were counseled that they needed the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They were told to claim this blessing and testify to it. It is quite possible that many have claimed two works of grace while still remaining in a pre-Christian state. In their disillusionment some adopted rationalizations and legalism as their justification, while others sought physical manifestations and emotional excesses (Snyder 72-73).

In comparing historic Methodism with the modern Holiness movement, Wesley Tracy said the holiness movement pressures people into a premature profession of sanctification. He said there are "tens of thousands of persons who were rushed prematurely into testifying to an experience that they have never understood, felt a need for, or permitted God to prepare them for. In contrast, the early Wesleyans "were *quick* to *seek* sanctifying grace but *slow* to *profess* it" (Tracy 7).

D. The Wesleyan paradigm. The classic Wesleyan paradigm taught that the natural condition of humankind is spiritual sleep. Through the prevenient grace of God we are awakened to our helpless condition. Wesley used such terms as "the almost Christian," "the faith of a servant," or "the legal state." C. Leslie Mitton explained: "Wesley was convinced that there were many devout and earnest people who never passed beyond this earlier state. In fact, he describes it in his *Journal* as 'the state most who are called Christians are content to live and die in.'"[7] Saving faith, which

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[7] Mitton 16. For a more modern attempt to describe the Wesleyan paradigm, see Brush.

comes as a gift to those who have truly repented and believed on the finished work of Christ, leads to "the altogether Christian," "the faith of a son," "the evangelical state."

Through saving faith we are justified and receive the witness of the Spirit that we are accepted. We are born again through the baptism with the Holy Spirit. This is not our final goal, but strictly speaking, the beginning of the race. From this start we press on to perfect love or Christian perfection.

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SUPERNATURAL AND SANCTIFICATION: COMPARISON OF ROMAN CATHOLIC AND WESLEYAN VIEWS

by
John E. Culp

The diversity of claims to truth in the contemporary world demand a way to distinguish among the options for belief. This diversity also exists in Christian theology and challenges the church in its struggle to identify the truth. Wesleyans have experienced this in the tension among different ideas about what constitutes the "Evangelical" movement of the twentieth century. As the debate about how to identify orthodoxy in Christian thought continues,[1] it will become increasingly important to be clear about the criteria that determine consistency and coherency in a theological tradition.

The concept of the supernatural appears to function as an important criterion in contemporary Evangelical theology and apologetics for determining what is orthodox. The response to the question about the reality of the supernatural identifies the orthodoxy of the system and its coherence with the Christian tradition. The variety of understandings of the supernatural requires careful reflection about the meaning of the term in order to avoid accepting understandings which are inconsistent with the Wesleyan theological tradition. In attempting to think through the various

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[1] See Clark Pinnock, et. al., *The Openness of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994). This book openly raises the issue of which understanding of God in contemporary Evangelicalism is the most faithful to biblical Christianity. See Randy Maddox (1994, 56) for a concise summary of the difference between Wesley and Calvinistic concepts of God.

understandings of the supernatural, Wesleyan theology confronts the difficulty that it lacks a concept of the supernatural that was self-consciously developed. Thus, finding a compatible concept of the supernatural can aid in defining the supernatural in a manner which coheres with Wesleyan theology.

Roman Catholic theology offers a concept of the supernatural developed through extensive discussions since the early middle ages. On one hand, intriguing similarities exist between the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural and the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification. On the other hand, the importance of the doctrine of sanctification to Wesleyan theology makes it a valuable point of departure in the effort to think carefully about coherency within the Wesleyan tradition. Further, the doctrine of sanctification provides a concrete expression of assumptions about God, human freedom, and the God/world relation which are crucial to a concept of the supernatural.

Describing and comparing these two doctrines shows that the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural and the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification share a common understanding of God's presence in human existence. It is an existence that enables humans to experience a relationship with God that carries out God's purposes in the world. This idea of God's presence can assist the Wesleyan tradition in avoiding a concept of the supernatural which denies the significance of human action. Avoiding a concept of the supernatural which conflicts with the Wesleyan concern for human salvation, and thus the significance of human action, can enable Wesleyans to maintain in a coherent manner both human freedom and the importance of God for the world. Consistent development of Wesleyan theology will assist in making it an effective voice in a pluralistic context where coherency is judged a significant criterion for the adequacy of belief.

The doctrine of sanctification seeks to describe how a believer is enabled to live for God in a world without God so that the world may know and come to have communion with God. While individual affirmation is important in achieving this goal, a focus on individual achievement in sanctification misunderstands the purpose of the doctrine and has contributed to the contemporary loss of emphasis on the doctrine in Wesleyan churches. Only as the focus is returned to the presence of God in human lives, enabling them to live for God, can the doctrine of sanctification continue to have meaning in the contemporary world.

The Roman Catholic Doctrine of the Supernatural

The term "supernatural" is used in a variety of ways. In popular usage it refers to what is unusual and beyond the ordinary. The comic "Superman" provides an obvious example of this type of understanding. More philosophical and theological understandings of "supernatural" refer to superior substances and surpassing effects (Kenny 96). "Nature," that which the supernatural is beyond or surpasses, refers to the resources and capacity of a thing (Kenny 4). The natural may be surpassed by either an enhancement of what is present in the natural[2] or by divine action.

In Roman Catholic theology, the supernatural refers only to the surpassing of natural capabilities due to divine action (Kenny 5). The most adequate definition of the term "supernatural" in Roman Catholic theology is that it does not refer to a type of existence which is different from human existence and composed of superior substances or surpassing effects, but to a new relationship to God (Kenny 96). Thus, God and Christ are not referred to as supernatural beings because the supernatural is the presence of God and Christ in the Church through holy living, the sacraments, and the conviction of sinners (Kenny 14).

The history of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural reveals a diversity of understandings. But this history also demonstrates a development in understanding what is meant by the divine presence. Building on the early scholastic concern[3] with the presence of the supernatural, Thomas articulated the doctrine of the supernatural as divine presence. Nominalism then shifted the understanding of the supernatural to an emphasis upon divine power. The modern understanding of the supernatural joins the concepts of presence and power and describes God's presence as both metaphysical and volitional, as both the presence and power of the divine will (Kenny 127-128, Maddox 1987, 3).

The Roman Catholic understanding of the relationship between the supernatural and the natural further develops the doctrine of the supernatural. Roman Catholic theology emphasizes the presence of the supernatural in the natural rather than the distinction between the supernatural and the natural. Emphasizing the presence of the supernatural in the natural retains the importance of God for the created world. Without the super-

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[2] This often is referred to as the preternatural in Catholic theology and is distinguished from the supernatural.

[3] The doctrine is not found in Biblical or Patristic texts, but emerges in scholastic thought in the 11th century (Kenny 3).

natural, the natural lacks a goal or purpose for existence. The natural by itself cannot overcome the limits that define its existence and nature.

The presence of the supernatural is especially important for human existence. When the focus is on the distinction between the supernatural and the natural rather than the presence of the supernatural in the natural, the supernatural becomes irrelevant for the natural because of the separation between it and the natural (de Lubac xi, 45-48). Such a separation makes much more difficult to resolve the metaphysical problems associated with doctrines such as the Incarnation and sanctification, which express God's presence.

In contrast to much modern Protestant thought, the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural occurs in the context of the Holy Spirit's activity in human existence rather than in the context of the nature of God. The supernatural is considered under the rubric of sanctifying grace.[4] This context gives additional evidence that the doctrine addresses the presence of God in human existence rather than the nature of God's existence. God gratuitously grants the supernatural in order to fulfill human, or non-divine, existence (Royo 637).

The central theme of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural is that human existence achieves its ultimate goal of deification[5] through God's presence in the realm of the human. Roman Catholic theology holds that the goal of human existence is God (de Lubac 149). This goal defines human existence and gives it purpose. Theologically this is accomplished by seeing that God as God is in God's self (de Lubac 217). The beatific vision allows a person to see God as three-personed (Kenny 84). God makes this beatific vision and union with God possible through God's supernatural presence in human life.

Deification occurs as a result of the increasingly specific presence of divine action as divine grace. This grace first becomes present in creation. In God's act of creation God provides for the possibility that all existence can accommodate the divine presence. The natural world was created with an openness to the divine (de Lubac 31-42). God created human beings as

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[4] See the Table of Contents in Royo where the supernatural is considered in the chapter entitled "Sanctifying Grace."

[5] The concept of "deification" comes from the Greek theological tradition and indicates that human existence becomes like God. Catholic theologians recognize the influence of Greek theology on the doctrine of the supernatural (de Lubac 275, Kenny 12).

part of that creation with the gift of the capability for an ontological relationship with God (Kenny 87, de Lubac 239). Thirteenth-century Roman Catholic theology referred to this as created grace present in human existence (Kenny 42). Created grace makes it clear that the possibility of union with God does not occur because of human nature or effort.

In the Incarnation, God acts more directly in human existence to make it possible for humans to experience God. Ontological union with God in Roman Catholic theology became possible because God became human in the Incarnation. God became human in Christ so that humans could become divine in Christ (de Lubac 26-30). The goal of human existence involves a becoming divine. The divine substance gave itself to human substance (Kenny 87). This giving is clearly understood as the expression of divine love.

Deification through the presence of God becomes specific to each individual in the grace given to each person. Grace, as a gift from God, frees the individual from the influence of sin so that the will to know God can be realized (de Lubac 239). Without divine grace, human existence would be frustrated by being directed to the goal of God without the will to know God. This hope of an individual relation to God avoided the extremes of pessimism and optimism found in ancient thought-which fluctuated between submission to fate and belief that human existence was unlimited (de Lubac 149).

The supernatural presence of God thus brings incorporation into the mystery of Christ through the love of God (Kenny 6). Deification became possible as a result of God's initiative in creating, in becoming human in the Incarnation as a result of God's love for created human existence, and in giving grace to the individual. Thus, there is a clear understanding that the experience of supernatural existence is not the result of human effort or a matter of fulfilling human abilities.

The process of incorporation into the divine, the means by which divinization occurs, has been described since the time of Thomas (Kenny 49) as participation in the divine. Participation has been described as both becoming part of and inadequately expressing a superior perfection by an inferior thing (Royo 32-33). It is not the activity of the human making itself divine. Instead, participation occurs through divine activity making it possible for the human to share in the divine nature. Through grace, humans seek God, but this searching requires a basis, a nature, which is divine by participation.

Becoming like God through participation in God, however, is more than a metaphor or an occasional similarity.[6] Humans do not just become like the divine, they share in the divine. And they share in the divine in more than one or two aspects. To experience the supernatural is more than merely being creative, or personal, or loving. Sharing in the divine nature involves both ontological and volitional aspects of human existence. Human existence experiences an ontological change due to its created capacity, given through grace, for sharing in the divine (McBrien 152). This change occurs through the presence of the supernatural. The indwelling of God is an effective, physical and ontological union as well as an intentional union (Kenny 87). But this divinization does not lead to a loss of identity or personal integrity. Ontological union with God, the unity of human and divine existence, is not a substantial union but an accidental union, meaning that it depends on God's grace rather than on human substance (Kenny 87). Thus it is not a union of identity whereby the human becomes divine and ceases to be human. This avoids the position that humans somehow are considered divine without a change in the human being.

Modern understandings of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural directly address this issue by dealing with the volitional aspect of human participation in the divine. The supernatural frees the human will from sin so that it can seek God. The supernatural does not destroy or change the human will into the divine will. From the perspective of contemporary Roman Catholic theology, the most significant characteristic of the supernatural presence of the divine is this personal and relational aspect rather than the ontological or substantial aspect (Fiorenza 118, Kenny 120).

Roman Catholic theology refers to the role of the Holy Spirit in responding to the logical difficulties of the metaphysical claim that human nature becomes divine. The Holy Spirit is crucial as God's self-

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[6] The term "theosis" or divinization can be understood in three ways: as pantheistic union, metaphorically and extrinsically, or literally and intrinsically. Orthodox thought understands "theosis" literally as participation in God's activities and characteristics without a confusion of substance or loss of identity. Protestant thought generally takes a metaphorical approach and Roman Catholic theology leans in the direction of the Orthodox understanding. See Kevin Meagher, Thomas O'Brien, and Consuelo Aherne, *1979, Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion, vol.* 3 (Washington, DC.: Corpus Publications), 3507.

communication. Divine self-communication to the created realm allows an overcoming of the metaphysical impossibility of the divine being present in the finite realm (Kenny 89-90). This contrasts with the Greek solution where humans are immortal because of their nature apart from the divine. The presence of an immortal soul in human existence makes possible the Greek concept of immortality (de Lubac 154). The Roman Catholic concept understands the basis for human supernatural existence as the result of a possibility which is external to human nature. This possibility depends on God's creative and special grace (de Lubac 155).

In summary, the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural holds that human existence can be united with the divine, with God, resulting in a change both in being and in purpose. This union with God does not destroy the integrity of human existence and does not come about solely through human nature or effort. The Trinity brings this relationship about through creation, Incarnation, and special grace. This supernatural existence is the goal for human existence and enables human beings to fulfill their goal. Thus, the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural describes the relationship of divine nature with the human rather than a state of nature, or a type of existence which is separate from human existence. For Catholics, the supernatural is not a characteristic of the being of God, but the presence of God in human existence.

The purpose or function of this doctrine is to account for the goal of human existence and how it is possible to achieve this goal. In the historical context of modern thought, where the concept of the self as individual was developing, this doctrine emphasized the importance of personal relationship with God, first in terms of being and then in terms of action. By implication, then, the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural includes the possibility and responsibility of acting on behalf of God. This action on behalf of God becomes the expression of God's specific action in the present context.

The Wesleyan Doctrine of Sanctification

Any presentation of the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification faces the initial issue of which doctrine of sanctification-John Wesley's, American Methodism's, or the Holiness Movement's? The vitality of the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification, expressed in this variety of understandings and emphases, does not destroy a common understanding of the doctrine. This commonality can be seen in the terms that recent inter-

preters from different branches of the Wesleyan tradition use to structure their discussion of sanctification.

William Greathouse, a Nazarene speaking from one perspective of the American holiness movement, deals with "Sanctification and the Order of Salvation," "The Path to Perfection," "The Development of Wesley's Doctrine, Christian Perfection," and "The Sanctifying Spirit" (Greathouse 208-231). Melvin Dieter, representing another part of the American holiness movement, describes sanctification by discussing the theological themes of "Original Sin and Prevenient Grace," "The Continuum of Law and Love," and "The Nature and Work of the Holy Spirit" (Dieter 21-29). Randy Maddox, writing as a United Methodist influenced by the holiness movement, treats sanctification as part of "the way of salvation" by treating "New Birth," "Growth in Grace," "Christian Perfection," and "Glorification" (Maddox 1994, 176-191). John Cobb, Jr., writing as a United Methodist in a chapter entitled "The Way of Salvation, II; God's Transformative Work," describes sanctification by using the categories "The New Birth," "Sanctification," and "Perfect Love" (Cobb 97-114). The themes of perfection, love, the Holy Spirit, a connection to salvation, and recognition of growth occur throughout these treatments of the doctrine of sanctification, indicating a common understanding which has been expressed in a variety of ways.

The Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification stresses the believer's empowerment by God for holy living and action. Sanctification describes the Christian life following justification. The experience of sanctification develops out of being made right with God through God's forgiveness. The doctrine of sanctification is not a doctrine which competes with, or replaces, the importance of the person's initial trust in God's forgiveness. While Wesley saw sanctification as the special responsibility o€ Methodists, he was very clear that the doctrine of sanctification assumed the reconciliation of sinners with God through Christ's atonement (Maddox, 1994, 170,176).

The Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification involves three stages. The first stage begins with the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the person who believes that God forgives (Greathouse 212). This aspect of sanctification is referred to as "initial sanctification" and consists of the work of the Holy Spirit in moving the individual to a more complete involvement in God's purposes and life. At this initial stage, the Holy Spirit establishes the love of God and neighbor as the basis for the new life which is experienced through justification (Cobb 98).

By responding to the direction and presence of the Holy Spirit, the believer experiences further spiritual growth (Maddox, 1994, 122). This further growth brings the believer to the realization that God offers a new level of fellowship. This level is the level of conscious commitment to loving God. Referred to as perfect love or entire sanctification by Wesley, this is the stage most distinctive of Wesleyan theology, but it is not seen as the entire experience of sanctification. The final stage of sanctification is glorification. Maddox describes these stages as moving from forgiveness for sin to deliverance from the power of sin to removal from the presence of sin (Maddox, 1994, 144). The three stages of sanctification demonstrate the significance of the action of the Holy Spirit in sanctification for all of Christian experience.

The need for sanctification arises because justification deals with the guilt from sin, but does not deal with the ongoing life of the Christian. The Christian lives a life of forgiveness. However, in living a life based on forgiveness, the Christian discovers the continuing influence of sin. The Wesleyan understanding of sanctification is that the experience of forgiveness for sin is not the final word that can be said about a person's relationship with God (Greathouse 215). Maddox describes this level of existence as experiencing the "plague of sin" (1994, 144). Forgiveness does not remove the presence of sin nor give the believer the resources to resist the influence of sin. Cobb says that the believer finds that the "unregenerate nature, with all of its perceptions and habits, is far from obliterated. It resists the newly dominant love" (98). God desires more for the Christian than repeated experiences of sin and forgiveness.

A comparison between Wesleyan and other understandings of the relationship between justification and sanctification highlights the distinctiveness of the Wesleyan concept of the role of sanctification in the Christian life. While Roman Catholic theology often requires the transformed moral life in order for justification to occur, Wesleyan theology holds that the transformation of life follows justification. In contrast to Lutheran understandings which hold that sanctification results from justification and is never complete until resurrection, Wesleyans expect that moral transformation involves significant change in the life of the Christian prior to death. Calvinists distinguish sanctification from justification and do not require sanctification for justification, but Wesleyans see sanctification as the vital completion of God's grace first experienced in justification (Maddox, 1994, 169). The doctrine of sanctification is crucial to Christian experience in the Wesleyan tradition.

The result of sanctification in the life of the believer is a life of perfect love resulting from the love showed by God to the believer (Greathouse 208). The believer lives in relationship with others in a manner demonstrating perfect love (Greathouse 226). The heart of what is claimed is that the Christian lives a life which has been changed in terms of its motivation. Sanctification ends the inner struggle to do God's will (Dieter 17). Life becomes motivated by the desire to do God's will, to love, rather than to do one's own will, by acting out of self-interest. This perfection is described at times as participation in God (Maddox, 1994, 132) or a restoration of the image of God in the life of the believer.

Development or maturation describes the experience of sanctification most adequately. Wesley held that there was no perfection which could not be improved *(Plain Account* 23). Sanctification involves a process which Outler described as "perfecting" not "perfected" (Peters "Foreword"). Maddox uses the terms "character formation" and ."therapeutic" to convey the sense that sanctification is a process of becoming perfect rather than a juridical declaration of being perfect (Maddox, 1994, 23). Sanctification, he adds, is not the achievement of a certain state even in terms of motivation (1994, 122).

This emphasis on a process of motivational development appears to conflict with Wesley's interest in the instantaneous achievement of entire sanctification. This tension has led some interpreters to describe Wesley's view as one of process, crisis, and process (Dieter 42). Maddox explains that Wesley's interest in the instantaneous aspect of entire sanctification comes from his concern to make clear that sanctification is the result of divine grace. Wesley thought it was necessary to say that there is a specific act on God's part which sanctifies the believer (Maddox, 1994, 189). Whether or not sanctification is instantaneous is not important in terms of the experience of the believer. Maintaining God's initiative is the crucial concern. Wesley himself held that there is both a gradual and an instantaneous aspect to entire sanctification *(Plain Account* 62). Contemporary holiness interpreters, as a result of the context of revivalism, have stressed the instantaneous aspect as a means of encouraging believers to make a commitment to loving God (Dieter 38). It does not seem necessary to require the instantaneous as the only way to retain either divine initiative or human commitment. On the other hand, as long as the emphasis on the instantaneous aspect of sanctification does not lead to unrealistic expecta-

tions of the sanctified life,[7] the divine initiative and human decision can be expressed in an understanding of sanctification as instantaneous. Keeping in mind the basic nature of sanctification as a developing reality helps resolve numerous debates about the nature of the sanctified life, its initiation, and its attainment or development. These debates grow out of attempts to explain the basic doctrine of sanctification in more detail. The sanctified person has been enabled by God's grace to move beyond the type of existence which remains subject to the power of sin. The issue is claiming enough without claiming too much (Cobb 101). Wesley established the position that the sanctified person is not changed from a person who makes decisions which may be sinful to a person who can never choose again to go against God's will. It is always possible for the sanctified person to choose to act in a way which does not express God's perfect love (Wesley, *Plain Account*, 94-95). The sanctified person is not a person who has achieved a level of perfection in behavior or relationship with God which will never improve. Finally, this perfection is a perfection which may still act in a manner which harms other people. The actions of the sanctified person who is responding wholeheartedly to God's grace grow out of the intention to love God perfectly. But that motivation does not rule out the possibility of misunderstandings and misinformation. Actions based on inadequate information may fail to express God's love.

Perfection does not mean perfect knowledge. Further, perfection does not require perfection even of motivation. A person may act out of a habit or learned response in a manner which does not demonstrate love even though the desire is to demonstrate love. When persons become aware of influences that lead them not to love God and neighbor, their intent to love God and neighbor leads them to seek a change in those influences that seek any other goal. This requires a decision on the part of the person to choose to continue to act on God's grace or to act on the basis of a motivation other than loving God. The problem with the expectation that perfection means never again doing the wrong thing or even never again being motivated to do the wrong thing is that sanctification is a renewal of the affections which are the basis for our decisions. It does

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[7] Cobb regrets that the emphasis on the instantaneous nature of sanctification has led at times to untenable positions emphasizing attainment of a state of perfection. According to Cobb, this has led much of Methodism to abandon the doctrine of perfection (109-111).

not refer to external actions, whether they are the avoidance of sin or the doing of good (Maddox, 1994, 132).

Wesleyan thought about the means of sanctification consistently attributes sanctification to divine grace (Cobb 108). God takes the initiative in prevenient grace by means of convicting and freeing the person's will from the effect of sin so that a choice to accept God's forgiveness becomes possible (Cobb 98, Dieter 24). God continues to take the initiative in entire sanctification through the work of the Holy Spirit cleansing the believer from the influence of sin and enabling the believer to love God and neighbor perfectly. God supervises the maturation process of character formation in the person who has been perfected in love. Wesley's understanding of God's grace includes two aspects, pardon and power. God's grace as pardon, for Wesley, was part of God's grace as power. Thus, God's grace pardons the sinner and God's grace as power enables the sinner to make the response to God's pardon which makes entire sanctification actual (Maddox, 1994, 119).

At the same time that the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification firmly holds to God's initiative in sanctification, it also clearly maintains the importance of the human response to God's grace. God's grace does not bring about the doing of God's will in the believer's life (Maddox, 1994, 22). God's grace frees the believer from sin so that doing God's will is possible; God's grace also empowers the believer to do God's will, with the believer becoming responsible to choose to do God's will.[8] The believer's willing response to God's love brings the believer into a deeper relationship with God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Maddox, 1994, 122). This ongoing human involvement is the basis for growing maturity in sanctification and avoids the problems associated with thinking of sanctification as a state which is achieved and then goes unchanged. Understanding perfection as a state which does not change reflects an understanding of God which tends to emphasize God's distance from human existence and deny human involvement in God's purposes and action.

To summarize, the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification describes the goal of Christian existence as a choice to live a life empowered by God's

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[8] Two of the most significant recent books on Wesleyan theology include the term "responsible" in their titles. They are Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, and John Cobb, *Grace and Responsibility*.

grace through the Holy Spirit. The sanctified person responds to God's offer of pardon and empowerment by loving God and neighbors. This is a life of continuing maturation in the commitment to perfect love through responding to the experience of God's love. There is a clear recognition of the necessity of divine initiative and human response.

Similarities of Roman Catholic and Wesleyan Concepts

The differences between the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural and the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification, and the differences in the terminology used to express them, may obscure their similarities. The references to early Greek theology in the development of each of these doctrines hint at a common historical influence. Thinkers in each tradition refer specifically to the Greek theological tradition's understanding of human existence as capable of divinization (theosis). Fiorenza, in discussing the divinizing aspect of grace, states that this is more typical of Greek than Latin theology but has been part of Roman Catholic theology since the Middle Ages (Fiorenza 124). Outler first called for the study of Wesley's relation to the Greek Fathers (Maddox, 1994, 260 n. 42), and subsequent work has demonstrated the significance of this source for Wesley's theology in the areas of his anthropology and understanding of the divine-human relationship.[9]

More importantly, these two doctrines share a foundational understanding that human existence is capable of becoming Godlike. This occurs through human response to a contact initiated by God which culminates in a fully restored relationship with God and the transformation from human to Godlike existence. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural expresses this understanding by identifying the goal for all human existence as God. The presence of the supernatural makes it possible for human existence to achieve its goal. When the presence of the supernatural is understood as a matter of being, of a certain type of existence, the doctrine of the supernatural explains how human existence could overcome the mortality which resulted from the Fall. When the

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[9] See Bassett, Maddox (1990, 1994), and Howard A. Snyder, "John Wesley and Macarius the Egyptian," Asbury *Theological Journal*, 45:2, 55-60, for representative articles dealing with this relationship. The discussion has moved from the initial suggestion by Outler that this might be a fruitful avenue of research to Maddox's proposal that Wesley can best be understood as a kind of mediating Anglicanism influenced by Greek theology (Maddox, 1994, 22-23, 66-67).

presence of the supernatural is understood in relational terms, the doctrine demonstrates the common purposes of divine and human existence. Wesleyan theology expresses the notion of becoming Godlike in the doctrine of sanctification. Entire sanctification describes the possibility of a person loving God perfectly in response to God's love and grace which makes possible the overcoming of the presence of sin in the believer's life. In Wesleyan theology, the doctrine of sanctification calls a believer to commitment to God's purposes, which results in a life of perfect love. The doctrine of sanctification expresses the ideal of being Godlike in love. Both doctrines maintain the conviction that attaining the goal of becoming Godlike depends on divine action. For the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural, union with God is possible and occurs because God acts to create beings with the possibility of being Godlike. In the Incarnation God identified with human existence and gives to individuals by, the presence of the Spirit, the full vision of who God is. Human existence is incapable of achieving union with God apart from God's action.

Wesleyan theology expresses the necessity of divine action by finding the presence of God's grace prior to the initial experience of forgiveness (calling the person to forgiveness), in the experience of forgiveness of sins through God's love, and in the experience of entire sanctification through the deliverance from the power of sin. There is never any sense in which serving God is possible except as a response to God's actions. In fact, Wesley's concern with the instantaneous nature of sanctification sought to maintain the crucial presence of divine grace rather than to describe the psychological state of the sanctified person.

Finally, both of these doctrines hold that human action is crucial in becoming Godlike. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural emphasizes this both by speaking of the divinization of human existence and by denying that this divinization is identification. The importance of human experience can be seen in that human existence has the potential for divinization. Other types of existence lack this potential. Furthermore, this doctrine does not overcome or end human existence, but rather calls for the human to see God as God is. Divinization does not lead to a loss of human identity. Participation in the divine is still human existence as human existence.

Likewise, the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification maintains a crucial role for human existence. Sanctification involves the human response to

divine grace. God does not sanctify apart from the individual's commitment to living the life to which God calls. In fact, this commitment involves a lifetime of development through repeated responses to God's grace. Furthermore, the careful expositions of the doctrine of sanctification avoid considering it to be a state which somehow is no longer characterized by human experience. Excessive claims for sanctified existence have occurred when people overlooked the human involvement and focused on the divine. To assume that humans become identical with God results in overlooking the importance of individual expressions of perfect love and the fact that individuals may not always and completely express perfect love.

Differences of Roman Catholic and Wesleyan Concepts

Although there are foundational similarities between these two doctrines, differences exist and must be considered in order to determine whether or not these two doctrines are actually compatible expressions of a common experience and understanding of God.

One of the more obvious differences relates to the difference between Roman Catholic and Wesleyan understandings of the relationship between justification and sanctification.[10] Often this difference is understood as the difference between sanctification being necessary for justification in much of Roman Catholic theology and sanctification being possible only after justification in Wesleyan theology. While popular Roman Catholic theology has required sanctification or being Godlike before justification, the historic Roman Catholic understanding differs. It was that the Spirit was God's gift usually received at baptism for cleansing in preparation for perfection, which was attained only at death (Bassett 114, 117). This led to the understanding in the Middle Ages that perfection was necessary for justification (Bassett 118).[11]

Another contrast between these two doctrines is the emphasis in each doctrine. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural emphasizes the divine. This is most obvious in that human existence is to experience

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[10] LaVerne Blowers pointed out this difference to me.

[11] But see Bassett (148 n. 92) for a suggestion that more recent Catholic theology avoids this position. This perspective can also be seen in the move from ontological language to relational language in the development of the doctrine of the supernatural. Relational language moves beyond a state of being which is necessary for acceptance by God.

divinization. The goal, for human existence is God. This goal is achieved in the beatific vision, a vision of God as God is. The formulations of the doctrine of the supernatural that stressed the ontological understanding of being assumed the priority of divine existence. Even in those understandings which take a more relational approach, the ontological and divine aspect did not become lost.

In contrast, the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification has primarily focused on human experience. While it is clear that the experience of entire sanctification comes about because of divine action, the emphasis falls on the Christian life. The practical development of the doctrine expresses this focus on Christian experience. Questions about whether the experience is instantaneous or develops, what exactly is meant by perfection in the life of the sanctified person, and how the person can be certain of sanctification deal with human experience.

A contrast in terminology between the exponents of these two doctrines reflects the contrast in emphasis. The Roman Catholic tradition has predominately utilized metaphysical terms such as "substance" and "nature." Even with the move to relational language, Roman Catholic theologians such as Karl Rahner have continued to talk about "human existence" and "being," metaphysical terms. The Wesleyan tradition has drawn more on personal language by using terms such as "will" and "love." The use of terms such as "imparted" and "imputed," which tend to have a more metaphysical orientation, has not been dominant.

This difference in terminology reflects the patterns in use at the time of the initial formulation of each doctrine. The Middle Ages thought in terms of substances and natures and debated questions such as the nature of divine existence. John Wesley was familiar with this type of terminology, but sought to bring the Gospel to those who were not. Personal language was much more meaningful in his context. As the more recent shift to relational language in the development of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural shows, it is not impossible to express this doctrine in personal terminology. Again the differences in terminology do not change the purpose, basis, or nature of the concepts. The only way in which terminological differences are significant is if ontological/metaphysical language implies a closer identity than personal language does. This might be the case if humans are seen as changing from a non-divine substance to the substance of God. Personal language does assume the continued existence of the individual rather than a loss of identity through union

with another. Roman Catholic theology of the supernatural has been careful to retain human identity in its understanding of divinization.

Another difference between the Roman Catholic doctrine and the Wesleyan doctrine relates to the understanding of the nature of the distinction between God and human existence. Roman Catholic thought has placed more emphasis on the distinction between human and divine natures while Wesleyan thought has stressed separation from God due to sin.

Roman Catholic theology of the supernatural begins with reflection on the difference between divine and human natures. Even though one of the characteristics of human nature is mortality due to sin, the metaphysical claim that humans can become divine has received more attention. The metaphysical problem of how one nature can become another nature has challenged Roman Catholic theologians (Kenny 84). The concept of being Godlike, of participating in the divine, is meaningful only after the difficulty of relating a finite nature to an infinite nature is overcome. The initiative for overcoming this distinction comes from, and only from, the divine.

For the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification, the separation between divine and human existence occurs because of human sin and the continuing presence of sin in the believer's life. While there may be an ontological difference, this is not the major issue. The need is for cleansing from sin, not for overcoming ontological barriers. Reconciliation occurs with God's forgiveness as a result of Christ's death, but the presence of sin hinders the full and complete relationship with God that is possible for the believer. After God has cleansed the believer from the power of sin, the possibility of ongoing and maturing fellowship with God becomes a reality.

One final difference exists. The Wesleyan theology of sanctification has always retained some sense of development or growth in holiness in relation to God. This emphasis becomes even more pronounced when Maddox uses terms such as "therapeutic" and "character formation" (Maddox, 1994, 23, 168). Roman Catholic theology, on the other hand, has tended to talk more about a state or type of relationship than a development. The beatific vision is not described in terms of an increasing insight into the nature of God. To be divinized means to be divinized wholly, not partially or incompletely. Even when the supernatural is understood in relational terms in Roman Catholic thought, the nature of the relation is described rather than the development of the relationship.

The comparison of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural and the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification shows that they share an understanding of divine action as divine presence making human response and communion with God possible. This relationship begins with divine action but does not conclude with only divine existence remaining because humans are empowered to act for God. While there are some differences in emphasis, terminology, and use of a concept of development, these differences do not change the basic similarities of the assumptions and understandings of the nature of the divine-human interaction. These doctrines concretely affirm that the God/world relationship is one of ongoing significance for both partners in daily existence, as well as in reflections about the nature of each partner.

Roman Contributions to Wesleyan Thought

The comparison of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural and the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification offers insights which can be helpful in the development of the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification. One of these insights grows out of the Roman Catholic emphasis on God. Ontological/metaphysical language indicates the importance of God to human existence in a way that personal language cannot. Ontological language about being deals with the existence of God while personal language deals with relationships. Although Wesleyan theology has always affirmed the necessity of divine grace for salvation and sanctification, its focus on human experience has made it susceptible to strong cultural influences leading to excessive individualism.

The Roman Catholic emphasis on becoming Godlike provides an emphasis which supports the idea that entire sanctification as perfect love seeks to show love to God and neighbor. Acknowledging the ontological basis for relationship with God can assist Wesleyans in avoiding the individualism inherent in the subjective focus on personal preparation for sanctification without surrendering the interactive nature of the relationship between God and human beings. Wesleyans can thus avoid surrendering the importance of the social aspect of holiness.

This comparison offers an additional insight which is especially helpful in maintaining a coherent Wesleyan theology in the face of other perspectives in contemporary Evangelical thought. The comparison of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural to the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification has shown a common understanding of God’s presence in

human experience as action enabling significant human action. Other understandings of divine action make the significance of human action problematic.

Much of the contemporary Evangelical use of the concept of supernatural, for example, moves in a negative direction by making a sharp distinction between the supernatural and the natural. This distinction becomes so complete that reality is understood to be composed of two realms, a divine and a human or natural. The agency in each realm is unique to that realm. While the assertion is made that God can and does act in the natural realm, God's action is understood as an intervention which overrules the natural order[12] rather than an action which enables human action or acts without reference to human action.

The compatibility of the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification and the Roman Catholic doctrine of the supernatural avoids assuming an understanding of God's relationship to the world and individuals which results in either reducing the presence of God or the significance of human action. Wesleyan theology must avoid contemporary pressures to understand God's presence in the world in ways which make human existence meaningless and incoherent. The best response to the search for meaning in our times is not to assert a divine determinism, but to recognize the graciousness of the divine presence.[13]

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[12] Most popular evangelical definitions of miracle illustrate this understanding and then generalize from divine action in miracles to all divine action. For a more careful statement from an evangelical perspective, see either William Abraham, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1985), 152-164, or Michael Peterson, et. al., *Reason and Religious Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 156-173.

[13] My colleagues Alan Padgett and Steve Wilkens provided me with invaluable assistance in developing and expressing my thoughts in this article.

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BY THE SPIRIT THROUGH THE WATER: JOHN WESLEY'S "EVANGELICAL" THEOLOGY OF INFANT BAPTISM

by
G. Stephen Blakemore

Can one reconcile John Wesley's acknowledgment of infant baptism as a saving and renewing sacrament with his constant insistence that the new birth must be a conscious transformation of one's life? Scholars often have noted this so-called "tension" within his theology.[1] This paper offers

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[1] While not exhaustive, the following list is representative. One finds Wesley's baptismal theology regarding infant regeneration described as either a reluctance to depart from his Anglicanism or as a hopelessly confounded confluence of pietism and sacramentalism, as in William R. Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1946), 125. Among the more generous, one discovers the claim that regeneration in infant baptism is the first stage of a two-step process of salvation in which baptism is a preparatory moment, but is not the new birth which must come in a subsequent experience of faith. This position is represented by Bernard G. Holland, *Baptism in Early Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1970), 58, 62, 65-66, 80, 130, 145. Robert E. Cushman "Baptism and the Family of God," in *The Doctrine of the Church*, Dow Kirkpatrick, ed. (Nashville, TN & New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1964), 83-85. Gayle Carlton Felton, *This Gift of Water: The Practice and Theology of Baptism Among Methodists in America* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 34-42. Also found is the view, very similar to the previous, that Wesley's baptismal theology implies that infant baptismal regeneration is an initial new birth but not the new birth in the highest sense-Colin W. Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1960), 119. A notable exception to the above is the view of Bishop Ole Borgen, *John Wesley on the Sacraments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1985). Bishop Borgen views Wesley's sacramental theology as a consistent thread in the tapestry of his soteriology. This article agrees with Bishop Borgen's assessment, but attempts to spell out concisely the

an interpretation of Wesley's soteriology that can reconcile his paradoxical claims: (1) baptism is regenerative, therefore infants ought to be baptized; (2) yet baptism is not the new birth, thus no one who is wise places trust for salvation in this rite.

To provide such an integrative explication of Wesley's views, we have to consider three different yet related theological nuances in his doctrine of grace. First we must expound Wesley's particular ideas about the nature of the fallen human condition in order to show how his soteriology acknowledges a "sacramental" element in all human experience. Next we need to ponder his theological emphasis on the new birth and subsequent sanctification as *therapeia psuches,* so that when we turn our attention to infant baptism we can see how his sacramental theology is, itself, part of his "experimental" theology. Our final task is to explore his conviction that all grace is "ordinarily" mediated to us in order to demonstrate how baptism, new birth "experience," and sacramentality are related. What surfaces is a Trinitarian soteriology centered on God's sovereign grace which places us unavoidably in the midst of God's redeeming activity and draws us through various means into the "life of God."

The Human Condition

As an orthodox theologian John Wesley believed that our inheritance of Adamic guilt and infirmity is an anthropological maxim. Adherence to this tenet is what separates Christians from pagans.[2] Pelagianism is a denial of the Atonement.[3] However, Wesley's development of the doc-

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theological worldview that provides the context for Wesley's sacramentology (as expressed in infant baptism) and his experiential emphasis on the new birth as a conscious act.

[2] *The Works of John Wesley*, Thomas Jackson, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978, 3rd Edition,) VI:54-64. Hereafter all references from *The Works of John Wesley* will be from this source, unless otherwise noted, and will be referred to as *Works*.

[3] Cf. Robert G. Tuttle, *Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1989), 113 - 142. Tuttle argues that prior to Aldersgate "Wesley's primary concern was with imitating the suffering Christ. Like the Mystics, he stressed the Incarnation as the central fact in Christianity, not the Cross. After Aldersgate, however, he emphasized the triumphant Christ and the Cross as an atonement for sin...." 131. This is an important observation. I would, however, qualify it with the suggestion that Aldersgate is the experience which placed the Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection in vital union in Wesley's subsequent musings. The reality of the Incarnation continues to play an important role in his theology even after Aldersgate, but one that is

trine of prevenient grace allows him to avoid the Augustinian/Reformation solution to the question of why some come to faith and others do not. Wesley rejects predestination, not because he holds a lower view of God's sovereignty than Calvin, Luther, or Augustine, but because he envisions the implications of God's sovereign operations differently. This difference provides the context for the rest of his soteriology. As Robert Cushman observes: "In the last resort Wesley is not a predestinarian because he rejects the practically absolute disjunction between nature and grace."[4]

Wesley's battle cry, "The grace or love of God whence cometh our salvation, is FREE IN ALL, and FREE FOR ALL,"[5] succinctly expresses his doctrine of prevenient grace. Yet, this declaration does not tell us what is the theological foundation of this construct. Unless one can show that the fundament of this doctrine is Christocentric, it is hard to defend Wesley against the charge, at least, of semi-Pelagianism. Reading him carefully, however, one can see clearly that Christology is the bedrock underlying this pillar of Wesleyan theology.

Prevenient grace is, in Wesley's account, God's gracious response in Christ to human sinfulness: "God did not despise the work of His own hands, but being reconciled to man through the Son of His love, he in some measure, reinscribed the law on the heart of His dark sinful creature."[6] Jesus serves as "the Second Adam" who mediates a partial restoration of the *imago dei* in humankind *qua* humankind prior to the new birth, thereby providing remedy for the infirmity of sin which came upon all by the offense of Adam.

The Christocentric and Trinitarian foundation of prevenient grace reveals itself even further in another passage. Wesley states: "The incarnation, preaching, and death of Jesus Christ were designed to represent,

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linked vitally to the work of Christ on the Cross. Thus, Wesley's "theory" of the atonement is one that is represented well, I believe, by Kenneth Grider's usage of the term "Governmental Theory." In this understanding Christ is more than a substitute, ransom, or moral influence. He is a "vicarious" agent. "[The Atonement] is done vicariously for us or on our behalf, so that its benefit can be transferred to us" *(A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology,* Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1994, 334).

[4] Robert Cushman, "Salvation for All: Wesley and Calvinism," in *Methodism,* William K. Anderson, ed. (Nashville, TN: The Methodist Publishing House, 1947), 114.

[5] *Works* V: 509.

[6] *John Wesley's Fifty-Three Sermons,* Edward H. Sugden, ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983), 429. Hereafter *Sermons*.

proclaim, and purchase for us this gift of the Spirit...."[7] The grammatical structure of the sentence indicates that by the incarnation the gift of the Spirit is *represented* to us, even as Christ's preaching proclaims this gratuity and his death purchases the same. This expression should be interpreted as Wesley's declaration that through the incarnation of God the Son the presence of the Holy Spirit is presented once again (re-presented) to humankind. This reading is supported by a later statement in the same sermon: "When he was incarnate and became man, he recapitulated in himself all generations of mankind, making himself the centre of our salvation, that what we lost in Adam, even the image and likeness of God, we might receive in Christ Jesus."[8]

In light of the above observations, it would appear that the foundation of prevenient grace in Wesley's theology is Christ's incarnation, itself an act of redemption. God the Father wills that God the Son assume our humanity and thus redeem it, that every individual might be granted the possibility of salvation through the prevenient presence of the Holy Spirit.[9]

There are at least three pivotal implications that this doctrine has for Wesley's perceptions of the divine/human relationship. The first of these is summed up in John Deschner's observation: "Wesley teaches that even this first re-inscription [of the moral law on the heart] belongs to the giving of the covenant of grace."[10] While following the Westminster Confession on this point, Wesley expands the Calvinist emphasis of the Confession. Rather than limiting this prevenient gift to the eternally elect, he contends that the incarnation draws every person "irresistibly" into the midst of God's redeeming activity. This has occurred objectively, i.e., quite apart from any particular person's consciousness of the fact.[11] God's

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[7] *Works* VII: 509.

[8] *Works* VII: 513.

[9] *Works* VII:512-513.

[10] John Deschner, *Wesley's Christology: an Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1985), 97. Apparently following the Westminister Confession, Article VII, he declares that no person since Adam has lived under a covenant of works and that "God, through Christ, hath established with men in all ages (as well before and under the Jewish dispensation, as since God was made manifest in the flesh) the covenant of grace" (*Sermons,* 89 ff.)

[11] John Fletcher interprets Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace as an expression of God's irresistible sovereignty. "We believe that these benefits were,

sovereign redemption reaches into the very heart of our humanity to create the possibility of salvation for all.

Wesley's doctrine, with its dual insistence on universal natural depravity *and* universal supernatural grace, implies a very different ontology than that of Calvin, Luther, or the mainstream of eighteenth-century Anglicanism. Wesley believed that God has established a covenant with all humans, thereby creating a synergistic relation. This synergism is to be understood ontologically as that which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have instigated, enable, and continually nurture. Here is a doctrine of the universal possibility for salvation that is neither Pelagian or even semi-Pelagian regarding free will, nor a Thomistic perspective built on natural law. Standing solidly on the Reformation undergirding doctrine of *sola gratia*, Wesley describes even human "nature" itself as graciously participating in God's saving presence through the incarnation, preaching, and atonement of Jesus, our "Second Adam."[12] This is why even our pre-regenerate life is subsumed by Wesley under the *ordo salutis*.

This brings us to a second determinative nuance of Wesley's soteriology. Grace is not to be conceived as some "substance" or even a particular "status" (such as the unmerited favor of God or a second chance) into which God has placed human beings. Grace is to be understood as the personal presence of the Holy Spirit; and prevenient grace is a particular mode of the Spirit's presence, imparted to all by the will of the Father *through the Son of His love*. A "real" change has occurred in which we experience God's presence as actual influence in our lives.[13] This presence means that our free human response to God's initiative is imperative because God has made responsiveness possible. Through the "Son of God

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at first, as gratuitously and irresistibly bestowed upon us as ... the divine image and favor were at first bestowed upon our first parents.... I say irresistibly because God does not leave to our option whether we shall receive a talent of redeeming grace." (Quoted in Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism 1790-1935* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1983), 149, note 16.

[12] Consider, for example: (1) Wesley's treatment of "natural conscience" as a supernatural gift of grace (*Works* VII:186-192); (2) his discussion of "free-will" in human beings as "a measure of free-will supernaturally restored to every man, together with that supernatural light 'which enlightens every man that cometh into the world'" (*Works* X :130).

[13] Cf. Albert Outler, *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 33.

[who] enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world" and by "all the convictions which His Spirit, from time to time, works in every child of man,"[14] God's presence is anchored, one might say, in our "nature." Or perhaps it is better to say that we are moored to God's presence.

This radical view of grace means that the Triune God is the source of our desire to do good, as well as our power to act upon this desire. Our spiritual hungers do not arise from within us as something "natural," but they are the work of God to deliver us preveniently "from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God."[15] In Wesleyan terms, this reality is not a prelude to salvation in Christ, but is the salvific presence of the Holy Spirit operating in us and for us within the scope of "the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul, till it is consummated in glory."[16]

Having underscored the first two implications, we now can assert the implication of Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace that is central to this paper: the human situation in the world is, at its heart, "sacramental."[17]

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[14] *Sermons*, 723-724. The scandal of sinful unbelief that will not "yield" to the drawings of the Father is that the generality of human beings will, indeed, stifle the very gracious, unsolicited, and inevitable hungers that the Triune God works in them. In a sense, for Wesley, the prevenient presence of the Holy Spirit, rather than original sin inherited, is what creates the genuine possibility of unbelief. By original sin human beings are spiritually dead-unfeeling, insensible to God or our condition; and no one goes to hell, Wesley tells us, for Adam's sin. Prevenient grace, thus, enables not only real response to God, it also makes possible conscious rejection, since by grace God speaks to every heart and awakens each to some degree.

[15] Works VI: 509.

[16] *Sermons*, 723. Thomas Oden is correct where he observes that, for Wesley, "the beginning place for the Holy Spirit is personal conversion focusing on prevenient grace..." (*John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994, 223).

[17] Admittedly, Wesley does not speak of his "world-view" as sacramental. However, by expanding the definition of the term to include more than a notion of "sign" or "symbol" or even "outward sign of inward grace," I hope to point to the heart of Wesley's soteriology which emphasizes the real and objective presence of God in human experience. To think of sacramentality in a broader sense, we must recover what is present in Wesley in a rudimentary way-a vital linkage of the theology of the Incarnation and a theology of the Cross-one which sees the totality of Christ's life as redemptive.

Wesley conceives of the incarnate Son not only as the atoning sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins (his dominant emphasis), but also as the "means" through which God the Father grants us a partial re-establishment of the *imago dei* in the personal presence of the Holy Spirit. "Sacramental" is the best description of this perspective on the divine/human relationship because it most adequately accounts for Wesley's continual insistence that God is present in our human experience, and is so objectively and unsolicited, but not necessarily. Not a mystical "divine spark," the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit is granted only because Christ has assumed our human nature.

Wesley's soteriology ranges far beyond mysticism and reveals how Jesus Christ-as the *sign* of God's grace, the *means* of God's grace, and the very *substance* of God's grace-is at the center of God's creation providing a *therapeia psyches* for fallen humankind.[18] The term "sacramental" is preferable as a description of Wesley's doctrine, because mysticism can entail Pelagian, or even worse, pantheistic tendencies that are not present in Wesley's theology.[19]

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[18] Outler locates Wesley in the tradition of St. Boneventura and Nicholas of Cusa in his interest in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He argues a point very similar to mine. He suggests that "Wesley's pneumatology begins with an awareness of the religious and ethical import of a valid integration of Christology, soteriology, and pneumatology; the vital linkage between theo-logy, Christo-logy, and pneuma-tology held together by a consistent emphasis on prevenience of all grace, and habituated awareness of the Holy Spirit as the Giver of all grace" *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage*, Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longden, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 164-165.

[19] The nuances of Wesley's theological construct make his notion of prevenient grace very different from a Schleiermacherian "absolute feeling of dependence." For Schleiermacher faith in Christ is the fullest expression of the absolute feeling of dependence, but for Wesley faith in Christ and "the witness of the Spirit" are experiences that one receives only as a unique gift. Thus, to speak of prevenient grace as a "sacramental" presence through the means of the incarnate Son-a Christocentric and Trinitarian focus-is very different from any system that views our awareness of God as a "natural" capacity of human beings. I find a particular spacial metaphor helpful for clarification. The doctrine of prevenient grace places Jesus Christ at the center of human longing-as the producer of the longing and its fulfillment. Schleiermacher's universalism places Christ at the apex of the human religious quest. For Wesley there is no "intuition" of God prior to the new birth and witness of the Spirit; there is only awareness of our desperate plight. But for Schleiermacher, every "intuition" of the "universum" is a legitimate expression of the absolute feeling of dependence.

The New Birth

Prevenient grace is not, however, adequate for salvation, in Wesley's thinking, but is only God's salvific, "sacramental" provision for the universal possibility of salvation. Something even more drastic is needed, something only God can provide, since the consequence of Original Sin is spiritual dysfunction, resulting from a broken relationship with our Creator. But our Creator is also our Redeemer, who desires to "fix" us by enabling a self-knowledge that is meant to lead to despair, and from despair to a posture of personal yieldedness to God's transforming power and presence.[20]

While such self-awareness is itself an act of salvific redemption by the Holy Spirit's prevenient presence, not all who are touched by the Spirit will open themselves to further salvation from God. Those who respond (by virtue of the grace-given freedom they have), however, to God's transforming power receive a second gift of grace that heals the broken *imago dei*: the new birth. This act of God brings a transformation of one's heart, mind, and will. God provides this change by an instantaneous event. By this gift, Wesley declares, God in Christ raises the soul that is yielded "from the death of sin to the life of righteousness."[21] Here we see the sophistication of Wesley's soteriology: our awareness of our

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[20] I have Calvinist friends who challenge Wesley and thus Wesleyans on this point. Their concern is, as far as I can understand it, that even if one grants that prevenient grace is at work in all people, to speak of resisting or responding freely to God (even at this point) is to allow that we cooperate in our own salvation. The only answer to them is, "You are right!" However, what we must understand is that our disagreements with those Calvinists who still take such a high view of God's sovereignty are not over God's sovereignty. Indeed, we are allies at this point. Rather, our debate concerns how one understands or defines sovereignty. God's majesty is not diminished by insisting that it is through His sovereign power that He has re-established the possibility of human response-ability to the "drawings of the Father." To say that God has "sacramentally" (through the means of the incarnate Son) partially restored the *imago* in human beings to enable true universal freedom is to exalt the love of the Father and the self-emptying of the Son and the centrality of the Holy Spirit in human experience.

[21] *Works* VI:71. Wesley expresses the need for the new birth in this way: "Whereas prior to the transforming grace the fallen individual does not have knowledge of God, much less love for God or fear of God, after the Spirit of God works in the heart of that individual then the earthly, sensual, devilish mind is turned into the mind which was in Christ Jesus."

condition and our openness to God are dependent on grace (the Holy Spirit's presence) that enables us to respond freely and accountably to grace and receive the gift of the new birth (a fuller experience of the Holy Spirit's presence). The new birth as a momentary, miraculous episode is not, however, an end in itself, but is understood as a decisive instance in the larger process of *therapeia psuches*-the totality of God's saving work.

Why does Wesley adopt this *therapeia psuches* soteriology? Albert Outler insists that he does so because he viewed the will rather than the passions as the root of sin.[22] Such an interpretation, although insightful in itself, does not tell the entire story, for it misses an important aspect of Wesley's anthropology as it relates to the infirmity of sin and the human need for new birth.

Wesley believed that sin has struck at the very root of the *imago dei* in humankind and, therefore, that human sinfulness is more than volitional. There also are affective and epistemological aspects to our malady.[23] So vast is the rupture in our human personhood that the power of sin can only be broken in one's life by a total "healing" of our souls, one that provides, first of all, the "knowledge of God" (supernaturally restored) and "love of God" (a gift of grace).[24] In other words, because of the pervasive nature of sin, the will cannot be turned unless the affections are also refocused on God, and the affections cannot be refocused on God apart from proper knowledge about God and personal knowledge of God.

No clear line of demarcation in Wesleyan anthropology divides the intellectual from the appetitive/affective and volitional aspects of human psychology. Recall the insistence that, although "right opinions are, in themselves, insufficient for true religion," "right tempers [proper Christian affections] cannot subsist without right opinion," even as love for God cannot "subsist without a right opinion of him."[25] In human experience, according to Wesley, understanding, desire, feeling, and will mutu-

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[22] Outler, *Theological Heritage*, 88.

[23] *Sermons*, 560-563.

[24] *Works*, VI: 64-71.

[25] *Works*, X: 348. Cf. Henry H. Knight, *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Metuchen, NJ & London, 1992), 195 ff. Hereafter *Presence.*

ally interact to shape or misshape one another.[26] The result of the complex damage that sin causes is called "Atheism" by Wesley because we are "bent" (to use Charles Wesley's term) in a direction that causes us to live in daily practice as though God does not matter. The new birth-a decisive act in the redeeming, healing process of salvation-is one of the components in God's response to this damage. Through grace, God heals our "atheism by the knowledge of Himself, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; by giving us faith, a divine evidence and conviction of God, and of the things of God-in particular, of this important truth, 'Christ loved *me* and gave himself for *me*," i.e., the new birth."[27] Given his views on our helplessness and his beliefs about God's desire to restore the divine image in us, it is clear why Wesley insists that a soteriology which emphasizes *therapeia psuches* is "the proper nature of religion, of the religion of Jesus Christ."[28]

Emphasizing as strongly as even St. Augustine the consequences of sin, Wesley sees that the human side of salvation is primarily passive. We receive from God, who is at work to restore holiness (and therefore wholeness) in our hearts and minds. We cannot heal ourselves, nor re-make ourselves. The metaphor of new birth, therefore, is perfect as a Wesleyan description of what happens to those who feel their need of God and surrender in despair to His grace. Birth implies utter depend-

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[26] It is almost trite to point out that we cannot choose what we do not in some way desire and that we cannot desire that which we cannot imagine or conceive. Yet, this is a pivotal observation for human psychology and Wesleyan theology. This is certainly the understanding that Wesley developed in his discussion of the process of salvation, from the human point of view. Knowledge of God and desire to please God are crucial gifts that must accompany if not precede the exercise of volitional faith. On this point Wesley shows significant concord with narrative theology and ethics. While he might take exception to the epistemology and ontology of certain "narrativists," he would certainly agree that a particular worldview is made possible by a specific story, which determines what our appetites can desire, and thus, our wills choose.

[27] *Works*, VI:64. In the sermon "Original Sin" Wesley emphasizes the malady of soul that we inherit, rather than bequeathed guilt. While the guilt of Original Sin is not questioned by Wesley, his theological concern lies in the human loss of capacity to know, fear, love, and respond to God. This is what necessitates his doctrine of prevenient grace as a "sacramental" gift through the humanity of Christ. Prevenient grace is what makes the "atheists" culpable for their blithe dismissal of God.

[28] *Works*, VI: 64.

ence, followed by emergence into a new life that awaits. For complete transformation, which is our only hope in Wesley's view, we must depend on God and wait for the activity of the Spirit.

The Father of Methodism preaches that only a radical act by a power that transcends us can lift us from the soul-deadening, sin-enslaved self-satisfaction that keeps us from "seeing" or desiring, much less living the life that we are called to in Christ.[29] The saving, restoring, and transforming presence of God brings *to us* the much needed change *in us* when the new birth occurs. As Thomas Oden has noted, for Wesley God's life-giving act causes "a fundamental change of heart (not merely a conceptual shift of ideas)" in us, which awakens "the entire sensory apparatus to a new way of living and sensing the reality at hand."[30] God's saving activity provides the cure for our spiritual illness. This cure is given as one "moment" of a continuing process of salvation. We are to live in grace by faith and grow in this transformed existence "until [our] whole sickness be healed, and that 'mind be in [us] which was also in Christ Jesus'"[31]

Wesley's *therapeia psuches* soteriology entails three distinguishable but related movements: (1) the working of prevenient grace; (2) the transformation of the new birth; and (3) subsequent, necessary growth in imparted holiness. Wesley describes this tripartite movement of the Holy Spirit, when considered in relation to those who are born again, as "the life of God in the soul of a believer."[32] This vision of the Christian life implies that each and every moment of our existence finds its proper identity and place only in Christology, and thereby provides the same "sacra-

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[29] *Works,* VI: 68-71. Wesley sums up his discussion of how the new birth happens by describing what happens but not how it happens, because the knowledge of how it occurs is not within human comprehension. "God having quickened him by his Spirit, he is alive to God through Jesus Christ.... [The new birth] is the change wrought in the soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is 'created anew in Christ Jesus..." (70-71).

[30] Oden, *JWSC,* 87. Being born from above is "like receiving a new sensory capacity, so that one can see with newly opened eyes that he has 'an advocate with the Father,' can hear the voice of one who is the resurrection, feel the love of God 'shed abroad in his heart'," 86.

[31] *Sermons,* 566.

[32] *Sermons,* 221. Cf. Outler, *Theological Heritage,* where he describes Wesley's understanding of the redeemed life as "participation in the divine life." "[Wesley] could interpret *dikaiosune* not only as the 'imputation' of Christ's righteousness to the repentant believer but also its 'impartation' as well" (p. 32).

mental" foundation for our living the new life of the new birth that we find for prevenient grace. Wesley reveals this way of thinking in his rejection and reworking of the Reformed position that makes Christ's righteousness (his active obedience) the formal cause of justification, and therefore, a substitute for human works of obedience and faith.

As close as Wesley's views of holiness and Calvin's "third use of the law" appear, ultimately they offer two very distinguishable portraits of Christian experience. Wesley makes holiness the essence of salvation in a way that surpasses Calvin's emphasis. He argues that Christ's righteousness is the formal cause of the new birth, making Christ's righteousness not a substitute for human obedience and holiness but the formal cause of our ability to obey God after the new birth. Wesley thus weaves Christ's obedience into the fabric of the *therapeia* that God is working in human lives. The grace of Christ's obedient life is imparted to the redeemed through faith, so that believers can "work out their salvation" in love. Our inclusion in Christ is "the life of God" in us that makes "the marks of the new birth" ours by impartation.

Given the strength of conviction in his claim that we are made whole existentially, and thereby enabled to "walk as Christ walked,"[33] we see why there cannot be, in a Wesleyan understanding, a relationship with Christ that transcends the arena where our moral choices and actions are lived.[34] For Wesley, the new birth is momentous as an experience of God's grace, but all the moments that follow are just as important as we live in God's presence, filled with His love.

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[33] *Works* XI, 444. While the term "existential" in any of its forms is a woefully overused word and might even be considered by some anachronistic as a description of Wesley's views, I cannot think of a better word to employ as a qualifier for Wesley's understanding of the human consequences of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. It is our very existence that is changed first by the prevenient presence of the Holy Spirit, then by the Spirit's renewing presence and work, and finally in the Spirit's gifts of sanctification and glorification. While Wesley does not begin with human existence and experience as his epistemological and ontological foundation, it is certainly his focus for all the right Trinitarian reasons.

[34] This conviction keeps Wesley from falling prey to the "mystical" dangers inherent in his theology of participation in the life of God. Tuttle observes, in this regard: "He admired the mystical ethic that embraced a compassion for those who suffer, and a holiness of life consistent with the mind of Christ whose Spirit with and within, for and among, empowers and sanctifies" (*Mysticism,* 181).

When Wesley speaks of the new birth (all of Christian life for that matter), the language of receptivity, dependence, and passivity abound in his assessment of the human side of salvation. His emphasis clearly falls on the divine syllables. The new birth is "a vast inward change, *a change wrought in the soul, by the operation of the Holy Ghost*; a change in the whole manner of our existence."[35] Therefore, even though personal faith is a crucial element in Wesley's doctrine of salvation, it is a penultimate consideration. The cooperative (synergistic) contribution that the human agent makes in the process is *acknowledgment* of need and *reception* of the healing and forgiving grace of God. Increasing openness to God, this is what Wesley means, in the final analysis, when he speaks of "working out our salvation."[36] The new birth is, ultimately, just what the metaphor suggests, an event that carries us along and brings us into new life, which we do not make happen.

The question now to be addressed to Wesley is how he can accept any sacramental understanding of grace if the new birth is really such a profound change? What we shall see is that the tension between a so-called "sacramental" theology and a so-called "experimental" theology is not really a tension at all for Wesley.

The Means of the "Experience"

It is understandable that Wesley has bemused many of his interpreters by his acknowledgment of infant baptism as a regenerative sacrament, describing the experience and results of the new birth in such beautiful and existentially captivating language. The question these commentators ask-implicitly or explicitly-is how the transformation Wesley describes can occur in an infant who, so the argument goes, lacks the cognitive abilities that are seemingly necessary for this experience. Modern Wesleyan scholars are in good company. Even some of Wesley's contemporaries - allies and opponents-asked similar questions. His reply to them is both telling about Wesley and instructive to us: "neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years."[37]

Since the new birth is a miracle, the heart of the matter for Wesley is not our psychological or cognitive developmental state (except in his sub-

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[35] *Sermons,* 213.

[36] *Works,* VI:506-513.

[37] *Works,* VI:74.

sequent considerations about how we evidence the new birth). When discussing regeneration he focuses on the conviction that only God can save us from sin and raise us to a life of righteousness. Infant regeneration in baptism is, therefore, no more unimaginable than prevenient grace-the partial restoration of the *imago dei* that occurs through Christ's particular humanity. Once he accepted Christ's incarnation as a "sacramental" gift that brings with it a real change, it is not a difficult move to affirm that *in Christ* God has established other "means of grace." Baptism of infants is God's means to re-create us (save us) at the earliest possible moment in our lives.

The energy driving Wesley's theology of salvation (or holiness), is an energy which can affirm both sacramental regeneration and radical experiential transformation. It results from the dynamic fusion of mystical pietism and the firm belief that God's grace is "ordinarily" mediated to us through "instituted" means of grace. We see the product of this union expressed most arrestingly in Wesley's exhortation to those who were "seeking the Lord, and had not yet received the witness of the Spirit."[38] He instructs them to wait upon the grace of God by using the means God has ordained, which are "outward signs, words, or actions [appointed by God] to be the ordinary channels whereby He might convey to men, preventing, lefting, or sanctifying grace."[39]

When we remember that Wesley's concern in these passages is pastoral- that he is addressing a theological issue for the sake of people's souls-the crucial import that a theory of mediation has for his soteriology becomes utterly transparent. As a pastor he passionately declares: "The sure and general rule for all who groan for the salvation of God is this, whenever opportunity serves, use all the means which God has ordained; for who knows in which God will meet thee with the grace that bringeth salvation?[40] As a shepherd of souls, Wesley trusted these means, because the Holy Spirit is present in the practices to apply the merits of Christ.[41] Wesley wants his charges to experience God (mystical pietism), but he is convinced that God has certain ways that He will use for this end (mediation).

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[38] *Sermons*, 168.

[39] *Sermons*, 170-171.

[40] *Sermons*, 183.

[41] *Sermons*, 171 & 184.

To understand better Wesley's soteriological emphasis here, we can compare Wesley's pastoral emphasis on "the means of grace" with much of our current literature on Christian discipleship. Doing this, we discover that Wesley had a different concept at work than that found in our contemporary talk about spiritual disciplines. In many of our current models the idea of "discipline" carries an anthropocentric focus-a perspective that Wesley strongly decries.[42] The label "spiritual disciplines" can too readily be envisioned as activities in which one engages to strengthen spiritual "muscles," or to get into shape as a disciple. While responsive "discipline" to use the means of grace is necessary, Wesley is thinking of the "means" as vessels chosen by God through which *He* grants us the divine presence, rather than as spiritual calisthenics.[43] These practices, and the potential involved in them, are where God locates His presence in relation to us.

Wesley told people to position themselves to receive God's blessing by observing the means God has ordained. God has "tied" us to certain practices, Wesley declared, as the avenues through which God wills to give himself to us (at least "ordinarily"). And yet, while Wesley contends that God has made himself present "objectively" in these practices, the mentor of the Methodists refuses to allow the means of grace to be turned into mechanistic operations to which God is somehow bound. When Wesley says that "we may affirm that, with regard to God, there is no such thing as means; seeing He is equally able to work whatsoever pleaseth Him, by any, or by none at all,"[44] he is not contradicting his other "sacramental" statements about the operations of grace. He is simply avoiding any *opus operatum* or sacerdotal concept of the means of grace.

Wesley's views on the mediation of grace can be summed up as follows: Although we cannot know God except on God's terms, God has granted us outward practices through which practices He is pleased to be present to us in order to produce in us a thorough experiential transformation of our lives.[45] Wesley's baptismal theology is part of this *schema*.

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[42] *Sermons*, 84.

[43] "Settle this in your heart, that the *opus operatum*, the mere work done, profiteth nothing; that there is no Power to save but in the Spirit of God, no merit but in the blood of Christ; that, consequently, even what God ordains, conveys no grace to the soul, if you trust not in Him alone" *Sermons*, 184.

[44] *Sermons*, 171-172.

[45] Henry H. Knight in *Presence* provides an excellent systematic discussion of Wesley's theory of mediation.

Although he never mentions infant baptism among the other means of grace, there can be no doubt that Wesley did believe in it as an efficacious sacrament through which God gives the new birth to the baptized child. None of his apologetic or polemical writing suggests otherwise, but affirms what he says in "The New Birth": "All who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole Office of the Baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition."[46] According to Wesley, infants receive six substantial benefits in baptism: (1) the guilt of Original Sin is washed away by the applications of the merits of Christ's death; (2) they gain entry into the "everlasting Covenant"; (3) they gain admission into the Church and consequent union with Christ who is its Head; (4) a change of status before God is granted, i.e., "The children of wrath are made the children of God"; and (6) "a principle of grace is infused which will not be wholly taken away unless we quench the Holy Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness."[47] Wesley's theology of sacramental grace and experienced transformation is a consistent, integrated, singular theology.

Some interpreters of Wesley have not seen it as such and have offered a "two-stage" interpretation of Wesley's sacramentalism and experientialist commitments.[48] In this dualistic interpretation, baptism is a preparatory work of the Spirit which is incomplete until the baptized individual undergoes a subsequent *experience* of conversion. But such a bifurcation is not necessary in order to make sense of Wesley. More than just unnecessary, such a reading of Wesley runs the danger of creating what Ole Borgen has called an "interpretive distortion of Wesley's views,"[49] since it is not altogether certain that our contemporary notion of conversion is synonymous with Wesley's usage.

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[46] *Works*, VI:74.

[47] *Works*, X:192 ff. The question of whether or not this revision of Samuel Wesley's treatise on baptism accurately reflects John Wesley's view is one that space does not permit us to address fully. However, it should be noted that Wesley rarely produced anything original in areas where he was not drawn into controversy, especially if he could find an extant source which adequately reflected his views. His sacramental theory never caused such conflict. Also, considering the other supporting statements that are found in Wesley's other writings, I find no reason to reject this revision as trustworthy of Wesley's own views.

[48] Above, p. 1, n. 1.

[49] *Sacraments*, 150.

Running the risk of generalization, we can legitimately observe that "conversion" in modern, evangelical parlance usually is thought of as a decisive and identifiable period in which one is consciously changed and becomes intentionally committed to Christ. The focus is on conversion as a momentary experience, usually emphasizing a decision for Christ. This same term as a theological category in Wesley's thought, however, is described as the totality of the work of God in a person's life, including both what God does and the human (grace-enabled) response to God's action.[50] To speak of conversion as a part of Wesley's soteriology without consciously holding on to Wesley's definition can redirect his emphasis. Wesley is made to sound like a decisionist, i.e., one who believes a human "decision" for Christ is what instantiates saving grace in our lives. However, as much as human response is valued by Wesley, his view is quite different that the decisionistic perspective.[51] The emphasis in Wesley's teaching is always on God's initiative, and human response as a soteriological category actually comprises a subset of God's grace.[52] Wesley would,

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[50] While Wesley uses the term "conversion" in a rather fluid way (which is true of other concepts, as well), Borgen's observations are correct. He writes that the new birth is never conflated with conversion as a doctrinal notion. Borgen goes on to note that Wesley does have a two-fold doctrine of conversion, but not of the new birth. First, conversion is understood as an instantaneous, or nearly so, "crisis" which usually includes "repentance, justification, the new birth, faith, and assurance." Secondly, the idea is "employed to denote the continuing process of change from sinfulness to perfection ... here 'conversion' is used as a synonym for 'sanctification'" *Sacraments*, 151.

[51] Even if one appeals to Wesley's famous Aldersgate experience, something is discovered other than the "Anabaptist" idea of decision and discipleship as the triggers which set saving grace in motion. Wesley went "unwillingly" to Aldersgate and once there did not make a decision but felt his heart "strangely warmed." He says he felt he trusted Christ alone for salvation, knowing that Jesus died even for him. It is not in the scope of this article to enter the debate about the significance of Aldersgate, but one observation is in order. Is it not strange that many commentators miss the fact that Aldersgate came as quite a serendipity to Wesley? He received something which he was of course desperately seeking, but he does not speak of commitment. Even more instructive is that Aldersgate did not alter Wesley's views on the regenerative efficacy of infant baptism.

[52] See Chiles for an outstanding survey of the transition of American Methodism's trek, during which the focus of Wesleyan/Methodist theology changed from a acknowledgment of the priority of God's grace to a preoccupation with human free will and ability (144-183). He states: "Repentance and, eventually, faith came to be considered essentially human acts, not God's gifts, and salvation proper became man's divinely assisted effort to moralize and spiritualize his life" (186-187).

no doubt, agree with Karl Barth's witticism that God is the only true existentialist. God's freedom, Wesley would add, enables our own.

The "two-stage" interpretation is not necessary for another reason. Because Wesley's doctrine of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives emphasizes the enabling of our personal response, his concern about the Christian life is always present tense. In his sermons he wants to know if the Holy Spirit is producing holiness in one's life at the present moment. Once the new birth has been granted by the Spirit through the water, human action becomes very important for Wesley.[53] In other words, the gift is given, but it can be forfeited. If the marks of the new birth are not seen to some developmentally appropriate degree, the amazing gift of God provided in infant baptism has been lost along the way. This loss occurs not because one commits a sin or a series of sins, but because one has ceased to participate in the divine life. To put it differently, in Wesley's view living in sin necessarily means that one has not and is not using "the grace that has been given." All grace can be either cooperated with or lost, whether granted sacramentally or otherwise, because grace is the personal presence of the Holy Spirit who comes to enable personal relationship with God.[54] Thus, Wesley does not posit as necessary a secondary experience of "conversion" and repentance, except for those who have lost the grace given in the new birth through their infant baptism.

Believing that the new birth-granted sacramentally in infant baptism-produces in us spiritual *dunamis*, Wesley cannot treat this sacramental gift as an immutable sacerdotal status or election on which one

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[53] In this regard, the fact that Wesley does not make baptism of an infant "necessary" for salvation, because the prevenient grace of God cancels Adamic guilt through the righteousness of Christ, builds the case further that Wesley conceives of the new birth as a central focus in the sacrament of infant baptism. Although the righteousness of Christ cancels Adamic guilt the moment one is born into the world, baptism does place the child in a "privileged" relationship to God, full justification and full regeneration. The new birth is the moment of grace in baptism and the continuing nurture of the church is the process of salvation in ongoing sanctification.

[54] An Anglican friend once told me that he thought my use of the phrase "personal relationship with Christ" was unbiblical. It implies a mutuality, he argued, between the believer and God. This, of course, is a terrible caricature of the position that one finds in Wesley. Relationship is the only appropriate-and biblical-term one can employ, because the radical work of the Holy Spirit produces responsibility and possibility. It is righteous accountability that is denoted by the concept "personal relationship" with Christ.

can presume. Therefore, he declares to those who do not reflect the new birth in their moral lives that the fact of their baptism merely "increases their damnation."[55] This same conviction prompts Wesley's impassioned exhortation in his sermon "The New Birth":

> If you have been baptized, do not own it! For how highly does this aggravate your guilt! How will it increase your damnation! Were you devoted to God at eight days old, and have you been all these years devoting yourself to the devil? Were you, even before you had the use of reason, consecrated to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost? And have you, ever since you had the use of [reason], been flying in the face of God and consecrating yourself to Satan? ... Never boast more of what ought to fill you with confusion, to make you ashamed before God and man![56]

The Spirit, through the water of baptism, creates a *responsibility* upon the baptized because the radical gift of regeneration in the new birth has created real *response-ability*. Thus, to rely upon one's baptism as though the new birth is an outward thing, rather than an inward change worked through outward means, is to "lean upon a broken reed."[57]

> The question is not, what you was made in baptism; (do not evade;) but, what are you now? Is the Spirit of adoption *now* in *your* heart? I ask not whether you were born of water and of the Spirit; but are you *now the temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in you*? I allow you were "circumcised with the circumcision of Christ;" ...but does the Spirit of Christ and of glory *now* rest upon you?[58]

If the answer to these searching questions is negative, then the hearers "must be born again" (*once again*), because salvation is relational and, therefore, always necessarily present tense. The Holy Spirit's presence enables and nurtures relationship with God, but does not compel or insure salvation. One must "work," in other words, because God is at work in us. Wesley's pleas to those who, in the present moment, fail or refuse to orient their lives toward the love of God are not evidence that he doubts the

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[55] *Works,* IX: 48-49.

[56] *Works,* VI: 76.

[57] *Works,* V: 222.

[58] *Works,* V: 221-222.

former efficacy of their baptism as infants, nor that he holds a dual notion of the new birth. Rather, these exhortations are a call to return to saving relationship with God and run from the increased damnation being faced as a result of a near Adam-like rejection of covenant with God.

Although he never had to develop his position systematically, Wesley nonetheless has a vigorous theology of the function of infant baptism-just as vigorous as that of Luther, for instance, who certainly had a very high view of the sacramental promise of God.[59] The real distinction between these two is not about the objective certainty one can have about God's grace given in baptism, but disparate conceptions about the nature of salvation. Luther's central concern was justification by faith alone, thus he utilizes his famous phrase- *simul just et pecattur*-to describe the Christian experience. Wesley's burden was the promotion of holiness as the very essence of salvation, not as merely a part of the Christian's response of faith. His contention that baptismal grace can be lost is not a weaker position than Luther's (nor sacerdotal Catholicism). Wesley was an evangelist, calling both to those who have never been baptized and to those who had. The former he invited to new birth for the first time. The latter he asked to come home to God who once had adopted them.

Wesley has a unified theology, the integrity of which is found in a constant theme: Holy Spirit enabled relationship with a holy God. An infant, "before he has the use of reason," becomes the recipient of grace and is mystically united with Christ through the act of baptism. The child is "elected" in a very real sense and begins to share in a different world, i.e., the life of God and the life of the Church in Christ. The mind of Christ is granted to the infant, not as a fully realized actuality, but as a grace-enabled full potentiality. The saving presence of the Holy Spirit, which gives new birth to the infant, continues to be salvific (regenerating) if the baptized person lives a life that reflects the saving relationship as this becomes developmentally possible.

Salvation is inward and outward holiness that involves further growth toward a particular human *telos*-glorification in Christ in the life

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[59] I utilize Luther as an example here because Colin Williams, one of Wesley's best interpreters, suggests that "we miss in Wesley's doctrine of assurance something of Luther's vigorous 'I am baptized': something of the reliance upon the promises of the Gospel, objectively symbolized by baptism, which is able to sustain us in the midst of the assaults of our emotional enemies" *JWTT,* 121

to come.[60] Achieving this *telos* depends not only on the initiatory grace of the new birth, but on subsequent gifts of grace, which complete the salvation that is granted and begun in the new birth. Just as we must depend on the Holy Spirit's presence prior to the new birth and must rely upon the Spirit's transforming presence for the new birth, after the new birth we must receive the sustaining and sanctifying presence of the Spirit which we do through the avenues God has ordained.

The Sacramental Community of Experience

"Participation in the divine life"-*therapeia psuches*-is, for Wesley, the very essence of salvation, as we have demonstrated. Participation in the transforming presence of God is not, however, an individualistic endeavor. As other's have shown, the Christian life, in Wesley's view, is a deeply socio-communal practice. In his opinion, not only can we not save ourselves, we can not on our own be saved (ordinarily) by God's grace through faith that works in love. For this reason he lists "Christian conference, which includes both the fellowship of believers and rightly ordered conversations *which minister grace to hearers*," as one of the "instituted" means of grace.[61]

This perspective on the functions of Christian relationships points us to the final element of Wesley's theology of Christian holiness, the necessity of the Church. Not only are Jesus and the practices that God has ordained "means of grace" in our lives, but other believers become, in Christ, avenues by which the Holy Spirit makes His way into our lives. As believers bring a child for baptism into "the life of God," the church is used by the Holy Spirit as a sacramental vehicle. The Holy Spirit, who is present in them, works through the parents, God-parents, friends, wor-

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[60] Glorification as the teleological purpose of salvation has not received the attention it deserves in Wesleyan circles. Of course, Wesley does not develop this doctrine with the same rigor that he does other doctrines (e.g., prevenient grace and entire sanctification). Deschner, however, points to the pivotal position this idea has in Wesley's soteriology where he observes that "when Wesley thinks of the fall in the context of sanctification, a supralapsarian motif can suddenly appear.... God decrees, foresees, and permits the creation, fall, and incarnation in order to effect His overriding purpose, that man should be made holier and happier than Adam before the fall" *Christology*, 22.

[61] Knight, 5.

shipers, and celebrants in their bringing the child to the altar of baptism, and thereby to the regenerating presence of the Holy Spirit.[62]

The personal "experience" of this relation to God that is divinely instigated through the church is, therefore, a crucial moment in the saving process of God's grace. The principle of grace infused at baptism is realized, and conscious experience of God's holy love and mercy grows out of the new birth granted in baptism. Wesley's insistence that his preachers take seriously their ministry to children is, I think, evidence that he understood in this way the relationship between infant baptism and radical Christian experience. He demanded that his preachers take time to "teach the children" because he had seen so many people who had both personally neglected the gracious gift of the new birth in baptism and had been personally neglected by the church and other Christians.

Many and perhaps most of Wesley's first readers had baptized children in their households. Thus, when Wesley requires his preachers to take time to train the children, he most likely was instructing his leaders under the presumption that the "principle of grace" was given to these children in baptism. Furthermore, while most people that Wesley encountered had, in his estimation, "sinned away" their baptism, he did not think that such an occurrence was an unavoidable event. Instructing the baptized children was seen primarily as a pastoral act and not an evangelistic endeavor.

This same pastoral impulse is seen in his advice to parents that they train their children by restraining them from "outward sins," as well as positively instructing them "early, plainly, and frequently in the things of God."[63] He speaks even more forcefully in another passage about the spiritual duty of parents, saying that, for the child, the will of the parent is

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[62] The relationship which God establishes with an infant through baptism, is the result of God's grace first of all, but depends in the second place upon the action of other people, as well, i.e., those who bring the baby for baptism. Taking Deuteronomy 29:10-12 as a foundation, Wesley declared that infants are "capable" of being in covenant with God. They become "obliged to what they knew not: the same faith and obedience with Abraham. *And so they are still, as they are still equally entitled to all the benefits and promises of it*." F. Ernest Stoeffler has tied Wesley's baptismal theology closely to the Puritan understanding of "covenant" ("Infant Baptism: Entry into Covenant," *Christian Advocate*, vol. VI, no. 11 (May 24, 1962, 10-11). However, to do so misses the distinctive theology of Wesley that separates him from Calvinism and thus makes his identity with the Puritans highly suspect. For Wesley the "personal" relationship with Christ of the baptized is central, where for the Puritan the emphasis was more on the obligations of the elect because of their election.

[63] *Works,* VII: 81-82.

"in the place of the will of God."[64] Rather than merely observing a developmental model for child rearing, Wesley was, I believe, speaking once again in a sacramental vein.[65] He is, is essence, imploring his Methodist families to see themselves as "means of grace," as "sacramental gifts" and not just social units or blood relatives. All holiness is social holiness because even our lives, lived in social interaction, are meant to become a sacramental presence to each other.[66]

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[64] *Works*, VII: 92. This passage occurs in a section designed to address the "cure of self-will" in children. While Wesley's advice is not adequate across the board in this treatise (indeed some of it might be damaging), his concern for the "cure" of self-will causes me to believe that this advice is given as an aspect of his *therapeia* soteriology. Born again children, just as born again adults, must grow in grace and have self-will further and further extirpated from their lives.

[65] While not talking about sacramentality, Kenneth Grider speaks of the efficacy of "our present suffering on behalf of others" as provisionally redemptive" (p. 334). He explains this in relation to Christ's "provisional" suffering: "Since Christ's suffering on behalf of everyone is provisionally redemptive, our present suffering on behalf of others is also provisionally redemptive." Grider defends this claim by saying: "This might be the inmost kernel of truth of the Christian faith: that suffering is provisionally redemptive." While such a claim requires more exposition than Grider gives it, it can be defended in a Wesleyan construct on the basis of the emphasis one finds in the rootage of our tradition: God's sacramental presence in believers. Such Christian participation in Christ's ministry of suffering, Grider tells us, "means that our suffering for others can become a means of their turning to God to receive the benefits of Christ's suffering." The compelling beauty both of Grider's perspective on holiness theology and what I take to be Wesley's "sacramental" understanding of God's presence in and through believers on behalf of others is the way they weave our lives together in the tapestry of God's salvation in Christ. Holiness is not an individual endeavor, but one that, by its very nature, requires our unity in Christ.

[66] Wesley's concern for "social holiness" has, for the most part, been interpreted in the twentieth century as a seventeenth century equilivant of the "social gospel." However, this is another "interpretive" distortion of Wesley's views. Even more calamitously, this bifurcation of Wesley's theological vision for human life into the "evangelistic" impetus of the revivalist and the "justice" efforts of the social reformer has produced a woeful situation for contemporary theology in the Wesleyan tradition. Rather than speak of personal salvation/holiness and social salvation/holiness, as though these two things are different emphases, we should, instead, recover Wesley's conviction that all of human existence is called to participate in the life of God. By so doing, we hold together the vibrant homogeneity of Wesley's theological anthropology-which views us as whole persons (1) individually in need of God's personal saving, transforming presence in our lives and (2) who require, ultimately, social conditions which

Wesley wanted baptized infants to be cared for. He required that they be trained in the rudiments of the Faith and led intentionally into conscious awareness of their privileged and blessed status before God. The "principle of grace" which was "infused" by the Spirit through the water as a divine potentiality in the infant was to be built on through the subsequent and on-going ministry of the church and Christian parents. God wants the children to "experience" divine presence and feel God's holiness in their lives.[67]

Conclusion

The doctrine of the new birth should not be abstracted from Wesley's rich soteriology if one is to understand the unity of Wesley's thought.

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allow for human flourishing in the salvation of Christ. This places God and our need of His salvation-rather than the conversion vs justice debate - once again at the center of our dialogue. Evangelism and social action can be seen as vitally linked to one another. Recovering the vitality that is required by a Wesleyan practice of infant baptism can provide a necessary witness to this God-centered reality of our lives: our individual need of God's grace, combined with the testimony that our lives are created to be essentially social. The church, then, rather than serving as the mere conscience of our culture, becomes a witness in thought, word, and deed to what our world is meant to be, especially as we take seriously the most vulnerable of our culture-the children.

[67] The question that arises in any discussion of Wesley's views on infant baptism is how we apply his convictions to our denominations, now that we are no longer a renewal movement in the Church of England, but formal churches with structures and membership rolls. My tradition, the United Methodist Church, has been wrestling with this issue for eight years now: what should be the status of baptized children. Another paper is required to answer this fully, but I want to observe at this point, that infants, in a Wesleyan construct, ought to be full members of the church, once baptized. However, if we think this way *as Wesleyans*, we will need to recall that for us the central issue of infant baptism is regeneration, not justification, since prevenient grace covers infants from the quilt of Adam's sin. This should inform our thinking about the status of the baptized once "the age of accountability" has been reached. If we are to recover a practice of infant baptism that is truly faithful to the best insights of our tradition, we must provide measures for removing from membership those who make no profession of their "ownership" of their baptism, both by confession of faith and the "marks of the new birth," since such a situation would indicate that the grace of baptism had been lost. Not to do this will be to take the easy way out of the tension we feel in our contemporary practice of ministry. If the church is the sacramental gift through which God brings us to Himself-and not the executor of sacerdotal authority-then the church must take very seriously both the nurture necessary to produce conscious experience of God's presence and the discernment required in holding persons accountable for their response to God's renewing grace.

When his understanding of sin, grace, and holiness are viewed as a single garment, it becomes apparent that both an experiential element and a sacramental commitment are required to do him justice. We cannot de-emphasize either and fully comprehend his thought on Christian life. Personal, conscious experience of the new birth-God's transforming presence-is a necessary component of any theology that wants to call itself Wesleyan. How can we not "feel" the change worked in us by God, if Wesley's theology is correct?

In a similar way his sacramentalism is imperative, for Wesley's soteriology is built on the foundation of God's initiatory work, providing for the personal presence of the Holy Spirit in human experience-even pre-regenerate experience-through the *means* of his incarnate Son. Because Christ, through his incarnation, preaching, death, and resurrection, is the means of all grace, the church's teaching/preaching about Christ, sacramental celebration of Christ, and fellowship in Christ are able, by God's design, to be conveyors of God's presence and grace. Even the lives of individual Christians become in Christ a sacramental presence to other Christians.

The practice of baptizing infants is not, therefore, a detriment to Wesley's experimental theology of holiness. Instead, this sacrament is an outward witness to our utter dependence on God's grace, a testimony that God's grace can only be had on God's terms, a reminder to us of our mutual responsibility for one another's spiritual flourishing, and finally a practice through with God gives us Himself.

REUNITING THE TWO SO LONG DISJOINED: KNOWLEDGE AND VITAL PIETY

by
Donald A. D. Thorsen

Editor's note: This is the presidential address delivered by Dr. Thorsen to the Wesleyan Theological Society convened at Northwest Nazarene College, Nampa, Idaho, November 3-4, 1995.

Last winter I needed to find another textbook for a class that I taught on contemporary trends in American Christianity. The book I originally planned to use was no longer in print-a dilemma faculty members often face. I called several friends in colleges and seminaries around the country to ask for suggestions for a substitute book. A book often suggested-that is, suggested by friends of mine outside the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions-was the book by Mark Noll entitled *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. After hearing their brief reviews of the book, I was intrigued by Noll's thesis, namely that "the scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind."[1] So I drove to the bookstore at Fuller Theological Seminary to purchase the book. I was quite pleased when I first began reading Noll's book. It fed into all of my scholarly biases.

Since I first became a religious studies major at Stanford University, I have had a passion - one could even say a calling-to pursue scholarly studies of religion. I can remember that, when I was a sophomore in college, I told my father that I planned to become a religious studies major. His response was, "O, so you plan to become a minister!?" When I told

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[1] Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 3.

him that I did not sense a call to pastor a church, he had a difficult time understanding why in the world I ever wanted to study religion from a scholarly much less a secular perspective. Later on, when I did decide to become an ordained minister, I had similar responses from the conference board of the Free Methodist Church that reviews prospective ministers. It seemed to be of little value to them that I should want to pursue the scholarly study of religion, since such a vocation-from their perspective-supplies so little to the day-to-day life of the church.

So I was receptive to Noll's critique of the intellectual weaknesses of American evangelicalism. Both in theory and practice, I was tired of feeling marginalized by an evangelical culture that largely ignores-at best-the scholarly study of religion and-at worst-assaults it. Time and time again I felt as if I needed to apologize for wanting to be a religious scholar, and, when I finally became a scholar, I felt as if I needed to left the appropriateness of my chosen discipline of theology, since-after all-it was not biblical studies.

Imagine my dismay, then, when I reached Noll's chapter six entitled "The Intellectual Disaster of Fundamentalism." In the first five chapters Noll presents what he considers the various cultural and institutional sources of the intellectual imbalance of American evangelicalism. His source identifications seemed reasonable to me. They include anti-intellectual developments due to utilitarianism, revivalism, separation of church and state, civil religion, a democratic understanding of society, a liberal view of the economy, and so on.[2] But then Noll turns in chapter six to what he considers the theological sources of anti-intellectual leaven among evangelical Christians. They are said to be three: the holiness movement, pentecostalism, and dispensationalism.[3]

It is beyond the scope of this address to deal with all of my scholarly reasons for rejecting the thesis that anti-intellectualism among *all* American evangelicals has its theological sources in the holiness movement, pentecostalism, and dispensationalism. I have already indicated several of my criticisms of Noll in my article published in the recent issue of the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*.[4] It is enough for us to reflect on the accusation by Noll that the Holiness tradition, which includes the *Wesleyan*/

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[2] See Noll, *Scandal*, 59-81.

[3] See Noll, *Scandal*, 109-145.

[4] Donald A. D. Thorsen, "The Future of Biblical Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 30:2 (Fall 1995): 182-202, esp. 195-200.

Holiness traditions, are responsible-along with pentecostalism and dispensationalism-for anti-intellectualism among *all* evangelical Christians in America.

As incredible as that accusation sounds, it has resonated with thousands if not millions of people because Noll is read as an authority among many evangelical Christians today. Noll, after all, is the McManis Professor of Christian Thought at Wheaton College, has served as an editor for several scholarly publications, and has written numerous books. The book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* was named the 1995 Book of the Year by *Christianity Today*, which-I must confess-is a special embarrassment to me because I serve as a Consulting Editor for this magazine, thus suggesting how little one affects the upper management of a publication even when serving on its editorial board.

Cri du Coeur

I want to borrow a line from his book with regard to my intention in this address. My intention is to issue a "*cri du coeur* [a cry of the heart] on behalf of the intellectual life by one who, for very personal reasons, still embraces the Christian faith in an evangelical form."[5] My address is also a cry of the heart. But it is a cry to those within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions to become more attentive to that which Charles Wesley said so long ago in the words of a hymn: "Unite the pair so long disjoined, Knowledge and vital Piety: Learning and holiness combined."[6] If, in fact, the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions have become lax in their intellectual prowess since the time of John and Charles Wesley (and I believe they have), then I seek to *re-unite* the two so long disjoined: knowledge *and* vital piety, learning *and* holiness combined.

Although our Wesleyan/Holiness traditions have not consistently affirmed the integration of heart and mind modeled by the Wesleys, we are poised to make more significant contributions to the intellectual well-being of evangelicalism and beyond if we support the historic and current trajectory of our Wesleyan/Holiness traditions toward a broadened and more active involvement in scholarship. Let me argue for this thesis by gleaning what nuggets of wisdom we can from Noll's work. Then I will

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[5] Noll, *Scandal*, ix.

[6] Charles Wesley, "A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists, 1780," Hymn 461, 1.5, *The Works of John Wesley*, Oxford Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, xxxx), 7:644.

address the need for a broadened conception of scholarship-for example, as promoted by Ernest Boyer and the Carnegie Foundation. I will conclude by looking at some of the contemporary advances that can be found with regard to scholarship in the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions.

The Scandal

I agree with the basic thesis of Noll's book. There is not much of an evangelical mind. That is, evangelical Christians have not generally done as good a job promoting matters of the mind as they have of the heart. For all the literature that has been generated by evangelicals and for all the sermons, seminars, crusades, and television programming, we have not significantly contributed to the intellectual development of America. Instead, evangelical Christians constantly attest to the ongoing impact of secular ideas on their beliefs and practices. Although evangelicalism has undeniably impacted America, for example, in its huge numerical growth, its impact on the intellectual dimension of American culture has been less significant.

So I have a love/hate relationship with Noll's book. I agree with his general thesis, but I disagree with his evaluation of the sources-and thus solutions-to the intellectual weaknesses of American evangelicalism. Is there a scandal? Yes and no.

Since basically I agree with Noll's overall thesis, I will not try to refute it. But, beyond the basic agreement, Noll has little to say to me as an evangelical-and even less to me as someone within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. The fact is that the problem of anti-intellectualism among American evangelicals is due as much-if not more-to sources *outside* the holiness movement, pentecostalism, and dispensationalism.

These sources particularly include Noll's own Reformed tradition, which includes his idyllic view of Jonathan Edwards and the turn-of-the-century Princeton theology. Noll himself is misleading at the beginning of his book because, when he first talks about the theological roots of evangelical anti-intellectualism, he traces them back to the 1820s and 1830s rather than to the later holiness, pentecostal and dispensational movements.[7] That preliminary theological discussion, in part, began my great disappointment with his damning discussion of the holiness movement and company. Noll's criticisms seemed so out of place in terms of his own

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[7] Noll, *Scandal*, 23.

historiography.

Contemporary scholars, including those Noll often quotes in support of his book, see the so-called leaven of fundamentalism coming primarily from the Reformed and dispensationalist traditions rather than from other evangelical traditions. George Marsden, for example, sees fundamentalism arising-among other places-out of dispensationalism and "a wider coalition with the publication and wide, free distribution of *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915), twelve paperback volumes containing defenses of fundamental doctrines by a variety of American and British conservative writers."[8] Alister McGrath specifically sees the roots of fundamentalism coming more from the Reformed traditions of evangelicalism, including scholars from the Princetonian School such as Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, and later J. Gresham Machen.[9]

Noll, on the other hand, briefly refers to the authors of *The Fundamentals*-which included such Princetonians as Warfield-as examples of enlightened authors who rose above growing fundamentalist tendencies.[10] This assessment demonstrates the way Noll views theologians from the Reformed tradition-with rose-colored glasses. Even David Wells, who is no fan of either the holiness movement or pentecostalism, does not blame them for the leaven of fundamentalism. Instead, he places the blame within the largely Reformed reaction to modernism.[11]

Scandalizing the Scandal

In his present book, Noll wonders whether the "scandal" can be scandalized. That is, are there ways to view the intellectual deficiencies of American evangelicalism in a more positive light. Noll suggests—and I agree—that we as evangelicals need to *reconceive* the place and function

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[8] George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 50-61, esp. 56-61; cf. 32-39.

[9] See Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 27-36, esp. 28-29.

[10] See Noll, *Scandal,* 189.

[11] David Wells largely sees the intellectual and theological weaknesses of American evangelicalism resulting from the loss of "the truths of historic Protestant orthodoxy"; pietists, charismatics and others represent aberrations of such truths, but their presence is seen as consequent and marginal rather than as the sources of greater evangelical anti-intellectualism. See *No Place for Truth, or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 9, 288-293.

of intellectual endeavors in our theology and evangelical ethos. But that which Noll conceives seems-ironically-to bring him to a conception of theology that is surprisingly characteristic of historic Wesleyan thought. It is at this point that Noll advocates a greater integration of heart and mind, reflective of what he sees as a more biblical (and thus-to him-more Reformed) approach to the intellectual dimension of life.[12]

John and Charles Wesley sought this same integration in their theology and ministry. Whether we in the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions have always maintained that integration is a complex question. In some instances we have done a good job at trying to hold this integration. In other instances we have not done so well, and I have to cry out *mia culpa* [I am guilty] with regard to our intellectual impoverishment. But we are not necessarily worse off than other strands of evangelicalism, especially given the fact that we do not have as many centuries of theological tradition on which to develop our beliefs and practices. Our theology is rooted more in the evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century than in the sixteenth century continental Reformation.

We hardly need to rehearse the many ways that John Wesley attempted to integrate heart and mind. Most scholars today firmly recognize him as a positive figure within the realm of evangelicalism, though they may not always know what to do with him.[13] Even Noll acknowledges the leadership of Wesley alongside others like Jonathan Edwards in historic evangelicalism, despite the fact that Noll never gives Wesley much serious consideration.[14]

In his attempts to scandalize the scandal, that is, reconceive the so-called integration of heart and mind, Noll is more critical of the heart dimension of things than of the mind dimension. Some of his limitations-in reflecting on the entirety of the so-called scandal-comes, on the one hand, from grandiose expectations of evangelical influence on all dimensions of American thought and life. On the other hand, Noll is preoccupied with poor scholarship in evangelical academies.

With regard to the first limitation, scholars such as Grant Wacker question whether "evangelicals do in fact need to establish a Christian view of

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[12] See Noll, *Scandal,* 241-253.

[13] For example, see McGrath, *Evangelicalism,* 25-26, 59, 117; cf. Wells, *No Place for Truth,* 134.

[14] See Noll, *Scandal,* 4, 8, 86.

everything."[15] With regard to the second limitation, scholars such as Robert Wuthnow, Richard Mouw, and Alister McGrath question whether evangelical scholarship has, in fact, failed all that badly. Wuthnow, for example, questions whether evangelicals like Edwards-if Edwards can even be considered a prototype of American evangelicalism-were all that successful in the intellectual development of the past. McGrath questions whether evangelicals have done so badly, given the relative newness of the contemporary resurgence of evangelicalism in America.[16]

A resource that is helpful in responding to Noll's concerns is the book by Ernest Boyer entitled *Scholarship Reconsidered.* Boyer reports that too many people, especially in academia, focus narrowly on what they consider to be *scholarship*. Too often it is conceived, valued, and rewarded only in terms of *research* scholarship. Boyer's work proves to be particularly helpful to those of us in the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. To that helpfulness that I now want to turn. Boyer's work serves not only as a critique to Noll, but also serves as a critique to us. Just as Boyer serves as a critic, he also serves as an encourager and as one who can model a more integrated approach to the relationship between our head and heart-at least within the academic institutions of America, both inside and outside evangelicalism.

What Is Scholarship?

My address hereafter focuses on the general topic of scholarship, but it should not be considered exclusive of people outside academia. I intentionally distinguish between *scholarship* and *academics*, not because a great deal of scholarship fails to come out of the academy, but because a

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[15] Grant Wacker, "The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind," *First Things* (March 1995), 36.

[16] See Robert Wuthnow, "The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind," *First Things* (March 1995), 39-41; Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995) 17-51; and cf. the forum discussion on the evangelical mind between Mark Noll, Alister McGrath, and Richard Mouw in *Christianity Today* 39.9 (14 August 1995): 21-27. In response to the forum, Paul Leggett questions whether "the spiritual forebears of today's 'evangelicals' are not the Protestant Reformers, the Puritans, nor even Jonathan Edwards or George Whitefield. Rather, those spiritual ancestors would be nineteenth-century revivalists like Charles Finney, Jonathan Blanchard, and D. L. Moody. In this sense, the Princeton theologians of the nineteenth century like Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield could not even be called "evangelical" since they vigorously opposed the revival preaching and theology of leaders like Finney; see "Letters to the Editor," *Christianity Today* 39.11 (2 October 1995): 6.

great deal of scholarship comes from pastors and informed lay people within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. Scholarly work can and should come from many places. Speaking as an academic, I look forward to a time of greater intellectual mutuality between our academies and our churches.

In 1990 Ernest Boyer, then director of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, published his *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Boyer wrote the book in order to confront the ongoing trend among American colleges and universities to reward *research* rather than *teaching* as a measure of scholarship. He considers this climate to be a suffocating practice, restricting creativity rather than sustaining it among faculty as well as students.

Boyer advocates more creative ways to conceive of scholarship, recognizing the full range of faculty talent and the great diversity of functions higher education must perform. In particular, he proposes "four general views of scholarship-discovery, integration, application, and teaching."[17] Boyer laments the loss of emphasis on *teaching* in colleges and universities around the country. Yet, if Christian colleges-including those representative of the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions-have a particular strength relative to the four types of scholarship proposed by Boyer, it probably would be the area of teaching. Where I teach (Azusa Pacific University), I hear too often that the school is a "teaching university", though that description is nowhere published in university literature. Focusing primarily on teaching, of course, is nothing about which to be ashamed or concerned. But too often the phrase "teaching university" is used as an excuse for devaluing and discouraging other types of scholarship within academia.

Boyer may have intended his reconsideration of scholarship primarily for the purpose of promoting quality teaching, but his views help us in the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions to develop a broadened perspective of scholarship. Boyer does not provide insight to academic institutions alone, though that is a natural center of scholarship. His broadened conception of scholarship also helps to encourage scholarship among pastors and lay people-places that the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions have always

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[17] Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990), xii.

encouraged individuals to contribute to the holistic well being of both our hearts and minds. Let me develop three of Boyer's ideas.

1. Enlarging the Perspective of Scholarship

Ernest Boyer proposes that we should reconceive the meaning of scholarship in terms of four separate, yet overlapping functions. These are: "the scholarship of *discovery*; the scholarship of *integration*; the scholarship of *application*; and the scholarship of *teaching*."[18] Boyer intended his discussion of scholarship "to move beyond the tired old 'teaching versus research' debate and give the familiar and honorable term 'scholarship' a broader, more capacious meaning, one that brings legitimacy to the full scope of academic work."[19] By broadening the concept of scholarship, Boyer thought that he would be able to encourage more scholarly work in the areas of integration, application, and teaching.

Although institutions of higher education in the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions have generally excelled at teaching, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the areas concerning the scholarship of *integration* and *application*. Scholarship conceived in these ways should be considered a strength in our movement, and in some ways they already are. We will not in the near future be capable of developing significant amounts of research in our institutions of higher education. If it can be accomplished, then it should be supported as best it can. But, realistically speaking, in addition to focusing on quality teaching, we should try to develop ways to contribute to the scholarship of *integration* and the scholarship of *application*.

Consider these two types of scholarship. First, the scholarship of *integration* gives special meaning to isolated aspects of scholarship; it makes them come to life. Scholarship that is integrative crosses disciplines, highlighting the relevance of one's own discipline as well as illuminating information in relevant ways, often for the benefit of nonspecialists. For example, we can show how a Christian worldview is relevant to many disciplines and to many areas of real life concern. More specifically, we can show how a Christian worldview—-that benefits from the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions—-is relevant today. Those concerned with integration must be specially adept at critical analysis and interpretation of the *best* scholarship available as they try to develop a more holistic and healthy way of viewing

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[18] Boyer, *Scholarship*, 15.

[19] Boyer, *Scholarship*, 16.

life. When one considers the theological heritage of the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions-with its dynamic conception of the interplay between the priority of the Bible and tradition, reason, and experience-it seems that contemporary scholarly trends that are interdisciplinary, interpretive, and integrative should come easily to this theological heritage.

Second, the scholarship of *application* takes aspects of scholarship found in discovery and integration and applies them to life. This emphasis involves doing more than just good deeds or being a good citizen. It involves a direct consideration of the *best* scholarship in one's own field of knowledge as it applies to real life issues. By focusing on the application of our disciplines, we in turn learn better theory (and theology) for having involved ourselves with the scholarship of application. As the old adage says, "the best theory informs the best applications, and the best applications inform the best theory." In the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions, we have a longstanding heritage of application. Note, for example, the theology and ministry of John Wesley, who continually concerned himself with the social as well as spiritual applications of his writings.

2. Creativity Contracts

Another lesson that we can learn from Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* is the need for what he calls "creativity contracts."[20] A creativity contract represents "an arrangement by which faculty members define their professional goals for a three- to five-year period, possibly shifting from one principal scholarly focus to another."[21] Simply stated, a creativity contract provides an opportunity for accountability-another characteristic reflective of the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. Boyer proposes the creativity contracts not only as a way to broaden the ways in which scholarship is conceived, but because he knows that scholars go through different periods in their lives. Sometimes they place greater emphasis on integration; other times they place greater emphasis on application or teaching. Regardless of the emphasis, a creativity contract helps to keep someone "on track", giving them a greater sense of direction and-hopefully-effectiveness.

With all of the small group and accountability relationships that most of us have experienced in the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions, one would

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[20] Boyer, *Scholarship*, 43-52.

[21] Boyer, *Scholarship*, 48.

think that we would consider the idea of creativity contracts for the purpose of scholarship to be obvious. Yet, as we all well know, that which is obvious is sometimes the thing that we-as scholars-are most likely to overlook.

Boyer does not signify the person or persons with whom a faculty member should make these creativity contracts. From experience I know that one may not want to make them with a chair or administrator because of ramifications for one's position. At Azusa Pacific University the faculty are required to fill out what are called *Summative Evaluations*. In many respects, they could function like creativity contracts because they require the formulation of goals, which later are supposed to be evaluated along with the faculty member's chair. But because the Summative Evaluation has become so institutionalized, they mostly appear to faculty as well as administrators as bureaucratic tools that need to be processed for the benefit of institutional record-keeping rather than for the personal and professional development of faculty members.

Making a creativity contract with a colleague may prove most effective in setting goals, maintaining these goals, and meeting them. In my own experience, specific individuals-both inside and outside my field of religious studies-have been invaluable in modeling how I can creatively accomplish scholarly work. On occasions, close work with those individuals have been the most helpful in guiding me to new (and sometimes previously inconceivable) ways in which to pursue scholarship. Whether these creativity contracts are formally devised or informally modeled, they will help most of us as we attempt to find new ways in which to contribute to the intellectual well-being of ourselves and others.

3. A New Generation of Scholars

Boyer envisions a future in which faculty will be liberated from a narrow conception of scholarship to one that includes the scholarship of integration, application and teaching as well as that of research. I also envision a liberated future for the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. But we need liberation from more than just a narrow conception of research as scholarship; we need to be liberated *toward* focusing more upon integrative and applied forms of scholarship. We also need to be liberated from too narrow a conception of Christian academia as "teaching institutions."

Evangelical Christian scholars in general and Wesleyan/Holiness scholars in particular need to become more creative in finding scholarly

ways to express themselves and their concerns. Most of us would not be at the annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society if we did not have a concern to make a difference in intellectual matters related to our Christian faith and theological heritage. Too often we feel restrained, but not always by real restraints. Of course, I recognize that there are real, significant restraints that exist in opposition to scholarly pursuits-heavy teaching loads, low salaries, extensive committee work, administrative responsibilities, commitments to family, church responsibilities, and so on. But many times we simply need a *vision* for how we can contribute to the greater scholarship of evangelicalism, of America, and of the world beyond.

Looking to the Future

As an encouragement to you, let me share why I am optimistic that the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions *will* contribute in the future at least to the intellectual development of evangelicalism. I will do this by reviewing some of the scholarly developments that have taken place recently, that is, with regard to developments in scholarly disciplines reflected in the Wesleyan Theological Society.

Established in 1965, the Wesleyan Theological Society has grown to more than six hundred members, including faculty, pastors, and active lay people. We have published the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* every year since the founding of the Society, and now the bi-annual editions are longer and of increasing scholarly content. Our annual meetings have expanded to include outside speakers, concurrent sessions (patterned after the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature), and this year group discussions based on various disciplines (patterned after the Oxford Institute). Also this year we have taken steps to establish an endowment for the Society and to change the annual meeting to the Spring, which is reflective of the growing scholarly interest among our members to attend the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature (AAR/SBL).

Members of the Society have progressively become more involved in their professional affiliations. Donald Dayton, for example, gave a plenary address several years ago at the Oxford Institute, which a growing number of our members attended, and he will give another plenary address at the upcoming AAR/SBL. At the AAR/SBL there now occurs annual gatherings of Nazarene scholars sponsored by Nazarene Theological Seminary, a gathering of Free Methodist and Wesleyan Church schol-

ars, and also a gathering sponsored by Asbury Theological Seminary. Many other professional affiliations could, of course, be included, each reflecting particular areas of scholarship within biblical studies, historical theology, systematic and philosophical theology, Christian education, evangelism, missions, and so on. Our members have not only begun to participate more, but also have attained positions of leadership in governance and publications.

Our seminaries continue to provide communities of scholarship which contribute to the intellectual leadership of the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. Asbury Theological Seminary, in particular, is developing greater leadership in the area of scholarship. Since the mid-1980s, Asbury published the *Asbury Theological Journal*, which represents a continuation of the *Asbury Seminarian*, founded in 1946-perhaps representing the first scholarly evangelical publication after the establishment of the National Association of Evangelicals. In addition, Asbury has brought world-class scholars to its various lectureships. Such lecturers have included Elizabeth Achtemeier, C. K. Barrett, James Dunn, Karlfried Froehlich, Jack Kingsbury, I. Howard Marshall, James Luther Mays, JYrgen Moltmann, Thomas Morris, Thomas Oden, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Peter Stuhlmacher, Geoffrey Wainright, and John Howard Yoder. Few academies in America can boast a more prestigious list of lecturers. In the future, Asbury plans to develop doctoral programs in biblical studies, theology, and missions.

Asbury Theological Seminary also has been successful in being awarded grants from the Pew Charitable Trust that provided for the development of a Wesleyan/Holiness Studies Center, which explores the interaction between the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions and American culture in the nineteenth century. The grants provided for three conferences that drew upon a variety of scholars from around the country and will result in a number of publications. One of the most helpful publications already available is the *Wesleyan/Holiness Studies Center Bulletin* that discusses scholarly topics related to the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions, and presents extensive bibliographies of books, articles, dissertations, and other literature related to Wesleyan/Holiness themes.

Our colleges and universities have had varying degrees of success in the area of scholarship. They and our seminaries continue to face the struggles involved with being tuition driven; but this is a problem for most Christian institutions of higher education in the country. There also

exist the complications involved with maintaining quality relations with supporting denominations. Yet, there do appear to be glimmers of hope with regard to what they do to enhance the culture of scholarship within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. Many of our colleges and universities have maintained lectureships that promote scholarship. Others have lowered their teaching loads, raised the amount of money designated for faculty development, sabbaticals, research grants, and professional travel, and still others have reduced teaching responsibilities for individual faculty who have been especially productive in their scholarly contributions.

With regard to the latter, let me share with you about an exciting idea sponsored by Point Loma Nazarene College entitled the *Wesleyan Center for 21st Century Studies*. The Wesleyan Center was established to inspire a new generation of Wesleyan thinking that will influence the broader church and social worlds of the 21st century. It is patterned after the Center for Christian Studies at Gordon College. The Wesleyan Center provides for three types of scholarship. First, Center Scholars represent faculty at Point Loma who receive grants for the preparation of original essays that define a Wesleyan position from the perspective of a specific discipline. Second, Center Fellows represent faculty who receive course-load reductions to enable them to produce a scholarly study or activity on a topic relating to the Center's mission. Finally, Visiting Scholars represent research and writing opportunities to self-supporting faculty from other institutions who are engaged in a study within one of the Center's areas of interest. The Wesleyan Center then plans to publish the results of the scholarship through the Point Loma Press.

Point Loma Press is the only established press with which I am familiar among institutions of higher education in the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. Several of our institutions are currently reviewing proposals for developing such presses, but so far they have been slow to publish scholarly writings. Until now, the most prolific publishers of scholarly writings in the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions have been by denominational publishers such as Beacon Hill Press, Warner Press, Light and Life Press, Wesleyan Church Publishing House, and Evangel Publishing House. Such denominational publishers have not only been helpful in the publication of some scholarly books, but also of other magazine, curriculum, and devotional literature-literature which we as scholars should not quickly discount as ways in which to contribute to the integrative and application forms of scholarship.

At the 1996 annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society, there are plans to have a forum with denominational editors and publishers within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. There should exist greater cooperation between these people and members of the Society. We plan to explore at that time how more cooperation might develop in a mutually beneficial way.

Other helpful publishers have been private or small-group ventures such as the Francis Asbury Press and Heritage Press. Schmul Publishing Company has for a long time been crucial to the preservation of Wesleyan/Holiness materials. All of these presses, however, have published with relatively small markets in mind. As long as we remain small-minded, we will have less of a chance to impact beyond very localized portions of America.

An excellent example of the innovative preservation of historical scholarship can be found at Northwest Nazarene College in its new *Wesley Center for Applied Theology*. The Wesley Center is developing computer resources crucial to continued scholarship within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. For example, it supplies computer access to many of the works by John Wesley, Adam Clark, the *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, and other holiness literature out of copyright. More importantly, the Wesley Center helps to preserve the theological as well as historical identity of the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions.

Another development in the information age has been the evolution of computer discussion groups accessed by e-mail. An example is *Wesleyans in Theological Dialogue*. This development reflects the growing familiarity with and use of the most current scholarly resources available.

Some denominations among the Wesleyan/Holiness denominations have taken helpful steps toward gathering their scholars together for the encouragement and guidance of those involved in scholarly activities. Before the founding of the Wesleyan Theological Society, the Free Methodist Church instituted what has come to be known as the *Graduate Student Theological Seminar*, which was known affectionately by its early attenders as the "Rye Conference" because it was held in Rye, New York. The Nazarene and Wesleyan Churches have periodic gatherings of scholars from their institutions of higher education. For example, the Nazarene Theology Conference invites religious studies faculty to meet, and the Nazarene Higher Education Conference invites faculty and graduate students from all academic disciplines to attend.

A recent and exciting development within our traditions is the *Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy Conferences*. The conferences were created by the efforts of such people as Susie Stanley, but they also are sponsored in part by denominations within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. The purpose of the conferences is to affirm, instruct, and encourage women in ministry. As a result, scholarly work has emerged from those who participated.

Although a number of institutions, both academic and ecclesiastical, have worked to promote scholarship, the most important proponents have been individuals who have sought to contribute scholarship both inside and outside the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. The founders of the Wesleyan Theological Society, for example, included such scholars as William Arnett, Charles Carter, Leo Cox, Merne Harris, Richard Taylor, and W. Ralph Thompson. Subsequent members of the Society worked to promote scholarship within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. Many of us in the Society have been inspired by the scholarly work of Timothy Smith, Dennis Kinlaw, Donald Dayton, Howard Snyder, and others. There are other scholars who have and continue to serve as role models for scholarly activity, including Ole Borgen, Albert Outler, Thomas Oden, and William Abraham.

Intent and Suggestions

It is the "cry of my heart" that there emerge a greater attention to scholarly reflection and scholarly output among academics, pastors, and laity within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions. I do not, however, want that scholarship to be self-serving. That is, I do not want to promote scholarship just for the sake of promoting our academic and ecclesiastical institutions. Instead, it is my hope that scholarship produced by people within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions will intertwine wonderfully with our already vital emphasis on spirituality and holiness. It is my further hope that the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions-along with evangelicalism as a whole-will have an increasing intellectual impact on contemporary American religion as well as society as a whole.

I do not want my concern for scholarship to swing the pendulum to the opposite extreme so that we neglect matters of the heart, faith, ministry, and social action. On the contrary, it is my intent that knowledge and vital piety be held in a creative balance that embodies the original heart-cry of the Wesleys. Today there is a great need for us to *re-unite* the two so long disjoined within the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions, namely,

knowledge and vital piety, learning and holiness.

Let me close by offering five suggestions that I think will help us become more appropriately focused on the scholarly dimensions of our Christian faith and practice.

First, we need to develop *new attitudes* with regard to the value and cultivation of the intellectual dimension of our lives as Christians as well as human beings. Probably my favorite quote from Noll's book involves this very need for a change of attitudes. He says:

> For evangelicalism as a whole, not new graduate schools, but an alteration of attitudes is the key to promoting a Christian life of the mind. It is the same for evangelical scholars. The key thing is to work at it. The superstructures-appropriate institutions, lively periodicals, adequate funding, academic respect, meaningful influence-are not insignificant. Some attention is justified to such matters. But if evangelicals are ever to have a mind, they must begin with the heart.[22]

There needs to be a *passion* for the well-being of the Christian life of the mind if we are to make a truly holistic contribution to the well-being of the world.

Second, we need to resist those like Noll who would make the Wesleyan/Holiness traditions the *scapegoats* for anti-intellectualism among American evangelicals. We are not without our weaknesses and needs to become more self-critical and to develop ourselves with regard to scholarship. But we need to be viewed with understanding and fairness when considering our history and theology. Moreover, we need to shed feelings of insignificance and insecurity that discourage us from speaking out when we have ideas to share that are genuinely valid from a scholarly perspective.

Third, we would do well to broaden our conception of scholarship so that it recognizes and rewards people for their involvement in the scholarship of *integration* and *application* as well as that of *research* and *teaching*. We often do not become more involved in scholarly activities because we cannot conceive of how we can contribute to the greater scholarly world. Yet our Wesleyan/Holiness traditions naturally lend themselves to involvement in the areas of integration and application as well as teaching. We should focus our efforts there in order to begin slowly to make our marks in scholarship. Those scholarly activities may take a variety of forms. We do not just have to write; we can do other

things. We can edit, we can work with computers, we can create videos, etc. But we can also write, and this is where I would especially like for us to become more active. Start now where your strengths are, even if it means starting small. Do not, however, be satisfied with little. An analogy can be drawn from the words of Paul when he says, "the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6 NRSV).

Fourth, we need to take seriously the idea of developing *creativity contracts*. We need to make them with ourselves if not with others. Proverbs 29:18 may appropriately be applied to those of us concerned about scholarship: "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (KJV). We who are concerned about scholarship need to develop a greater *vision* for ourselves as well as among those for whom scholarship is not a concern. But we may not do anything about it unless we set long-range goals and find ways to hold ourselves accountable to those goals. So, be creative in terms of the types of scholarly activities in which you become involved *and* to which you seek to hold yourself accountable!

Fifth, some of us will need to become more assertive in terms of doing the work of *financial development* in order to pay for the kind of superstructures mentioned earlier in the quote by Noll. As a scholar, I have at times come to hate the term "entrepreneurial spirit" when it is used as an excuse to develop a variety of academic programs designed more to make money than to enhance scholarship. Still, money and other support systems are essential for promoting Christian scholarship.

We need to become more development oriented in order to achieve some of the goals we set out in our personal or possibly institutional creativity contracts. Some of us might find that we have special talents for getting grants, developing new academic programs, or raising money for yourself or your institution for the purpose of promoting scholarship. These tasks, however unappealing they may seem to you, are not insignificant and may provide yet another way in which you can contribute to the overall development of the Christian life of the mind.

Finally, I realize that so much of what I have said sounds like just more academic idealism, more ivory tower musings. But I resist that caricature. Like the Wesleys, I believe that our Christianity needs an integration of knowledge *as well as* vital piety, of learning *as well as* holiness, and we continually need to reassess *and* create new ways in which to promote that integration of heart and mind.

BOOK REVIEWS

John B. Cobb, Jr. 1995. *Grace & Responsibility: A Wesleyan Theology for Today*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 192 pp. ISBN 0-687-00769-0.

Reviewed by Randy L. Maddox, University of Sioux Falls, Sioux Falls, S.D.

As the promotional blurb that I provided for this book suggests, I see its publication as a significant event. In it one of the most prominent contemporary United Methodist theologians finally engages his Wesleyan roots as seriously as he does current theological agendas. Moreover, he has taken the time to develop an informed reading of Wesley for this engagement, something few American Methodist systematic theologians have done for over a century.

The "back to Wesley movement," growing over the last few decades in Methodism, has been carried on more by historians, historical theologians, and sacramental/liturgical theologians than by systematic theologians. This helps explain Cobb's initial distrust of the movement, fearing that it sought merely a repristinization of Wesley's teachings that minimized the impact of intellectual changes during the past two centuries. He was also troubled by the tendency of proponents to champion highly selective aspects of Wesley. It was only as Cobb became convinced that those central concerns that provide cohesion to Wesley's thought have relevance for today that he gained interest in the call for Wesley's contemporary heirs to reconsider their founding father. The degree of his present interest is evident in the basic contention of this book, namely that such reconsideration of Wesley is the *only* way for the movement that he initiated to move forward today with some shared missional basis.

The pastoral concern expressed in this contention clearly influences Cobb's attempt to strike up a dialogue between Wesley and the present,

rendering it a situated and "interested" reading. But all readings of tradition are such! The refreshing thing is that Cobb readily admits this reality, and he tries to articulate up front the situational dynamics that influence his framing of questions and assessment of contemporary relevance. Moreover, unlike those correlation-theologies which take as their situation the hypothetical "modern person" facing traditional faith claims, Cobb owns his concrete situation within a specific faith tradition - the United Methodist Church, with all of its present stagnation and fragmentation.

The very fragmentation of United Methodism, along with its historical distance from Wesley, poses Cobb's first challenge in this book. If he is to bring contemporary United Methodists into dialogue with Wesley's theology, he must first help them recognize their own operative theology, so that points of contact can be explored. Chapter one is devoted to articulating this largely subconscious operative theology. Cobb's central claim is that the various dimensions of this theology revolve around the question of how God is related to created reality. This question involves competing conceptions of the nature of God's power or how God chooses to exercise power. Cobb astutely relates the present polarizations in United Methodism (e. g., liberal/conservative, evangelical/liberationist, naturalist/supernaturalist) to disagreements or confusion in this area. This diagnosis provides the background for his recommendation of renewed consideration of Wesley, for Cobb recognizes that Wesley wrestled extensively and brilliantly with this question of how God works redemptively in creation. Cobb's hope is that a recovery of Wesley's way of conceiving how God is in the world and what God is doing in the world can help United Methodists address today's issues with greater insight and consensus (33).

In keeping with this hope, Cobb begins his exposition of Wesley in chapter two with an admirable sketch of basic themes in Wesley's conception of God's activity in the creation. Cobb's interest throughout the chapter is in how Wesley could affirm God's intimate interaction with creation without undercutting or overriding the integrity of creaturely being and action. As one would expect, Cobb occasionally reflects on possible points of agreement between Wesley's convictions and his own process theology. Cobb is fairly careful not to turn these occasions into a thinly-veiled prescription of process theology as the only legitimate contemporary translation of Wesley, or to read a process metaphysic back into Wesley.

For example, when Cobb cites Wesley's reference to God as the "Soul of the Universe" (50), he effectively highlights the distance that this emphasis places Wesley from deistic assumptions (including those of many classical theists!), while recognizing that Wesley's own view remains Newtonian, he was no panentheist. Likewise, when Cobb proposes that Wesley's model of God's responsible interaction with humanity be applied to all "individual events" (52), he is clear that this is his own extension by analogy of Wesley's convictions to process categories. He is a little less clear, however, in recognizing that the valid potential of this extension would be limited to rendering the "panpsychism" of a process metaphysic more Wesleyan in cast, not establishing that Wesley would embrace this metaphysic himself if he were in our context.

Chapter three narrows in on Wesley's understanding of God, humanity, and the interaction of the two. The discussion is framed in terms of the common scholarly claim that love is the central concept in Wesley's model of God and of human life. Cobb strongly affirms this centrality of love, both as true to theological standards and as relevant to contemporary needs and issues. At the same time, he raises some concerns (in both regards) about Wesley's particular formulation of the ideal of love. His major concern is that Wesley's strong emphasis on the primacy of love for God in the Christian life (e.g., prescribing that our conscious experience be continuously dominated by thinking of God) leaves little room for love of neighbor, let alone "lesser" loves like love for self or the enjoyment of food and friends. Cobb is quick to add that the alternative is not to debate what portion of love we ought to devote to God and what portion to others. The very assumption in such a debate, that one can sharply distinguish love for God from love for neighbor, is where Cobb finds fault in Wesley's formulation (65). While Wesley admittedly insisted that love for God and love for neighbor require one another, Cobb finds too little of a sense in Wesley that it is precisely through love for neighbor that one loves God. Some will worry that Cobb goes too far in the other direction, moving beyond the legitimate point of the complimentarity of our love for God and love for neighbor to the identification - or reduction - of love for God to love for neighbor (a move more in tune with process panentheism than with an authentic theism).

In chapter four Cobb probes Wesley's stance on the traditional themes of justification and assurance for their contemporary relevance. His analysis begins with a description of how such soteriological issues

were displaced in nineteenth-century theology and an argument for renewing consideration of them. Two claims in his subsequent analysis of Wesley's stance are particularly noteworthy. The first relates to the traditional Western affirmation of inherited guilt. While endorsing Wesley's rejection of inherited guilt (via prevenient grace), Cobb observes that the direction of this move is toward greater emphasis on individual voluntary sins. He then argues that we are better served today to retain Wesley's actual balance between collective and individual guilt than to follow later Methodist theology in pushing this momentum to the extreme of sole recognition of individual voluntary sins (84).

Cobb's second noteworthy claim relates to Wesley's emphasis on assurance as an inward sense of peace, joy, and love that empowers Christian life. He has some difficulties with the idea of "spiritual senses" that Wesley uses to articulate this theme, preferring a process epistemology (72-4, 96). He wants to highlight - or push further - Wesley's mature recognition that assurance can coexist with some of the anxieties, fears, and frustration of life. Cobb strongly endorses the desirability of recovering in contemporary United Methodism an emphasis on the importance of an inward experience of peace, joy, and love as the working of God's grace in Christian life (96).

Chapter five shifts attention to Wesley's emphasis on the further soteriological themes of the new birth and sanctification. Cobb notes at the outset that the closest thing to sanctification in contemporary vocabulary is spirituality. He then identifies an important corrective that Wesley offers when read in this light. Most models forwarded in the recently renewed emphasis on spirituality focus one-sidedly on either moral behavior or inner serenity. By contrast, Wesley is instructive precisely in his refusal to separate the inner and outer dimensions of Christian life (101). In the context of this general affirmation, Cobb again raises some concerns about Wesley's specific formulations. For example, he joins many in charging that Wesley equates the life of love too univocally with a rigorous life of discipline (104). He also echoes a common worry among later Methodists that Wesley's emphasis on the instantaneous experience of entire sanctification distracts from the importance of gradual growth in holiness and serves to call the whole doctrine of perfection into disrepute (109ff). But, unlike many who then abandon language of perfect love, talking only of continual striving, Cobb calls for a renewed Methodist commitment to the goal of perfect love, while avoiding exaggerations about the meaning of love to which Wesley was rhetorically prone (112ff).

The choice of themes in Cobb's exposition of Wesley to this point was guided by their prominence in Wesley's own thought. The themes in the last three chapters are selected more in view of the current theological situation. In chapter six Cobb draws on Wesley to critique the prevalent bifurcation of law and gospel in contemporary Christian life and thought. Focusing on his own tradition, Cobb astutely notes that, while Methodists may have broadened Wesley's perspective by applying the law more directly to structural social matters than he did, they have abandoned the teaching of the law almost everywhere else - thereby breaking the dialectical relation of law and gospel that was so central to Wesley (123). Cobb's hope is that Wesley's model of repentance within the process of progressive sanctification can help United Methodists recover a preaching of the law of love that is suitably broadened to deal more adequately than Wesley did with social sin and corporate repentance.

Chapter seven turns to one of the most prominent issues in current Christian discussion about how to hold together a spirit of openness with a sense of identity, both in relation to other Christian groups and to other world religions. This topic plunges Cobb into a longstanding Methodist debate over Wesley's various comments on the essence of true religion and on the difference between theological opinions and essential doctrines. Cobb quickly sides with those in this debate who consider Wesley's emphasis on love and personal transformation to involve a minimizing of concern for orthodoxy. He issues a call for Christians to follow Wesley's example of working together to clarify our purposes without requiring the precondition of agreement on some confession or creed (143).

On the issue of religious pluralism, Cobb gives a sympathetic exposition of Wesley's own assumption of universal accountability for the "light" one receives, then argues for a somewhat different emphasis that takes more into account the historical-cultural situatedness of knowledge, a growing theme over the last two centuries. The clarity with which Cobb makes his case on both matters should serve well the critical discussion that he is sure to spark.

Cobb's final chapter takes up the methodological question of norms in theological judgment. He uses this chapter to contest a "hermeneutical" conception of the so-called Wesleyan quadrilateral. Cobb understands this conception of theological method to reduce tradition, experience, and reason to unduly subordinate roles in relation to the Bible. Since Cobb develops his critique of this conception in dialogue with my exposition of

Wesley, I would clarify that my endorsement of a description of Wesley's theological method as a unilateral rule of Scripture with a trilateral hermeneutic of tradition, experience, and reason related to Wesley's *self-understanding*. I recognize (as does Cobb, 167) that this self-understanding reflected the lack of sensitivity to the influence of pre-understandings on one's reading of Scripture that was typical of Wesley's Enlightenment context. That is why I went on to describe Wesley's *actual practice* of theological reflection as relating the various norms in a "hermeneutic spiral" of becoming aware of and testing preunderstandings. I believe that this latter description affirms the dialectical relationship between the norms that Cobb rightly desires.

By contrast, it is the ambiguity of the relationship between the norms that troubles me about the explicit "dialectical" conception of the quadrilateral that Cobb champions as more authentic to Wesley and to contemporary experience. It is striking that Cobb's defense of his alternative focuses on the specific question of whether reason and experience can criticize and correct scripture (174). I looked in vain for similar emphasis on scripture correcting experience and current standards of "reason." This lack suggests more a model of the ultimate priority of reason and (contemporary) experience over scripture (and notably absent tradition) than a truly dialectical relationship! In terms of Cobb's specific example of the feminist critique (175), I would place emphasis on how experience and rational reflection helped recover a critique of patriarchy present within scripture itself, rather than cast it as a showdown between the authority of scripture or that of reason and/or experience. When issues seem to require such a showdown, I believe that the Wesleyan alternative must be to keep probing the hermeneutic spiral until a response, more adequate to all theological norms, is found.

While I am uncomfortable with some of the apparent implications of Cobb's framing of the quadrilateral, my own most significant reservation about his proposed appropriation of Wesley lies elsewhere. One of the differences that Cobb repeatedly emphasizes between Wesley and the situation of contemporary Methodism concerns the awareness of human psychological dynamics. Sometimes this is presented as a matter of Wesley's lack of knowledge of these dynamics, given his historical setting (e.g., 7, 126). At other times it is a recognition that psychological categories have superseded Wesley's theological categories in the common sense of the church (e.g., 22, 124). Either way, Cobb generally assumes

that contemporary psychological accounts of the conditions of human responsibility and freedom in moral action should be adopted in reframing Wesley's account of the Christian life for today (cf. 24-5, 78). While I agree with Cobb's sense that any contemporary appropriation of Wesley must address psychological models and concerns, I would focus this agenda rather differently.

Scholars are finally recognizing that Wesley had an explicit (indeed argumentative) position on the psychological dynamics of human moral action. Wesley embraced an "affectional" moral psychology, in direct contrast with both the prior common intellectualist tradition and the emergent empirical determinism of such folk as Hobbes and Hume. The focal claim in Wesley's psychology was that the affections, like the mind, are dependent upon experience. In particular, it is only as we experience love that we are freed up and empowered to love. This conviction lay behind Wesley's concern to craft various means of expressing and experiencing the love of God and neighbors. Seen in this light, it is significant that it was precisely as Wesley's followers abandoned his moral psychology for alternative ones (first the rationalist psychology of Thomas Reid *et al*., then the naturalist psychology of James, and today any of the several competing schools of thought) that they found both his theological claims and his various means of grace increasingly puzzling or unnecessary. As such, I believe that what is actually needed is a *reconsideration* of Wesley's own moral psychology, in dialogue with present competing schools of thought.

I trust that the seriousness with which I have tried to recapitulate and assess Cobb's proposal demonstrates again my profound appreciation for both his willingness to undertake this task, his integrity in carrying it out, and the many insights that he provides in the process. While he frames his discussion specifically for his United Methodist tradition, anyone concerned with faith-fulness to Wesley's vision in the context of present realities and issues will find this volume instructive. I recommend it broadly, and look forward to the fruitful discussion that it is sure to foster among the range of Wesley's theological descendants.

Tessa Berget. 1995. *Theology in Hymns? A Study on the Relationship of Doxology and Theology* According to *A Collection of Hymns for Use of the People Called Methodists (1780)*. Translated by Timothy E. Kimbrough. Nashvillege: Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press. Updated version of *Theologie in Hymnen?* 1989. Oros Verlag: Altenberge, Germany.

Review by Maxine Walker, Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego, California.

Professor Berger's title in the interrogative mode appropriately announces that the work is an unfolding inquiry into the operative principles of doxology and how hymns can be analyzed for their theological content. Within the study and avowedly beyond the study, the controlling questions is "What is the essence of doxological speech and the relationship of doxology to theology?"

Berger constructs a tripartite study that explores answers and offers additional questions about how the language of doxology is related to the matter of theological reflection. In each of the three sections, Berger carefully outlines a "multiplicity of presumptions and perspectives" and then proceeds to define the common questions of context that may reveal a "concealed ecumenicalism." Berger chooses Wesleyan hymnody as the central case study not only because it offers an excellent example of doxological speech (hymnody is a genre of doxological speech), but also because Wesleyan hymnody shapes the identity of Wesleyanism. This suggests that doxological traditions and practices will reveal in doxological speech the unifying response of faith to the saving acts of God.

Part one surveys the major scholarly discussions of doxology and theology in Roman Catholic liturgy, Protestant systematics, the Orthodox traditions, and ecumenical dialogue. Berger reviews the contributions of major liturgists in each tradition, analyzes the differences in their respective methodologies that reflect on doxology and theology, and argues for "doxology" as the point of unity in the ecumenical dialogue.

A striking way that her work may contribute to Wesleyan scholarship occurs in her highlighting of the Orthodox tradition, a legacy that never alienate its theology for its "doxo-logical" expressions. It is Berger's concern that scholarly theological analysis can be applied to doxology. The extensive references that follow each chapter is a compelling show of the academic endeavors shaping her central question:

"What meaning do doxological traditions have in relationship to theological tradition?"

In Part two, Berger answers the question by placing the debate in the context of a specific doxological tradition. She reviews the history of the Methodist "renewal" movement, the central features of John and Charles Wesley's spiritual biographies, and proceedes to outline the characteristic of Wesleyan hymnody in the 1780 *Collection*. Her analysis attempts to determine the poetical nature of the hymns and to trace the scriptural sources and literary allusions of this specific doxological tradition. The primary value of this section is Berger's thesis and analysis of the hymns as the spiritual journey or experience of the Christian rather than evaluation of the hymns according to the theological categories. Charles Wesley himself stated that the hymns "are not carelessly jumbled together, but carefully ranged under proper heads, according to the experience of real Christians" *1780*.

This section illustrates the difficulty of theological reflection on doxological material. First, Berger, as a way to organize this part, enumerates theological characteristics that are evident in the hymns: 1. The soteriological emphasis; 2. The experience of salvation and the understanding of revelation; 3. The experience pf salvation as realized eschatology?; and 4. The Struggle for Christian perfection. Refrences from the hymns' phrases and stanzas interpret the theological themes. However, in the discussion of "Christian Perfection" (142-53), Berger seems to undercut her central thesis by suggesting that this particular theme in Wesley's hymns does not lend itself easily to "systematic consideration." In fact, Berger must confront the complexity, even contradictions, in reports of the experience of Christian perfection. She concludes that the hymns themselves capture the struggle for Christian perfection, but it does appear that theological themes and categories may be the only way to impose some kind of understanding on the exclusively divine action.

Berger, as any scholar trying to bridge two genera, must juggle differing methodologies, and particular must accommodate one that expressed Christian experience in images and symbols and the other in systematic analysis. She consistently urges that the genera not be reduced to a single genus or that a theological reading be understood as a final word on doxology. Her purpose appears to determine both the limits of systematic theology and the poetic hymnal expressions in order to restore collective meaning to the "Constitutive Multilingual Nature of Faith."

Second, Berger notes early in the work that part two may appear an "erratic block of [specific] material" since parts one and three seem organically related. One wonders if her interpretation or reflection on the hymns cannot help but produce "immediate illustrations" for the theological themes and thus for parts one and three because such is the nature (tension in?) of the questions about the relationship of theology to poetry. Berger's intellectual acumen is such that she constructs a worthy contextual scaffold for the discussions of the concrete material.

Part three builds on analysis of Wesley's hymns by asking how doxology qua doxology interprets the reality of faith. Particularly valuable is Berger's rhetorical analsysi that doxological speech is both dialogic and transcendent. Doxology responds appropriately to God's saving acts and thus *may* have some priority over theological reflection. The book makes a convincing case for "questioning" theology in hymns and encourages further inquiry into the relationship between doxology and theology.

H. Ray Dunning, Editor. 1995. *The Second Coming: A Wesleyan Approach to the Doctrine of Last Things*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House. ISBN: 083-411-5255.

Reviewed by Jerry W. McCant, Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego, CA.

Ray Dunning, professor emeritus of theology at Trevecca Nazarene College, has gathered nine colleagues and with them has sought to break the conspicuous silence on eschatology prevalent in the ranks of Wesleyan scholars. Three major divisions comprise this book: (1) Biblical Studies; (2) Historical Studies; and (3) Theological Studies. This structure signals the reader to expect a broad rather than a narrow focus.

All ten contributors are Nazarene educators. A book with such multiple authorship always is more difficult for a reviewer than a book with a single author. Diversity always creeps into such a volume. Each author has a distinctive style and vocabulary, particular strengths and weaknesses.

There are three essays in Part I. Using the book of Revelation as a "test case," Frank Carver concludes that the nature and function of the biblical canon are prophetic. Thus, he argues for a "prophetic hermeneutic" of the Bible. Roger Hahn discusses two phrases, "the last days" and "the signs of the times." Arguing primarily from the Synoptic instances of these phrases, Hahn notes the sparing use of these expressions in the New Testament generally. Both phrases refer more to the present and a relationship with Christ than to future eschatological events. In a redaction-critical essay, Jirair Tashjian concludes that the Marcan "Olivet Discourse" is an exhortation rather than apocalyptic speculation. He notes further the pluralism in the Synoptic perspectives and their attempts to deal with the "delayed Parousia."

In Part II three authors make contributions. George Lyons writes two chapters on eschatology in the early church and concludes that there is no patristic unanimity. For the early church eschatology was primarily the conviction that Jesus will bring salvation to a proper conclusion. William Greathouse describes John Wesley's view of eschatology. In his published works, Wesley has no sermon on the Second Coming. Regarding his interpretation of the book of Revelation, Wesley depended on the work of Bengel, engaged in fanciful speculation, thus making it difficult now to harmonize his various visions of eschatology. Greathouse concludes that

Wesley was not an apocalpyticist nor a premillennialist. Harold Raser reviews the eschatologies of the American Holiness movement. He discusses the postmillennial, premillennial, and dispensationalist premillennial views and notes that in the Holiness movement eschatology was divisive, sometimes to the point of verbal violence.

Part III has four essays. Ray Dunning proposes four presuppositions of a Wesleyan eschatology: synergism, a *chronos* view of time, conditional covenants, and the "Jesus heremeneutic." He notes the antipathy of speculation in "authentic Wesleyan theology." Harvey Finley and Dunning co-author "Apocalyptic Eschatology," seeking to distinguish between apocalyptic and prophecy. William Miller discusses "the new apocalypticism," and provides an exposé of the dispensationalism of John Nelson Darby. He concludes that Darby's doctrines of the "secret rapture" and pretribulational premillennialism are not apostolic and are not self-evident in Scripture. In a final chapter, "The Theology of the Final Consummation," Rob Staples advances the proposition that eschatology and history belong together and concludes with a discussion of six images of the final consummation. Staples' title would be less presumptuous if he used the indefinite article "A" rather than the definite article "The."

The Second Coming is a collection of informative and provocative essays. Most of the authors move away from futuristic interpretations of eschatology toward a personalized moralism. Throughout the book there is a denigration of date-setting eschatology that knows too much about the future. There is obvious polemic against "pop eschatology" and dispensational pretribulational premillennialism.

However, the book fails to fulfill the implied promise of its title. This volume provides little discussion of the second coming. Staples devotes three pages to the second coming, but only as one of the six images of the consummation. Perhaps the subtitle should have been the main title since it promises a Wesleyan approach to eschatology. However, the first reference to Wesley appears on page 139. Greathouse makes soteriology the key to Wesleyan eschatology, even though he notes Wesley's confession of ignorance concerning eschatology. Wesley's "fanciful speculations" hardly inform his soteriology. Despite Greathouse's description of Wesley's "fanciful speculations," Dunning declares the antipathy to speculation in "authentic" Wesleyan eschatology. In his discussion of "the final consummation as separation," Staples engages in one style of eschatological speculation. Although the subtitle promises a

"Wesleyan approach," Dunning's introduction expresses his hope that readers will "draw their conclusions regarding the position that is consistent with Scripture and Wesleyan theological commitments."

These essays in biblical studies are informative and interesting, but they neither discuss the second coming nor contribute to a Wesleyan approach. Their views on eschatology and apocalyptic flow against the stream of scholarly consensus. George Lyons provides massive patristic citations, but they do not inform a Wesleyan approach and the second coming becomes lost in the discussions of many other topics. The essays by Lyons conform to the "catalog" genre without revealing the developmental trends in patristic thought. How does Lyons' data illuminate a Wesleyan approach? Did Wesley read these "fathers" (assuming that there were no "mothers" - have the contributors to this volume not heard that sexist language is obsolete?)? Did Wesley appropriate or criticize patristic views? Is there any evidence of patristic influence in Wesley's eschatology?

The title *The Second Coming* promises a discussion of one aspect of eschatology. However, eschatology becomes the "tail" that wags the "dog" (second coming) in this volume. One wonders if the title was not simply a "marketing" decision. The only distinctive Wesleyan feature of the book is that all the contributors come from a denomination that professes to be Wesleyan.

Reinert O. Innvaer. 1993. *Sennepsfrøet: En bok om misjon* [= *Mustardseeds: A Book About Mission*]. Oslo: Rex Forlag. 164 pps.

Reviewed by David Bundy, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Tomes by Wesleyan/Holiness and/or Pentecostal missiologists about mission theory are quite rare. Probably this is because the most important developments in Holiness and Pentecostal mission have not been either stimulated or controlled by "mission boards" following the model of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Mission. Scandinavian mission has had other models. This book is a passionate treatise arguing for the Norwegian/Scandinavian model of Pentecostal mission, a model profoundly rooted in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition of William Taylor, J. Waskom Pickett, and E. Stanley Jones.

Behind this volume lies a history, generally unknown outside Scandinavia, of careful reflection and debate about the theory and practice of mission. Indeed, Norwegian Pentecostalism began partly as a protest by the Holiness Methodist pastor T. B. Barratt against the heavy hand of the U. S. Methodist Episcopal Mission Board on Norwegian Methodism and against the ecclesiology which sustained that Board.

The first Pentecostal mission agency, the Pentecostal Missionary Union (1908), was founded as a cooperative agency on a design proposed to the British leaders A. A. Boddy and Cecil Polhill. When Barratt felt this agency was prejudiced against sending Norwegians, he founded in 1913 the *Norges Frie Evangeliske Hedningemisjon* [NFEH]. After deciding that the NFEH was too far removed from the local congregations, Barratt withdrew from the NFEH and led in the establishment (1931) of the *Pinsevennenes Ytre Misjon* of which Innvaer has been Mission Secretary since 1987. The particular impetus for writing this book is the evolving lack of precision in the activities and goals of missions. As Innvaer points out in the introduction (pp. 7-12), nearly every humanitarian and ecclesiological activity has been defined as mission. Increasingly, these are not being held together by a common missional theme.

There are two primary foci to Innvaer's argument: the biblical and the historical. The biblical arguments about the nature of mission (pp. 23-71) present an interpretation of the imperative for mission. It is argued that mission must be occasioned by the Holy Spirit and that the local congregations are the primary locus of mission activity and the place from which persons are chosen for foreign mission (on the example of Paul).

Brief attention is given (pp. 73-91) to the development of mission theory in the early church, the Christianization of Europe, early Christian mission by East Syrian missionaries in China, Catholic expansion during the conquest of the Americas, and the modern Protestant missions movement in Europe stimulated by Pietism, including the missions of William Carey and the Wesleyans. This is a prelude to the discussion of the emergence of mission consciousness within Norway.

In Norway, as in Germany and England, the impetus came from Pietism within the Lutheran state church, influenced by L. Laestadius and Hans Neilsen Hauge. Into this environment came the Methodists (from both the U. S. and England), the Baptists, and, unmentioned by Innvaer but important for Barratt and others in Norway, the Salvation Army. Drawing from these heritages, Barratt and the other early Norwegian Petecostals drafted a model for mission which has become normative in Scandinavia and in much of the Pentecostal world. That model was based on Barratt's experience as a Methodist, on a reading of William Taylor, and on the Holiness/Pentecostal values of self-determination under the guidance of the Holy Spirit rather than on blind allegiance to an organization. It is through Barratt that the Scandinavian relationship with the "self-supporting" mission theory of William Taylor began [for a brief indication of Taylor's influence on Barratt, see, D. Bundy, "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 Press, 1994), 461-468].

Innvaer succinctly narrates the evolution of Norwegian mission theory and mission activity, insisting that there is no necessary distinction between "social ministry" and "evangelism" as some, under the influence of North American debates, have argued. He insists that mission is "grassroots work" (p. 121) which should eschew political participation in the host country. One can argue for religious freedom, against enslavement, but it is the task of the converts to restructure the political life of their countries. In the tradition of Taylor and Barratt, he argues for national self-determination in the churches, noting that the Methodist churches in South India, founded by William Taylor in 1870-1875, were already self-supporting and sending missionaries in 1884 (p. 129). He suggests that partnerships be developed between national churches/congregations for mutual aid and inspiration.

The conclusion is that there are a wide number of possibilities for mission in the modern period, including traditional long-term mission, short- term mission,

radio-television, economic development and assistance, Bible translation work, and social ministry. The essential, Innvaer insists, is to plan and do this mission in light of the biblical priorities which allow the national churches their dignity and autonomous contextual development under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Innvaer's work is an important contribution to Holiness and Pentecostal discussions of mission. Despite the fact that it is meagerly documented, it can lead the enterprising reader into a vast literature, a journey which can begin with the bibliography at the end of the volume (pp. 163-164) to which I would add, in addition a volume edited by I. M. Witzøe, *De Aapne d¿re: Norges Frie Evangeliske Hedningemissions arbeidere og virke gjennem 10 aar* (Oslo: NFEH, 1925,) and another by Erling Str¿m, *Misjonen: Guds Hjertesak* (Oslo: Filadelfiaforlaget, 1945) as well as selected texts by T. B. Barratt and some of the mission biographies published in Norway. These suggestions do not detract from the virtues of the book, which deserves serious attention both in Scandinavia and beyond.

Thomas C. Oden. 1995. *Requiem: A Lament in Three Movements*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 176 pp.

Reviewed by Roderick T. Leupp, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Rizal, Philippines.

"Conversion" is not too strong a word. A remarkable change has come over the writings of United Methodist theologian Thomas C. Oden during the past fifteen years. During the 1960s and 1970s Oden was a self-avowed "movement theologian," deeply immersed in the existentialist theology of Rudolf Bultmann and the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers. Never as radical as the "death of God" theologians, Oden nevertheless was more likely to conduct an encounter group than a Bible study. His historical sense was fixated on the period from the eighteenth century Enlightenment to the present.

Beginning with his 1979 rediscovery of classical orthodoxy, detailed in *Agenda for Theology*, Oden has found his way back to Christian antiquity. He would probably say that it has found him, so faithful and tenacious is God's grace. Before, Oden was apt not to trust anyone over thirty; these days, he trusts no theological voice less than three hundred years old (excepting John Wesley and similar writers). He would rather read the Fathers of the Church than the *New York Times*. "Consensual ancient classic Christianity" (p. 138) is his guiding light.

Oden's return to the sources bore the rich fruit of his three-volume *Systematic Theology* (1987-92), wherein he makes the treasures of "ecumenical" (in the sense of what has been believed everywhere, always, and by all Christians) Christianity available to the working pastor and those desiring a fresh immersion into the living waters of their Christian affirmation. In *Requiem*, a shorter and much more pointed volume, Oden's intent is more polemical (combative) than it is irenical (peaceful). Profoundly disturbed by the drift within his own Methodist heritage, Oden is not about to abandon a sinking ship. Rather, he wants to take over the theological helm and steer United Methodism—and by extension all of mainline Protestantism—back to basic, elemental Christianity.

What does this really mean? Is Oden's reaction against liberalism and modernity merely another knee-jerk one against political correctness, displayed now in theological dress? What positive suggestions does Oden make? Virtually all of the action in *Requiem* (including the account of his leaving a communion service at the Theological School of Drew Univer-

sity when the celebrant invited worshipers to the Lord's table in the name of Sophia and not Jesus Christ) takes place against the backdrop of the world Oden knows better than any other, having given the past thirty years of his life to it. This is the theological seminary. Since when the seminary sneezes the local church catches cold, Oden is convinced that unless definite and even wholesale changes sweep over the liberal seminary, the United Methodist Church soon will go the way of the dinosaur.

Two Oden proposals are: (1) reform the seminary tenure system so that the liberal elite cannot dig in their heels with impunity; and (2) encourage the traditional, evangelical students in their struggle to get a "real" theological education, not one eclipsed by modernity, narcissism, naturalism, and other abortive orientations critiqued throughout *Requiem*.

John Wesley's theology was disarmingly simple. He believed in only three or four Christian fundamentals (although Wesley should not be considered a "fundamentalist" as this word is understood today) - original sin, justification by faith, the new birth, holiness of heart and life. Oden's message is equally simple: return to the pure milk of Christian orthodoxy. As Oden delivers it, however, some may find this milk a bit curdled and acidic.

Oden is not strictly fair in naming the enemies. He continually warns that theological education, presumably including that practiced at Oden's workplace, Drew University, is bankrupt and in the hands of a tenured knowledge elite whose only creed is "new is better." Oden actually names only one such seminary, the Episcopal Divinity School of Cambridge, Massachusetts, where one theological instructor is "a self-described lesbian feminist" (p. 58) who works amidst "an openly homosexual-welcoming seminary" (p. 59). Maybe no United Methodist seminary could be fairly described in such words. Or maybe Oden cannot bring himself to be so critical of his own tradition. Or maybe the problem of liberalism is not as widespread as Oden believes.

Is liberalism as bad as Oden makes it out to be? Oden readily admits that liberalism, when characterized as fairness and openness to critical inquiry, has benefited the church greatly. Oden continues to advocate cultural pluralism, which means, among other things, women in ministry, providing they are not "ultrafeminists." But it is *doctrinal* pluralism that he insists must be checked if the church is to thrive in the new century. Lest we forget what orthodoxy means, Oden includes three ancient creeds in Appendix C.

John Wesley engaged in pamphlet warfare with Calvinists after the Methodist revival had taken root. In *Requiem,* Oden is likewise engaged in combat against the perceived enemies of classical Christianity. Oden's personal pain is evident throughout; *Requiem* does live up to its subtitle of being a "lament." No one could accuse him of writing in bad faith. One may question, however, Oden's charity in comparison with Wesley, his mentor. Has he really given liberalism a fair hearing, as Wesley would have done? Does Oden always write with the sort of calm dignity that marked even Wesley's polemical writings? One thing seems assured. Whether Oden's proposals, including the revamping of the seminary tenure system and encouraging evangelical students in their struggles, will bear fruit will not be known until after his own requiem.

J. Steven O'Malley and Thomas Lessmann. 1994. *Gesungenes Heil. Untersuchungen zum Einfluss der Heiligungsbewegung auf das methodistische Liedgut des 19. Jahrhundertsam Beispeil von Gottlieb Füssle und Ernst Gebhardt*. BeitrSge zur Geschichte der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche, 44; Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus. 74 pp. No ISBN.

Reviewed by David Bundy, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana.

This volume gathers two extended essays presented at the 1992 meeting of the Historical Commission of the European Commission of the Evangelical-Methodist Churches. The authors are established scholars. Professor O'Malley, Asbury Theological Seminary, throughout his career has focused on the Evangelical United Brethern Church in the U. S. A. and Germany, contributing several books and articles to the subject. Thomas Lessmann is pastor of the Evangelical-Methodist Church at Recklinghausen, Germany. An earlier scholarly contribution was published in the same series: *Rolle und Bedeutung des Heiligen Geistes in der Theologie John Wesleys* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche, 30; Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus, 1987). The method of this review will be to look at the two studies on "sung holiness" and then to offer a general appreciation.

O'Malley's study of the role of Gottlieb Füssle in the Holiness Movement within the contexts of the Evangelischen Gemeinschaft in Germany and Switzerland (the Evangelical Association, which became EUB) is the first major study of this influential musician. Füssle (4 Sept., 1839—17 March, 1918), born at Plochingen, Württemberg, Germany, experienced conversion at age 14 while listening to the preaching of the Evangelical Association traveling preacher Johann Nicolais. By 1865 he was song leader at the annual conference. Eventually, he settled into a pastoral role, first as the assistant of his mentor, J. G. Wollpert, near Reutlingen. Füssle accepted in 1878 the pastorate of the Zionskirche in Stuttgart where he remained for forty years until his death in 1918.

His musical output was significant as he sought to give voice to his spirtual insights. These were formed through his Pietist heritage in interaction with the American Holiness movement, first as experienced through the traveling preachers and missionaries of the Evangelical Association, and then, following his meeting Robert Pearsall Smith in 1875, by a wider range of Holiness thought. Füssle reported on his experience

of Smith and the Holiness revival in *Die Heiligungsversammlung in Stuttgart mit Beziehung auf die Allianzversammlung in Basel und das Auftreten R. Pearsall Smiths bei derselben mit Auszügen aus seinen Predigten* (Stuttgart: G. Füssle, 1875), a treatise which remains one of the most important sources for this incursion of the American Holiness movement into Europe during early 1875. Füssle wrote extensively in the *Evangelische Bottschafter* and contributed a number of books on a variety of subjects related to the Holiness and Pietist heritages.

It was, however, his hymnody, the largest collection of which was published in *Pilgermanna* (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlaghaus, 1906) which influenced developments on both sides of the Atlantic. O'Malley analyzes the theological themes of the hymns and categorizes them into major and minor groups. The largest group reflected on the nature of the holy life in classical Holiness and Pietist terms. Successive themes were: (1) the new birth; (2) sanctification; and (3) "the wandering pilgrim on the way to God's kingdom" (p. 25). Secondary themes of Füssle's hymnody identified by O'Malley include the nature of Scripture [conservative but not fundamentalist], christology, sin, ecclesiology, the community of the Spirit, and healing. Füssle also dealt with the eucharist, the role of women, and secularization. O'Malley concludes that the themes were developed in ways congruent with the Pietist and Holiness heritages of the 19th century Evangelical Association.

Lessmann's study of Ernst Gebhardt is the first major study of this foundational German Methodist Holiness theologian/hymnographer since the somewhat hagiographical study of Theolphil Funk, *Ernst Gebhardt der Evangeliumssänger* (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlaghaus, 1969). Gebhardt (12 July, 1832—9 June, 1899) was a very productive writer; no one had even attempted to establish a list of his compositions, translations, and original hymn texts. Lessmann ascertaines that Gebhardt published, between 1870 and 1895, sixteen hymn and song books, only five of which are undated. From this corpus, Lessmann compiles a list of 605 contributions, including 179 original compositions, 369 translations, and 108 compositions (pp. 63-74). This list provokes many yet unanswered historical questions, not the least of which is: Who did Gebhardt translate, why, and for what contexts?

Lessmann identified several "theological accents" in Gebhardt's work. The soteriological themes are found to be prominent, as are issues of christology and sanctification. Lessmann is careful to point out that,

according to his analysis, only four percent of Gebhardt's publications and ten percent of his works and translations focus on themes ideosyncratic to the Holiness movement. The conclusion that he was not, therefore, the "hymnist of the Holiness movement" is, in this reviewer's opinion, too quickly drawn. There are still the questions of what, when, and why. The Holiness movement, despite the efforts of some of its enthusiasts and critics, was never a single-issue movement. This was certainly not the case in Germany where Gebhardt and most of the proponents of the holy life remained in contact with a diverse public through ecumenical cooperation within the context of the Evangelical Alliance. Most remained within either the German state Lutheran church or the Methodist Church until the advent of Pentecostalism in Germany. It would appear that Gebhardt's theological and musical themes reflecte that context.

Such interpretative qualms aside, Lessmann's work is a significant development in the critical study of Gebhardt. The list of titles will give subsequent researchers more immediate access to the mind and heart of this influential Mehodist Holiness theologian and hymnographer. O'Malley's work on Füssle is indeed a pioneering work which has implications for the development of trans-Atlantic Holiness movement research. His identification of the confluence of Holiness and Pietist themes will merit considerable reflection and research. The volume makes a major contribution to the quite neglected subject of Wesleyan/Holiness music.