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Our Personal Core Identity: A Wesleyan Perspective

Abstract

Humans have many relational identities that vary with changes in relationships such as being a mother or a daughter, but one's core identity remains independent of these social roles. This paper explores human personal core identity theologically by drawing on Methodism as it existed under the leadership of John Wesley, and scientifically by using three cutting edge scientific research projects: *The Human Family Tree* and *The Human Genome Project* present empirical evidence that all humans are genetically related and only one race exists - the human race. *Discovering Ardi: Changing Our Understanding of Human Origins* shows that humans did not evolve from apes. Wesley's theology is used, first, to develop a reference baseline for further comparative research on *identity*. Second, Wesley provides a means to analyze core identity and develop a theological solution allowing recognition and reclamation of one's true personal core identity. Wesley believed that all of humanity is called to be a habitation of God, as the saints of God and partakers of the inheritance that belongs to the saints. He believed that God intended that our common ancestry would foster love, binding us together as a race, and thus contribute to the solution for racism and war. With a solid understanding of one's core personal identity, one can better fulfill their many role identities because each relational identity rests firmly upon the bedrock of one's personal core identity.

Key Words: Identity, relationship, personal, Wesley, genome, Ardi.

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On a clear night about 30 centuries ago, a king of a small nation that would reach its zenith in the next generation looked up into the night sky, ablaze with stars, and poetically asked a question, in essence, that had echoed down to him through many generations, an echo still heard today: “Who am I?”¹ To his people he was The King, and he represented them all, female and male alike. Today, he represents us as we ponder his question.

I shall often use plural personal pronouns such as *we* and *our* in this paper. Unless otherwise stated, these pronouns refer to either the entire human race, or the entire Christian community.

This paper will explore, from the perspective of Christian, “Wesleyan Methodism,” one answer to this question. That there are many answers is evidenced by the perennial quest humans have always had for identity. Indeed, the breadth and scope of this subject,² coupled with varying degrees of specialization necessitated by the huge expansion of knowledge in our era,³ more than justifies its use as the theme for this colloquium. Therefore, I will limit consideration to *our personal core identity*.

I will draw heavily upon two sources in providing an answer to this question. First, the primary theological source is “Wesleyan Methodism” - or Methodism as it existed “under the leadership of John Wesley” and found in his writings, in contradistinction to “Calvinistic Methodists, or from Methodists like Grimshaw of Haworth or Venn of Huddersfield who remained within the Church of England,” or of the current understandings that have been developed in the churches that have descended from Wesleyan Methodism. Bowmer uses the term in this sense, in his fine book on *The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in Early Methodism*.⁴

I have chosen to theologically address the question of identity from the perspective of Wesleyan Methodism in order to establish a baseline, or reference point, for further comparative research. It is well known that as Methodism developed there were continual branching splits giving rise to many new holiness movements, particularly among the more Pentecostal Methodists. There were also occasional unions among the various splintered groups. In the course of the more than two centuries following Wesley’s death, his views were, and are, continually being contextualized, modified, reinterpreted, refined, and redefined. By providing a baseline presentation of the primal views of Wesleyan Methodism concerning our core personal identity,

interpretive comparison could be made with the various current understandings on this subject among the churches whose roots reach back to Wesleyan Methodism, and perhaps even allow comparison with non-Wesleyan churches.

Second, I have made use of up-to-the-minute scientific information provided by *The Human Family Tree*, a new television special released on August 30, 2009, by the National Geographic Society and IBM Co., and by *Ardi*, the earliest human ancestor ever found, whose name is also the title of a television presentation concerning this discovery, first shown on October 11, 2009, by the Discovery Channel. I will show how these new and exciting discoveries relate to, and shed light upon our own personal core identity.

Every adult carries many identities, but by this statement one usually means that every person plays many roles such as father or son, brother or sister, carpenter, professor, or truck driver. These roles are relational identities. There are many other types of relational identities, including ethnic and cultural identities. Being Basque, for instance, would be meaningless if no other cultural or ethnic identity existed. I want to primarily examine our core, personal identity that defines who we are but does not change with changes in our relation to others in society in general. However, I will show that character, our moral identity, does have a profound influence on our core identity.

I will show that Wesley, who died nearly seventy years before Darwin published his first book on evolution,⁵ clearly rejected the idea that humanity was made in the image of the beasts of the field. On the surface, Wesley's statement would seemingly rule out accepting any kind of Christian evolutionary thinking, yet today theistic evolution is accepted by many in several Christian denominations, including some members of the churches that arose out of Wesleyan Methodism.

To begin, I will define personal identity. Then I will discuss who we are in relation to society, first, from the perspective of Wesleyan Methodism, then from a secular, scientific viewpoint. This discussion will be followed by a look at our core personal identity, presented in three parts: the basic component of identity, the meaning of oneness in identity, and reflection on what has gone wrong with our original identity. Finally, I will examine how our true identity can be restored, followed by concluding remarks.

Personal Identity

The phrase, personal identity, is necessarily a special relational term that contrasts *personal* with everything else that exists in all of creation, including the Creator. The etymology of the word *identity*, dating back to 1570, derives from Middle French, *identité*; then from Late Latin *identitat-*, *identitas*, and probably from the Latin word *identidem*, meaning *repeatedly*, a contraction of *idem et idem*, literally meaning *same and same*.⁶

- Briefly, *identity* includes the idea of having the quality or condition of being the same as something else.
- *Identity* denotes a sameness of essential or generic character in different instances, or oneness.
- Finally, *identity* can also refer to the distinguishing character or personality of an individual, or individuality.

Who am I, step one: cutting edge science

Christian and non-Christian alike readily recognize that they are members of the human race, but what does this statement really mean? What, and how much, do any of us have in common with all of the rest of humanity? Are we all related, somehow?

Of course, many Christians will cite the book of Genesis, chapters one and two, to show that we all came from a single pair of humans who were, in turn, created by God, and therefore conclude that we are all related. Wesley took this position, as indicated by his comments on Genesis 1:26, and Acts 17:26, respectively.

That man was made male and female, and blessed with fruitfulness. He created him male and female, Adam and Eve: Adam first out of earth, and Eve out of his side. God made but one male and one female, that all the nations of men might know themselves to be made of one blood, descendants, from one common stock, and might thereby be induced to love one another. God having made them capable of transmitting the nature they had received, said to them, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*⁷

In Wesley's comments on Genesis 1:26, he observes why he thinks that God created humanity from one pair: so that humanity "might thereby be induced to love one another."⁸ Wesley, expositing on Acts 17:26, noted that

He hath made of one blood the whole nation of men - By this expression the apostle showed them in the most unaffected manner, that though he was a Jew, he was not enslaved to any narrow views, but looked on all mankind as his brethren: *having determined the times* - That it is God who gave men the earth to inhabit. ⁹

The idea that humanity descended from one pair is evident throughout Wesley's writings, and he took this position as a matter of fact. See, for instance, sermon 62, "*The End of Christ's Coming*," where he writes of how "the Son of God was manifested to our first parents in paradise."¹⁰ If the idea that humanity descended from one human pair could be proven to the world, and if we would then reconsider the meaning of our common identity, could this new information lead to a more peaceful society?

What does science think about some kind of common origin for humanity? Some of the most exciting discoveries of the twenty-first century are being produced by National Geographic and IBM's now four-year-old *Genographic Project*.¹¹ Although this project is scheduled to be completed by the end of next year, preliminary results have been released through a National Geographic two-hour television special presentation called *The Human Family Tree*.¹²

The Genographic Project identified and examined more than 200 genetic DNA markers found in hundreds of thousands of people living across the globe. It was discovered that all humans living today actually are the descendents of one, specific human pair that the program's leaders have named "Scientific Adam" and "Scientific Eve."¹³ These scientists determined that Scientific Adam lived about 60,000 years ago and Scientific Eve perhaps 150,000 years ago.¹⁴

The Human Family Tree showed the results of "deep ancestry tracing"¹⁵ for 250 people chosen at random from only one street in truly cosmopolitan Queens, NY, by comparing DNA markers found in the Queens sampling with data thus far produced by *The Genographic Project*. Here is their amazing conclusion:

Regardless of race, nationality or religion, all of us can trace our ancient origin back to the cradle of humanity, East Africa.¹⁶

One result from *The Human Family Tree* project that was even startling for the two Queens volunteers involved, showed that a man with a very black complexion and a man with a very white complexion had a common ancestry in northern Europe only 10,000 years ago, as confirmed by examining the genetic markers in their DNA.

The results of this study to date are nothing short of astounding. First, if, from a secular, empirical, viewpoint we all descended from one pair, then we are all genetically related to each other. Second, it was shown that the genetic makeup of all people living today is more than 99.9% identical.¹⁷ That means less than one-tenth of one per cent of our DNA accounts for all the visible differences between us. That means that there is very little difference, if any, between races. That means there *is* only one race, the human race, but many cultures such as Black, Hispanic, Asian, Basque, White, Southern, Northern, Eastern or Western; and each grouping contains many sub-cultures.¹⁸

That means, from a secular, empirical viewpoint, that we are all brothers and sisters sharing in a common humanity, and living in a common society that has evolved into many different cultures. We are all the same in that we are all human. That means that the bedrock of our identity is built on the fact that we are all members of the human race; we are human, we all share the

same blood, and are therefore related by blood.¹⁹ That also means that, as a member of the human race, and therefore of society, I may need to re-examine responsibly my own identity and how I view people, especially people who may look different than me.²⁰

Who am I, step two: Christ and society

Wesley²¹ understood and taught that Christianity is a social religion. Indeed, he said,

When I say [that Christianity] is essentially a social religion, 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 [people].²²

In other words, from the standpoint of a vibrantly alive Christianity Wesley said that we need each other if we are to survive and thrive. In this same sermon Wesley recognizes that each person does require some alone time for prayer and rest, but rest must not consume all of one's time, for that "would be to destroy, not advance, true religion."²³ It is exclusively within the crucible of society that we Christians grow into our full, God ordained and guided, human identity in order to become what God intends us to be. Why is this so?

Wesley preached that rather than commanding us not to have anything to do with unbelievers or wicked people, God said that without such people "we cannot be Christians at all." It is through our interaction with the ungodly that we bring to bear the "the full exertion of every temper," and "the complete exercise of poverty of spirit, of mourning, and of every other disposition" that Jesus proclaimed in the beatitudes.²⁴ As Wesley speaks of meekness, he reminds us that:

Instead of demanding 'an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth' [a Christian] doth 'not resist evil,' but causes us rather, when smitten 'on the right cheek, to turn the other also;' [exercising] mercifulness whereby '*we love* our enemies, *bless* them that curse us, *do good* to them that hate us, *and pray for them* which despitefully use us' Now all these, it is clear, could have no being were we to have no commerce with any but real Christians [emphasis mine].²⁵

Looking again at Wesley's words, I have emphasized expressions that graphically depict our core relationship with society: *we love. bless. do good. and pray for them.*

From the perspective of Wesleyan Methodism the characteristics of loving, blessing, doing good, and praying for society are integral to our core personal identity and are also attributes of our character. Our identity is who we are; our character is what we are. The problem we Christians face is how to forge a character that is congruent with our identity. Identity can be unknown,

disguised, hidden, lost or found, damaged, disgraced, repaired, or honored. Character is that set of features which distinguishes the one from the many, and is therefore hidden only with great difficulty, and then not usually for long.

There is a relationship between character and identity. My pastor, mentor and best friend, Rev. Percy Gutteridge, shared this sequence that relates character and identity with regard to sowing and reaping: A thought, a desire, an act, a habit, a character, a destiny;²⁶ at the end of life, our character will reflect our identity, at the beginning our identity can commence the forging of our character within the crucible of society. This forging is accomplished in a crucible where it is society itself who provides the necessary *heat* - heat that is generated by friction - that brings about the personal transformation within us, as intended by God.²⁷ That is why I agree with Wesley²⁸ that knowing our own true *core personal identity* will help us to better understand why, how and what we are intended to become.²⁹

Who am I, step three: our core personal identity

I said that *identity* denotes a sameness of essential or generic character in different instances - oneness. What might be, or perhaps is intended by God to be, the single, most essential, generic characteristic defining humanity from the perspective of Wesleyan Methodism? I submit that the noun love best answers this question. In three parts, I will show that love is the most basic component of our core personal identity; second, that we *are* love; and third, that something terrible has happened to our original *core personal identity*.

Part 1: The basic component of identity

Christianity teaches that under the Old and New Covenants³⁰ God has made but one law, the law of love. Under the Old Covenant humanity was to love God with all their heart, soul and mind, and their neighbor *as themselves*.³¹ Under the New Covenant we are to love God with all our heart, soul and mind,³² and our neighbor *as Christ loved us*.³³ Wesley understood that the law may have changed in degree with the change in covenants, but not in principle. The law of love is supreme. Since the creation of humanity unto this very day we have had only one commandment to obey: the law of love. Why does God consistently maintain a single focus on love for God and neighbor?

Christians well remember who their neighbor is through the parable of the Good Samaritan.³⁴ Wesley commented on this parable, and his words are well worth the space in this article.

Let us *go and do likewise*, regarding every [person] as our neighbour 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 that 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.³⁵

In his sermon entitled, *The Duty of Reproving our Neighbour*, Wesley says, in language that could not possibly be plainer, that “the persons intended by ‘our neighbour’ are every child of man, everyone that breathes the vital air, all that have souls to be saved.”³⁶

Through these, and many similar statements, Wesley, without doubt or equivocation teaches that the entire human race is one family, and that it is through the same love binding the family together that “God has strongly bound us [humanity] to each other.”³⁷ To think otherwise, Wesley says, is to engage in bigotry and factional zeal that diminishes who we are, and thus damages our very identity. I think it is for these reasons that Wesley wrote, in Christian love:

I look upon all [of human society] as my parish: thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work which I know God has called me to. And sure I am that his blessing attends it.³⁸

Part 2: We are love - oneness in identity, and more cutting-edge science

In his sermon, *The Image of God*,³⁹ Wesley begins with the authorized text of Genesis 1:27: *So God created [humanity] in his own image*. Speaking of our first parents before their Fall, Wesley plainly declares that “man was what God is, Love,”⁴⁰ that is, as love is God’s very nature and integral with his identity, so love is intended to be our very nature and integral with our identity. Wesley was intimately familiar with the Greek text of I John 4:8 - ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν θεόν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν - *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love* [emphasis mine]. In this text, the first occurrence of love, ἀγαπῶν, is in the verbal form and expresses *what we are to do*; the second occurrence, ἀγάπη, is a noun expressing *what we are*. In other words, as it is God’s nature to love,⁴¹ so love is to be our very nature. To paraphrase Wesley’s overall message in light of I John: as God is love and loves us, so we are love and thus love - or should love - God and each other. Although humanity is created in the image of God, mankind does not become God. Rather, Wesley teaches, God is the source of love; mankind is a vessel for “the love of God [to be] shed abroad in their hearts, with love to every child of [humanity].”⁴²

Although Wesley died in 1791, before Darwin⁴³ and Wallace⁴⁴ were even born, 1809 and 1823, respectively, the men who simultaneously and independently published similar theories of natural selection and evolution in 1859, Wesley did address some of the concepts of evolution. Ever a voracious reader, Wesley was undoubtedly aware of current, pre-Darwinian, evolutionary thinking. Ancients such as Xenophanes, 500 B.C., and Aristotle, 350 B.C., had developed several theories concerning the evolution of life. It was Aristotle who first advanced a system of classification for the animal kingdom.⁴⁵ Without doubt, Wesley was also familiar with some of the famous men of his day who contributed to various aspects of evolutionary thinking, including John Ray - 1686, Carolus Linnaeus - 1735, Count De Buffon - 1749, and Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis - 1751.⁴⁶

In 1782, Wesley published a paper entitled, *Remarks on the Count De Buffon's "Natural History,"*⁴⁷ wherein he vehemently disagreed with the Count, particularly with Count Buffon's "theory of generation" concerning how life arose upon the earth. It was the French naturalist Comte de Buffon who had "developed the modern definition of a species."⁴⁸ In his monumental work,⁴⁹ Buffon discussed the similarities between, and possible common ancestry of, apes and humans, and he developed concepts quite similar to the uniformitarianism developed by Charles Lyell forty years later.⁵⁰

In his sermon, *The Image of God*, Wesley wrote that he was "ashamed to say" that some of his fellow compatriots

eagerly maintain that they were not made in the image of the living God, but of the beasts that perish; who heartily contend that it was not the divine but the brutal likeness in which they were created, and earnestly assert 'that they themselves are beasts' in a more literal sense than ever Solomon meant it. These consequently reject with scorn the account God has given of [humanity], and affirm it to be contrary to reason.⁵¹

My intent here is not to raise and discuss the issue of evolution versus creationism,⁵² but only to state clearly Wesley's position on this issue as definitive for a Wesleyan Methodism perspective, particularly with respect to human identity, and contrast Wesley's position with the other two main viewpoints.⁵³ I recognize that some Christians springing from a Wesleyan heritage may take an opposing viewpoint, and in fact, the majority of people today generally support some aspect of the evolutionary side, particularly those in the field of biology.

Many Christians today, including some whose beliefs have root in Wesleyan Methodism, adhere to the idea of theistic evolution, which is more of a stance, rather than a theory, that accepts the idea of developmental creation; that is, humanity developed "from a previous state or form, but that this process was under God's guidance."⁵⁴

The Roman Catholic Church has accepted the principles of theistic evolution by allowing

for the possibility that man's *body* developed from previous biological forms, under God's guidance, but it insists on the *special creation* of his *soul*. Pope Pius XII [who was pope from 1939 until his death in 1958] declared that "the teaching authority of the Church does not forbid that, in conformity with the present state of human sciences and sacred theology, research and discussions . . . take place with regard to the doctrine of evolution, in as far as it inquires into the origin of the human body as coming from pre-existent and living matter - but the Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God," Pius XII, *Humani Generis* 36. So whether the human body was specially created or developed, we are required to hold as a matter of Catholic faith that the human soul is specially created; it did not evolve, and it is not inherited from our parents, as our bodies are. [Emphasis is Catholic writer's.]⁵⁵

While the Church permits belief in either special creation or developmental creation on certain questions, it in no circumstances permits belief in atheistic evolution.⁵⁶

Thus, the Roman Catholic Church, as well as numbers of non-Catholic Christians, including those with Wesleyan Methodism roots, accepts either creationism or theistic evolution. In fact, theistic evolution is sometimes called Christian evolution in order to distinguish it from atheistic evolution - a theory that makes the claim that life developed solely due to random, natural forces.⁵⁷ The main criticism that atheistic evolutionists make against theistic evolution is that it depends upon a supernatural creator, a position beyond scientific, theoretical consideration. Thus, the question raised is whether there is a difference between the physical and spiritual origins of human life.

Frank Collins, a medical doctor who directed the *Human Genome Project*,⁵⁸ is one scientist who turned from atheism to a Christian belief in God that includes the acceptance of theistic evolution. He attributes his conversion to a number of factors. In the testimony he published online, he said that the writings of C. S. Lewis, coupled with his study of human DNA, and "ultimately, a [Barthian] leap of faith," led to his conversion. Collins's testimonial conclusions are interesting and pertinent to this discussion.⁵⁹

As a believer, I see DNA, the information molecule of all living things, as God's language, and the elegance and complexity of our own bodies and the rest of nature as a reflection of God's plan.

I have found there is a wonderful harmony in the complementary truths of science and faith. The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. God can be found in the cathedral or in the laboratory. By investigating God's majestic and awesome creation, science can actually be a means of worship.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, Wesley was unambiguous on this issue. Wesley's perspective is that we did not spiritually or bodily descend from lower animals, but that God truly did create humanity in his, God's, own image exactly as the biblical account relates. Today, Wesley would be numbered among those believing in creationism.

I think this point touches upon one of the key aspects of, and current controversy over, human personal identity. It is one thing to say that my heritage - the status, the identity that I acquire through birth - is from the lower animals. It is quite another to say that my heritage comes directly from God. These two positions, namely that of Wesleyan Methodism and the evolutionists of Wesley's day, are mutually exclusive, and both positions generate significant ramifications concerning our identity. Theistic evolution has been developed as a possible way to bridge this heretofore unbridgeable chasm.⁶¹ Indeed, Collins says that "40% of working scientists" today claim to be believers,⁶² in part, because of this very bridge.

Today, science no longer claims that humanity descended from apes. Rather, the claim today is that both humans and apes descended from a common, hominid ancestor. On October 1, 2009, the National Geographic Society announced that, after fifteen years of research on fossils found in Ethiopia, they have found "the oldest fossil skeleton of a human ancestor."⁶³ These fossils are thought to be about one million years older than "Lucy," who was previously, at an estimated 3.2 million years old, the earliest human biped ever found.⁶⁴

The discovery of the new skeleton, of the species *Ardipithecus ramidus*, or "Ardi,"

puts to rest the notion, popular since Darwin's time, that a chimpanzee-like missing link, resembling something between humans and today's apes, would eventually be found at the root of the human family tree. Indeed, the new evidence suggests that the study of chimpanzee anatomy and behavior - long used to infer the nature of the earliest human ancestors - is largely irrelevant to understanding our beginnings.⁶⁵

Wesley would certainly be in agreement with the conclusion that modern apes are irrelevant in trying to understand our origin. On October 11, 2009, The Discovery Channel aired a two-hour special, *Discovering Ardi: Changing Our Understanding of Human Origins*. Ardi is now considered "the last common

ancestor of humans and living apes,”⁶⁶ and “the oldest skeleton from our (hominid) branch of the primate family tree.”⁶⁷

I note for the record, that these finds do not repudiate the current theories of evolution, they merely modify scientific understanding. The theory of evolution, itself, is constantly evolving, as demonstrated by the impact of the discoveries cited here. Indeed, this flood of twenty-first century discoveries reveals, more than ever, that strong echo from the past concerning the intense interest that we humans have in our origins and identity.

Wesley made two further observations concerning our first parents, as recorded in the opening chapters of the book of Genesis. He understood that the first human pair were given clear minds with the capacity for perfect justice that saw things as they really are, perfect wills that were governed by the love of God, and perfect freedom to make their own choices; and the result was that the pair lived in perfect happiness.⁶⁸

Thus far, what conclusions can be drawn about our identity? First, we are all members of the human race, and we are all related to each other by blood; we are family in the truest sense of the word. Second, humanity did not descend bodily from apes, a scientific fact that can be of tremendous significance in trying to bridge the chasm between creationists and evolutionists. Third, from the perspective of Wesleyan Methodism, at the core of our original nature we are love, because we were created in the image of God. Therefore, by blood, by descent, and by human nature we are all “bound together,” as Wesley would say.⁶⁹

Wesley’s idea of being “bound together” contains the kernel, the essence, of what oneness means. In the eyes of Wesleyan Methodism, as human beings part of our core identity with respect to oneness is that originally our human nature was created in the image of God; in addition to our blood kinship, our common nature of love unites us, or was intended to unite us, making us one people. Speaking on behalf of all humanity, our true identity comes with a perfect mind governed by a nature of perfect love, living in perfect freedom. And yet, in the real world, we can readily recognize that something is drastically wrong with all of us.

Part 3: What happened to our God-given identity??!

According to a Wesleyan Methodism perspective, when we enter this world our actual nature already exists, but is hidden. If so, what does it look like? And how might we see it? By the time we reach the age of speech, usually around the age of two, this nature begins to be revealed as we learn to articulate our first words, words such as, “No!” and “Mine!” At age two this is considered “cute.” At age four it is annoying. At age fourteen this attitude can constitute willful sin.

It becomes readily apparent that some drastic catastrophe has befallen the perfect human nature that Wesley described. The result of this catastrophe is that our understanding of our own, true identity becomes blurred, indistinct, and perhaps even lost, as we develop a counterfeit identity that expresses itself in a manner contrary to God and humanity. In this section, I want to focus on our counterfeit identity, and in the next section on our true, God-given identity.

This well known catastrophe is commonly referred to as the Fall of humanity. In his sermon titled, *On the Fall of Man*, Wesley describes the results of the Fall.

Adam, in whom all mankind were then contained, freely preferred evil to good. He chose to do his own will rather than the will of his Creator. He ‘was not deceived’, but knowingly and deliberately rebelled against his Father and his King. In that moment he lost the moral image of God, and, in part, the natural [image of God]. He commenced unholy, foolish, and unhappy. And ‘in Adam all died.’ He entitled all his posterity to error, guilt, sorrow, fear; pain, diseases, and death.⁷⁰

In other words, Wesley said that as a result of the Fall our first parents became totally depraved, and they passed this depraved nature on to all of their descendents. Wesley taught that total depravity referred to “the entire depravation of the whole human nature, of every [person] born into the world, in every faculty of his [or her] soul,” as demonstrated by humanity’s love of “idolatry, of pride, self-will, and love of the world.”⁷¹ In other words, sin had invaded and contaminated every aspect, every part of human nature. Wesley also recognized that the image of God in humanity was disabled - but not annihilated - by sin,⁷² for he said there were “remains of the image of God” in all of humanity.⁷³ He saw the Fall as the cause of a disease for which Christ is the only therapeutic cure.⁷⁴

Wesley is now describing what I have called humanity’s counterfeit identity. Wesley wrote that without the application of the gospel cure “we bear the image of the Devil”⁷⁵ in our depravity, and it is the Devil who robs us of our true identity by supplying us with a counterfeit identity. Our counterfeit identity is constructed of self and selfishness, pride and prejudice, and many of the other marks of the evil one. Wesley has many things to say about a question that he raises: “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”⁷⁶

Who am I, step Four: our true identity restored

As I have shown, Wesley’s understanding was that the Fall caused the image of God to be disabled, or disfigured, but not annihilated in humanity. Wesley looked at sin as a disease of the soul,⁷⁷ and salvation as “*θεραπεία ψυχῆς*,”

or therapy for the soul or psyche, which is “God’s method of healing a soul which is thus diseased.”⁷⁸ In the hymns written by the Wesley brothers the phrase “sin-sick soul” can be found at least nine times. I have chosen verse one from Hymn 386 as a representative example:

Saviour of the sin-sick soul,
Give me faith to make me whole!
Finish thy great work of grace!
Cut it short in righteousness.⁷⁹

In contrast to Dutch Orthodox Calvinism’s predestinarian viewpoint that salvation provides for a limited atonement⁸⁰ and is not, therefore, intended to benefit the damned, Wesley was adamant that salvation is intended for all people.⁸¹ Indeed, Wesley fervently preached that

the great end of religion is to renew our [the whole human race] hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parent. Ye know that all religion which does not answer this end, all that stops short of this, the renewal of our soul in the image of God, after the likeness of him that created it, is no other than a poor farce and a mere mockery of God, to the destruction of our own soul.⁸²

From the perspective of Wesleyan Methodism, the saddest part of our sad situation is that we often do not even realize what has happened to us, nor do we remember who we were because we are often mesmerized by trinkets, gadgets, and self. Wesley believed that “till we are sensible of our disease it admits of no cure.”⁸³ Thus, in order to bring healing for this disease, Wesley believed that it was absolutely essential for the evangelist to first bring her or his listeners to repentance so that the cure of justification and sanctification might be experienced. His definition of repentance is quite illuminating. In addition to the idea of changing one’s mind, repentance also includes gaining knowledge about one’s self, “of [one’s] sinfulness, guilt, and helplessness.”⁸⁴

Philosophers have long known that we often think more highly of ourselves than reality would admit, and it is for this reason that Wesley thought it was a great mistake to have people who are “wholly unawakened, [and] unconvinced of sin,” begin spiritual exercises while in a state of self-delusion.⁸⁵ Therefore, he thought it imperative that every seeker of salvation who begins their journey should “pray that you may be fully discovered to yourself, that you may know yourself as also you are known,”⁸⁶ for to do otherwise would not result in genuine salvation. He continued,

When once you are possessed of this genuine conviction, all your idols will lose their charms. And you will wonder how

you could so long lean upon those broken reeds which had so often sunk under you.⁸⁷

Wesley thought that it was

almost needless to remark how conducive this is to the attainment of all other knowledge; or, in other words, how conducive it is to the improvement of the understanding. An erroneous opinion of ourselves naturally leads us into numberless errors; whereas to those who know their own folly (beside the natural advantage of it) the Lord of nature 'giveth the spirit of wisdom, and enlightens the eyes of their understanding, after the likeness in which they were created' ⁸⁸

And this knowledge of their disease, whereby they are more and more cleansed from one part of it, pride and vanity, disposes them to embrace with a willing mind the second thing implied in 'circumcision of heart' - that faith which alone is able to make them whole, which is the one medicine given under heaven to heal their sickness.⁸⁹

This examination of Wesley's thinking on the importance of knowing one's self may explain why he delivered, at great cost to himself, what was to be his final sermon at St. Mary's, at Oxford.⁹⁰ Although he was a highly respected Oxford don who had been asked to preach regularly at the university, his listeners took great offense at his words because he tried to lay out the "plain truth" concerning their spiritual poverty without using "nice and philosophical speculation," or "perplexed and intricate reasonings."⁹¹ I am convinced that he said the hard things found in this message out of a heart of love for his audience, and because he thought this message provided the only possible means needed to awaken in them their need for the grand cure to be bestowed upon them by Christ, himself.⁹²

What stopped the Oxford audience from accepting Wesley's plea for their souls? Wesley, himself, at the beginning of his sermon identified the cause as pride, and he thought that the self-awareness that they should gain from his sermon would bring them cleansing from "pride and vanity," thus enabling "them to embrace. . . that faith which alone is able to make them whole," and which is the only remedy "under heaven to heal their sickness."⁹³ In his mind, pride led the Oxford dons to feel insulted by his message. This kind of preaching had often worked for the common people, and worked well, but academia was a different matter.

Wesley understood that the means of the grand cure for the full restoration of our true identity was taught in what he called the two grand, fundamental doctrines of Christianity,

the doctrine of justification, and that of the new birth: the former relating to that great work which God does *for us*, in

forgiving our sins; the latter to the great work which God does *in us*, in renewing our fallen nature.⁹⁴

Wesley defined the new birth as

that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life: when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is ‘created anew in Christ Jesus’, when it is ‘renewed after the image of God’, ‘in righteousness and true holiness’, when the love of the world is changed into the love of God, pride into humility, passion into meekness; hatred, envy, malice, into a sincere, tender, disinterested love for all mankind. In a word, it is that change whereby the ‘earthly, sensual, devilish’ mind is turned into the mind which was in Christ’ This is the nature of the new birth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.⁹⁵

Thus, Wesley understood that the path of repentance and self-awareness, justification, and new birth is the one and only way of salvation and the restoration of our true identity. Outler states that Wesley’s sermon entitled, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” ably showed the relationship between saving faith and sanctifying faith and was the best summation of the way of salvation “in the entire sermon corpus.”⁹⁶

Conclusions

From the perspective of Wesleyan Methodism, when our true God given core personal identity has been restored, we become “an habitation of God through his Spirit,” and saints of the Most High God who are “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”⁹⁷ To answer the question posed by king David, we are the saints in whom God inhabits. This is our true, core personal identity, and the foundation for all the other role or relational identities that we carry. Each of us may wear many relational hats, but at the end of the day we hang them all on the same hat-rack of our true, core personal identity.

I believe Wesley has clearly delineated the means, the only means, whereby we can rid ourselves of our counterfeit identity and claim the inheritance that accompanies our true core personal identity. It is through repentance, and the self-awareness that is part and parcel of repentance, that we are enabled and motivated to recognize and shed our counterfeit identity and thus begin the journey to reclaim our true core personal identity.

Our search for identity is the quintessential question, and quest, of the ages. The milestones in science that I have cited can have huge ramifications for humanity’s search for identity because these discoveries can contribute to the reduction of following false trails. The year 2009 marks the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the theory of evolution, a theory

that, among other things, proposes that we study the animal kingdom in order to find our own roots. The theory of evolution has been a long-standing bone of serious contention between creationists and atheistic evolutionists. It is a fact of considerable importance to any evangelist that the concept of theistic evolution not only can, but actually has been used to bridge the chasm between atheism and Christianity. Francis Collins is but one scientist who has passed over this bridge. Collins entered the realm of science as an atheist and has emerged as a Christian.

First, the idea of studying animals in order to understand human origins has not changed. What has changed is the idea that humans descended from apes, and this is no small thing. Considering that this long-standing belief remains so objectionable to creationists, perhaps the discovery of Ardi and the results of the *Human Family Tree* study can contribute to building a bridge of understanding between creationists and evolutionists. I note that while the idea that humans were created by God remains unpopular with some evolutionists, Christianity has made an impact upon the scientists involved in the *The Genographic Project* because they have chosen to name the single pair, from whom they say all humans have sprung, Scientific Adam and Scientific Eve.

Although I have known about the discovery of Ardi for perhaps only two months, this new, exciting understanding has had great impact on me as I consider the potential these discoveries present for world peace and the promotion of the kingdom of God. As opportunity presents itself, I can share this new information in a way that can be of comfort to others who also are in a quest for their identity.

Second, empirical evidence has been discovered that fosters the idea that there is really only one race, the human race, which is expressed in many different cultures and subcultures. From a theological viewpoint, why would God allow so many different cultures to arise, considering how divisive cultural and ethnic distinctions can become? From my reading of Wesley, I understand that it is only within the confines of society that a Christian can reach her or his full human God-given potential. Friction generated by society is the catalyst that produces the saints of God, and it is as saints that we find our true core personal identity and purpose.

Wesley saw that God is bigger than any one human being's understanding can comprehend, and perhaps the multi-cultural approach is the best way for us, collectively, to understand God. For instance, my ethnically white, North American understanding of God has been immeasurably enriched by considering the viewpoint of my black, African Christian sisters' and brothers' understanding of God. My rugged individualistic, American perspective of God has been drawn much closer to God as I absorb the family concept of the Triune God as seen by collectivistic Christians of the Mediterranean and the East.⁹⁸

When two men who differed in skin color found out that they came from a common ancestor only ten thousand years ago they were shocked. One can only wonder how this new knowledge has affected the manner in which they view one another, now that they have had several months to digest this new thought. If people are willing, this new information can become a bridge of common understanding that could potentially bring huge rewards such as a reduction of racial tension, war and strife in our common society. These discoveries certainly add new meaning to old questions: Am I my brother's keeper, and who exactly is my brother?

What will we do with this new information? These discoveries have caused me to re-examine my own view of myself and of people who may look different than me. I can see that we often fail to see the image of God either in ourselves or in each other. We erroneously think of our cultural differences as racial differences. We misinterpret small genetic differences, such as skin tone, that amount to less than one-tenth of one percent of our total genome, as racial differences. Yet, from the perspective of Wesleyan Methodism, these mistakes can be corrected as we progress along Wesley's *ordo salutis*⁹⁹ by truly understanding that these differences are only cultural differences, because there is only one human race in existence on this earth.

The next time I fill out a form that asks for my race, I will choose *other* and write in *human*. If enough people do this perhaps the authors of these forms will provide choices of cultures rather than so-called races. I note that in my Asbury Theological Seminary profile I am asked to answer a question called "Ethnic," and the choice available to me is "white." Middlesex University, in London, England, asks for "Ethnicity," and the available choice for me is "Caucasian." I can see that some progress is being made in recognizing that there is only one racial identity that we can choose - the human race.

Most of all, it has been my own personal experience, as a Christian springing from a Wesleyan heritage, that exchanging my counterfeit identity for my true identity, and realizing who I am, where I have come from, and where I am headed has brought an inner peace that equals the pearl of great price¹⁰⁰ in value. With a firm and sure understanding of my core personal identity, I can better fulfill all of my many role identities. I can now be whole in my composite identity that includes my many relational identities, where each relational identity rests firmly upon the bedrock of my core personal identity.

Endnotes

¹ This was king David, Psa. 8:4; in today's vernacular David asked, "What is humanity...?" Also, see Psalm 144. John Wesley personalized this question: "Nay, what am I? With God's assistance I would consider myself," in Ser. 116, "What Is Man? Psalm 8:4," Ed. Albert C. Outler, vol. 4 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976–), 20.

² In the realm of the social sciences alone, there are many ways to consider identity, such as philosophical, religious, political, national, cultural, gender and even sexual orientation identity.

³ Fernando Canale, "Interdisciplinary Method in Christian Theology? In Search of a Working Proposal," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*. Volume 43, Issue 3, Pages 366–389, ISSN (Online) 1612-9520, ISSN (Print) 0028-3517, DOI: 10.1515/nzst.2001.006, 18/10/2001, Published Online: 23/01/2006; accessed 8/10/2009, 367

⁴ John C. Bowmer, *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism* (Dacre Press: Westminster, 1951). Bowmer said "the term 'Wesleyan Methodism' seems to have been used, in its later connotation, from about 1822 onwards, when *The Methodist Magazine* became *The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*," thus changing its primitive meaning of "Methodism under the leadership of John Wesley" to include "other 'Methodists' which either broke away or sprang up of independent origin" (p. ix). However, "before the Methodist Union in 1932 'Wesleyan Methodism' was used almost exclusively to distinguish the parent body from 'Primitive Methodism' and 'United Methodism,' the other two parties to the Union" (p. ix, footnote 2).

A. B. Hyde also uses the term "Wesleyan Methodism" in this same sense as a chapter heading when referring to early leaders of the Methodist movement who were under the direct guidance of John Wesley, *Methodism: Tracing the Rise and Progress of That Wonderful Religious Movement, Which, Like the Gulf Stream, Has Given Warmth To Wide Waters and Verdure To Many Lands; and Giving An Account of Its Various Influences and Institutions of Today* (Willey & Co: Greenfield, MA, 1887), chapter 16, pp. 211-219.

⁵ Charles Darwin, *On The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (John Murray: London, 1859).

⁶ Any good dictionary can supply this information. I have used the American Heritage Dictionary.

⁷ John Wesley, *Notes on the Old Testament*, Wesleyan Heritage Publications, electronic version, 2002, Ages Software. Gen 1:26, p. 17; emphasis is Wesley's, to indicate biblical text.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1850), Acts 17:26, p. 325; emphasis is Wesley's, to indicate biblical text.

¹⁰ Wesley, 2:478.

¹¹ National Geographic Society and IBM Co., *The Genographic Project*. See the home page for this project: <<https://genographic.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/index.html>>, accessed on 8/30/2009.

¹² National Geographic Society and IBM Co., *The Human Family Tree*, a television special aired on the National Geographic cable channel on 8/30/2009.

See the home page for this phase of the Genographic project: <<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/human-family-tree>>, accessed on 8/30/2009.

¹³ Ibid. It is interesting to note that these names, given by the project scientists, allude to the biblical pair while yet clearly indicating a “scientific” difference.

¹⁴ Ibid. My point is not to discuss possible objections to this scientific data, such as how a pair living perhaps 90,000 years apart could be the ancestors of all of today’s humanity, but to use, and draw conclusions from, the empirical data. In any case, the researchers, themselves, did not seem to have a problem with this point.

¹⁵ Deep ancestry research traces genetic markers found in today’s human DNA back in terms of tens of thousands of years.

¹⁶ National Geographic Society and IBM Co., *The Human Family Tree*. <<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/episode/the-human-family-tree-3706/Overview>> Accessed on 8/30/2009.

¹⁷ National Geographic Society and IBM Co., *The Human Family Tree*.

¹⁸ That there is only one race is certainly not a new idea. The father of India, Mohandas Gandhi, said, “There is only one race - the human race,” <<http://www.communigate.co.uk/ne/nindi/page9.phtml>>, accessed on 10/30/2009. This quote was repeated by Yves Coppens, the palaeoanthropologist who discovered the fossil named Lucy that is referenced later in this paper, <http://www.thuram.org/index.php?idioma=in&seccion=there_is_only_one_race_the_human_race>, accessed on 10/30/2009.

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion of human blood types please see this University of Arizona website: <http://www.biology.arizona.edu/Human_Bio/problem_sets/blood_types/Intro.html>, accessed 10/15/2009. The Website for The Human Family Tree project also supplies considerable detail about blood types and DNA markers.

²⁰ During the colloquium discussion interchange (10/26/2009) held after the presentation of this paper, one student observed that although oppression may be removed, there is still a great need to deal with the trauma left by oppression.

²¹ All references to “Wesley” are to John Wesley unless otherwise indicated.

²² Wesley, Ser. 24, *Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount: Discourse the Fourth*, 1:533-534.

²³ Wesley, 1:534.

²⁴ Wesley, 1:536.

²⁵ Wesley, 1:536, emphasis mine.

²⁶ Shared in private conversation with Rev. P. H. P. Gutteridge, 1909-1998. Rev. Gutteridge may have gotten this idea from Emerson, who had all but the word desire.

²⁷ It is an empirical, scientific fact that friction produces enough heat, such as that produced by the subduction of the Pacific tectonic plate under the North American plate, to create volcanic lava flows found, for instance, in the Cascade Range of America. Likewise, society can create tremendous heat that is sometimes felt in the form of war. The well known story of Corrie ten Boom is a beautiful illustration of how God builds Christian character through the extreme stress of war; see <http://www.corrietenboom.com/index_en.html>, accessed 11/20/2009, for more information.

²⁸ Wesley, 1:480. Wesley emphatically said, one must first “know thyself!” so that one may press onward to the Kingdom of Heaven, Sermon 21: *Sermon on the Mount, I*. This is an oft repeated theme of Wesley’s.

²⁹ Space precludes further discussion of character, but for more information on this subject from the Wesleyan perspective please see Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist*, 9:32-46, *The Principles of a Methodist*, 9:47-66.

³⁰ Here, the Old Covenant is simply an equivalent way of referring to the Old Testament of the Bible, including the old Mosaic Covenant, based on human performance or works; The New Covenant refers to the New Testament that was established by Christ and is based on love. I have used the word covenant, rather than testament, to emphasize Wesley’s understanding that humanity is in a binding relationship with God. I realize that the Old Testament contains more than one “covenant.” My point is only to contrast the main difference between these two covenants, agreements, or testaments, as indicated by my use of italics in this paragraph.

³¹ Exod 20:1-20; Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37-39.

³² Wesley devoted an entire sermon to this subject, Sermon 144, The Love of God, 4:331-345.

³³ John 13:34-35, 15:12. Concerning loving God the law has not changed under the New Covenant, but in loving our neighbor the New Covenant raises the degree of love required, for we are now to love our neighbor as Christ loved us rather than simply love others as we love ourselves. This is why John writes in I John 2:7-8: “*I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning.... A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you.*” Thus, the command to love our neighbor has not changed in principle but has changed in degree.

³⁴ Luke 10:29-37

³⁵ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1850), Luke 10:37, p. 169; emphasis is Wesley’s, to indicate biblical text.

³⁶ Wesley, Ser. 65, *The Duty of Reproving our Neighbour*, 2:514.

³⁷ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1850), Luke 10:37, p. 169.

³⁸ Wesley, Letter to an unknown friend (perhaps the Rev. John Clayton?), dated Mar. 28, 1739, 25:616; also quoted by Outler in his introduction to Sermon 38, 2:62. I have substituted [of human society] for “the world.”

³⁹ Wesley, Ser. 141, 4:292-303.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 4:294.

⁴¹ Wesley was intimately familiar with the Greek text of I John 4:8 - ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν θεόν. ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν (He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love). In this text, the first occurrence of love, ἀγαπῶν, is a verb; the second occurrence, ἀγάπη, is a noun.

⁴² Wesley, Ser. 129, Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels, 4:164.

⁴³ Charles Darwin home page, < <http://darwin-online.org.uk/> >, accessed 10 Sept 2009.

⁴⁴ Alfred Russel Wallace home page, < <http://www.wku.edu/~smithch/index1.htm> >, accessed 10 Sept. 2009.

⁴⁵ The Jackson edition of Wesley's Works contains eight general references that Wesley makes to Aristotle, showing that Wesley was familiar with Aristotle's writings.

⁴⁶ <http://www.aboutdarwin.com/literature/Pre_Dar.html> This website provides a brief history of evolutionary thinking before Darwin, accessed 11/15/2009.

⁴⁷ John Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, Jackson Ed. of 1872 (Grand Rapids: Baker, reprinted 1978), 13:448-455.

⁴⁸ About 1749. <http://www.aboutdarwin.com/literature/Pre_Dar.html> Accessed 10/1/2009.

⁴⁹ Buffon published the first volumes of his encyclopedia in 1749; the final volumes were published in 1804, nearly sixteen years after his death. <<http://www.english.upenn.edu/Projects/knarf/Buffon/buffon.html>>

⁵⁰ Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1707-1788, wrote *Historie Naturelle*, an encyclopedia of 44 volumes, wherein he said the earth was much older than 6,000 years, <<http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/history/buffon2.html>>, accessed on 11/15/2009.

⁵¹ Wesley, Ser. 141, *The Image of God*, 4:292-93.

⁵² A discussion of "evolution and creationism" would certainly be a worthy subject for a doctoral dissertation.

⁵³ I.e., Wesley's belief in creationism vs. atheistic creationism or theistic creationism, as will be shown.

⁵⁴ <http://www.catholic.com/library/Adam_Eve_and_Evolution.asp>, accessed 11/15/2009. This Roman Catholic website is sealed with the Nihil Obstat (Bernadeane Carr, STL, Censor Librorum, August 10, 2004), and Imprimatur (Robert H. Brom, Bishop of San Diego, August 10, 2004).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Cf. Sally Lehrman, *Scientific American*, November 2008, "The Christian Man's Evolution: How Darwinism and Faith Can Coexist." This article can be accessed online, <<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=the-christian-mans-evolution>>. Accessed 11/15/2009.

⁵⁸ The government coordinated *Human Genome Project* was a 13-year-long study that was completed in 2003. The goals of this project included identifying all of the genes in human DNA and determining the chemical base pair sequences so that this information can be made available to the private sector for further study. <http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/home.shtml>, accessed 11/1/2009.

⁵⁹ <<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/04/03/collins.commentary/index.html>>, accessed 10/27/2009

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Exploration of the relationship between creationism and theistic evolution could produce many fine papers. Indeed, each position is a viable and potential subject in its own right.

⁶² <<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/04/03/collins.commentary/index.html>>, accessed 10/27/2009.

⁶³ The National Geographic Society, Jamie Shreeve, Science editor, *National Geographic* magazine. < <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/10/091001-oldest-human-skeleton-ardi-missing-link-chimps-ardipithecus-ramidus.html> >, accessed 1 Oct. 2009.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ *Discovering Ardi: Changing Our Understanding of Human Origins*, <<http://dsc.discovery.com/tv/ardipithecus/about/about.html>>, accessed 11 Oct. 2009.

⁶⁸ Wesley, 4:293-295.

⁶⁹ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1850), Luke 10:37, p. 169. Wesley said that it is the common ancestry in which we all share that binds humanity together.

⁷⁰ Wesley, Sermon 57, *On the Fall of Man*, 2:410.

⁷¹ Wesley, Sermon 44, *Original Sin*, 2:183.

⁷² Outler, in Wesley, *Introduction*, 1:64.

⁷³ Wesley, Sermon 129, *Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, 4:163.

⁷⁴ Wesley, Sermon 44, *Original Sin*, 2:184.

⁷⁵ Wesley, Sermon 44, *Original Sin*, 2:179.

⁷⁶ Wesley raises this specific question in Sermon 9, *The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption*, 1:259. He is quoting Romans 7:24.

⁷⁷ Wesley frequently writes of sin as a disease, cf. Sermon 14, *The Repentance of Believers*, 1:347

⁷⁸ Wesley, Sermon 44, *Original Sin*, 2:184.

⁷⁹ Wesley, *Hymn* 386, 7:560.

⁸⁰ The 'Five Points' of Calvinism are remembered by the acronym, TULIP: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and the Perseverance of the saints.

⁸¹ Wesley, Sermon 106, *On Faith*: And whosoever in every nation believes thus far the Apostle declares is 'accepted of him,' 3:497

⁸² Wesley, Sermon 44, *Original Sin*, 2:185.

⁸³ Wesley, Sermon 14, *The Repentance of Believers*.

⁸⁴ Wesley, Sermon 79: *On Dissipation*, 3:123.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Wesley, Sermon 78: *Spiritual Idolatry*, 3:113.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Wesley, Sermon 141, *The Image of God*, 4: 300.

⁸⁹ Wesley, Sermon 17, *The Circumcision of the Heart*, 1:404.

⁹⁰ Wesley, Sermon 4, *Scriptural Christianity*, 1:159-180. This sermon was delivered on August 24, 1744.

⁹¹ Wesley, *Preface to the Sermons*, 1:104. Here, Wesley said, "I design plain truth for plain people." See Outler's introductory comment, 1:109-116.

⁹² Ibid. Outler points out that Wesley never regretted preaching this sermon, and he cites Wesley's journal entry, dated Friday, August 24, 1781 - nearly forty years after the event: "I am now clear of the blood of these men. I have fully delivered my own soul," 1:115.

⁹³ Wesley, Sermon 17, *Circumcision of the Heart*, 1:404.

⁹⁴ Wesley, Sermon 45, *The New Birth*, 2:187

⁹⁵ Wesley, Sermon 45, *The New Birth*, 2:193-194.

⁹⁶ Outler, "An Introductory Comment" to Sermon 43, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 2:154. Due to space limitations I will simply refer the reader to this sermon for more information on Wesley's understanding of the way of Salvation.

⁹⁷ Wesley, Sermon 3, *Awake Thou That sleepest*, 1:153.

⁹⁸ I recommend this excellent book providing a detailed examination and comparison of fourteen cultural values, including individualism and collectivism: Craig Storti, *Figuring Foreigners Out: A Practical Guide* (Boston: Intercultural Press, 1999).

⁹⁹ The term *ordo salutis*, the way of salvation, is used frequently by Outler in his various introductions to individual sermons written by Wesley. This term describes the "successive stages from repentance to experienced holiness" (Albert Outler, 1:165, footnote 61).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Matthew 13:46, KJV.