WHOLENESS IN KOINONIA:
A PRELUDE IN A WESLEYAN QUEST FOR KINGDOM JUSTICE

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INTRODUCTION

The paper discusses wholeness as the potential of restoring God's image in us. This kind of wholeness cannot be achieved unless one is emptied of self-interest, like Christ emptied himself of his divine attributes (henosis) in order to give us the possibility of theosis. The process of wholeness is a product of the work of a second grace and only exists in koinonia (fellowship) with God and others. The absence of koinonia (spiritual and economic) hinders the presence of God's kingdom in our personal and collective lives. Being in communion with God requires being in koinonia with others, as do the three persons of the Trinity. The process of wholeness in koinonia reflects the risky nature of the Biblical God who risks for our sake. It is a process full of risks that liberate us from ourselves. It is an open-ended process whose outcome is unknown until the end and is co-authored by God and individuals.

The concept of the Kingdom of God lies at the heart of John Wesley's teachings. The ethics of social holiness of "seeking justice" is to live for the kingdom and have koinonia which is the soul of the Church. When koinonia is absent we have a body but no soul—we have a corpse. Koinonia is understood as fellowship in the Spirit while both our souls and bodies are cared for. Koinonia is also understood as thanksgiving for "giving us this day our bread" and not "my bread". Koinonia is the sharing of the Lord's bread as well as our bread. Wholeness is koinonia was practiced experienced by the first Christians as can be seen in Acts 2:45-47 and 4:32-33.

That wholeness included a fivefold reality, namely: corporate worship; home relationships; self-actualization; economic relationships; and social outreach. That fivefold reality had been lived by and proclaimed by the early Church Fathers at whose teachings John Wesley found his inspiration. Unfortunately, as Albert Outler writes: "Wesley has yet to be studied in any great breath and depth in the
light of those sources and their shaping influence on his thought”.

Wesley saw that wealth and privilege were two of the chief enemies of faith, holiness and wholeness. He wrote extensively on the issue of poverty and wealth, however the focus of this paper is not that.

The paper serves as a prelude to a triangular thought and has two main parts. Specifically, the first part deals with the legacy that the early Church Fathers have had on John Wesley’s thoughts about kingdom justice. In that sense the Wesleyan tradition is a return to the roots of the faith and should be viewed as such.

The second part deals with the dual dimension of seeking justice through kenosis (emptying) when an individual denounces self-interest according to Christ’s example. This kenosis involves significant risks but follows the paradigm of a Biblical God who risks for our sake. The second part also discusses personal and social holiness as a vehicle to reach theosis, which is nothing but Wesley’s contribution to the Anglican norm of “Scripture, Reason and Christian Antiquity”.

Wesleyan experience is not just an experience of being forgiven, but rather a wholistic experience of being pardoned and being led to good works according to Wesley’s favorite text (Gal. 5:6).

EARLY CHURCH FATHERS AND THE WESLEYAN QUEST FOR KINGDOM-JUSTICE

One of the main objectives of John Wesley was the restoration of apostolic Christianity as proclaimed by the early Church Fathers. Their writings form for Wesley the essence for his sought-after revival. His interest in them was motivated by the fact that in their times they were a minority in the world but not of the world, and their teachings were morally instructive rather than speculative.

Moreover, Wesley borrowed from the Eastern fathers the concepts of salvation as a process as well as the concept of discipline and discipleship for his societies that practice the loving works of the Scriptural mandates. The mystery of divine action and human reaction signifies the beauty of free will and choice where God’s irresistible power as Creator is balanced with God’s resistible power as Governor. For Wesley, “Thy Kingdom come” reflects the dynamic relationship between God and his people where the unfolding of history is done as the interaction of both parties i.e. co-authored by God and humans. Wesley’s influence extended beyond the essence of how individuals should deal with their finances. His thoughts were designed to have an impact on the collective economy too.

Wesley’s main economic arguments—inspired by the Eastern Fathers—and his kingdom justice perception can be summarized below:

We are stewards and not owners of the resources entrusted to us.
Material resources were entrusted to us for the have-nots.
It is the use of money and not money itself that becomes an impediment to kingdom-justice.
Whatever gains we make, we earn them and distribute them for the sake of the kingdom.
Identification with the poor and the disadvantaged is of utmost significance for the Christian, because we are called to good deeds.

The presence of poor among us is a sign of defrauding the kingdom.

The accumulation and preservation of wealth for one's own sake is proportional to our losses in God's grace.

The natural progression of economic growth for individuals and societies is the loss of Christianity among the people, unless we return our wealth to the work of the kingdom.

In his sermon on "The Use of Money" it is clearly portrayed what we could call the first principle in his economic thought, that is, we are stewards and not owners of what we have. Wesley encouraged honorable and honest profit making—"make as much as you can"—not for the sake of the individual but for the sake of others. Hence, money by itself neither is good or evil, but its usage becomes a medium of blessing or a vehicle of curse. Money in the hands of kingdom people becomes "nourishment for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothing for the naked".

Therefore, Wesley drew a line between the necessary and the abundant. He instructed his followers to make and save as much as they could, but he also instructed that the abundant is to be used for the needs of others. The others refer first to the household of faith, and then to those outside the kingdom reality. The concept of human restoration presupposes for Wesley participation in the divine nature of the three person of the Trinity. The three persons are in koinonia with each other and do not deprive each other of anything. The kingdom in us is a microcosmos of the kingdom to come, and thus, the blame for others' needs rests upon us who may be withholding from them what God has entrusted us for their aid. According to Wesley, spending money on luxury goods or hoarding money while the poor are suffering is depriving the Lord of his resources and defrauding the kingdom.

Moreover, according to Wesley we will be judged according to our stewardship of the material resources we have been entrusted with. Wesley writes on those who observe the first two rules (make as much as you can and save as much as you can) but neglect the third one (give as much as you can) "yet nothing can be more plain, than that all who observe the two first rules without the third, will be twofold more the children of hell than ever they were before".

For Wesley the accumulation of material things is inconsistent with holiness and leads to the death of religion. Wesley truly demystifies wealth and power and sees self-interest and the profit motive as the foundation of injustice. His understanding of justice and human rights far exceeds those of modern Christians. Wesley's understanding is not limited to giving a helping hand to the needy. It is outcry against injustices. He writes: "The grand plea is, They are authorized by law. But can law, human law, change the nature of things? Can it turn darkness into light, or evil into good? By no means. Notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still. There must still remain an essential difference between justice and injustice, cruelty and mercy" and he continues: "Wealth is not necessary to the glory of any nation, but wisdom, virtue, justice, mercy,
generosity, public spirit, love of our country. These are necessary to the real glory of a nation; but abundance of wealth is not."^12

Wesley goes on to say that he wants to

lift up my voice like a trumpet to those who gain and save all they can, but do not give all they can! Ye are the men, some of the chief men, who continually grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and in a great measure stop his gracious influence from descending on our assemblies. Many of your brethren, beloved of God have not food to eat; they have no raiment to put on; they have not a place where to lay their head. And why are they thus distressed? Because you impiously, unjustly, and cruelly detain from them what your Master and theirs lodges in your hands on purpose to supply their want! See that poor member of Christ, pinched with hunger, shivering with cold, half naked! Meantime you have plenty of this world's goods—of meat, drink, and apparel. In the name of God what are you doing? Do you neither fear God nor regard man? Why do you not deal your bread to the hungry; and cover the naked with a garment? Have you laid out in your own costly apparel what would have answered both these intentions? ...But you say you can afford it! O be ashamed to take such miserable nonsense into your mouths! Never more utter such stupid cant; such palpable absurdity! Can any steward afford to be an arrant knave? To waste his Lord's goods? Can any servant afford to lay out his Master's money, any otherwise than his Master's appointed him? So far from it, that whoever does this ought to be excluded from a Christian society.\n
This is kingdom justice at its best, based on the concept of stewardship. Koinonia in the Spirit also implies distributive justice based on the concept of social equality where equals are treated equally.

Manfred Marquardt writes that for Wesley "personal striving for increasing wealth and social injustice are two sides of the same coin".\n
Wesley places a heavier burden on those who have the riches and "are not under necessity of working for your bread" to do the blessed works of attending to the needs of others. Not doing so increases the probability of "decreasing in grace in the same proportion as they increase in wealth" and considers it natural for someone to lose the kingdom because of the unshared riches that have been accumulated and have been destroying the essence of Christianity.

For Wesley the spread of true scriptural Christianity promotes growth, investments, prosperity which in turns brings "pride, love of the world, and every temper that is destructive of Christianity." Thus, Christianity "wherever it prevails, it saps its own foundation" and "has a tendency in process of time, to undermine and destroy itself."

The question is obvious and Wesley asks it: "But is there no way to prevent this?—to continue Christianity among a people? Allowing the diligence and frugality must produce riches, is there no means to hinder riches from destroying the religion of those that possess them? I can see only one possible way; find out another who can. Do you gain all you can, and save all you can? Then you must, in the nature of things grow rich. Then if you have any desire to escape the damnation of hell, give all you can; otherwise I can have no more hope of your salvation, than of that of Judas Iscariot."\n
The Wesleyan (Methodist) movement started among the poor workers in Bristol, UK and the Methodist strategies of Societies, Bands, and Class meetings were simply "cells for koinonia" where the Wesleyan principles of unlimited accountability and identifying with the poor took precedence over custom and propriety.16

Where does Wesley draw such radical thoughts and practices? In his letter/essay "A Plain Account of the People called Methodists" he says that his inspiration has been the apostolic age and what followed it.17 But let's pause for few minutes and listen to what the Eastern Church fathers had to say about stewardship more than 1,700 years ago.18

Wesley's thoughts on the "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity" is a reflection of John Chrysostom's thoughts on the deplorable effects of the bad use of wealth on an individual's life. "For such is the character of a life of this kind which is devoted to luxury, and wealth and power; it is foul and ugly and full of much abomination....."19 Chrysostom speaks of the story of the poor Lazarus and the wealthy man, reminding us that the rich man is in hell because he neglected Lazarus.20 Wesley's point that it is the bad use of wealth and not wealth itself which is evil, is borrowed directly from Chrysostom who says "for neither is wealth an evil, but the having made a bad use of wealth....."21 Wesley borrows from Chrysostom who says that the wealth of a person represents a loan from the Lord for which the person is accountable for to the Lord on behalf of the poor (stewardship). If an individual hoards her/his wealth in terms of not distributing it to the poor, the person is useless in the work of the kingdom and in the society at large.

Chrysostom goes further by calling a rich man not the one "who is in possession of much, but one who gives much." He further explains Abraham's riches in terms of reaching out to the poor and the strangers, and thus God honored him by letting his angels stay with him.

For is it not disgraceful to clothe our walls with marble, vainly and to no end, and to neglect Christ going about naked? ...Behold now this great danger has overtaken us! Let your houses stand by you! Let them deliver you from the threatened peril, but they cannot...Let riches now lend assistance!...We build houses that we may have a habitation; not that we may make an ambitious display. What is beyond our wants, is superfluous and useless. Put on a sandal which is larger than your foot! You will not endure it; for it is a hindrance to the step. Thus also a house larger than necessity requires, is an impediment to your progress toward heaven....

Later in the same homily, Chrysostom will call the rich to give their riches to Christ who can pay them eternal interest.22 The destruction of Christianity as seen by Wesley in the form of wealth accumulation is a reflection of Chrysostom's thoughts that there is no honor or pleasure in wealth accumulation but rather the latter uproots the essence of Christian principles.23

Chrysostom's extensive writings on the subject are a true treasure of knowledge and understanding. Wesley's notion that true wealth is by nature outgoing i.e. has value only when it spends itself on behalf of the needy is coming from Chrysostom. Wesley's notion that accumulation of wealth for one's own sake brings pride and destroys Christianity can also be found in Chrysostom. Chrysostom's belief in the commonality of goods is found-
ed on his doctrine of creation from which Wesley borrows. "But is this not evil, that you alone should have the Lord's property, that you alone should enjoy what is common? ... The rich have that which belongs to the poor, even though they may have received it as inheritance, no matter whence their money comes... Let us not become more beastly than the beasts... Whence then, does such great inequality arise? It arises from the greed and the arrogance of the rich.

When Wesley talks about the damnation of the rich he simply echoes Chrysostom who says about the neglect of the poor by the rich "what streams of fire will be enough for such a soul?" The unacceptable realities of poor amongst the people that Wesley talks about is also an echo of Chrysostom's argument that it is unacceptable to observe a situation where Christ 'emptied Himself of so great glory for thy sake, but thou dost not count Him deserving even of a loaf; but thy dog is fed to fullness whilst Christ wastes with hunger.'

Obviously, Chrysostom's writings reflect the most cohesive arguments on the dogmas of Christianity and economics. But let us leave Chrysostom and read some of the other Eastern fathers on the same topic.

The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles dates to the early second century A.D. and is considered to be one of the most original writings of the Apostolic Age. It is frequently quoted by the Church fathers of the first four centuries (the ones that Wesley relied upon). With regards to koinonia we read:

Thou shall not hesitate to give, nor murmur when thou givest; for thou shalt know who is the good repayer of the hire. Thou shall not turn away from him that is in want, but thou shalt share all things with thy brother, and shalt not say that they are thine own; for if ye are partakers in that which is immortal, how much more in things which are mortal?24

It is clear from the above passage that stewardship is of the essence. Sharing is at the heart of koinonia, and participation in the immortal things of the kingdom requires koinonia in the mortal things of this life. We could thus, say that this is the foundation of Wesley's economic thought, in the sense that the basis of economic koinonia is the other persons' needs.

Furthermore, it is enlightening to see Wesley's thoughts to resemble so much the ancient Christian thought and paradigm with regards to losing the kingdom due to

not pitying a poor man, not labouring for the afflicted, not knowing Him that made them, murderers of children, destroyers of the handiwork of God, turning away from him that is in want, afflicting him that is distressed, advocates of the rich, lawless judges of the poor, utter sinners.25

Another text of the first part of the second century A.D. that of the Epistle of Barnabas shows the wide dissemination of the economic dimension of koinonia within the Apostolic Age and its influence on the patristic thought from which Wesley borrowed heavily.
At this stage we should also take into account the influence that the Epistle to Diognetus\(^2\) has had on Wesley's thought regarding sanctification and the perfection of the Christian life. The epistle is full of the power that the manifestation of a godly and holy life has on us as imitators of God. The latter is advanced when someone "takes upon himself the burden of his neighbour... by distributing these to the needy."

The Methodist tradition of the second work of grace can also be traced in the apostolic age and specifically in the Shepherd of Hermas. Hermas frequently talks about the possibility of a second repentance after baptism and he connects that possibility with the question of wealth accumulation i.e. not giving as much as a person could. Hermas sees a world divided between the rich and the poor. His primary concern is the salvation of the rich, which requires giving to the poor. Otherwise the riches become the idols which constitute an impediment to salvation as Wesley wrote. He speaks of his tower-building vision and the fact that some round stones cannot be used in the project and he asks: "Who are these that are white and round, and yet do not fit into the building of the tower? ... when then, will they be useful for the building? "When the riches that now seduce them have been circumscribed, then they will be of use to God...those who are rich cannot be useful to the Lord unless their riches be cut down".\(^27\)

Furthermore, Hermas suggests that the rich who do not share with the needy are guilty for the blood of the poor.

The Cappadocian fathers (Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus) were among the most explicit Church fathers regarding the Church's teachings on matters of wealth accumulation, the responsibility of the rich toward the needy, the causes of poverty, the corruption of the state (and its responsibility for the poor), as well as the need for the church to institutionally intervene and assist the poor.

Reading all the three, one could easily see the similarities among their writings and those of Wesley on similar matters. The following quotes are but a very small example of their influence on Wesley.

"What is a miser? One who is not content with what is needful. What is a thief? One who takes what belongs to others. Why do you not consider yourself a miser and a thief when you claim as your own what you received in trust? If one who takes the clothing off another is called a thief, why give any other name to the one who can clothe the naked and refuses to do so? The bread that you withhold belongs to the poor; the cape that you hide in your chest belongs to the naked; the shoes rotting in your house belong to those who must go unshod".\(^28\) In another passage, Basil accuses those who neglect the poor of homicide: "one who can remedy this evil and out of greed refuses to do so, can justly be considered a murderer."

Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa claims that poverty could be eradicated if we were in God's will and share our wealth with the needy "poverty would no longer afflict humankind, slavery no longer debase it, shame no longer distress it, for all things would be common to all."\(^29\)

Both of them consider the existence of poor in the presence of abundance an insult to the image of God the Creator, and urge Christians who desire to be like Christ—and thus restore the image of the Creator in them—to share with the needy, a concept found also in Wesley's writings.
At this point we should also note that it was Wesley's and the Eastern fathers' belief that the care of the poor was the responsibility of the Church and thus giving was necessary. His teachings had a magnificent effect on sacrificial giving patterns that sustained the work of the societies and of the Methodist congregations.

**FROM KENOSIS TO THEOSIS: A KONONIA SYNTHESIS**

Kingdom Justice for Wesley is the absence of social injustices and the presence of forces that restore God's image to individuals. For him kingdom meant 'not the kingdom of glory, (although that will, without question, follow) but the kingdom of heaven, that is, true religion upon earth.' The presence of riches according to that sermon is an impediment for the kingdom of heaven to be present in the lives of those who control the riches. The removal of social injustices according to Wesley is a vital step in order to reach kingdom justice.

According to Wesley the social injustices reflected evil realities that could be eliminated. They did not represent failures on behalf of the poor or unavoidable fate according to God's election. Thus, he was engaging the agents (government and influential rich individuals) who could make a difference and reduce the social injustices.

Wesley's thoughts on social injustices that betray the kingdom ideals are well articulated in his letter/essay "Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions." There we find some of the causes that he identifies for the social evils, namely: unemployment, scarcity of goods, high prices, squandering of resources, monopolization of goods and means, rising rents, the elimination of small farms, and high taxes as a result of the public debt. He is especially harsh on the taxes on the poor, the breweries that destroy the wholeness of a person's potential, and the luxurious/conspicuous consumption of the wealthy.

Wesley was urging his followers to be hard-working individuals, diligent in their tasks and with high thrift goals. At the same time he was analyzing the economic situation to the best of his ability influenced primarily through the work of Josiah Tucker and Edmund Burke.

Wesley was well aware of the economic happenings in his time, which he documents well in his journals. For him the presence of hungry people at the same time when conspicuous consumption was taking place was an abuse of the freedoms that God had imputed to us. The economic inequalities had obviously contributed to social inequalities of the things that the Creator had intended for common use—and thus echoing Chrysostom—which prevented God's justice from taking place and also contributing to the high costs of food and to higher levels of unemployment.

According to Wesley the expensive clothing and furniture, the balls, and the extravagant lifestyles were robbing the poor and the Lord.

We need at this point to understand the socioeconomic framework at the time of Wesley's writings. It is the 1760s and the 1770s and rebellion is threatened because of the economic and social injustices in the United Kingdom. Hungry people were violently seizing goods withheld from them for the sake of higher profits.

At this time another influential and equally well-known moral philosopher was contemplating and formulating the foundations of the free capitalistic society. Adam Smith in 1776 published his famous book "The Wealth of Nations" which is the cornerstone of the capitalistic economy. Adam Smith in his effort to influence the economic process with
the principles of the Enlightenment period spoke of natural prices, natural wages, natural interest rates and natural employment levels, all directed by an invisible hand, which is nothing other than the self-interest of the individual.

However, at this stage we need to pause and think of the nature of self-interest and its compatibility with the Biblical norm in general and the Wesleyan paradigm in particular. It is my assertion that Wesley was attacking that principle-motive and was calling the people to denounce their self-interest and look after the interests of others.\textsuperscript{37} It is further the claim of this paper that the Wesleyan paradigm is kenotic in nature especially with regards to economic interests and kingdom justice.

While Adam Smith saw the self-interest of individuals as the ultimate promoter of harmonious relationships that brings equilibrium in the markets, Wesley saw the self-interest as the medium that promotes injustice and perpetuates evil in the world. It is the claim of this paper that Wesley interpreted wealth accumulation—motivated by self-interest—as one of the primary causes of the inefficacy of Christianity.

Biblical Christians do not have self-interest because the latter is crucified on the cross of Golgotha. Material surpluses and exuberant lifestyles represent the perpetuation of a sinful nature and prevent the Christian from receiving God’s grace. Biblical Christians are supposed to empty themselves of all but love—as Christ did—and offer themselves to the service of the kingdom. The passage from Acts 2: 42,47 speaks about a koinonia where production was taking place for the sake of the kingdom reality.

In Biblical koinonia the collective well-being of the community supercedes the self-interests of the individual members. The latter cannot function outside of the former, and the former is healthy when the latter parts have healthy relations with each other. Theissen\textsuperscript{13} argues that the conflicts within the Corinthian church were rooted in the contrast between rich and poor, and hence Paul’s calling for equality in 2 Corinthians 8:13,14 makes perfect sense. Paul is reminding them of the story of manna redistribution found in Exodus 16:16-18.

Everybody is supposed to produce for the sake of the community, and everyone receives according to her/his needs. Koinonia cannot exist outside of the framework of social equality, which explains why Paul claims that the presence of hungry persons among the Corinthians generates judgment. Moreover, the absence of koinonia signals the partaking of demonic cups rather than the Lord’s Supper. “Do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?” (1 Corinthians 11:22). The lack of recognition of the body of Christ (v. 29) is rooted in exploitation and thus koinonia presupposes the absence of inequalities and the abolition of any type of dichotomies in the body of Christ.

The above discussion could help us develop a framework of thought and analysis where engagement in public policy would translate into mirroring the community’s endeavor to live by Godly standards of love, social justice, being public light, salt and leaven.

The failure to engage in public policy formulation has had costly consequences. Carl F.H. Henry writes that such a failure “cast evangelicals in a pluralistic society in a role of concern only for their own special interests, and not for justice and equity as a public cause that embraces an evangelical agenda with that of all other citizens ... Only public policy involvement that transcends a partisan agenda and envisions social justice as a uni-
versal due—reflecting God's universal demand for righteousness—can invalidate the complaint that evangelical orthodoxy is concerned for justice only when and as its own interests are violated. 30

Of course Wesley's works and ministry are a tremendous testimony in that public policy arena as his journal entries and letters to public policy officials—including his letters to the Prime Minister advocating justice for the poor—can testify.

Wesley's assertion that the Gospel can have no place where satan's throne is, is directly related to self-interested individuals who accumulate for their own sake 31 rather than for the sake of the kingdom. In the Biblical framework, to seek justice is to live and produce for the sake of God's kingdom. We live in the reality of the incarnational kingdom where Christ is the center of all. 32

This incarnational kingdom reality signifies for Wesley the fact that Christ emptied himself (Phil. 2:7) of his omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient qualities/attributes in his incarnate state 33 for our own sake in order to empower us for theosis. He became the second Adam and God the Father took with him the same risks that He originally took with the first Adam. If Christ were not a second Adam i.e. there were no chances of him falling, then, divine justice and God's image in us could never have the potential of being restored. 33 However, Christ had to give us the chances as originally designed in the garden of Eden. For that purpose he had to empty himself of those divine attributes in order for us to have the possibility of restoration and one day to 'be like him' Therefore, the dogma of kenosis is inseparable from the dogma of theosis. Christ emptied himself of His divine attributes and lived a life of complete dependence upon the Heavenly Father (John 5:30, 36) being completely subservient to His father in all things (John 6:57; 8:26-29, 8:42; 11:41-42; 12:49-50; 13:3; 14:10; 16:28; 2 Cor. 8:9).

Christ's kenosis is the example for our lives especially if we wanted to implement koinonia justice. The being of God can only be revealed, known and understood through koinonia including the economic one. Being implies life and that in turn means communion and koinonia where self-interest is non-existent.

John Zizioulas writes about that communion relationship: "This ontology, which came out of the eucharistic experience 34 of the Church, guided the Fathers in working out their doctrine of the being of God, a doctrine formulated above all by Athanasius of Alexandria and the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa... The being of God is a relational being: without the concept of communion it would not be possible to speak of the being of God... The Holy Trinity is a primordial ontological concept and not a notion which is added to the divine substance... The substance of God, 'God', has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion... Communion which does not come from hypostasis that is, a concrete and free person, and which does not lead to hypostases that is concrete and free persons, is not an image of the being of God. The person cannot exist without communion; but every form of communion which denies or suppresses the person is inadmissible". 35 To that we could add that the end of obedience is communion and Christ was in constant communion with the Father because of His obedience.

Christ's kenosis represents how Christ out of love gave us the freedom to enter again into the holy of holies and restored for us the potential of being in "His image". His keno-
Theosis represents the reality that without ever ceasing to be who He was (the eternal Son), willingly and freely changed what He was (attributes) by entering into the human condition, and so becoming the second Adam as originally envisioned by Father the Creator.

The theosis dogma in Wesley can be traced back in the influence that other Eastern fathers such as Macarius the Egyptian and Ephraem Syrus have had on him. The Homilies of Macarius and the works of Ephraem Syrus became Wesley's backbone thought of the progressive surrender of our will to the will of God. Our participation in God's grace is fulfilled by participating in metousia theou (partaking of God's divine nature and being filled with the fullness of God) and thus the fullness of life and faith is sustained by the fullness of hope that one day "we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2).

**Concluding Remarks**

Wesleyan dogmas imply that socioeconomic policies should take into account the fact of an incarnate love along with the principle of justice for the poor. The latter says that God's Truth is ordered to merciful and partial justice. Biblical justice has to be partial in order to restore impartiality. Therefore, our kingdom-justice is related and tied to our principles of identification with the poor, restoration of their rights and privileges, and struggle for their advancement through sacrificial love by rejecting the bankrupt individualism. The biblical God is the one "who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing" (Deuteronomy 10: 18). Biblical justice is biased in favor of the powerless.

At this point we need to relate the principle of social equality to the one above i.e. that of partial justice. The issue at hand, is human needs and just claims as the latter are related to income distribution.

The rights of the poor are the concerns of righteous persons, while the wicked ones do not care about justice for the needy (Proverbs 29:7). John Mason writes that "assisting poorer and weaker members of society constitutes a practical meaning of justice and righteousness is a theme running boldly throughout the Bible from the Mosaic laws ... to the prophetic complaints... and reinforced in the New Testament".

For an excellent treatment of biblical verses dealing with the issue of poverty see Sider's edition "Cry Justice!"

We need to remember that creation's goods are for all, and not only for the privileged. However, when the plutarchs control not only the money but also the culture and the democratic institutions, then, monetary inequality becomes social inequality and the basic needs of the poor are not met.

Richard Gilbert writes that "there is a strong Biblical tradition of challenging excess of wealth; at the same time a 'preferential option for the poor' can be discerned." The early Church's teachings on the issue of wealth, possession and poverty were clear. The Church fathers insisted on the fact that redistributing for the sake of the poor was not an act of charity but rather the restoration of what was due to them. According to them economic resources belong to the Lord, and therefore, the common cause and purpose asserts its common use.

Other Church fathers in later days emphasize the same things. St. Ambrose takes an interesting position by claiming that the wealthy are granted temporal goods - he even
uses the example of Judas who was given the moneybag—so by their misuse they will have no excuse after death. 'They, then, who have devoted themselves to pleasures, luxury, robbery, gain, or honours are spectators rather than combatants. They believe the profit of labour, but not the fruit of virtue. They love their ease; by cunning and wickedness they heap up riches; but they will pay the penalty of their iniquity, though it be late. Their rest will be in hell...'. St. Jerome will add, 'The apostle too tells us that covetousness is idolatry... Such is the climax of complete and apostolic virtue - to sell all that one has and to distribute to the poor, and thus freed from all earthly encumbrance to fly up to the heavenly realities with Christ... Let your praises come from the stomachs of the hungry and not from the rich banquets of the overfed.'

Obviously for the Church Fathers and for Wesley economic equilibrium does not occur when supply equals demand, but rather when our claims (demands) of the possessive individualistic spirit are emptied of their self-interest and balanced by our supply of stewardship in the spirit of our collective responsibility that we carry towards our fellow human beings. Only then "our light will shine like noonday" as Isaiah 58, proclaims and claim our seat in the table of theosis. We could start by limiting the spheres of life where money talks and makes a difference.

Notes
1. The "invisible hand" which is the primary engine of economic growth according to Adam Smith.
2. This is how E. Stanley Jones understood koinonia according to Wesleyan principles. See his book *The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person*, Abington Press, 1972.
5. Partially understood as our restoration to God's image. Christ's kenosis (as second Adam) empowers us to move from salvation to sanctification. Moreover, it means—as Gregory of Nazianzus would have said—the possibility of us humans to reach the same status of humanity as that of Christ. That was the purpose of kenosis.
6. His sermon on *The Use of Money*, (Sermon L, *The Works of John Wesley*, third edition, Baker Book House, 1991) shows that the provider of material things is God but how they are used depends upon the individual.
7. Which is actually the interpretation of the Greek word oikonomia (oikonomos was the steward in charge of the household affairs).
13. See above p. 286.
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18. It needs to be noted that this paper intends only to serve as a prelude and not a full list of all Wesley's and the Eastern Fathers' writings on economic matters.


21. See above p. 236.


23. See above pp. 276-278.


25. See above p. 379.


37. It is not clear if Wesley was familiar with Adam Smith's work, however, the fact that his writings coincided with that of Smith make me think that at least he had an idea of the principles that Smith was advocating.


42. See e.g. Mark 13:32.

43. Gregory of Nazianzus said that what has not been assumed has not been healed.

44. For which eucharistic experience Wesley urges his followers to partake as often as they could. See Works, Vol. VII pp. 147-156 (this sermon on The Duty of Constant Communion).


46. The whole chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians reflects also that same idea.


49. Sider R. (1980), Cry Justice!, The Bible on Hunger and Poverty, IVP, IL.