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INTRODUCTION

TED A. CAMPBELL

The essays that follow were presented in a unique world ecumenical conference on “Sanctification in the Benedictine and Methodist Traditions,” held July 4-10, 1994, at a Catholic retreat center near Rome. The original vision for the conference was that of Dr. James Udy, a member of the Uniting Church in Australia. Dr. Udy had long worked for the cultivation of the Methodist heritage of the Uniting Church and he had also made the acquaintance of Benedictines in Australia. He became convinced that Benedictines and Methodists shared a common heritage in spirituality. Subsequent conversations with Professor Albert C. Outler of Southern Methodist University (who died in 1988) convinced Udy of the need for an international conference exploring this common heritage.

Dr. Udy served as president of the World Methodist Historical Society in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. He presented a proposal for a Benedictine-Methodist conference at the 1991 meeting of the Society in Singapore, and the Society voted its approval. The presence at that conference of Mrs. Febe Rossi of the Waldensian-Methodist Church of Italy offered an important connection with the Italian venue set for the meeting. Over the next three years Dr. Udy, Mrs. Rossi, and many others worked tirelessly, building relationships with Benedictine leaders, developing databases of interested persons, publicizing the event, making arrangements for the meeting, securing papers, and crisscrossing the world many times with letters and faxes. Mrs. Rossi described a pizza party she held in her home for student volunteers who helped prepare mailings for the conference; she also described the consternation of their local post office in Padova when she brought in carloads of mail to be sent out.

In the fall of 1993, as preparations for the Conference had entered a crucial stage, Dr. Udy suffered a life-threatening stroke which left him unable to communicate. Those engaged in planning the event despaired at first of going ahead with the conference, feel-
ing that the event could never be quite right without Dr. Udy's visionary leadership. But a consensus was reached that preparations were already too far along to abandon the conference, so other planners doubled their efforts and preparations for the conference went ahead.

So it was that we came to Rome in July 1994 from Asia, Africa, the Americas and Europe, and met at the "Better World Institute," a Catholic retreat center south of Rome. This setting is near the town of Rocca di Papa, out of the ancient Appian Way from the City, directly across from Castel Gandolfo, the summer residence of the Pope.

The conference brought together an impressive range of persons from throughout the world: scholars, abbots, nuns, evangelists, the Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Order, a distinguished Waldensian historian from the University of Geneva, Methodist bishops, a Catholic Cardinal, faithful workers from Methodist and Waldensian churches, even a Mormon observing the conference with her friends. But the most important human presence at the conference was that of Dr. James Udy, whose partial recovery from the effects of the stroke had enabled him to travel to Italy and participate.

We came to know each other. We talked about life in God. We heard formal papers on the histories and spiritualities of our traditions, we met in groups to discuss their implications, and we walked the grounds together or sat in the gardens and talked even more. We worshiped together, and experienced the sharp pain of separation at the Lord's table. We sang Benedictine chants and Charles Wesley hymns, revival songs and contemporary Catholic choruses. We talked of John Wesley and Benedict of Nursia, of Phoebe Palmer and Hildegard of Bingen. We were challenged to think about liberation and social justice, and about piety and prayer.

We found after a while that the Catholic-Protestant polarity was but one aspect of our complex relationships. Waldensians, with their strong inheritance in Calvinism, rejoiced to hear a Catholic scholar describe the grounding of Augustine's spirituality in his understanding of election and predestination. Methodists and Benedictines became comfortable with their common teaching that "perfection" by grace is possible in this life; Waldensian participants became rather uncomfortable on this point. Methodist and Benedictine women found commonality in the narratives of their struggles for dignity and equality. We also found points where our personal paths had crossed: the Benedictine Abbot Primate recalled Sunday evening Methodist services in his hometown in Minnesota; a Methodist feminist theologian testified that her conversion to Christ had been influenced by a chance encounter with Benedictine monasticism.

This was a unique ecumenical moment. No conference quite like it had been held in the past, and no plans were made for a similar conference in the future. The idea of bringing a Protestant denominational family into dialogue with an international Catholic religious order proved to be an eminently sensible means of ecumenical contact, affording Catholic-Protestant bilateral dialogues. The choice to focus on spirituality, and sanctification in particular, proved an apt way to get at new issues beyond those conventionally addressed in faith and Order discussions. By the time we left Rome, many of us felt that in a few short days together we had probed the very heart of our spiritual traditions. Methodist and Benedictines seemed to find in each other means of divine grace and spiritual inspiration. We left Rome newly inspired to make the ecumenical quest for visible Christian unity a central part of our own spirituality and of our own quest for sanctity in Christ. It is our prayer that readers of these essays may perceive beyond them the Spirit that so uniquely inspired this event.
OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

JEROME THEISEN

It is an honor for me to open this conference and to extend to each of you a heartfelt welcome! Since I represent the world of Benedictine women and men, I am aware that my welcome is not only personal but representational, offered on behalf of some 27,000 Benedictines in the world.

All of us here have an interest in holiness and a history of holiness. During these days of the conference I am sure we will revise and expand our notion of holiness. The conference promises to be important for our own personal history of holiness as well as for the history of holiness in our two traditions. Let me beg your indulgence if I introduce this conference with a reference to a few markers on my own path in search of holiness. I trust you will not find them so different from your own markers.

I was born in a small town in central Wisconsin (U.S.A.) where the townspeople generally served the needs of the surrounding farming community. There were four churches in town: Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, and Free Methodist (when I was young I thought the word “free” meant no collections; later I learned it had something to do with governance). My first grade public school was located right across the street from the Methodist church. During my grade school and high school years I had friends in all the churches except the Free Methodist Church; at least at the moment I cannot remember any persons from

Jerome Theisen was the Abbot at S. Benedetto Dell’Abate Primatie in Rome, Italy, at the time this paper was delivered. Unfortunately, Abbot Theisen passed away unexpectedly this past September.
that small community.

I learned that Methodists were not supposed to drink, smoke or dance, but I knew Methodists who did all three and more. I heard good music coming from the church: organ music and hymns, but of course I never visited the church or attended a service. This was dangerous and forbidden, so I was made to understand from my Catholic education. Yet, I recognized holiness (I didn’t use the word) in many of my Methodist friends, teachers, and acquaintances. They were upright persons with a sense of civic service. At Memorial Day and other civic services, the Methodist minister prayed spontaneously with eyes closed; this impressed me since I was used to the Catholic priest with his formulary prayer. I noticed too that the Methodist ministers moved from congregation to congregation very often, maybe every five years, and I noticed that some had beautiful daughters, but undateable, at least in my mind.

Early experiences are important for all of us, and I learned that holiness (I didn’t use the word) is found beyond the pale of the Catholic Church, and this was confusing since at that time we Catholics still lived under the impression that extra ecclesiam nulla salus was literally true, and we knew, or we thought we knew, where the true church was to be found.

Well, to get on with the story of the markers, three years after high school I entered the novitiate of Saint John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. The year was 1951. I entered with the idea that it was a reward to the monastery. I had the impression that I was already holy and that I only needed to be recognized as such. I certainly did not come for conversion. I thought the monastery was a place of holiness, prayer, and peace; in short, a place of holy people. I saw it as a separate world, a place for super Catholics, not the run-of-the-mill persons in the outside world.

It took me a while to become disabused of my first understanding of the monastery. I should have changed my opinion the first day, but I didn’t. Only gradually did I discover that the monastery has its share of crabby, selfish, angry, lazy, and you-name-it monks. Of course, I saw that it was also a place of self-giving, generous, prayerful, and colorful monks. Holiness was mixed with unholiness in the persons around me. This was demonstrated even more clearly to me when I came to Rome in 1954 to begin theological studies. The monks I met were a mixed lot, but I discovered that some did not even regard me as a genuine Benedictine (my monastery was too involved in pastoral care and education).

The next step was to discover that holiness and unholiness existed in a certain mix in myself. Theology helped in this discovery; at the time I read a lot of Lutheran and Tridentine theology, but I also had time and distance (a long way from home) to reflect on my own monastic life. What I found in my fellow monks I also found in myself: pride, anger, stinginess, lack of self-giving, passions of all sorts. The monastic life did not eliminate these. And, of course, to present the other side of the story, monastic life presented many means to improve in holiness.

In the 1960s when I began to teach theology, I was impressed by the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. This is not the place to critique his total system, but three features are clear in his thought: his love for the world, his vision of God’s presence in all aspects of the universe, and the centrality of Christ in the movement of love. The
writings of Teilhard and the documents of Vatican Council II, especially the document called Gaudium et Spes, gave me a clearer vision of the holiness of all life. I could no longer make such a sharp distinction between life in the church or in the monastery and life in the world. I found holiness in all aspects of life.

The 1960s, of course, were years of freedom to test all traditions and thoughts. I am speaking here especially of the American and Catholic experience. Political, social, and conciliar events offered Catholics the opportunity to look afresh at all aspects of Catholic life and thought: liturgy, marriage, religious life, ecumenism, theology, etc. They were heady days as one found gospel values and holiness in many circles; not necessarily confined to the church.

I was impressed by the goodness, shall we say, holiness of all creation. But then a strident note was heard, actually it was there all the time. It was the experience of the assassination of President Kennedy, the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., the marches for civil rights, the embroilment in the war in Vietnam. Holiness pervaded the world, but also violence, lack of freedom, war, sickness, and death.

The 1970s gave me a more sober view of the holiness and the evil in the world, both in myself and in the world at large. I had not given up on the basic vision of the goodness of the universe in which we live, but the vision was more realistically coupled with a vision of the inherent sin of the world. Perhaps, I thought, violence, both intended and unintended, was the basic sin of the world.

In the 1970s and 1980s, especially after my election as abbot of my monastery, I became more appreciative of the methods of the monastic movement. I came to realize that the practices of the monastic life had something to do with the reduction of violence and the growth of holiness. Through a rhythm of community prayer, lectio divina, fraternal service, silence, hospitality, study, and manual and/or mental labor one is immersed in the realm of holiness which is the realm of God and Christian love. Monastic life is not a life apart from the Christian community; it is a life centered on Christ and his love for the world and the human community. The monastic practices are designed to put one in constant contact with the source of the universe.

This in short is my journey of 63 years, 43 of which were spent in monastic life. My perception of the journey, especially in the last 43 years, has gone from holiness to unholliness, just the appositive from what one might expect. Whereas I began monastic life with the idea that I had little to improve in my state of holiness, I have come to the point where I perceive in myself an underlying unholliness, a basic need to overcome violence, anger, self-centeredness, and mediocrity. Perhaps this gradual discovery is itself holiness. It is certainly humility and a transition that Saint Benedict himself understood. He said in chapter 4.62 of the Rule: "Do not aspire to be called holy before you really are, but first be holy that you may more truly be called so" (Non velle dicari sanctum antequam sit, sed prius esse quod verius dicatur). Are self knowledge and truth other names for holiness?

Saint Benedict seems to teach—and we will hear more about this from other speakers—that there is a double process afoot in the monastery and in the monk. One is a process of perception, the other is a process of reality. The two need not be the same; maybe they seldom are. In any event we see that Benedict allowed for a process of
holiness and he acknowledged that there could be actual holiness in the present life; one need not wait for a life to come. In the present life one can move close to God, one can move in the realm of God.

During this conference we will hear much about the coincidence of Methodist spirituality and Benedictine spirituality. We will not be the first to notice the parallels. This was pointed out in a recent book by Father George Tavard. He said: "...elements of monasticity have remained in the Churches of the Reformation...In the sixteenth century itself, the monastic ideal found a refuge of sorts in the Spiritual Reformation when small groups of people who believed themselves especially chosen by God hoped to experience holiness and to find heaven in their very life on earth through the close fellowship of their communities. Subsequent movements of reform and renewal were still led by a search for a quasi-monastic ideal as is notable in Lutheran pietism, in the Unitas fratrum under the guidance of Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760), and in the Methodist movement under the impetus of John Wesley (1702-1791)." (The Church, Community of Salvation. An Ecumenical Ecclesiology [Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992], p. 126).

I close with a bit of humor from a Minnesota writer, Garrison Keiller. At one point in a short story he described the pitcher of a baseball team: "God had never granted Little Jimmy's prayer request for a good curveball, so this fine Christian boy got shelled like a peanut whenever he took the mound, and one day Ronnie Decker came back to the bench after an eternal inning in centerfield and said, 'First Revelations 13:0: Keep the ball down and throw at their heads.' Ronnie is Catholic, and they have more taste for blood, it seems" ('Was there ever a Methodist bullfighter?', in We Are Still Married [New York: Penguin Books, 1990], pp. 100ff.).

What we are about this week is not an impossible task. It is one already foreseen by scholars but not carried out in great detail, or at least not to my limited knowledge. Our conferences and discussions this week should remedy this situation, at least in part. I wish all of you a pleasant journey into the realms of holiness.
SANCTIFICATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

WALTER F. KLAIBER

"Strive . . . for holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."

This sentence from the 12th chapter of the letter to the Hebrews was the primary scripture for John Wesley in his whole Christian life. In one of his later sermons (On the Wedding Garment, 1790), he expressly denied that he ever changed his mind on this subject. "Some have supposed that when I began to declare, 'By grace ye are saved through faith,' I retracted what I had before maintained, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' But it is an entire mistake; these Scriptures well consist with each other; the meaning of the former being plainly this, 'By faith we are saved from sin, made holy.'"

Whether Hebrews 12:14 played a similar role in the thinking of the founders and main theologians of the monastic movement I do not know. But the matter itself, to see the Lord as the goal of a holy life through meditation and asceticism, was certainly in the center of this movement. I doubt, however, whether any of the monastic fathers would have said that human beings are sanctified by faith.

But obviously holiness and sanctification are not major themes of New Testament teaching, at least if you look only at the use of the words. In order to clarify what may be a New Testament basis of a doctrine of sanctification today—be it in the Benedictine or be it in the Wesleyan tradition—I will try to answer

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three questions:
1. What is the meaning of holiness and sanctification in the world of religion and in the Hebrew Bible?
2. What is the meaning and the importance of sanctification in the teaching of the New Testament?
3. What is the legacy of the New Testament teaching on sanctification for our time?

I. HOLINESS AND SANCTIFICATION IN THE WORLD OF RELIGION

Holiness is one of the basic phenomena in the world of religion. According to Söderblom the dimension of holiness is more fundamental to religious thinking than the idea of God. There are some clear aspects of this dimension which are found in many religions as well as in the Hebrew Bible.

a) The meaning of “holy” and “holiness” is not to be defined by other words or ideas. Holy is God and whatever and whoever belongs to him in a special way. The opposite to the holy is the profane, the area of everyday life, accessible to everybody. The holy is set apart from everyday life. It is a sign and space for the dimension of the transcendent within this world and bears in itself the mark of the fascinosum and miraculous.

To say that God is holy describes him as the “Wholly Other” and indicates the numinous power of his being, in the presence of which human beings must perish if they are not cleansed (Isa. 6). In the Bible God’s holiness is also said to be the reason for his faithfulness and righteousness (cf. Psalm 99) and his love which exceeds all human measure (Hosea 11:9).

On the level of persons and things the opposite notions of clean and unclean have some relationship to the holy and the profane. What is holy has to be clean; but not all that is clean is thought to be holy. The “holy” is not only without any defilement; it is full of power, mystery, and super human potency. Therefore of course holy persons and holy offerings should be blameless and flawless; but basically their holiness is not the result of any characteristic or attribute. They are holy because God set them aside for himself or because human beings dedicated them to God.

b) It is of great importance that all that is holy is concrete. Thoughts or ideas are not called holy, only persons, places, or things. These persons, places, or things are the marks of the transcendent, the “Wholly Other” within this world. They are this in such a way that a piece of the real world is cut out and set apart as a sign of the presence of the Holy One within this world. At least in the Bible those holy places or persons symbolize that the whole world belongs to God. The election of Israel as “Kingdom of priests and a holy nation” is based on the argument: “for all the earth is mine” (Exod. 19:5f).

c) Sanctification in its broadest sense means: to make holy or to declare as holy. Depending on the subject and the object of such a sanctifying action we may distinguish different notions of the word, which I will illustrate with biblical examples.

- God indicates his holiness (or the holiness of his great name) which has been profaned among the nations; he proves himself to be holy (cf. Ezek. 36:20ff).
- God separates priests or his people of Israel from the peoples in the world and
sanctifies them to be his own possession (cf. Lev. 20:26, 21:15, 23, 22:32). Lev. 22:32 shows that God's saving act, the liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt, is considered the "sanctification" of Israel. The cultic dimension and the salvation history aspect are brought together in a manner which may be quite unusual in the world of religious thinking but which is very deep and effective in its theological message:

- People dedicate themselves or things to God. This notion belongs almost completely to the cultic aspect of holiness.
- People try to live in accord with God and his holiness. It is this aspect of sanctification which shows within the biblical tradition the strongest ethical emphasis of the concept of holiness. The strange mixture of ritual, moral, and social commandments, which is so characteristic of the Holiness Code (esp. Lev. 19), may also be found in a similar context in other religions. The commandment "You shall be holy; for I am holy, Yahweh your God" (Lev. 19:2) is "applied to every facet of Israel's existence, but—and this may be unique in the world of religions—wherever men are involved with each other holiness means love—love to neighbour, to the resident alien, the blind, the deaf, and the slave."

Last observation: It is quite remarkable that in early Judaism, just at the birth of Christianity, there were two quite influential "Holiness movements"; the Pharisees and the Essenes. As far as we know both tried to take seriously that according to Exod. 19:6 Israel should be "a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation." They applied in different ways the prescriptions of priestly purity to all people of Israel and to the members of their own group respectively. The group at Qumran, especially thought of their community as the temple of God and tried to shape the lives of individuals and of the community in the presence of God.

2. THE MEANING OF SANCTIFICATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are two possible ways to deal with the theme of sanctification in the New Testament.

1. We could look for all motives and ideas within the teaching of the New Testament which in the Christian tradition have been connected with the subject of Christian holiness and sanctification.

2. We could confine ourselves to the use of the Greek words ἁγιασμός and ἁγιάζω

I tend more to the second alternative, but I do not want to limit my task to a mere lexicographical research of these Greek words. I am interested in studying the linguistic paradigm of the language of holiness, but I will also try to note where the matter of sanctification is dealt with by using other words or images. This includes the necessity to distinguish carefully the different ways of speaking on this matter.

a) If we look at the teaching of Jesus, as it is transmitted in the Synoptic Tradition, we will observe that the language of holiness is rarely used. In the first petition of the Lord's prayer, "Hallowed be thy name" it is not clear who is asked to make God's name holy—God himself, which would fit the second petition "Thy kingdom come," or human beings, which would relate to the third, "Thy will be done." Perhaps the ambiguity is intended. God is asked to vindicate the holiness of his name by making
human beings ready and able to honor his name and to respect with their whole lives God’s holiness and divinity.\(^{11}\)

The “Cleansing of the Temple” could indicate the zeal of Jesus for the holiness of the Temple; but, contrary to the usual Jewish concept of the holiness of the sanctuary, the Temple is said to be a “house of prayer for all the nations” (Mark 11:17).

There are even some exegetes who are convinced that by words like Mark 7:15 “there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile...” Jesus dissolves the distinction between the sacred and the profane which is basic for the religious thought of the whole ancient world.\(^{12}\) When he denies that there are things which are per se clean and unclean it seems that he does not share the idea of an almost “material” holiness of certain things.

In every case we may say that Jesus did not use the cultic paradigm to describe the impact of God’s presence within the world of human beings. With the image of “the Kingdom of God which draws near” he uses the language of power and liberation. With his view of discipleship he enters the world of learning—but in a very special way which calls for the whole being of the disciple.

b) In the Johannine form of the teaching of Jesus there are only three, but three important occurrences of ἁγιάζων: “the Father has sanctified the Son and sent him into the world” (John 10:36). He is God’s chosen and consecrated messenger, endowed with the Holy Spirit. John 17:17 and 19 show what is meant by sanctification in the whole New Testament: In the prayer, “sanctify them in the truth,” God is asked to include them within his sphere and to permeate them with his nature and reality, his “truth.” Here, too, sanctification is connected with the sending into the world. Sanctification, being set apart for God and his truth, is a contrast to the world, but does not mean withdrawal from the world. On the contrary, it is the basis for the sending into the world as witness to God’s love and truth. And in the same manner as with Jesus it is God who sanctifies those whom Jesus will send. In order that the disciples, as sinful human beings, may be sanctified by the Father, the Son has to intercede for them. He sanctifies himself, i.e., consecrates his life as a sacrifice for his disciples in order that they may be holy, belonging fully to God.\(^{13}\)

The sanctification of human beings is God’s work through Jesus Christ. He makes out of sinful creatures messengers of his grace and truth within a world which is opposed to him. If we were to ask what is the “equivalent” of God’s action on the side of the disciples and within their life, the fourth Gospel would answer with reminders like: “abide in me” or “keep my word/my commandments” and would add: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you,” thus indicating the ethical dimension of the human reaction to God’s action.

c) The center of the New Testament teaching of sanctification is found within the letters of Paul. Paul obviously offers not only his own theological reflections but represents an important aspect of the message of the early Jewish-Hellenistic Christian Church as a whole which shows its traces in Acts 1, Peter and the letter to the Hebrews.

The first important common feature is: Sanctification of human beings is in principle God’s action through Jesus Christ. In the first letter to the Corinthians Paul cri-
 Sanctification in the New Testament

cizes many problems in the life of the Corinthian Church, but nevertheless he writes "to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1:2). It is "Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1:30). And the members of the church are reminded: "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ..." (6:11).

This corresponds with the use of the participle perfect passive of hagiazēin to describe the Christians in Acts 20:32 (26:18); Rom. 15:16; 2. Tim. 2:21; Heb. 10:10 (Part. Pass. Praes. Heb. 2:10, 10:14); cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; John 17:19.

When Paul addresses the members of the church as "saints" he uses not just a title of honor for the eschatological people of God whose original meaning is already forgotten. The church and its members belong to God, are "his saints" because Christ has sanctified them by the sacrifice of his life. Holiness is in its essence social holiness: there are no single saints and in the view of the New Testament it is not possible to distinguish between the holiness of the church as institution and the holiness of her members. Even where it is said that Christ has sanctified the Church or the people (Eph. 5:26; Heb. 13:12) it is obvious that each individual member is included, and where Paul uses the plural—"saints"—he speaks not only of the sum of individual saints but of the church as a whole as the communion of saints.

As we have noticed there are examples where Paul uses justification and sanctification as parallel expressions of what has been done by God in Jesus Christ and through baptism for the salvation of human beings. Justification and sanctification therefore do not relate to one another as indicative and imperative as is held by a broad tradition of Protestant theological thought. Both notions speak in similar ways of God's initiative for the salvation of humankind and the establishment of a new relationship between God and those who belong to Jesus Christ. The difference is only that the word "justification" belongs to the language of law and social relationship whereas the word "sanctification" belongs to that of cult and worship.

What effect has this different background on the meaning of the theological terms?

"Sanctification" describes the "evidence of the reality of justification." "Justification" speaks about a changed relationship with God in which sin is forgiven and a new status before God is granted and a whole community with God is established. "Sanctification" speaks about a changed relationship with God from which a renewed being results, a new attitude and behavior towards God and people in our environment and towards ourselves, a behavior which is shaped by this new relationship. As distinguished from what is said about justification we can observe in the notion of sanctification a kind of inclusion of human action within God's action. There is some sort of synergism between God and human beings which, of course, is not accumulative, adding human efforts to God's work, but which is "inclusive," enabling and motivating the Christians to bring their will, their thinking, their feeling, their gifts and their potentiality, their weaknesses and shortcomings into the relationship with God and to use them as instruments of God's grace.

In this connection the relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit and sanctification is of great importance. Through the work of the Spirit human beings experi-
ence the presence of God in their lives, and as a place of divine presence they are sanctified, filled, and shaped by the power of God's nature. God's nature, however, is love, and therefore it is God's love which has been poured into the hearts, the very center of the lives of those who are justified by faith through the Holy Spirit that has been given to them (Rom. 5:5). The sanctifying action of the Spirit, therefore, is God's own work, the work of his grace and love, coming from extra nos; and at the same time it is done with us and in us (in nobis) motivating our spirit and enabling our body to be used to the service of God.19

This points to the next feature of the Pauline notion of sanctification. The language of holiness underlines the fact that our whole life belongs to God. It is not only our inner relationship to God which is affected by the salvific work of God in Christ but our whole life, including spirit, soul, and especially body. It is Paul's prayer that God's peace may sanctify the Christians in Thessalonica entirely and that their spirits, souls, and bodies may be kept sound and blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:23). Because the Christian people have not yet reached the final destination of their lives they are still in the process of sanctification, of preservation and trial, of growing and perfection.

The arena in which this has to be fulfilled and accomplished is the arena of everyday life, including the church and the world outside her. The spiritual worship to which Paul calls the Christians in Rom. 12:1ff. is the process of sanctification "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of your minds..." That is the accomplishment of God's sanctifying grace in our life and it is executed in the organic togetherness within the body of Christ and in a life of abundant love within this world as it is shown by Paul in Rom. 12:3-21.20

This leads, where necessary, to practical advice for Christians on what to do and what not to do. Sanctification in its positive intention means to be filled with the love of God and of our fellow human beings and to live out this love (1 Thess. 4:9).

But sanctification also deals with the negative aspect. There are manners and kinds of behavior which we should abstain from. There is no doubt that not only in the later Christian tradition but also already within the New Testament sexual passion and lust are mentioned as primary dangers to a holy life (1 Thess. 4:3ff.).21 It is not our task in this paper to deal with the question of what problems this has caused for human beings struggling to balance their desires to live a holy life with their sexuality. I should only mention that in the broader context of Christian paraklesis all dimensions of human relationships with one another and also our relationship to property or wealth are mentioned as areas where we have to beware of evil habits and attitudes.22

A last observation: The image of the Holy within the world includes also the separation of those things and persons which are holy from everyday life. As we have seen, this image is used in the New Testament not literally but in a figurative sense. The people who are sanctified by God through Jesus Christ live their lives with their fellow human beings. Nevertheless, they are foreigners in the world because their lives have new roots and a new destination through the grace of God. But it is just this distance from the world which is the basis of their existence for the world as messengers of God's reconciling love within this world.23
d) We should not close this survey on the New Testament teaching on sanctification without a short look into the letter to the Hebrews. Here the paradox of the Christian perspective of holiness is carried to extremes.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews takes up the categories of worship and sacrifice of the Old Testament temple, but only to surpass these categories radically. Through his sacrifice and his blood Christ purifies from their sins those who belong to him. Through him they achieve not only an outward purity and transitory holiness but an inward sanctification which is valid once for all (Heb. 9:13ff.; 10:10).

Sanctification means to be received into communion with God. It means to share God’s own holiness and therefore to have an unhindered access to the “sanctuary,” i.e., to God himself. For the letter to the Hebrews, therefore, sanctification is salvation, and sanctification is perfection. This perfection is not achieved after a lifelong quest for holiness or by the gift of a “second blessing.” “By a single offering he [Jesus Christ] has perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). Nevertheless, this perfection is not yet the end of Christian pilgrimage. It is threatened by the danger of apostasy which would mean to be lost once for all (Heb. 10:29) and it is the beginning of a dynamic and faithful life in the communion with God which enables us to “worship the living God” (Heb. 9:14). Again we have the language of cult, but from Heb. 12:28 and its context it is clear that such worship includes the service of the whole person in all areas of everyday life.

The admonition “to pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14), therefore, does not encourage the effort to achieve holiness and salvation by works of moral endeavor, but to live the call and the grace which we have received. (Again the combination of “peace with everyone” and “holiness” indicates the deep and indissoluble connection between love of God and one’s neighbor in the New Testament tradition!)

The deepest expression of the theology of sanctification within the letter to the Hebrews is found in 13:11-14. The author refers to the bodies of the animals whose blood at the Day of Atonement is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin. These bodies are burned outside the camp. Like them, burdened with the guilt and the curse of sin, Jesus suffered outside the city gate, outside the sanctuary, outside the precincts of the temple, outside the Holy City. But just this place of gallows and garbage, this place of utmost profanity becomes the place for sanctification where, by the blood of Jesus, the people are sanctified and brought into communion with God. The Old Testament meaning of “holiness” is defined radically new in the sense of a simul sanctus simul profanus.

This gives also a new direction to the lives of those who are sanctified. They are called to “go to him outside the camp and toil bear the abuse he endured” (Heb. 13:13). According to this conception Christian “sanctuaries” are no longer conceivable. The “holy places” of Christianity have to be in the midst of the garbage of our inner city, where people suffer from alienation from God and themselves and where we try to take with us the presence of God and the holiness of his love to all the “ unholy” places, where hatred and fear reign.
3. THE LEGACY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING FOR TODAY

Within the New Testament terminology of salvation, the language of sanctification and holiness has three specific notions which are important also for our teaching today.

(1) The theocentric meaning of salvation

Salvation is not only a matter of human well-being or of a meaningful life. It is basically a matter of relationship to God. To belong to God is the very essence of salvation. Therefore "no one will see the Lord without holiness" (Heb. 12:14) points not to a "pre-condition" rewarded by a life in God’s eternal presence, but it is the matter itself. Holiness means to belong to God and is accomplished in the last encounter with him where we will "see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Because God’s very nature is love, this theocentric meaning of salvation does not exclude our relationship to other people from our life with God. On the contrary, the nearer we draw towards God the nearer we will come to our neighbors.

(2) The concrete meaning of salvation

Salvation does not only include forgiveness or a change within our “heavenly account.” It is also a change in our personal relationship to God, and this not only imputative, so that we are seen as people who belong to God, but also effective, so that we are made to be his people, able to do his will, taught and empowered by his Holy Spirit. Our whole life belongs to God. All dimensions of this life are at his disposal to be instruments of his grace and righteousness within this world.

(3) The inclusive meaning of salvation

Although salvation is received by faith alone through the grace of God in Jesus Christ this does not mean that we, as children of God, are merely passive in the process of salvation. God’s sanctifying grace makes us instruments of his work within this world, "working out our own salvation"—not to merit it but to be a living and active part of it and its fruits.

Regarding the relationship of the New Testament teaching on holiness and sanctification to what we have said about holiness within the world of religions and the Hebrew Bible, I want to point to three additional observations.

(1) The noncultic dimension of holiness

In contrast to what is seen in most religions and in the Hebrew Bible, in the New Testament we do not have holy places or sacred vessels, not even special holy persons beyond what is said about the Christians as a communion of saints. What does it mean in this context that some Christian traditions have reestablished special signs of holiness within the Christian church by establishing sacred places or persons?

(2) The social dimension of holiness

The main emphasis on holiness and sanctification in the New Testament is on the social aspect of God’s work with us. This was never totally forgotten in Christian tradition, especially not within those movements we represent here. But at the same time it was never easy to relate this social dimension of holiness to the emphasis on person-
Sactification in the New Testament

al holiness and perfection which is also very characteristic to our common tradition. To be released from all anxiety about our personal salvation because of being justified and sanctified by Jesus Christ sets us free to take care of others. At the same time we feel still the necessity and the inward obligation to care for our personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to deepen our spiritual life day by day. How can we make both these ends meet?

(3) The cosmic dimension of holiness

Especially in the Hebrew Bible we find that the separation of certain places and times and people as "holy" is a sign of the fact that the whole world belongs to God. All creation is sacred to God. On the one side the New Testament has fulfilled this meaning by declaring all things "clean." We can use all with thanksgiving (1 Tim. 4:4; Rom. 14:14; Titus 1:15). On the other hand we have lost special signs which remind us that we as human beings may not use and exploit the creation according to our discretion as it belongs to God and we are to administer it according to his will. Do we need anew signs like a holy fallow or the Sabbath Year or similar regulations to remind us that "the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it" (Psalm 24:1) and that it has been entrusted to us for careful stewardship and not for boundless exploitation?29

NOTES
6. Cf. the examples given by Mircea Eliade, Das Heilige und das Profane, pp. 147ff.
20  Klaiber


10. This of course is the method of articles in theological dictionaries like those of Otto Procksch and Horst Balz (refer to note 2). A middle course, as in this paper, is steered by John Riches (refer to note 2) or E.G. Blackman, Art. Sanftification, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), col. 210-213.


15. There is only one reference to hagios as a single person. Phil. 4:21. There is some evidence that in the Apostles' creed homoousios means "the holy as a single person, the Greek and Latin equivalent of communion of saints," was understood in the neutral sense as "participation in the eucharistic elements" (cf. Josef Haing, KOINONIA, "Kirche" als Gemeinschaft bei Paulus, Biblische Untersuchungen 16 (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1982), pp. 206ff). This would be without any parallel within the New Testament use of hagios. But it is still more plausible that the phrase meant the "fellowship of holy persons" especially the communion with the martyrs and the redeemed in heaven (J.N.D. Kelly, Early Creeds (London: Longman, 3rd ed. 1972), pp. 388-97).


18. Cf. Romans 6:13, 19. It may be noted that the phrase synergos thei `ecko-workers of God't in 1 Cor. 3:9, which was so important to John Wesley, is not used by Paul to describe the efforts to live according to the will of God but to tell about the participation of the first Christian missionaries in the mission of God. But in the field of missionary work this deals with the inclusion of the activity of human beings within the activity of God as it is done in the field of personal salvation in Phil. 2:12f, a passage which was in the center of Wesley's theology (cf. Sermon 85: On Working Out Our Own Salvation; Works of John Wesley, vol. 3, pp. 199-209).


21. Abstention from fornication as a first "condition" of sanctification is also mentioned in
Influenced World

Also debated


29. Of course traces of the normal Jewish linguistic usage to speak of holy places are found in the New Testament, too (cf. Matt. 4:25; 24:15; 27:53; Acts 6:13, 21:28; Rev. 11:2; but see also 2 Pet. 1:18). The New Testament authors speak of Holy Scriptures (Rom. 1:2) or holy prophets (Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21) and in the post-pauline time also of holy apostles (Eph. 3:5). How much in the New Testament language of holiness itself is there a cultic dimension is debated (cf. O. Procksch, THWNT 112); "spiritualized, but never totally disappeared" and contrary to him Horst Baltz, EWNT 147: "Es wäre dennoch verkehrt, die Helligkeit der Glaubenden im NT als kultisch bestimmt und vermeint verstehen zu wollen." "Hilgkeit in the N.T. is not influenced or shaped by the dimension of cult.

A RESPONSE TO
BISHOP KLAIBER’S PAPER

ABBOT JEROME THEISEN

1. We are indebted to Bishop Klaiber for laying out for us in a succinct and professional manner the basic features of holiness in the world of religions and especially of the Bible. He calls his paper “an outline” but it is surely more than that; it leads us into the heart of the subject of holiness, the theme of our discussions this week.

2. It is clear from Bishop Klaiber’s paper that holiness is basically an attribute of God. God is holy, which means that God is transcendent, removed from that which lies in front of the temple, removed from impurity. God is holy, but creatures can share in the holiness of God; this is what we wish to explore this week: how we share in the holiness of God.

3. Bishop Klaiber makes it clear that holiness is not just an eschatological phenomenon, something to be awarded only at the journey’s end. Holiness characterizes the Christian community now, especially in its social relationships to one another and to the world at large.

4. Bishop Klaiber also makes it clear that Christians are not mere passive instruments in the process of holiness. In some mysterious manner they work with God’s Spirit in the achievement of holiness. Bishop Klaiber is aware, I am sure, of the large amount of ink that has been spilt over this question of God’s gift of salvation or holiness and human cooperation. Other speakers will have to deal
with this subject more in detail, especially since the monastic movement often has been
categorized as a works movement, a human striving for perfection.

5. Bishop Klaiber stresses the social dimensions of holiness, the social conse-
quences of being in a holy relationship with God. To stress the social dimensions of
holiness, however, does not exclude the personal dimensions. Catholic theology
through the ages has often dealt more directly with the personal dimensions of hol-
iness: What happens to the person who becomes a believer, receives baptism, and is
sanctified by the Holy Spirit? This person needs to act differently just as the whole
assembly of believers needs to act differently. The different action, even social action,
it would seem, comes from a change deep within the mind, the heart, the spirit, the
soul, and the body. Holiness seems to have something to do with the individual mem-
ber of the Body of Christ.

6. The Lutheran tradition has stressed considerably the abiding presence of both
holiness and sin in the believing Christian. Catholic theology too has struggled with
this phenomenon and has learned from the controversy with the Lutheran tradition.
Even if this is not our immediate subject this week (the relationship between Lutheran
and Catholic theology in this regard), I think we would do well to pay some attention
to the matter of the presence of holiness and sin in the Christian, who as a believer,
accepts the word of God and seeks to live it out. A discussion of holiness should not
neglect the law of sin in our members (cf. the letter to the Romans).

7. On page one of his paper Bishop Klaiber makes this statement: "I doubt, howev-
er, whether any of the monastic fathers would have said that human beings are sancti-
fied by faith." I am acquainted with only a part of monastic history, but I notice in the
Rule of Benedict some statements that would seem to be similar to the problem which
Bishop Klaiber puts before us. Both statements are found in the prologue to the Rule
of Benedict. In verse 21 we read: "Clothed then with faith and the performance of
good works, let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide, that we may
deserve to see him who has called us to his kingdom." In this verse seeing God
requires faith and the performance of good works. I assume here that seeing God
requires holiness. The other passage is verse 49: "But as we progress in this way of life
and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflow-
ing with the inexpressible delight of love." Surely love is another way of expressing the
basic holiness of the Christian; it is a love that cannot find progress and perfection
except in faith.

8. I am happy for the challenge which Bishop Klaiber puts before us (by us I mean
especially Orthodox and Catholics): "What does it mean in this context that some
Christian traditions have reestablished special signs of holiness within the Christian
church by establishing sacred places or persons?" Let me offer a few reflections by
way of answer. We are agreed that holiness resides in God primarily and that God
shares holiness with humans, and here we are speaking directly of Christian believers.
If the human-divine Christ shares in the holiness of God, and if the body of Christ shares in the holiness of God in Christ and the Spirit, the church as the body of Christ, gathered or not, is characterized as holy. Just as the holiness of God extends to the world at large and to the assembly of believers, so also the holiness of the church extends to the place where the word of God is heard and the bread and wine are shared. The church building is holy because of the people who gather there. It is also holy because of the word and the sacrament. Saint Paul seems to point to the holiness of elements, bread and wine, when he refers to the words of the Lord that are handed down: “This is my body, which is for you,” and “This cup is the new covenant in my blood” (1 Cor. 11:24f.). Saint Paul complains about those who do not recognize the bread and the wine. The point I wish to make, all too briefly, is that some assemblies are holy because of the people, some earthly elements are holy because of their use. Some places are holy because of people who are involved in sacred actions of word and sacrament. These reflections, however, still make us think about the extent to which we have sanctified places and persons. Let us continue to approach this subject during our discussions this week.

9. Finally, Bishop Klaiber could only allude to the meaning of holiness for the care of the world. If Christians have been known to exploit the world to their own advantage and even as a sign of their right relationship with God, what have we learned more recently about the need to respect our environment and how will the notion of holiness help us in our care for the human community and the world?
SANCTIFICATION IN THE TRADITION
OF DESERT FATHERS:
A METHODIST PERSPECTIVE

ROBERTA C. BONDI

What I want to do for you today is something in the style of old time Methodists:
I want to give my testimony concerning the question of Christian perfection and the
tradition of the Desert Fathers.

Long ago, when I was a child growing up in New York City, every summer my
mother, my two little brothers and I would leave my father to go to visit my grand-
mother and grandfather, my aunts and uncles on their farms in rural western
Kentucky. There in the country I would experience all sorts of things that were very
different from my life at home. Some were interesting, like churning milk into but-
ter; some, like cleaning chicken carcasses, were disgusting. Most of them, were sim-
ply boring. Of all the many things that characterized these country visits, however,
none was so significant to me as going with my grandparents year after year to their
little rural Baptist church for the week of special summer preaching services that
constituted what was known as the Revival.

These services provided an ambivalent experience that was to mark my life from
that point on. Certainly, Revival services were never boring. It was a fine thing to go
out at night to the old white frame building. I liked sitting in a clean, starched dress
with my great aunts, and I enjoyed singing hymns the little congregation would sing
with the battered old piano.

The preaching, on the other hand, was difficult to endure. Brother Smith would

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always begin the message of the evening by announcing God's coming judgment. “Sinners!” Brother Smith would shout. “You are all sinners! You know your Heavenly Father is perfect, and Jesus tells you to be perfect just like him. But are you perfect? No! You are not perfect! You are sinners, rotten sinners, and your sin is so terrible the holy God himself cannot bear to look upon it. Are you prepared to spend eternity in hell?”

Then, after Brother Smith had preached in this vein a while, he would shift gears and begin to preach John 3:16. “Yes,” he would say, “you are a disobedient sinner,” his voice dropping to a whisper, “but your heavenly father loves you in spite of your sin. He loves you enough to send his son to die for your sins. If you would flee the torments of hell, have faith; believe he loves you. Only believe; only believe God loves you, or he'll send you to hell forever!” Every night I would leave the service, trying to believe God did love me, in spite of my inability to be perfect, but I never could believe it.

After a few days, the Revival would be over and I would return to New York, where I would have terrible nightmares about my disobedience, my sinfulness, the Last Judgment, and my inability to believe God loved me.

The source of these nightmares was to tell the difference between what Brother Smith told me that God the Father expected of me, and what my human father asked of me. My basic assumption was that of most children, namely, that God the Father was like my human father, only more so.

My human father was a remarkable man, brilliant, charming, funny, and full of life. I loved him passionately. At the same time, as a young man he valued achievement above all, and he tolerated no imperfections or weaknesses in his children. He expected immediate perfection in all things, and when I constantly failed, he was furious with me. Then, my inability to answer his fury would fill me with a secret, hidden, rage and guilt.

There is no doubt that all of this was hard to live with. I was not a successful child. What was hardest, however, was that I knew even if I could have succeeded in some things, in one basic way I could never be perfect because I was a girl. This was because the entire world I lived in both shared in and helped pass on to me the cultural assumptions of the time about the relative value of girls and boys, of “weak,” “silly,” “emotional” women and “strong,” “responsible,” “intelligent” men. Because I was a girl, I believed I was doomed forever to be imperfect in my father’s eyes, and everything that I learned in school and certainly in church, too, seemed to confirm that God himself viewed my femininity in the same way.

So, my childhood was governed by three religious convictions that I thought were at the heart of Christianity. One was that, as my human father demanded excellence at all times and was very angry when he did not get it, even more so God must expect excellence and be enraged at my human sins and failures. Second, I was convinced that in so far as God did love human beings, God could not love us for who we actually are, but rather, in spite of who we are, and in my case, in spite of being female. Three, it seemed to me that for Christians, salvation depended upon being able to believe, “to have faith in” all sorts of things, like God’s love for me, that my experience told me were impossible.

As I grew older these convictions hurt me. When I was twelve years old, my family became Methodist and I was unable to lay them aside. And by the time I turned eighteen, I resolved to keep as far away as possible from the judging, implacable Christian God.
who had taken up residence in my heart and for whose love I longed.

Then, in the autumn of 1965, when I was twenty-five years old, I encountered monasticism for the first time in an alley in the city of Oxford, England. Why was I in the alley? It was because I couldn’t bear to meet any human beings on the street, and I didn’t want to meet them because I was afraid. Only six weeks before I had left the seminary at Southern Methodist University in the States to begin graduate work in Semitic languages at Oxford. In the seminary, I had studied Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, and I had avoided classes in church history and theology. The only exception had been the classes taught by Albert Outler, the great historian of the theology of John Wesley, which I had taken, not because they were about Wesley, but only because Professor Outler was such good entertainment.

Earlier on the afternoon of my walk down the Oxford alley I had met my Hebrew tutor the first time, and there, I had discovered first, that my training in Semitic languages in the States might not be adequate to my needs in Oxford, and second, that for the other Semitic language required for my degree, I would have to study Syriac, a language whose surviving texts were almost all from the early church.

Now, my spirits were very low. I could not imagine how I, as a woman, was going to have to do what I needed to do. I had never even seen a woman doing what I was trying to do, and I was filled with despair. I wondered how I could ever have attempted to become a woman scholar in a man’s world.

Resentfully and fearfully, I brooded over my despair as I walked down the alley that day. I was hardly aware of the sunlight, the blue sky or the tidy back gardens I was passing, full as they were of late blooming roses and the tall blue stalks of Brussels sprouts. Then, for an instant, the sun went behind a cloud, and I looked up. Beside me was a high, red brick wall, perhaps eight feet tall, and it stretched before me and behind me for a long way. Suddenly, I was seized with curiosity. I had to know what was behind the wall. It took only a minute to find a toe and finger hold in the crumbling mortar of the brick, and in a few more minutes, I was nearly up. I paused for a moment to gather my courage, then I lifted myself far enough to peer over the top.

When my eyes lit on what was on the other side, I was so astonished I nearly fell off the wall. What was I seeing? I seemed to be looking into a medieval miniature, into a picture of an emerald green garden full of a profusion of flowers. Among the flowers, on benches and on lawn chairs sat five or six women of every age, gracefully dressed in long brown robes, and holding books in their laps. Perhaps it was my sudden intake of breath; perhaps the sound of my scrabbling hands in the loose stones at the top of the wall, but all together the women looked up from their books and saw me. In the embarrassment and shame of my discovery I slid down the whole length of the wall. Examining my skinned hands and knees at the bottom, I knew I had seen what I had only read about before: monastic women. Pondering in my heart what I had seen, I went home to my little flat, only to tuck away the memory of the convent garden with other incomprehensible memories that worked in my imagination. Over the next two years I completed my first degree in Semitic languages, I began work on my D. Phil., and I continued to wrestle with my painful attraction to and repulsion from Christianity and its God.

My struggles with Christianity and what I believed to be its demanding, vengeful god
continued until the day in my graduate work I first began to encounter a different God, a different understanding of myself, and a different understanding of what that God required of me, in the lifegiving tradition of the Desert Fathers and Mothers of the early church. It happened like this.

As I have mentioned, though I had avoided Christianity through my first two years in Oxford, for my Semitic language degree I had done Syriac as my second language. Now through a series of unlikely circumstances, I found myself in the Bodley library, unhappily searching for a dissertation topic through piles of hated Christian Syriac texts. Day after day as I read these early Christian books, each lay as heavy on my heart as Brother Smith’s revival sermons.

Then, one chilly autumn morning, surrounded by stacks of patristic texts, I picked up and opened to the middle of one entitled The Thirteen Ascetical Homilies of Philoxenus of Mabbug. Though it had been composed by a Syriac-speaking monophysite bishop of the sixth century, it was a collection of ascetical homilies written in the tradition of the Desert Fathers and Mothers of Egypt. Though I knew nothing of those Egyptian monks at the time, I can remind you now that they were a puzzling group of people, Christians who were heroes of the ancient world, at the same time they challenged everything their world stood for. By their own lives and teaching they offered radical Christian alternatives to the ordinary life patterns of their culture, alternatives to the social order, to gender expectations and family, to the uses of money and power, dominance and submission, which the rest of the world took for granted. God’s love for humankind was the foundation of their radical Christian vision; our perfect love for God and neighbor was its goal. Of course, I knew nothing of all this at the time, confronted in the library by the Thirteen Ascetical Homilies.

Nevertheless, unknown to me as the monks were, at the very moment my eyes fell on the page, content of the books began to open my heart to an entirely different reality, in which I would learn that God was very different from the one I had thought God to be, and that both God’s love and God’s expectations of me in terms of perfection were very different from what I had thought they were.

So what did I read that day that began this process of healing of the heart? It was a homily exhorting monks not to criticize or judge each other, but rather, to treat each other with the gentleness and kindness of God, who always loves us, and who always makes far more allowances for us and our failings than human beings do, because God alone understands our circumstances, the depths of our temptations, and the extent of our sufferings.

It was an epiphany. I was struck dumb with joy by what I read. I had believed for as long as I could remember that God, before anything else, demanded perfection of me in all things, that God was the one for whom I could never be good enough. But Philoxenus, out of the tradition of the desert, was telling me something very different, that God loves us, not in spite of who we are, but as the very people we truly are, and most important, as the very person I am. I kept on reading. Could it be true that God the Father did not expect as much perfection of me as did my human father? I did not know the answer to this and to many other questions that day, but I knew that somehow, in that moment, through that early monastic tradition, the ancient monks had spoken directly to me out of their own love and out of God’s love for me, and my heart had been able to hear.
I left the library that morning resolved to do my dissertation on Philoxenus' monastic theology. Unfortunately, this was not to be, for in the world of American and British theological scholarship of the Sixties, there was a near consensus that serious scholars studied ancient Christian doctrine not ascetic theology.

I began a dissertation, therefore, on Philoxenus' christological teachings, and in the beginning everything went well, and I was soon drawn into the logic of the christological controversies. At the same time, I began to read much more widely in the ascetical texts of the early church, The Sayings of the Fathers, the Macarian Homilies, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, Origen, Evagrius Ponticus and Athanasius.

I am not sure at what point I realized I was in a crisis. What I do know is that one day I woke up with such severe anxiety I could not work. Day after day, I would sit at my desk and stare at a blank page and wonder what was wrong. Then, little by little it dawned on me. In my heart I still believed that being Christian was about "having faith in," "believing" the right things. I had been drawn into the logic of the christological debates. Now I was terrified that I was about to decide that I could not believe any of the ancient christology I was studying, and if that were to happen, I would have to abandon the God to whom I had already committed myself as unbelievable.

I did not know what to do until one day I talked with a man who was the chaplain at Pusey House in Oxford. He arranged a three-day visit in the guest house of the Anglican Benedictine convent in South Oxford. I was exhausted when I arrived at the front gate of the very same Convent whose back wall I had climbed more than two years earlier. I barely remember being led through the gate and into the guest house by a stout, smiling oblate, dressed in a brown habit. I recall her explaining the rules, though I do remember climbing the stairs to my room and falling instantly asleep on the bed in my coat and hat and mittens.

I also remember well, what happened after that. I was awakened by a knock on the door. Before I could even get up, Mother Jane was in the room. Immediately, her presence overwhelmed me. She was a tall woman, beautiful to me in her brown habit, and even before she spoke I noticed that there was something odd about the way she walked and held herself. There was a freedom in her that I had never seen in any woman or any human being, a freedom I could not have imagined to be possible. This was a woman, a woman radiating intelligence, energy, and kindness, absolutely without fear, and absolutely without apology for who she was.

While I stood there, she walked over to me to give me the kiss of peace, and then I threw my arms around her neck, sobbing. After she had patted me for a few moments, she asked me what was wrong. Somehow, I was able to tell her my fears about my research and the loss of my newly discovered faith, as well as about the hurt I had felt as a woman around the use of my mind my whole life.

The exact words of her answer are not important—it was something like, "it was God who gave you your mind; never be afraid to use what God has given you," but it freed me from my confusion between "believing the right things" about God and knowing the living God. At the same time, because she was a woman who so clearly embodied what she said, she showed me that a human being, and a woman, could live in freedom from fear, full of integrity and joy.
During the days in the convent that followed, I slept and ate and prayed in a state of peace. As an enclosed order of contemplatives, the sisters had no contact with visitors. In the chapel, however, I was able to watch the sisters attentively as they prayed. I saw them look out the window, listen to the birds, fidget, concentrate, or daydream, and I could see for myself that the world the sisters lived in was a world far more real, and far less circumscribed and truncated than the one in which I was trying to live, and they, too, seemed to have the same fearless freedom I had met in Mother Jane. In those modern Benedictine women I could see with my own eyes the living out of the tradition of the great teachers of the ascetic theology of the early church of the east, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, the author of the Macarian Homilies, Philoxenus, and the Abbas and Ammas of the Egyptian desert.

When I left at the end of my stay, there was much in me that was unchanged. I still had my dissertation to complete; I still wrestled with all the pain associated with being female in a Christian tradition and a world that did not seem to value women. I still struggled with an unbearable sense of unmetable expectation from myself that I be perfect in everything I do.

At the same time, my stay confirmed the lifechanging experience of the loving and gentle nature of God I had encountered in the early monastic texts, and I began to be free of my image of an implacable God who demanded perfection. Certainly, I no longer confused faith in God with faith in what we say about God. Finally, in my contact with Mother Jane and the Benedictine women I had seen for myself a breath-taking sight of what is possible for a human being and a woman, and therefore myself, to become, and I never, ever forgot it.

Over the next years, I completed my dissertation and then turned back to the monastic texts of the early church, including this time, Benedict and his Rule. During this time I began to learn from them the content of the true perfection the early monastic teachers believe God asks of us, and it was not the perfection of “believing the right doctrine,” or being obedient to the expectations of the church, my family, or the culture that I be a “good” woman; rather, it was the living out of the Great Commandment, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

Finally, under the influence of the early monastic teachers I was able to truly begin to understand that, if their conviction that love is the final goal of the Christian life, then loving and learning how to love is neither a matter of gritting one’s teeth and becoming instantly perfect, instantly loving by a matter of sheer anxious will, nor is it something God does to us in a moment of conversion to Christianity, as Brother Smith thought that learning to love fully is a Christian’s life-time work and discipline and pleasure. What makes growth in love possible is God’s generous and gentle love for us which precedes, works with, and enables all that we do as we grow in love.

During this same time, not so surprisingly considering how thoroughly grounded in the theology of the early church John Wesley was, I became able to understand and then claim as my own John Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection. For Wesley, as for the great monastic teachers of the early church, the goal of Christian perfection lay at the heart of what he was about, and for him, as for them, Christian perfection is “nothing
higher and nothing lower than this: the pure love of God and humanity—the loving God with all our heart and soul and our neighbor as ourselves." Wesley, like the early monastics believed that reaching this goal did not generally come in some instant transformation that took place all at once at the moment of conversion to Christianity, but was rather, the work of the Christian life. And Wesley, too, like the great teachers of the early monastics, was convinced that whatever we do to grow in love, we are only able to grow because of the love and grace of God which precedes and works with all we do ourselves.

Three years ago I became an oblate at St. Benedict's Convent in St. Joseph, Minnesota, a Roman Catholic community that embodies in the present what I found nearly thirty years ago in the Anglican Benedictine convent in Oxford. Becoming a Benedictine Oblate was something I had felt led by the Spirit to do for a long time, but I did not think it was possible because I am a United Methodist. When at last I asked the director of Oblates at St. Benedict's about this, her reply was simple and unambiguous, and it confirmed what my heart already knew: There is no conflict, she said: Benedictines preceded the division of the churches.

Today, I am a professor of church history at Candler School of Theology, the largest of the United Methodist Church's seminaries which train men and women for the ministry. As I was led by the middle-aged oblate into the Benedictine convent in Oxford so long ago, I now also lead droves of hungry students into our common life-giving riches of the early monastic tradition. It is amazing to me still how often this tradition, as it did for me, gives the Methodist students access to the meaning in the depths of their own tradition in the teaching of John Wesley.

Is this where the renewal of the people of God lies, in the recovery of the early monastic tradition and in the roots of Methodism? It would be grandiose to say so. Nevertheless, I am convinced we hold in our hands and our heart extraordinary resources for renewal if we are willing to make them available, and I trust the work of the Holy Spirit who, I know from my own experience, renews all things.
In the final chapter or epilogue1 of St. Benedict's Rule, we read the following lines:

The reason we have written this rule is that, by observing it in monasteries, we can show that we have some degree of virtue and the beginnings of monastic life. But for anyone hastening on to the perfection of monastic life, there are the teachings of the holy Fathers, the observance of which will lead him to the very heights of perfection. (RB 73.1-2)

In ending this way, Benedict seems to drastically relativize the monastic Rule he has just written, for he calls it a mere "beginning" of monastic life. Indeed, he urges the reader to go beyond his "little Rule for beginners" (73.8) to a higher level of spiritual life which he does not hesitate to call "the heights of perfection."

To someone who has just read the Rule for the first time, and even for one who knows it well, the theme of "perfection," which is mentioned twice in one verse, comes as a surprise. Although an epilogue normally summarizes the content of a document, this is the first time that "perfection" has been mentioned. This fact makes it difficult to study this theme by staying within the document itself.

The concept of "perfection" is not very attractive to modern ears. It smacks of attitudes that we do not much like: elitism, perfectionism, individualism, qualities that hardly seem compatible with the humble gospel of Jesus Christ. Moreover,
Benedict makes it even worse by speaking of the towering "heights of perfection." There is something off-putting about this language.

Furthermore, Benedict's remarks about a "perfection" surpassing his "Rule for beginners" comes at a bad time, for he has just enunciated a magnificent hymn to interpersonal cenobitic love in the previous chapter (RB 72). Can he really mean to suggest that there is a higher spiritual level than the sacrificial love of one person for another? To answer these questions we will have to compare RB 73 with several other texts to put it in perspective.

THE RELATION OF THE EPILOGUE TO THE PROLOGUE

One of the most difficult questions about Benedict's epilogue concerns its redactional history. Since the chapter begins with an autem (however), it seems to be answering a previous text, but many scholars think that text is not RB 72. Because it closely resembles the last verse of RB 66 in its vocabulary, and because RB 66 sounds like a closing chapter, some think it originally followed that chapter. When Benedict decided to add several more chapters, the epilogue got displaced to its present position.

I agree that the epilogue does not logically follow RB 72, but I would argue that it is really a continuation of the prologue. That chapter ends like this:

Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation. It is bound to be narrow at the outset. But as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love. (Pro. 48:49)

In terms of vocabulary, there are several common words here: initium (beginning); conversatio (monastic life); cursus/festina (run/hasten). Although the message is not exactly the same as in the epilogue, these texts still have a good deal in common. In both cases the monastic life is seen as a two-stage process, with a slow beginning but a much more promising and exciting future if we use the tools at hand to make progress. When we set these two passages next to each other, they suggest that the whole Rule of Benedict is framed in a dynamic spirituality that assumes that the monk is capable of real personal growth and development.

Moreover, there is a very useful by-product from a juxtaposition of the prologue and epilogue, for when we reunite them we remember that they were addressed to the same person or class of persons. In the case of the prologue, that is probably a new candidate to the monastery; but we may assume that the epilogue is addressed to one who has advanced as far as the Rule will take him/her. Yet if the epilogue is also aimed at newcomers, then its reference to the "little Rule for beginners" is really an effort to console and encourage them at the outset of their journey. This relieves us of the difficulty of explaining how Benedict could reasonably claim that he had only written a rudimentary Rule for monks.

PERFECTION IN THE RULE OF THE MASTER

A second question we should ask about Benedict's theme of "perfection" is its relation to the Rule of the Master. This is the contemporary monastic Rule that Benedict
often drew from in composing his Rule. Yet it does not seem that Benedict took his theme of "perfection" from the Master. There are no parallel passages to RB 73 in the Rule of the Master. Nevertheless, the Master does have a very definite theory of "perfection" that appears in his chapters on silence (RM 8-9). According to the Master, there are two kinds of monks, the perfect and those who are less-than-perfect. The curious thing is that the Master requires a stricter form of discipline from the perfect monk than from the less-than-perfect.

But the crux of the Master's theory lies in its rigid stratification of persons without any suggestion that one could move from one class to the other. This is not a casual remark nor a misunderstanding, for the Master makes it plain from the beginning of his Rule that he considers the ordinary monk spiritually inept and hopeless. All one can do is obey the abbot's every order to avoid disaster. There is no hint in this very long and detailed Rule that real spiritual growth is possible for the average cenobitic monk.

As for Benedict, he has almost nothing to do with this kind of elitist thinking, although he once slips and uses the vocabulary of "perfect" monks. But by and large he steers very clear of the Master's static and closed spiritual categories. In fact, he seems to go out of his way at precisely the critical junctures of his Rule to speak about the monastic life as a dynamic process full of hope for the average person.

Along with his elitist theory of "perfection," the Master has an extremely other worldly eschatology. He promises the ordinary monk a heavenly reward, but little other consolation on this side of the grave. All the Master promises the monk is a share of the cross of Christ. Benedict knows that we must carry the cross, but he cannot rest content with the grim prospect held out by the Master. He promises us that if we are faithful to the monastic life (or Christian discipline) we can expect to "run with joyful hearts" (Prov. 49). The "perfection" spoken of in the epilogue is also something to be enjoyed in this world and not just in heaven. And so, even if the "heights of perfection" may seem too elevated, at least they are attainable here and now. Presumably this is good news for modern listeners, who hope for genuine experience of God in this world and not just the next.

MATTHEAN PERFECTION

Not only does RB 73 contain a new theme of "perfection," but it begins with a very unusual title: "That the whole observance of justice is not found in this Rule." What are we to make of that? One of the best modern translations simply has: "This Rule is only a Beginning of Perfection." That, of course, is the message of the epilogue, but it fails to take account of the term "justice." In fact, "the whole of justice" is a reference to Matthew 3:15 and a spot check of Benedict's use of this word shows that he quotes no less than four different Matthean passages using the term "justice."[19] "Justice" is certainly a key-word for Matthew, but it is not so obvious what it means. It seems that he uses it in a Jewish way to refer to the intensely personal bond that exists between covenant partners. Far from an abstract, legalistic term (as it might be for the Greeks), "justice" is what one does for the covenant brother or sister and against our common enemy. It is closer to the blood-ties of the clan than it is to more antiseptic notions of common citizenship. The message of the title of RB 73 is that the Rule is
only a minimum and its performance is never enough. But if you apply the Matthean logic to "perfection," then that is never enough either!

Is it a coincidence that Matthew also uses the term "perfect" in two very provocative passages? We are all familiar with them, but it seems important to review them here. Even if Benedict does not quote them in his epilogue, once he has alluded to Matthean "justice" in the title, these passages are hard to keep out of mind when reaching the rest of the chapter.

The first one comes in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus tells us to "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48). What preacher has not sweated and squirmed over this text? Imagine our relief then when we find out that the Greek *teleios* refers more to completeness than to freedom from fault or error. This should also remind us that the English term "perfect" has the same double potentiality, for, besides connoting a lack of nothing, it also means "brought to term," "fully made." And of course that is one reason why a discussion of "perfection" is appropriate in the final chapter of the *Rule*, where it is a question of bringing the monastic project to completion.

But even if "perfect" means "complete" rather than "flawless," how can we be "complete" like God? It is quite clear in the verses that precede Matt. 5:48 that God's "completeness" consists in inclusivity: God rains equally on the bad and the good. The peculiar "perfection" of God that Matthew holds up to the Christian is the refusal to return evil for evil or to reserve love for the good. So Matthew challenges us to extend our love as widely as we can. Needless to say, this is not what "perfection" means to most people:

The second Matthean "perfection" text is the one where Jesus tells the young man: "If you would be perfect, go sell what you have and give all to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me" (Matt. 19:21). Now it is inconceivable to me that Matthew would use this unusual word "perfect" without reference to the earlier text where it means inclusivity. But how should we understand that idea here? Probably the most likely interpretation would be this: By keeping the commandments you have certainly made a good start toward the Kingdom of Heaven. Now, you should complete your journey by practicing dispossession.

It is helpful to keep two things in mind about this text: but the problem is that the two things seem to be opposites. First, the call to "perfection" here and in 5:48 is made to all and not to an elite. In Matthew's terms, it is synonymous with salvation. On the other hand, the specific kind of "perfection" Jesus asked of this young man should not be generalized. Self-dispossession is what he personally needed to do to "complete" his spiritual journey, but it cannot be applied to all Christians or even used as a proof text for monastic life.

**PERFECTION FOR CASSIAN**

Finally, we cannot achieve any depth of insight into the "perfection" of Benedict's epilogue without a look at John Cassian. There is little doubt that Cassian is the main influence on this last chapter of the *Rule*, and that influence is nowhere so strong in the Benedictine *Rule* as it is here. Although there are many words and phrases that
resonate with Cassian's writings, we are mainly concerned with the use of "perfectio" and its cognates. Both the phrases "perfection of monastic life" and "heights of perfection" are considered to be allusions to Cassian.

Although neither of these phrases is particularly revealing in themselves, they are part of what is for Cassian a substantial theme. In fact, he uses the term "perfection" in many different passages and what he has to say about it is highly relevant to our discussion. It seems only reasonable to assume that Benedict has a general grasp of Cassian's theme, and that this is the framework for Benedict's two terse uses of the term.

From Cassian's extensive remarks about "perfection" in Conf. 11, it is evident that "perfection" is for him a relative term. Even though this may seem to contradict the apparent meaning of the word, any human "perfection" must necessarily be relative because we are not God nor are we "finished." As long as we are wayfarers on the human pilgrimage, absolute "perfection" can be for us only a goal, whereas those "perfections" we can reach are relative and open to further development.

Cassian makes this point very forcefully in Conf. 1, where he insists that it is not spiritually useful to have merely a heavenly goal (telos). To make any progress, we need earthly goals (skopos) that are attainable and also empirical. The realized eschatology of Cassian is one of his most valuable teachings. It makes him an effective spiritual master because he is able to motivate us by indicating realizable spiritual goals that give us hope and energy.

But all such talk about human progress and striving in the spiritual life carries with it the obvious danger of Pelagianism. And in fact Cassian was condemned (posthumously and unjustly) for just that point in the sixth century. Nevertheless, he is well aware of this danger in regard to the concept of "perfection," and he explicitly notes that apart from the grace of God there is no such thing in the spiritual life. In fact, any talk of Christian "perfection" that does not begin and end with God is merely disguised self-idolatry.

Since Cassian always talks in terms of relative "perfection," he needs to employ various stages or levels to make his schema work. An overall survey of his various discussions of "perfection" shows that he is capable of using many different combinations. Some of these pairs are more successful than others, but he often notes that there is really only one Christian absolute, and that is love. All of the other comparisons can be criticized, but love cannot, for it is supreme in the teaching of Jesus. Whether or not Cassian's teaching about "perfection" is fully adequate to the gospel ethic of Jesus, it is definitely useful for articulating the dynamic spirituality that is his trademark.

CONCLUSIONS

Perfection in Benedict's language is closer to love than to flawlessness. This becomes evident when the epilogue is paired with prologue 49, where love is the culmination of the monastic life. What is more, Cassian often insists that love is the pinnacle and "perfection" of all Christian and monastic life, a sentiment which Benedict no doubt shares. Even the modern sensibility should not balk at this kind of perfection.

Benedict's idea of "perfection" is not static, as in the Rule of the Master, but fluid and
dynamic. In fact, RB 73 is full of the vocabulary of movement and progress, as are many other passages of RB. Moreover, the effect of Benedict’s call for “perfection” at the end of his Rule is to keep the monastic system open-ended and aimed at continual progress.

The “perfection” taught by Benedict in his Epilogue is not elitist, but a call to every person to work for spiritual growth. This universal call is bolstered by promises of tangible this-worldly gains in the spiritual life to the person who is willing to take the means toward progress.

Far from an abstract, individualistic concern for self-improvement, Benedict’s “perfection” should be understood as a cognate of biblical “justice.” This anchors the concept in concrete acts of covenantal love, and precludes rarefied, other-worldly separation from worldly concerns.

Finally, Benedict is as well-aware as Cassian that there is no Christian “perfection” without the grace of God. When he speaks of the higher elevations of “perfection” in the last verse of the Rule, he notes that we will reach them “with God’s protection.”

NOTES
1. Webster’s Third International Dictionary (1976) defines “epilogue” as follows: “The final part that serves typically to round out or complete the design of a non-dramatic literary work.” Further, the epilogue is usually not part of the main body of the text and often sums up its main themes. Quotations of Regulae Benedicti used here are from RM 1980 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 1981).
2. The means that Benedict recommends in Regulae Benedicti 73 for higher perfection is to be found in the writings of Scripture and the Fathers. If Benedict had told us what to look for in those texts we would have a clearer idea of what “perfection” means for him; but he did not. Moreover, scholars aren’t even in complete agreement about which texts are recommended. Most commentators think that “Conferences” and “Institutes” refer to John Cassian, but this is denied by A. Wathen, “Methodological Considerations of the Sources of the Regula Benedicti as Instruments of Historical Interpretation,” Regulae Benedicti Studia 5 (1977): 101-18. Wathen also resists identifying “Lives of the Fathers” with the Vitae Patrum (The Regula Benedicti 1.73 and the Vitae Patrum,” Cistercian Studies ICSI 19 (1984): 208-311). M. Casey, “Ascetic and Ecclesiastical Reflections on Regulae Benedicti 735,” Tyndalla 28 (1985): 14-24, thinks that Regulae Benedicti 73 recommends a balanced program of lectio divina, with both cenobitic (Basil) and anchoritic authors (Cassian and the Desert Fathers) given the seal of approval. Of course, Scripture is the main focus of lectio divina.
3. Besides the abstract noun perfectio, the same root appears in verb form (“to accomplish” or “to complete”) in Regulae Benedicti Prol. 4; 422; 44.10 and 73.8. The adjective (“perfect” or “complete”) is found in Regulae Benedicti 5.9; 6.3 and 7.67.
4. The same metaphor of “heights” occurs in 73.8, where the higher levels of “doctrine and virtue.” Benedict uses two different words to describe these peaks: etstudo (73.2) and cultus (73.8). The second term is Cassian’s usual expression: cultus perfectionis (Inst. 4.8; 5.28; 7.13; Conf. 1 Praef.: 2.4, 24; 3.22; 9.2, 3, 9, 7, 4; 10.8, 4; 21.33, 1). The image of climbing to the heights of perfection implies hard labor on our part, but Christ (Christo autem in good protet) will be our alpine guides (73.8-9).
5. A. Lenitini, La Regola di San Benedetto (Monf. Cassino, 1980), p. 647 and A. Böckmann, Perspektiven der Regula Benedicti (Münsterschwarzach, 1986), p. 106, both think that autem here is strong and must be an adversative to the preceding chapter, namely, RB 72. Another approach to the question is that of A. Wathen, who claims that some of the same literary
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sources (especially Ambrose on Ps. 119 and Clement ad Corinthios) run like a thread through RB 71, 72 and 73 (“The Exigencies of Benedict’s Little Rule for Beginners: RB 72,” The American Benedictine Review: UABRU 29 (1978): 41-66). Finally, M. Casey (“Ascesic...Reflections,” see note 2) argues that RB 73 really means to teach the same respect for Church teaching and social responsibility as is found in RB 72.


The last sentence of RB 66 begins: Honi autem homin. RB 66 closes with an admonition that the Rule is to be “read often in the community,” which is a typical way ancient monastic legislators ended their work (R IV P 3:31; Augustine, Pract. 8.2). RM 95 also ends on this note and it is significant that, like RB 66, it is a chapter on the porter.

7. More precisely, the prologue ends with the following sentence: “Never swerving from his instructions, then, but faithfully observing his teaching in the monastery until death, we shall through patience share in the sufferings of Christ that we may deserve also to share in his kingdom. Amen” (ProL 50). This verse is copied verbatim from RM 81:46; but Benedict has inserted his own verses 46-49 into the Master’s ending, thus transforming it from within. It is this insertion that I am emphasizing here.

8. The means to the end in ProL 49 are three: faith, the monastic way of life (convivatio) and the commandments of God; in the epilogue we will find the means by reading Scripture and the Fathers. In two other similar passages, the Instruments of Good Works (RB 4:75-78) and humility (7.67-70) are presented as the means to be employed in the climb toward spiritual growth and perfection.

9. For an extended discussion of the problems with such identification, see my article “Benedict’s Use of Cassianic Formulae for Spiritual Progress,” Studia Monastica (SM) 34 (1992): 235-40. For a detailed comparison between Benedict’s prologue and epilogue, see A. De Vogüé, La Règle de saint Benoî (Paris, 1972) IV 115-118. He does not agree with me that the epilogue is addressed to a newcomer, yet he shows how closely it is tied to the prologue in terms of vocabulary and themes.

10. The Table of Correspondences of RM and RB (RB 1980, p. 488) indicates only one vague connection with RB 73.8 (RM 95:24). In general, Benedict seems to lean much more heavily on the Master at the beginning of his Rule than at the end. That would indicate that the last part of the document is the product of a mature mind, better able to stand on its own. There are of course other influences at work at the end. But as I indicate in the previous section, I do not consider RB 73 a mature statement by Benedict. Still, my theory does not explain why, if the prologue and epilogue so closely yoked, the former is so heavily dependent on RM and the latter not at all.

11. “Perfect” disciples are mentioned in RM 7.2; 10; 8.33; 9.37; 41; 46. The “imperfect” are called such only once, in 9.48, but they are referred to obliquely many times.

12. So RM 1.87. “Therefore all who still have folly as their mother ought to be subject to the authority of a superior so that, guided on their way by the judgment of a teacher, they may learn to avoid the way of self will.” Since the Master thinks that all cenobites are subject to obedience (RM 7), that must mean that they all “still have folly as their mother.” This low esteem for the common-monk is typical of the Master. Although the Master never calls the abbot a “perfect” monk, it is obvious from this verse that this is implied. Since the abbot is chosen from the ranks, it is not clear how a “perfect” monk will be found in such a motley, imperfect band.

13. In RB 6, Benedict has produced a radically reduced summary of RM 8.9 (at a ratio of about 10 to 1). Perhaps he did not notice that the term “perfect” no longer makes sense without the whole context from RM 9. Since RB 6.3 has essentially gathered the Master’s thought (De Vogüé, La Règle, 4:251-52), all attempts by translators to smooth it out are either confusing or inaccurate.

15. The Master launches into fulsome descriptions of paradise in 3.78-95 and 10.92-117. In both cases, Benedict omits these eschatological passages and substitutes short formulae that promise spiritual fulfilment in both this world and the next.

16. As explained in note 7, Benedict has inserted Prov. 46-49 into the text of the Master. This has the effect of providing earthly consolation in the form of joy to the Christian who is on the journey toward heaven. Without this insert, the curriculum of Master's School of the Lord's Service (Ths. 45) is strictly the carrying of the cross with Christ. This is in no way meant to downgrade the importance of the message of the cross, and especially the theme of patience, which figures so prominently in the *Rule of Benedict*. See M. Casey, "The Virtue of Patience in Western Monastic Tradition," *CS* 21 (1986): 1-2.

17. Besides "perfection," which is treated as a "this-worldly condition," Benedict names the following terrestrial goals which can be reached by the monk who is willing to consult the sacred texts and what they teach: "guides for human life" (73.3: the implication is that this human life will be holy); "reach the Creator" (73.4: but not just in the next life); "cultivation of virtues" (73.6); "teachings and virtues" (73.9). Granted, "the Creator" could be an eschatological reference and "hastening to your heavenly home" (73.8: *paimem coeternum*) certainly is.

18. *RB* 1980, p. 295. Admittedly, the translators here are consistent because they render many of the titles in paraphrase. But it seems to me that they could have at least explained their decision in the extensive footnote they supply for this title. For his part, De Vogüé, *La Règle*, 2.672, thinks that 73T is "secondary" since it seems to mimic the language of the first verse. This does not mean that the author of the title was someone other than Benedict. It is hard to imagine someone inserting this title as an *explanation* of Benedict's chapter. Besides, *justitia* is a fairly common theme in the *RB* (see next note).


21. See Gribomont, op. cit.

22. Although Benedict never indicates that he intends "perfection" to mean "completeness," in fact he teaches this ethic throughout his Rule. In my article "Benedictine Spirituality," *Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1993), pp. 84-91, I locate the heart of Benedict's theology in his theme of the fear of the Lord (RB 7.10-13). But this same mighty Lord is then to be adored precisely in the most marginal and unlikely persons such as the youngsters (RB 3), the sick (RB 36), the stranger (RB 53), the wayfarer (RB 66). See S. Légarè, note 21, above, 1079-81; V. Despraz, "The Apostolic Life and Virginity in the New Testament," *ABR* (1991:1), pp. 106-10.

23. For a short list of correspondences as is follows: *initium conversationis* (Inst. 4.39.1; *Conf.* 21.10.1); *celistudo perfectionis* (almoner p. 18.5); *instrumentum virtutis* (*Conf.* 6.10.3; 24.24.3); *negative et desidiosus* (*Conf.* 12.16.3). The parallel apparatus in *RB* 1980 lists other allusions to Cassian in RB 73. The general tendency of commentators is to assign the main influence for RB 73 to Cassian, but A. Wathen has fought hard against this trend in his studies (see note 2, above). A. De Vogüé, "Les mentions des Oeuvres de Cassien chez saint Benoit," SM 20 (1978): 275-85, shows well enough that RB 73 does refer to Cassian's works, but I agree with Wathen and J. Gribomont, "The Commentaries of Alain de Vogüé and the Great Monastic
Tradition,” ABR 36 (1985:3): 229-62, that too much has been made of Cassian’s influence on Benedict.

25. For celsitudinem perfectionis, see note 4, above; doctrinae virtutumque culmina: Conf. 18.15; 21.34, 3; 22.7.

26. Although I may seem to arrive at more positive conclusions in this article than I did in my earlier work (see “Benedict’s Use,” note 9, above), it still seems to me that “perfection” is an inherently ambiguous category and not an ideal way to end the Holy Rule. I would prefer that Benedict would have ended with the hymn to love in RB 72.

27. Conf. 11.7-8, 12.


30. Conf. 11.12: There are different kinds of perfection, thus the various kinds of “blessed” persons in the Beatitudes receive different rewards; love is a higher perfection than fear; a friend is higher than a servant.

As a working definition of “Christian spirituality” let me propose one given by the Dutch Augustinian scholar, Father Tarcisius van Bavel. Speaking to a group of Augustinian friars in 1986, he admitted that the notion of Christian spirituality was broad, and that one rarely found it described in religious literature. It might be conceived, he said, as a “window on the Gospel, an outlook on the Gospel.” All authentic Christian spiritualities are responses to the Gospel, but “no two persons can read the Gospel in an entirely identical way.” Each one “inevitably listens in a personal way, lays stress on different things and has a number of favorite texts.”

Thus, a window screening in and out of view different concrete features of the Gospel, enables a given spirituality to accent particular evangelical values over others. At the same time, because each Christian spirituality is a “window on the Gospel,” when it is properly embraced it leads its adherents into the whole truth of the Gospel. Father van Bavel thus distinguishes Augustinian spirituality from its Benedictine, Cistercian, Franciscan, and Ignatian alternatives by stipulating the distinctive role of love of neighbor and community life which Augustinian spirituality emphasizes. By way of illustrating his point, Fr. van Bavel stated, in an off-the-cuff remark, that in the Benedictine tradition, the monastery church was the center of life; in an Augustinian friary, the center of life is found in the common room.

Prayer, though important for Augustine, is thus not the center of his spirituality. I
would agree with Fr. van Bavel about this, and about the importance of love in Augustinian spirituality. But then it has to be said that what is vital for Augustine is love with all of its attendant theological problems. He puzzled within himself about love, thereby refusing to understand it in simplistic terms, as if the meanings of Scripture texts concerning love of God and neighbor yielded easily to interpretation and application. Instead, he considered love to be “sacramental,” an activity rooted in Christ which is therefore also a sign pointing to a reality beyond the immediate and the tangible.

Characterizing Augustine’s notion of love as sacramental and setting it at the center of his spirituality strengthens the assessment of that spirituality as being both rigorously biblical and theological. By this I mean that it takes the Word of God as its exclusive starting point and goal. Many Christian spiritualities might wish to make the same claim; however, Augustine is the uncommon Logomaniac within the history of spirituality. One consequence of his concern with the Word is that his spirituality is remarkably social over against tendencies, ancient and modern, to locate the epiphrase of the spiritual life within the recollected experience of the individual believer or seeker. Even Augustine’s celebrated contemplation at Ostia had to be received with Monica, and consisted more in a shared hearing than in a private vision.

In locating sacramentum in cantus, Augustine also thereby insists upon the essential ambiguity of Christian love. This is due to the fact that, in semantic terms, sacramentum, like its synonym mysticum, posits a simultaneous disclosure and hiddenness. Disclosure and hiddenness coincide in the Augustinian notion of sacrament much in the same hypothesis manner that the two natures of Christ coexist in one person without polarity or confusion. Thus, the hiddenness of God, or God’s absolute transcendence, is revealed and affirmed, not limited or resolved, by the Incarnation. This is to say that we do not grasp God as a result of the incarnation; godliness is not domesticated by the Word becoming flesh. This essential hiddenness of God and, therefore, of love is not owing to our sinfulness. Nor is it unraveled by our justification, so that growth in personal holiness somehow results in the mystery of God becoming perspicuous. For Augustine, the Incarnation is a sign of the abiding mystery of God.

In like manner, the sacrament or mystery of love (sacramentum mysticum cantat) directs our reading of the essential texts and traditions of Christianity toward a deeper opening of the soul to love: dilege et quod vis fac. But like an enigma, the sacramental aspect of love lures us into puzzling out seeming contradictions in the scriptural texts. The apparent resolution of these difficulties often leaves the Christian unsatisfied, even repulsed. All of the rough spots in Augustinian theology—predestination, religious coercion, unbaptized infants, just war—occur precisely because the Word of God is at jarring and enigmatic as it is lucid and alluring. Terribilis est urbs fluctuosa. For Augustine, some questions in Christian life and doctrine simply refuse to yield totally congenial answers. Sometimes God’s love is tough love. But in Augustine’s view, we experience it as such only because we perceive it, as St. Paul tells us, ex parte and in amagnate par speculium. The sacrament or mystery of love discloses that the love which we love and by which we love is known only partially and enigmatically. To love fully means to know God fully, but “who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counsellor?” The error, according to Augustine, is to think that one has finally resolved all of the biblical or theological conundrums in favor of a definitive, enlightened
Christian spirituality. It is against precisely this sort of closure that Augustine believes the sacramental aspect of love to be directed.

But if the inherent ambiguity implied in Augustine’s notion of sacrament or mystery as an heuristic of love led him into a few conclusions which seem to us at least problematic, it also enabled him more often to arrive peerless at intellectually and morally daring, progressive stances. For Augustine, the true referent of sacramentum caritatis is Christ and, by extension, the Church. The deeds and words of Christ recorded in the scriptures and celebrated in ecclesiastical rites (preeminently in baptism and eucharist) convey the tension between disclosure and hiddenness in terms of God and in terms of love. In Augustinian spirituality we love God and neighbor by entering into the divine mystery of love. This means, in part, that we anticipate being caught offguard, taken by surprise by God’s love expressed—sacramentally—by God’s Word. This attitude toward love, governed by sacrament or mystery as it pertains to interpreting the scriptures, is, however, also the hermeneutical principle which guides Augustine’s approach to the scriptures. Augustine’s reasoning is intentionally circular. We understand the scriptures, especially difficult passages, because we approach them out of a reverence for the sacramental character of love which we have come to perceive, in part, because we have encountered it beforehand in the scriptures. Many will recognize in Augustine’s approach the basis for a later monastic spirituality of lecto divina.

In terms of hearing the scriptural word, sacramentum is what Augustine refers to as the event in which Christ wrests control of the text away from the auditor, who, in this case, resembles Baudelaire’s hypocrite lecteur. *1 From Augustine’s point of view, the auditor is always too prepared to assign ready-made meanings to scripture texts. Take Augustine’s interpretation of John 8:3-11, the pericope of the woman caught in adultery. The pharisees and scribes who presented the woman to Jesus knew that in Deut. 22:22-24 and Lev. 20:10 God commanded death by stoning as a punishment for adultery. But “who among you is without sin?” Let him cast the first stone” (John 8:7). Augustine referred to Christ’s words in this context as the “responso quodam,” the reply of wisdom which subverts the pharisees’ and scribes’ all-too-literal attachment to these texts. *2 Note, too, the enigmatic character of the counter-dilemma which Jesus posed to the woman’s judges. In Christ, the divine Word was enfleshed, but Augustine understood this sacramentum not only in terms of the “real presence,” but in terms of its essential ambiguity as far as what is communicated is concerned. Christ did not condemn capital punishment a priori, but he made it seem ludicrous that anyone except himself could justly apply that penalty.

I think that Augustine’s commentary on this pericope conveys all the essential tensions of his spirituality in the terms in which I am trying to set it out: what I have referred to as sacramentum caritatis. It begins, as I said, with the Word of God as it is presented to us in the scriptures. The sacramental character of love introduces a certain ambiguity into our reading of the texts. The pharisees and scribes, who, after all, were not wrong about the prescriptions of Deuteronomy and Leviticus, discovered in their intimate contact with the Word that the biblical text was more ambiguous than they thought. If we can imagine how Augustine thought they must have felt after hearing Christ tell them “let the one without sin cast the first stone,” we come close to understanding the effect or phenomenon conveyed by the technical term sacramentum. They are suddenly surprised at being
caught off-guard by the Word of God, of having the text (which they thought they had mastered) wrench out of their specialist control.

Moreover, thrust into examining their own consciences as a result of Christ’s words, they are thus prompted into recognizing themselves in the woman whom they condemn. This is the point in Augustine’s interpretation in which his famed predilection for interiority reveals itself as effectively social, as a turn toward love of God and neighbor conceived essentially as conversion. This view of interiority stands over against a certain neo-Platonic introversion toward flight or escape from the moral consequences or responsibilities of one’s history. Here, too, we can detect the influence of Augustine’s thinking about creation of the human being in the trinitarian image of God, its deformation in the Fall, and the reformation of that image through conversion and repentance. 46

If we read closely Augustine’s commentary on this text, we discover that the motive behind the Pharisees’ and Scribes’ change of heart toward the woman is not simply mercy or pity, but justice. The confrontation of the self with itself, personal conversion, means, in part, for Augustine recognizing oneself morally imaged in the other. This is the burden of Christ’s words to the Pharisees and Scribes: “let the one without sin cast the first stone.” (Justice, personal and social, emerges from the reconciliation stimulated by the recognition of the similarities between oneself and the other (as sinner, guilty party, enemy, etc.). The role of memory within Augustine’s triadic structure of the trinitarian image of God, which is analogously discovered in the human soul, is, in part, that of keeping alive our “dangerous memories.” These recollections of our personal guilt, when held up to our gaze, remind us of our fallibilities, and serve as a check against spiritual or moral pride. Compassion toward enemies is thus born in the recognition of an infirmitas communis, a sense of shared guilt and responsibility. Augustine interpreted the departure of the Pharisees and Scribes from the scene as a frank admission of their guilt.

Much of the theory behind this approach to the scriptural Word as sacramentum caritatis is found at the end of Book Two of De doctrina christiana. Augustine’s biblical hermeneutics, Text interpretation, such as that exhibited in Augustine’s Commentary on the pseudo-Johannine text, would thus be glossed by Augustine with 1 Cor. 8:1: scientia inflat, caritas autem adaequant, knowledge puffs up, but charity builds up. The knowledge signified by scientia is a reference to technical know-how, whether in the philological manipulation of texts or in the application of logic to moral theory or to some other branch of sacred sciences. In the text found in De doctrina christiana, Augustine parallels love with humility, which sufficiently decents the hearer of the Word as to permit the hidden sacramenta to incline the auditor toward the “love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge” (Eph. 3:19). 47

Knowing properly the mind of God thus involves an unknowing which is governed by the sacramental dimension of love. This unknowing, which is a product of the enigmatic nature of divine mystery, clearly consists in a letting go of the pretentious grasping or closure of the meanings of sacred scripture, so that God’s will is not so clearly and ultimately perceived. 48 Indeed, in spite of his personal opposition to the use of the death penalty and of his frequent use in letters and sermons of the text of the woman caught in adultery in order to urge public magistrates and civic officials of his day to practice clemency toward convicted capital criminals, 49 Augustine seems not to have deduced from the text an
absolute, universal divine prohibition of the death penalty. I would argue that this is not a weakness in his thinking, but a strength. It witnesses once again to the intellectually frustrating, but salutary hesitation definitively to seize upon one possible, legitimate moral reading of the scriptures when the unknowing implied in the admonition scientia inflat, caritas autem assaialnit, the sacramentum caritatis alerts him to another, seemingly contradictory sense or senses.

But it is not Augustine’s position for or against the death penalty that is the most compelling element for spirituality within his interpretation of this text. Rather, as a result of Augustine’s reasoning about the text, the topic of infirmitas communis, understood as the shared moral weakness between accuser and accused, emerges as a novel and radical theme in Christian spirituality. Augustine insisted that magistrates who were prepared to condemn convicted criminals to death should examine their own moral histories to see whether they had not committed sins or crimes which, though deserving of severe penalties, had gone unpunished either through mercy or by virtue of having been undetected. Entering into their own moral depravity furnished judges with the ground from which their judgments about others ought to be made.

Closely allied with this theme in those Augustinian texts in which the pericope of the woman caught in adultery is utilized, is that of open confession of wrongdoing. Augustine saw that confession of sins counteracts the strong tendency in the personality toward a self-glorification rooted in the denial of moral failures. He explored the personal consequences of human glory and its antidote in his Confessions; while in City of God he extended this analysis to the political sphere. For Michel Despland, Augustine, by confessing his sins publicly, gives language in Christian spirituality a continuity with the therapeutic role which Plato’s myths held in Greek philosophy. Liberation, both personal and social, is promoted once confession frees up the linguistic behavior essential for common life which is frozen by neurosis and ideology. In communities, religious and civic, public language structures and embodies the desires of groups. “Keeping open the negotiation with other publicly constituted groups” Despland holds that “there is no such thing as common life without ideology or neurosis,” and that “the best that can be done is to relativize the ideologies and neuroses, to keep individuals and groups in touch with each other.” That project is threatened when language itself breaks down or, in Despland’s words, freezes up.

The best way to keep alert to the dangers of ideology and neurosis may well be to keep in mind what Walter Benjamin has so aptly called dangerous memories; namely remembrance of the dead, those who suffered and were defeated. (Ideologies and neuroses have the obsessive outlook of those determined to be winners.) Most dangerous are the memories of the evils we have committed or the costs we did not or could not correct. Although committed to the urban lifestyle, Plato remembers that his city killed Socrates. In contrast, philosophy of history since Hegel offers a repulsive spectacle: excuses (evils for a greater good) or self-exculpation. The attempt to think teleologically of the historical whole may attribute guilt to others but never to the writer and his spiritual fathers. Augustine in contrast knew that the unveiling of the course of one’s life, confession, included confessions of guilt before God and human beings. He was not so neurotic as to have covered up
all his dangerous memories.25

Augustine's propensity to situate confession at the heart of common life is apparent in his monastic rule as well as in his political theology. References to sin, pardon, confession, repentance, examination of conscience, and prayer for pardon are found in the fourth, sixth, and eighth chapters of the Rule.26 The strongest statements are clearly found in the sixth chapter, with its climactic admonition: "An individual who absolutely refuses to ask pardon (umpiam petere), or does so without meaning it, is entirely out of place in the monastery, even if he is not dismissed."27 In the City of God, he includes confession of wrongdoing and prayer for pardon within his portrait of the ideal Christian emperor, and singles out the public penance performed by Emperor Theodosius the Great (379-395 A.D.) after he had ordered a massacre at Thessalonica (390 A.D.) as the "most remarkable" imitated among the ruler's many noteworthy deeds.

Augustine’s treatment of Theodosius aligns the emperor with the Apostle Paul, Augustine’s countertype to the entire cast of classical Roman political leaders. Principal among the reasons supporting this countertype was the fact that Paul’s life of public ministry, although expressive of virtue, demonstrated the additional and fundamental quality of self-criticism, an awareness and public admission of spiritual and moral incompleteness. In highlighting Paul's boast that his weakness is his strength (2 Cor. 12:5 and 9-10), Augustine proposes an alternative public discourse to the straightforward Stoic rhetoric of self-glorification which constituted the ideology of the uiri optimi.28

The importance which Augustine attaches to the frank admission of wrongdoing in his own life, as well as in monastic and political communities, thus finds a contemporary echo in Despland's conviction that dangerous memories, when held up to our gaze, help us to keep alert to the dangers of ideology and neurosis which threaten common life. If, as Despland suggests, this emphasis represents a major contribution of Augustine to the history of Christianity, it also illustrates the importance to Augustine of the proper place of language in what he took to be the central task of Christians: love of God and neighbor. We have not spent much time discussing Augustine’s views regarding the general unreliability of human speech, the insistence with which he understands the scriptural assertion omnis homo mendax.29 However, it is clear in his writings that he regarded confession of sins as the only occasion in which human speech might stand outside the veiled confines of deception and, in particular, of self-deception.30 Understood in this way, confession represents the fundamental spiritual discourse, the oratio ursi,31 because it discloses the contours of the soul to itself. As such it is the paradigmatic dialogue between the soul and God.32

The conversion of heart which is key to penetrating the sacramentum carnis and which inclines scientia toward sapientia requires just such open confession of one’s sins. The enigmatic, sacramental aspect of love which Augustine encountered in his own study of the scriptures taught him that we love God and neighbor as genuinely as we can only when our decision about what to do proceeds from as honest a self-disclosure of our moral failure as we can muster. This Augustinian position has never been accorded a prominent place in Christian spirituality. Yet I think that it could be sustained as a core statement of Augustinian spirituality by a careful reading of each of Augustine’s major writings: Confessions, De Doctrina Christiana, De Civitate Dei, and De Trinitate, as well as of
the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*.

It is not Augustine's fault that this particular emphasis on an open confession of sins as the gateway to self-knowledge and, hence, as the starting point for a proper, graced love of God and neighbor, has been lost on his posterity. It would be enlightening to know what impeded the reception in the Middle Ages of the central element of public penance in Augustine's portrait of the emperor in *City of God*; or why, indeed, the role of memory, intellect, and will in fostering conversion through confession has been historically omitted from discussions of his theory of the triadic structure of the image of God within the human soul. Equally curious and regrettable is the cumulative, negative effect of centuries of interpretations of Augustine in reading him as a pessimist. Clearly, more research is needed on the history of the reception of Augustine within later periods of history.

I should like to close this talk by reading a passage on Augustine's spirituality from a book by Rowan Williams.

To be human is to desire, to be drawn and moulded by extra-rational, even extra-mental, attractive forces. Augustine's greatest legacy to Christian spirituality is the affirmation that the life of grace can include not only moral struggle and spiritual darkness, but also an awareness of the radically *conditioned* character of human behaviour—marked as we are in ways unknown to us by childhood experience, historical and social structures, and many more facts of which Augustine himself could not have been consciously aware, but to which our own age is especially sensitive. If human behaviour is such, the 'creation' of a life realizing the purposes of God, the transformation of image into likeness, is not impossible, but does take on a different quality. The emphasis must be not upon achievement but upon attitude. What holds a life together is simply the trust—or faith—that the eyes and the heart are turned towards truth; and that God accepts such a life without condition, looking on the will rather than merely the deed. God asks not for heroes but for lovers; not for moral athletes but for men and women aware of their need for acceptance, ready to find their selfhood in the longing for communion with an eternal "other.""


7. See Augustine, ep. lv tr. 7, 2. At doctr. chr. 3, 12, 20, he stipulates that figurative language in the scriptures is to be interpreted "auque in formum illum contint, sive Dei, sive proventi, sive extraque." See also doctr. chr. 3, 15, 23.

8. See Augustine, conf. 13, 18. The Word of God is mediated in the holy scriptures "in nomen radicum et per sacramentum caelest." For the fundamental text in Augustine, see Gr. adv. Moni 2, 4, 5, 6 (PL, 34, 158-99). See also ut deo 3, 9, 17, 35; doctr. chr. 3, 12, 20; 3, 15, 23-18, 26. A concise, thorough exposition of Augustine's theory (along with references to other studies) is offered by Graziano Rinati, Agostano teorico dell'interpretazione. Filosofia della religione, Testi e studi 1 (Brescia: Paideia, 1980), pp. 51-72.
Sacramentum Caritatis as the Foundation


11. See 1 Cor. 13:12, and the discussion by Cornelius Mayer, "Aenigma," *Augustiniana Lexikon*, 1:12 (Basel-Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1986), pp. 141-42. Who points out that of the nearly 179 uses of *aenigma* in Augustine's work, about 70 are found within a citation of the Pauline text. *Aenigma* is defined by Augustine as "obscura quaedam figura rerum" (en Ps. 138, 8); and as "obscura parabola quae difficile intelligatur" (en Ps. 48, 15). See also the definition given by Quintilian, *Inst.* 8, 6, 52. For further discussion, see also Mayer, *Die Zeichen*, pp. 463-64.

12. *Rom* 1:34. See Augustine's use of this text and of 1 Cor. 13:12 at *gr. t. nov. [= ep. 140] 25, 62, in the context of his discussion of the difficulties we encounter in trying to determine the ethical demands of *sacramentum* cantus. Note that the discussion is framed by references to *sacramentum* (24, 64) and *mysterium* (26, 64), and this both terms refer to context I have discussed this text and its principle ethical and hermeneutical issues somewhat in my article "Sacramentum Christi," and more completely in *Language and Justice: Political Anthropology in Augustine's De Civitate Dei* (Oxford University, 1992), pp. 118-68. Augustine explains elsewhere that we come to know God enigmatically: "proficere per speculum in aenimate" (trin. 14, 25; cf. ep. 187, 29). The reference is given by Mayer, *Aenigma*, p. 141. See the recent study by Tacitus van Bavel, "God in between Affirmation and Negation According to Augustine," *Collectanea Augustiniana*, vol. II: *Augustine: Prestyler Factus Sum*, eds. J. Lienhard, E. Muller, and R. Tieske (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 73-97.


14. Walter Ong, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prelegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986 [1967]), pp. 277-83, is right to insist that the notion of sacrament at the time of Augustine be considered in terms of oral cultural, and not the typographic cultures which postdate the advent of the printing press.


17. *Eph* 3:19, cited at *de rerum natura*, 3, 28, 38, where he argues for the possibility of plural valid readings.
of one scripture text.

19. See Augustine, in Ps. 50:8-9 (along with the study by Suzanne Poque, "L’écho des événements de l’été 413 à Carthage dans la prédication de saint Augustin," Homo spiritualis. Festgabe L. Verheijen, ed. C. Mayer (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1987), pp. 391-99); ep. 153, 3, 6-4, 10; serm. 13, 7. See also Dodaro/Szura, "Augustine.

20. See especially Augustine, ep. 153, 6, 16.

21. The motif is found in Ambrose, De fuga sæculi 1, 1, 2, as Augustine notes at c. iut. 2, 8, 23. It is explicitly mentioned by Augustine at ep. 153, 4, 10 in connection with Jn 8:3-11. See also Augustine, s. dom m. 2, 64; an et ar. 4, 11; serm 293, 12; 264, 3; 362, 5.

22. See Augustine, serm. 13, 7.


28. See Augustine, cii 4, 9, 2.

29. Ps. 115:10-11. See, for example, Augustine, serm. 110, 2; 131, 4; 131, 8; 147, 1; 166 this sermon was preached on the text of Ps. 115:11; 328, 1, 2; 335E, 3; 335M, 2; en. Ps. 36 s. 2, 9; 52 4; 91; 6; 115; 3; e. ep. Parm. 2, 2, 5; perf. aut. 12, 19. The text also occurs at serm. 132A, 2 = s. Mai 129) the authenticity of which has been questioned by a few scholars, but sustained by the majority. See P.P. Verbraken, Études critiques sur les sermons authentiques de saint Augustin, Instrumenta Patristica 12, (Steendruche: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), p. 178. Augustine also cites the text within a quotation of Ambrose’s exp. Is at nupt. conc. 1, 35, 40 and 2, 5, 15, as well as at c. iut. imp. 4, 120.

31. See Augustine, in Ps. 84: 14-5, especially 15: "a domino deo data est justificatio conficiendi, ut ipse aponecat impios piem se fieri non posse, nisi ille fecerit cui conficiatur, credendo in eum qui justificat impium."

32. See Augustine, in Ps. 103:4, 18: "quae est disputatio hominis ad deum, nisi confessione peccatorum? conficiere deo quod es, et disputasti cum illo, disputa cum illo, fac bona opera, et disputa. l.) quid est disputare cum deo? te illi indicas, ut indicet se tibi nesciendi." Note, too, the subordination of good works to confession, which provides a check against pride.

33. See Augustine, trit. 12, 11, 16-18; deur. chr. 2, 7, 10-11.

INTRODUCTION
We have come together to consider the topic of “Sanctification in the Benedictine and Methodist Traditions.” I would like to begin these comments by reflecting for a moment on the word “tradition.” We might define “tradition” as the process by which communities selectively and critically connect themselves to their past. It is a value-laden term, denoting not all of the past, but the past which we value and select and which we choose to “hand on” (tradere) to new generations.

Benedict of Nursia begins his Rule for Monte Cassino with an act of “trading.” He discusses in the first chapter of the rule the four different types of monks that had evolved up to his time, and he is perfectly clear about his evaluation of these different types. The anchorites seem to be acceptable to Benedict, who himself had lived as a hermit for some years, and who would encourage members of his communities to live as hermits, at least for limited periods. He then discusses the “Sarabaites,” that is, monks living according to the ancient Palestinian pattern in 

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travels of monasticism. Benedict’s evaluation of these is one of sharp and unbounded criticism. “It is,” he says, “better to be silent about their wretched lifestyle than to speak. Casting these aside,” he continues, “let us with God’s help establish a rule for Cenobites, who are the best kind of monks.” This, I say, is an “act of traditioning” (actus tradendi), an act in which Benedict selectively and critically connects his followers to the past of monasticism, opening a new way for the future.

It is my hope in the following comments to engage in a similar “act of traditioning,” an act by which we today may selectively and critically connect our present with our past and our future. It is, admittedly, a complex undertaking, since there are few straightforward paths from Benedict to John Wesley and from thence to present-day Methodists. Twelve centuries lay between them, centuries which included the Reformation and the break with Catholic communion brought about in the English Reformation. The path to connecting our pasts that I shall pursue here is a path marked out by Wesley’s own “act of traditioning” in appropriating the resources of ancient Christian asceticism for the Methodist people in their quest of “Christian holiness.” Moreover, I shall pursue this path in a cultural context that might be described as “postmodern,” that is, a cultural context that has emerged since the 1970s which values tradition as a way for asserting contemporary identity.

THE POSTMODERN QUEST FOR WESLEY’S ANCIENT CHRISTIAN SOURCES

I begin with the present, by considering the rather large enterprise that has grown up in the last thirty years, and especially in the last ten years on the part of Wesleyan or Methodist Christians to find Wesley’s ancient roots. The investigation of John Wesley’s ancient sources itself reflects the postmodern cultural context. Up until the end of the 1970s, there was very little written on the subject, but since that time a remarkable coterie of women and men around the world have taken up this issue, and the enterprise of locating Wesley’s ancient Christian roots reflects Methodism’s own quest for self-identity in the 1980s and beyond.

It was Albert C. Outler, professor of historical theology at Southern Methodist University and a leading Methodist ecumenist, who suggested in 1964 in a provocative paragraph and a lengthy footnote attached to it that John Wesley’s doctrine of sanctification might have roots in the work of Gregory of Nyssa and the Cappadocian writers of the fourth century by way of the so-called “Macarian” homilies. Outler himself later made the shift from “modern” to “postmodern” culture quite explicitly, and I am convinced that his embracing the postmodern outlook lay in the background of his rather sad estrangement from his erstwhile ally, Dean Joseph Quillian of S.M.U., who remained to the very end a staunch advocate of old-style Liberalism. In any case, Outler’s comment about Wesley and Gregory of Nyssa was followed up in the late 1960s by Robert Sheffield Brightman, then a doctoral student at Boston University, who wrote an ecumenically inspired imaginary dialogue between Wesley and Gregory of Nyssa. Brightman himself was convinced that Outler’s argument about direct influence of the Cappadocians via the Macarian literature was mistaken.1

In the 1980s the quest for ancient Christianity in Wesley became something of a passion throughout the Wesleyan world. Kelley Steve McCormick, an elder of the
Church of the Nazarene, offered a 1983 Drew dissertation on "John Wesley's Use of John Chrysostom on the Christian Life." I was myself part of this quest, offering an S.M.U. dissertation (with Outler as an amicus curiae to the dissertation committee) in 1984 on Wesley's vision of ancient Christianity. In the next year, a dissertation was presented at St. Louis University on "John Wesley and the Church Fathers" by Arthur C. Meyers, a professor of economics at that (Jesuit) University, whose exposure to Catholic Christianity there prompted him to investigate his own Methodist tradition's Catholic roots. At about the same time in Sweden, a scholar named Bengt Haglund began work on a dissertation in this area as early as 1981; but Haglund died tragically in 1987 without finishing his research. Throughout this period, Professor Roberta Bondi of Emory University had taught a course in Wesley's patristic roots, and published at least two articles reflecting this interest. Moreover, a student of Professor Bondi's, Dr. Hoo-Jung Lee (now at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul) offered a dissertation at Emory in 1991 on "The Doctrine of New Creation in the Theology of John Wesley," including a chapter on Wesley's appropriation of ancient Eastern Christian literature.

In addition to these individual works, at least two scholarly conferences have addressed the issue of the ancient or Eastern roots of John Wesley's theology. The Wesley Studies Working Group of the 1982 Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, including Outler, Bondi, Haglund, and myself, heard a paper from Professor Bondi on this topic, and included in its published recommendations the suggestion that this research should be pursued further. Eight years later, the 1990 annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society (meeting at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo) focused on the theme of 'Wesleyanism and Eastern Orthodoxy,' and heard a number of papers on these themes. I would call attention to the fact that the Wesleyan Theological Society is a conservative evangelical body, representing the Holiness tradition of North American Wesleyanism, and it is, I think, quite significant that this group would have taken up (with great enthusiasm) the question of Wesley's roots in ancient Christianity.

Throughout the decade of the 1980s, then, the subject of John Wesley's knowledge and uses of ancient sources became a consistent thematic enterprise in Wesleyan studies. Coming from North America, Sweden, and Korea, from men and women, from older and younger scholars, from Conservative Evangelicals and scholars of Methodism's liberal traditions, it represents at least an impressive coincidence of interests. It represents, I believe, Methodism's recovering sense of self-identity as a Christian tradition with deep roots, and provides a point of contact for our attempts to bridge the Benedictine and Methodist traditions.

WESLEY'S ANCIENT CHRISTIAN SOURCES

What, then, were the ancient sources on which John Wesley relied, and which piqued the interest of so many Methodist investigators in the last decade? There were at least two occasions in which John Wesley himself laid out in a kind of schematic form his understanding of these deep roots. One comes in his sermon "On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel, near the City Road, London" (1777). After asserting
that Methodism is nothing less than the religion of the Bible. Wesley then claimed continuity between the Bible and the early church in the following "act of traditioning":

This is the religion of the primitive Church, of the whole Church in the purest ages. It is clearly expressed, even in the small remains of Clement Romans, Ignatius, and Polycarp; it is seen more at large in the writings of Tertullian, Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Cyprian; and, even in the fourth century, it was found in the works of Chrysostom, Basil, Ephrem Syrus, and Macarius.12

This passage is particularly revealing of Wesley's conception of ancient Christianity. Century divisions are clearly laid out, with the Apostolic Fathers (here, Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna) representing the second century, the quartet of Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Cyprian (all Africans) representing the third century, and "even" (note the surprise on Wesley's part) in the fourth century John Chrysostom, Basil (the Great, Bishop of Caesarea), Ephraem Syrus and Macarius "the Egyptian." Wesley's evaluative traditioning is clearly present here. With the exception of Clement of Rome and the third-century quartet of Africans, the entire list is composed of Christians from the eastern Mediterranean. Conspicuously absent from this list are Latin writers Jerome, Augustine, and Ambrose, although the first two of these do show up in a more general list of authors, Wesley recommended for clergy to read.13

These lists offer a fairly good indication of the ancient Christian texts to which Wesley had access, and this can be substantiated by examining the sources to which Wesley frequently referred in his various writings.14 In the first place, Wesley had frequent reference to the writings of the "Apostolic Fathers," the collection of Christian writers from the early second century which includes Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and a letter of Polycarp of Smyrna to Ignatius. John Wesley not only edited, but produced his own translation of the works of the Apostolic Fathers, published in 1749 in the first volume of his Christian Library.15 The Apostolic Fathers were of particular interest to Wesley, because some eighteenth-century critics of traditional religious belief—Dr. Conyers Middleton in particular—argued that the age of miracles had ceased with the Apostles and that miraculous powers were not exercised in the Christian Church from the time of the Apostles. Wesley had just finished his translation of the Apostolic Fathers when this argument emerged, and he wrote a lengthy defense of "miraculous powers" in the early Church based especially on his reading in the Apostolic Fathers.16

As the list quoted above indicates, Wesley's preference in third century authors was for Africans, two from the Alexandrian tradition that had attempted to unite Hellenistic philosophy and Christian faith (Clement of Alexandria and Origen), and two from Roman North Africa (Tertullian and Cyprian, both of Carthage). When we turn to Wesley's preferences and selected readings in fourth-century writers, though, his particular predilection for ancient ascetic Christianity becomes apparent. We should note at this point that Wesley's view of the fourth century was colored by his consistent belief that the Church had fallen from its original purity with Constantine's conversion to Christianity. "Constantine's calling himself a Christian," John Wesley
wrote, "was productive of more evil to the Church than all the ten persecutions put together." Recalling the quotation above that true Christianity was expressed "even in the fourth century" in certain authors, we can recognize Wesley's sense that the Church at large had failed its Christian mission in this century and the true faith remained only in certain circles of fourth-century Christians.

But just what were these certain circles of fourth-century Christians amongst whom Wesley thought the true faith had persisted beyond Constantine? The list above mentions John Chrysostom, Basil the Great (one of the Cappadocians), Ephraem Syrus, and "Macarius." What should be noted about this group is that all of them were monks. Monasticism as we know it had originated roughly simultaneously with Constantine's conversion, and spread rapidly from the Egyptian deserts around the Eastern rim of the Mediterranean, with particular monastic traditions developing in Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor. Thus, although Wesley never says it quite like this, the fact is that the pockets of pure Christianity he recognized in the fourth century were exclusively those circles of Christian monks whose asceticism marked a reaction against the Constantinian alliance of Roman culture and Christianity.

The Spiritual Homilies attributed to "Macarius the Egyptian" deserve special notice, for although Wesley read and quoted Chrysostom, Basil, Ephraem Syrus, and other ancient authors, he actually published an edition of the Macarian Homilies, which followed the translation of the Apostolic Fathers in the first volume of his Christian Library. Outler's thesis concerning the influence of Gregory of Nyssa on John Wesley relied on a theory (of Werner Jaeger) that the "Spiritual Homilies" were a redaction of Nyssa's work. This theory has been generally rejected, both with respect to the Macarian literature and then further with respect to its influence on John Wesley. It is at this point that Professor Hoo-Jung Lee makes an important contribution, arguing that the Macarian homilies in themselves (and not as a reflection of Cappadocian theology) should be seen as a significant source of John Wesley's doctrine of holiness and sanctification.

It is instructive, especially in light of Methodist-Benedictine conversations in this conference, to consider Wesley's thoughts on Augustine of Hippo, the near-contemporary of the Cappadocians whose thought was so influential on Western theology in the Middle Ages and in the Reformation. Although Wesley could quote Augustine positively, and in fact did quote Augustine more than any other ancient author, he could also heap caustic criticism on the Bishop of Hippo Regius. "[A] wonderful saint!" Wesley wrote of Augustine on one occasion, "As full of pride, passion, bitterness, censoriousness, and as foul-mouthed to all that contradicted him as George Fox himself." Wesley was convinced, for example, that Augustine's furious response to Pelagius had mistaken Pelagius's laudable insistence on the necessity of good works with the false notion that good works could win human beings salvation. This is especially interesting, considering that Pelagius (probably) and the "Semi-Pelagians" (certainly), such as Vincent of Lerins and John Cassian, represented the traditions of ancient asceticism, in which a stress on good works in sanctification was prominent. Ancient ascetic Christianity, then, played a critical role in John Wesley's conception of the Christian vision. It suggested the possibility that long after the age of the apostles, and even after the disastrous effects of "Constantine's calling himself a Christian,"
true Christianity could persevere in history. Wesley saw the spirituality of asceticism, especially earlier Eastern asceticism, as reflecting faithfully the Gospel challenge to be conformed to the image of Christ, and he saw ancient ascetic Christianity as reflecting more faithfully the Gospel's mandate that good works ought to accompany true Christian faith.

ANCIENT ASCETICISM AND WESLEY'S CONCERN FOR SANCTIFICATION

The preceding comments have offered a sketch of how John Wesley thought of ancient Christianity, showing the prominence of ancient ascetic Christianity in his vision. It is also important to consider, I believe, how Wesley actually utilized or employed these notions of ancient ascetic Christianity in his work of reform in the eighteenth-century British church and in particular in his advocacy of sanctification.

We should be aware of the fact that John Wesley was not the first European in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to call upon ancient ascetic sources for understanding the process of sanctification. This had been a particular preoccupation of Anglican moralists in the late seventeenth century. Most prominently, Wesley had studied and later produced an edition of William Cave's Primitive Christianity: Or the Religion of the Ancient Christians, which had been published in 1672. Cave's book was divided in such a way as to show the false charges brought against ancient Christians (Part I), the private virtues of the ancient Christians (Part II) and the public virtues of the ancient Christians (Part III). Wesley had also read Cave's massive volumes entitled Apostolici (the lives of Christians prior to Constantine) and Ecclesiastici (on the lives of Christians after the time of Constantine), both of which paint laudatory portraits of the holiness of the early Christians. He was aware of a large body of Anglican literature that pointed to the model of the ancient church as a model for the reform of Anglicanism. One example of this literature would be Nathaniel Marshall's The Penitential Discipline of the Ancient Church, a proposal to the Anglican Convocation for reintroducing public confession into the Church of England.

In addition to Anglicans, Wesley was aware of and published editions of works of European Pietists who had called upon ancient Christianity as a model for contemporary holiness. Johann Arndt, whose works in the early 1600s lay in the background of Lutheran Pietism, was said to have memorized the fifty spiritual homilies attributed to "St. Macarius the Egyptian," and reflected the influence of these ancient mystical homilies throughout his four-volume work on True Christianity. This work, in turn, was read widely by Lutherans throughout the seventeenth century, and in this way it came to influence the Pietistic movement. Philip Jakob Spener's treatise entitled Pia Desideria, one of the first Pietist manifestos and originally an introduction to one of Arndt's works, has a section describing our "hope for better conditions in the Church," and one of Spener's points was that the extraordinary holiness of the ancient Church gives us grounds to hope that even in later generations such holiness might be realized in the life of the Church.

In addition to Anglicans and Pietists who had called on ancient Christian literature, Wesley was also aware of a strain of Catholic literature (largely Gallican) that had also held the vision of ancient Christianity as a model for Christian holiness in the pre-
sent time. For example, he had read as early as his days in Georgia Claude Fleury's *Mœurs des Chrétiens* the "Manners of the Ancient Christians" (1682), and Wesley eventually published his own edition of this work. Moreover, Wesley knew of a little treatise on "the Heavenly Lives of the Primitive Christians," attached to Anthony Horneck's work *The Happy Ascetic*. This work was based on a letter (1660) from Jean Fronteau, chancellor of the University of Paris, to Francis de Hartlay-Chanvallon, Archbishop of Rouen. Wesley would publish editions of both of these works, and in them he again found "pre-packaged" literature on ancient Christianity that linked the vision of holiness in the ancient church to the contemporary attempt at Christian renewal.

What, then, did Wesley find in ancient ascetic Christianity that he valued and passed along ("traditioned") to the Methodist people? This is a question that I have tried to avoid for a decade now. Albert Outler had pressed me to demonstrate, in my 1984 S.M.U. dissertation, that Wesley's understanding of sanctification was one drawn principally from ancient Eastern Christian ascetic sources. I resisted this grace, arguing that it is virtually impossible to weigh the relative strength of the influence of various sources over twelve hundred years of history. But even if we cannot weigh these influences, the question still remains as to what Wesley valued and selected, concerning the pursuit of sanctification, in these ancient ascetic sources. I now attempt to answer this question directly by suggesting five particular legacies of ancient monasticism that Wesley valued.

1. In the very first place, I would stress that Wesley's interest in ancient asceticism was not only in the theology that he found in those ages, but more importantly *in the actual holiness he perceived in the ancient monks*. This can be easily seen by considering his comments on ancient Christian saints. He refers to Ephraem Syrus ("St. Ephraem Syrus," for Wesley) as "the man of a broken heart," i.e., one who reflected consistently the virtue of humility of spirit. Similarly, Wesley's edition of the Macarian homilies in his *Christian Library* has the following preface remarks (actually taken over from the English translation of Macarius to which Wesley had access):

What (Macarius) continually labours to cultivate in himself and others is, the real life of God in the heart and soul, that kingdom of God, which consists in right-eousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost... He seems indeed never to be easy, but either in the height, or breadth, or length of divine love, or at least in the depths of humility."

Similar references are plentiful. The point I wish to make here is that Wesley not only valued the *theology* of ancient ascetic Christianity (this is the point most frequently made in academic circles); more importantly he saw ancient asceticism (in this case represented by "Macarius" and Ephraem Syrus) as *actually living out a life of Christ-like holiness*, both as individual spiritual guides and as "primitive" Christian communities. The vision of the ancient ascetics, then, was part of John Wesley's comprehensive act of envisioning how the church might be, how it *should* be, in eighteenth-century Britain. In this respect, the vision of ancient ascetic Christianity was pitted against the lack of spirituality and holiness in Wesley's own culture, and specifically in
his own Church. I want to stress this point, because most of the research on Wesley and ancient Christianity to date has tended to stress theological or doctrinal connections. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature with which Wesley was familiar, and his own use of this material, suggests that in the first place it was the moral or spiritual model that he found in ancient Christianity that he primarily valued: not just their doctrine of sanctification but rather their actual holiness.

2. In the second place, then, I would stress the similarities between Wesley's doctrine of sanctification and that of ancient Christian asceticism. In particular, Wesley's understanding of the religious life as the quest to restore the lost image of God, a version of theesis, has direct precedents in the ancient monastic writings to which Wesley appealed. The Robert Sheffield Brightman dissertation on John Wesley and Gregory of Nyssa stresses the similarities between the understanding of holiness shared by Wesley and Nyssa: both insisted that the goal of humankind is the restoration of the divine image, lost since the fall. At this point Professor Hoo-Jung Lee has made another important point. Professor Lee shows that Wesley's vision of the restoration of the divine image is linked to Wesley's overall vision of the goal of all creation, namely, the restoration of the whole of creation to the reign of God that is implied in the Macarian literature and made even more explicit in Ephraem Syrus.

It is important to remember, as I have stated above, that there were also prominent Catholic and Anglican precedents for Wesley's stress on sanctification and holiness in addition to the these ancient Eastern Christian sources. Perhaps most notably would be the Anglican devotional literature that had been written in the seventeenth century, and to which Susanna Wesley referred as 'practical divinity.' Given the importance of Catholic and Anglican and even Puritan literature in Wesley's comprehensive vision of Christian life, it may not be the case that ancient ascetic Christianity was the primary source of Wesley's view of sanctification (as Outler implied on a number of occasions). But nevertheless, Wesley found ancient monastic understandings of sanctification generally consistent with his stress on the necessity of holiness and good works following conversion. This became particularly crucial in Wesley's polemic against "antinomianism" in the Revival, and I suspect that Wesley's publication of the Macarian homilies along with Anglican, Puritan, and Catholic devotional literature in his Christian Library was both to illustrate holiness itself (cf. the previous point) and also to suggest to his doctrinal detractors that the insistence on holiness and good works was a consistent mark of the purest traditions of the Church, East and West.

3. In the third place, I would argue that Wesley's understanding of religious communion and communal discipline was grounded in ancient Christian ascetic practice, although this too was "traditioned" or handed on to Wesley by European Pietism, Puritanism, and by the "Religious Societies" movement in Britain. Wesley's "General Rules" of the United Societies functioned as terms of communion for early Methodists. Again, they were not doctrinal terms of communion but moral ones. My colleague David Lowes Watson has shown that the attempt to live by the covenant supplied by the General Rules was the primary activity of early Methodist class meetings, which may have appeared more like a "twelve-step" meeting than like a contemporary Christian prayer meeting. Moreover, Wesley made it clear that he saw the
Methodist institutions of classes, societies, and even their practice of determining "communion" at the Love Feast by the use of "class tickets" as grounded in the eucharistic discipline of the ancient church.\(^{13}\)

Now one might define monasticism as a form of Christian life which establishes distinctive criteria for communion in addition to or beyond the criteria for communion established by the church at large. That is to say, monasticism develops a religious community with particular standards for its own adherents, such as traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and these particular criteria are not required of Christians in the church at large. The monastic community admits members to its particular community, and can also practice a form of "excommunication" which does not imply excommunication from the church at large.

It is in this particular sense that early Methodism could be described as a "monastic" movement. Its members did not take traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, although voluntary celibacy and poverty (and obedience to the Conference) were in fact prominent features of the lives of early Methodist preachers. Most importantly, the system of Methodist "classes" and "societies" and "bands" did in fact establish criteria for community beyond those of Anglicanism at large, and even established grounds for a kind of Methodist "excommunication" that did not imply excommunication from Anglicanism. As a "society" within the Church of England, Methodism functioned parallel to the way in which religious orders had functioned in Catholicism, and one of the most intriguing contemporary proposals for Methodist identity is that Methodists should align themselves globally not as a church or denomination, but rather as a kind of "religious order" whose distinctive membership cuts across the boundaries of existing ecclesial communions or new ecumenical unions.\(^{14}\)

4. In the fourth place, Wesley's use of therapeutic imagery, and especially his attempt to catalog spiritual "illnesses," had clear precedents in ancient ascetic literature. Wesley considered himself to be something of a scientist of the religious life: constantly jotting down notes about his own and other peoples' spiritual experiences, "searching the scriptures" for their light on spiritual experience, and writing up his sermons, many of which stand as generalized treatises on specific aspects of the religious life. Among these Sermons, a number deal with specific spiritual problems faced by seekers and believers: "Heaviness through Manifold Temptations," "Wandering Thoughts," "The Wilderness State," and the like. Wesley developed something like a scientific taxonomy of spiritual problems, and wanted his Methodist leaders to be able to diagnose them and prescribe their various cures.

In this enterprise, Wesley found ancient ascetic writers to be especially helpful. In his sermon on "The Scripture Way of Salvation," he cites a passage from the Macarian Homilies to illustrate the problem of believers who have been lulled into a (false) sense that they no longer have inward sin.\(^{15}\) Similarly, Wesley cites a long story from Ephraem Syrus in his Journal illustrating the need for the repentance of believers.\(^{16}\) In these ways, the ancient monastic writers were valued for their long experience in spiritual matters, especially their ability to identify the consistent problems that believers faced.

5. Finally, and in the fifth place, Wesley's vision of the goal of sanctification, Christian
perfection, seems to have clear precedents in ancient ascetic literature, though again there was a long process of traditioning in which Catholic, Anglican, and some Protestant sources played their parts. John Wesley consistently taught that the process of sanctification is culminated in "entire sanctification" or "Christian perfection," which he understood to mean the goal (telos) of loving God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Wesley's early poem "on Clemens Alexandrinus's Description of a Perfect Christian" calls upon Clement's description of the goal of Christian perfection. It begins with the stanza:

Here from afar the finish'd Height
Of Holiness is seen:
But O what heavy tracts of Toil,
What Deserts lie between. 37

Wesley later stated that his treatise on "The Character of a Methodist" was also based on the description of a perfect Christian in Clement's Stromates. 38

It is likely that the reason why Wesley was attracted to the Spiritual Homilies attributed to "Macarius of Egypt" was because of the stress that the Homilies laid on the goal of Christian perfection. Indeed, these Homilies, as other ancient ascetic literature, regarded the goal of humankind as "deification" (theosis or apotheosis); but it is important to note that Wesley eliminated this controversial term from his edition of the Homilies, replacing it typically with "sanctification." 39 The Homilies speak of a "Sanctification of the Spirit" which can be termed "an Entire Redemption from Sin," 40 or "the Baptism of Fire and of the Holy Ghost." 41 Similarly, those who attain spiritual perfection are described in the Homilies as "baptized into the Holy Spirit." 42 The Christian's quest for holiness and perfection is a persistent theme in the Macarian Homilies which shines through Wesley's edition of them. 43 Wesley saw "Macarius," then, as a fourth century advocate of the quest for perfection Wesley believed to have characterized the church as a whole in its purer ages.

CONCLUSION: ANCIENT ROOTS, METHODIST ROOTS AND THE CONTEMPORARY ECUMENICAL QUEST FOR CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

I have tried to suggest in the foregoing paragraphs that the traditions of ancient Christian asceticism provide a common tradition for both Benedictine and Methodist understandings of sanctification. From the monks of the ancient church to Benedict of Nursia these traditions came by way of the Western monastic traditions of John Cassian, strongly influenced by the theology and spirituality of Augustine of Hippo. For John Wesley, the inheritance of ancient Christian monasticism came through a variety of sources, especially by way of Anglican and Gallican theologians and spiritual writers who found in Christian antiquity a vision or pattern for the renewal of the church in their own times. There were other paths by which the inheritance of ancient monasticism came to Wesley, perhaps most notably in the fact that the Book of Common Prayer had taken up the Benedictine tradition of lectio continua.

Beyond the historical linkages between our traditions, this conference must also
address the ways in which Benedictine and Methodist traditions about sanctification have diverged from each other. As an Evangelical Methodist, I am inclined to stress that Methodists and Evangelicals more broadly have developed their own distinctive spiritual traditions, embracing theological understandings of the "way of salvation," "moments" in Christian experience such as "awakening," repentance, conversion, and possibly subsequent experiences, even their own "institutions" for spiritual development, such as revivals, camp meetings, testimonial gatherings, hymn sings, and the like. It will be important in this gathering to consider not only our common roots, but also the distinctive gifts that our traditions have developed on their own over the centuries past.

But let not our distinctive developments hinder our sense of common roots in Christian history and experience. Those of us who work in clergy education in North America have seen a considerable revival of interest in traditional forms of spirituality in the last decades. One of the most interesting developments has been the rise of interest on the part of Evangelical Christians in monastic and ascetic spirituality. This is, I believe, a peculiarly Evangelical response to the postmodern cultural condition in which the search for deeper roots or traditions has become so prominent. The time is ripe, I think, for such a meeting as this to consider our common heritage, our distinctive gifts, and the challenge that we may together lay before the world today the challenge to be conformed to the image of Christ.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Notes

2. I should note at this point that although the title "Wesley's Use of the Church Fathers" was suggested for this paper, the term "Church Fathers" itself implies a way of traditioining with which I am uncomfortable, since it seems to favor male writers of antiquity. I shall prefer the expressions 'ancient Christian writers,' etc. to 'Church Fathers' in the text following.
11. The papers of the conference were published in The Wesleyan Theological Journal 26:1 (Spring 1991), and Randy Maddox's programmatic essay for the conference, "John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy: Influences, Convergences, and Divergences" along with an article by Howard Snyder on "John Wesley and Macarius the Egyptian" appeared in the Asbury Theological Journal 45:2 (Fall 1990), pp. 29-53 and 55-60, respectively.
13. In the “Address to the Clergy” 1:2 (Jackson, ed., Works, 10:484), and even here Wesley reserves his highest praise for the Eastern writer Ephraem Syrus.
14. These sources are tabulated in my dissertation (see reference above, “John Wesley’s Conceptions and Uses of Christian Antiquity”), appendix 3, pp. 324-338 and in John Wesley and Christian Antiquity, appendix 2, pp. 125-134.
15. John Wesley, ed., A Christian Library: Consisting of Extracts from and Abrifedgements of the Choicest Pieces of Practical Divinity which have been Published in the English Language (50 vols.; Bristol: Felix Farley, 1749-1755), 13-78. My own comparison of Wesley’s version and the earlier translation of (Archbishop) William Wake shows that Wesley began his work as a fresh translation, but as he progressed he relied more and more consistently on Wake’s translation; William Wake, trans., The Genuine Epistles of the Apostatical Fathers (London: Richard Sare, 1693).
36. In Jackson, Works, 3:56-59; and in W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heinzenrater, eds.,
70  Campbell


38. John Wesley, "The Character of a Methodist," in Jackson, ed., *Works*, 8:339–347. Wesley's note that this was based on Clement of Alexandria is given in the *Journals* for 5 March 1767 (Jackson 3:273; Cummock 5:197).


43. A tabulation of passages dealing with holiness and perfection included in Wesley's edition of the Macarian homilies is given in Campbell, "John Wesley’s Conceptions and Uses of Christian Antiquity," appendix 4.
The theme of this conference, sanctification in the Methodist and Benedictine traditions, has a profoundly personal quality for me. Having been born and raised in the Holiness movement of American Methodism, and formed in the Benedictine tradition as a young adult, the call to sanctification has been, and remains, of central importance in my life. Yet I am no longer an active member of either of these traditions. Given the seriousness of my pursuit of holiness in childhood, adolescence, and early manhood, I have struggled to understand the impact of these traditions on my life. My hope is that this reflection on the spiritual journey of a Methodist/Benedictine pilgrim will be a useful case study, highlighting concerns that these movements should consider as you ponder their missions in the Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions.

There is a growing trend among academics to use their own autobiographical reflections as texts to be probed and analyzed. This mode of inquiry enables the writer to bring to her audience rare personal experiences, and to provide a critical evaluation of that life journey. Autobiographical reflections are not a foreign genre to the Benedictine and Methodist traditions. Indeed, over the centuries Methodists and Benedictines have found confirmation of the call to sanctification in the life stories of women and men who have recorded their response to God's call to live holy lives.

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This presentation draws on both autobiographical traditions, using autobiographical reflections as a text to be analyzed, and personal experiences of God's call to sanctification as an additional witness to the believer's mission to grow into perfect love of God and humanity. To accomplish this task, Friedrich von Huegel's three elements of religion will be introduced as an analytical tool, followed by a study of experiences in the Holiness tradition of the American South and in the Benedictine tradition of the United States. The concluding assessment may offer insights into issues that confront Benedictines and Methodists, as they witness to the importance of sanctification in the lives of all Christians.

Baron Friedrich von Huegel, a German nobleman who was born in Florence in 1852 and lived most of his life in England, was deeply interested in what he called the mystical element of religion. He recognized that religion was neither simple, "in the sense of being a monotonous, a mere oneness, a whole without parts," nor was it a "mere multiplicity, a mere congeries of parts without a whole." He sought to understand the complex nature of the faith experience, and develop a means of evaluating how this complexity is best harmonized.

These studies led the Baron to conclude that there are three basic elements to religious experience. These are not discrete stages, but aspects of personal faith that are always present to a greater or lesser degree. The first of these is sense and memory, or "the child's means of apprehending religion." This aspect of religion relies on external stimuli and authorities in one's life. The symbols and rituals of religious practice excite the imagination. The religious instruction received from parents, clergy, and others in dominant roles have a profound influence on early understandings of religious faith. Within this element, religion is "a Fact and Thing."2

The second element is "question and argument," or "the youth's mode of approaching religion." The Baron observes that as a human grows, the wonder and awe that external religion inspires also stimulates curiosity and questions, especially as the youth encounters conflicting ideas and assertions about religion. As Friedrich von Huegel explained,

"The old impressions get now more and more consciously sought out, and selected from among other conflicting ones, the facts seem to clamour for reasons to back them, against the other hostile facts and appearances, or at least against those men in books, if not in life, who dare to question and reject them."

It is at this point that the rational, disputatious, and abstractive aspect of human nature plays a role. In this second element, religion is "Thought, System, a Philosophy."3

The Baron's third element of religion is "intuition, feeling, and volitional requirements and evidences" or the ethico-mystical dimension of faith. This is the most difficult to define, and yet is the most essential for a complete and full religious experience. This element comes to the fore as,

Certain interior experiences, certain deep-seated spiritual pleasures and pains,
weaknesses and powers, helps and hindrances, are increasingly known and felt in and through interior and exterior action, and interior suffering, effort, and growth.

Friedrich von Huegel explained that in this element a human's emotional, volitional, ethical, and spiritual powers are in ever-increasing motion. He observed that in this aspect of the faith experience, "religion is rather felt than seen or reasoned about, is loved and lived rather than analyzed, is action and power, rather than either external fact or intellectual verification." In this element a human reaches the most mature experience of religion; for the principles and teachings of the faith are not simply a fact taken on the authority of an external source, or a system of thought that merits intellectual assent, but a lived reality that permeates the interior reflections and external actions of the believer.

Friedrich von Huegel stressed that these are not isolated developments, but are elements of the whole experience of religion. He argued that when these are cultivated and permitted to function in harmony, they create for the believer, "indubitable sensation, clear thought, [and] warm faith in and through action." In evaluating his own religious experience, he observed, "I believe because I am told, because it is true, because it answers to my deepest interior experiences and needs." It is within this triad that a healthy and life-giving faith grows and matures.

In looking at the history of Christianity, the Baron concluded that this balance is rare. He observed that the tendency in religious movements is to disparage or discard one or two elements in favor of another; rather than permitting the others to supplement, stimulate, and purify the preferred element of religion that gave focus and vitality to the movement. Although his study does not discuss Methodism and only mentions Benedictines in passing, I have found his three elements of religion powerful analytical tools as I have sought to understand my experiences and response to the Methodist and Benedictine calls to sanctification. What follows is not a theological explication of sanctification; it is a description of the lived experience of one who found the call to sanctification a compelling force in his life.

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I was born in Elkin, N.C., in 1954. It was a small town located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, dominated by a textile mill on the Yadkin River. My father, Clyde Parker, was the pastor of a small Pilgrim Holiness congregation, part of a denomination that drew inspiration from the Methodist and Quaker traditions, and was created in the 1920s out of a collection of holiness churches, prayer unions, and missionary societies. Starting with a tiny congregation of no more than forty, my father built a church of over 250 members, largely from among the poorest and most neglected people of that very religious Southern town. We were a congregation of working-class people, whose lives had been radically changed by the faith preached by my father.

My earliest memories are infused with religious significance—three church services each week, evening prayers by my bed, and Mother's determined efforts to help my older brother and I memorize the scriptures. It was also clear from my earliest forma-
tion that we were different from others who called themselves Christian. We took the faith seriously; lived it more conscientiously, and believed more correctly than those who lived around us. This meant that we dressed differently, spoke differently, and behaved differently. We were a people set apart.

When I was barely three years old these lessons had made a deep impression on my imagination. I knew that everyone comes into the world with a serious problem called sin, and because of this we do things that hurt God and other people. God had to punish these bad actions, because he loves good and hates evil. People who died and were not sorry for their sins were sent to a terrible place called hell, where they burned forever in a fire that never went out. But Jesus came into the world to help us change, and became like him—a child of God. This was the way we were saved: by being sorry for our sins and asking Jesus to come into our hearts and help us change. I wanted to be a child of God, so I prayed and asked God to forgive me for all the bad things I had done. I did not want to go to hell.

Sunday was the busiest day of the week. The morning was always a blur of activity, with music to be practiced and members of the congregation coming to the parsonage to ask questions and offer assistance with the church’s many projects. Dad was usually in his bedroom, half whispering, half speaking his sermon, searching for the right emphasis or place for a dramatic pause.

I always sat on the front pew, where Mother joined me after she had finished playing the organ. The architecture of our sanctuary was dominated by a large wooden pulpit, which stood at the center of the platform. Behind the pulpit were oversized wooden chairs where my father and the song director sat. A piano and electric organ flanked the pulpit, and the entire platform was bordered by a carpeted step and railing. We called this the altar, or “mourners’ bench,” for it was here that sinners came and knelt to give their souls to God and ask forgiveness for their sins.

The services followed a set pattern: opening prayer, two hymns, announcements, pastoral prayer, collection of tithes and offerings, special music, sermon, an altar call, and the closing prayer. There was never any hint of formality in our worship. Often hymns and sermons were punctuated by the cries and shouts of one of the saints of the church; and frequently after Dad’s pastoral prayer someone would stand up and tell of a great work that God had done in their life. There were often tears of joy and heart-rending sobs. It was not uncommon for one of the faithful to walk the aisles of the church, waving a handkerchief and shouting “Glory!” and “Praise Jesus!” We were not Pentecostalists and condemned the use of “unknown tongues”; but religion was very emotional for us and we were encouraged to express it.

Dad’s preaching had a sing-song quality in my early childhood, and as he proceeded from point to point and approached the climax of his message, his voice would become raspy and beseeching. The peril of sin was great and the need to repent urgent. If I understood nothing else of what he said, that was always clear. The recurring themes of his preaching were salvation and sanctification—the two pillars of the American Holiness tradition.

Even as a small child, I knew from Dad’s sermons that to go to heaven I had to pass through “two crisis experiences.” The first crisis was a recognition that I was a sin-
ner, who desired to repent and seek God's forgiveness. This act of repentance could be made anywhere, not simply at the altar in church, and with it came salvation. But this was just the beginning. As one grew in the Christian life the presence of the "old man of sin" would become increasingly apparent, for like Saint Paul the newly-saved found that he continued in sin, even as he tried to resist it (Rom. 7:14-20). This realization led to the "second crisis experience," when the saved person sought the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the removal of all sinful desires from his life. From this point forward the sanctified believer would be guided by the Holy Spirit and avoid sin. This second work of grace infused in the believer a state of sinless perfection. Empowered by God's grace, the sanctified believer could accomplish great things and endure with gladness the sacrifice of cherished goals and aspirations to further the cause of the gospel.

But there was a terrifying caveat to this message. It was always possible to return to the old ways and fall from grace. This was called back-sliding. If this occurred, the believer had to begin the process anew. God was endlessly patient in this lifetime, but if one died with the smallest stain of sin, God's justice required the severe penalty of eternal punishment in hell.

Dad's sermons were always followed by an altar call. Mother would quietly go to the organ and play an appropriate hymn. One of these is still among my favorites:

Just as I am without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Dad's sermons were very effective; for even at the tender age of four and five I thought a great deal about the terrible consequences of neglecting God's call to live a sanctified life. For this reason my earliest memories include frequent trips to the altar, Mother's gentle supplications for my soul, and the happiness and encouraging smiles that greeted me when I rose from "the mourners' bench."

But what was this sanctified state—this holy life? In my childhood that state was understood as a series of clear injunctions and prohibitions: regular attendance at church, tithing faithfully, keeping Sunday holy, and dressing modestly. We were forbidden to curse or swear, drink alcoholic beverages, smoke tobacco, play card games, dance, or go to movies. We were to love those who treated us badly, and show kindness when others were cruel to us. For a religiously minded boy with a tender conscience, these were demanding standards that were frequently broken. Back-sliding was a daily ritual, as were my prayers for salvation and sanctification. God was loving but just. I feared God's justice.

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As childhood gave way to adolescence, the religious reality in which I lived began to fracture. Travels to other countries opened my eyes to new cultures and customs. Books that were read suggested other ways of viewing the world and life. I encoun-
tered people who did not share my vision of Christianity, but spoke seriously about the Christian life. Even more troubling, I came to know people who rejected religious belief, and yet were kind, generous, and wise. My questions and search for explanations about our doctrines and practice rarely resulted in serious dialogue, but frequently with cautions about over-intellectualizing the faith. I came to question the prohibitions that set me apart from my peers; and began to secretly break the old taboos of movie-going, drinking, and smoking. By the second year of undergraduate studies, my Holiness faith was shattered. I hated the god of my childhood and would rather suffer an eternity in hell than live the tenuous existence my childhood faith seemed to require.

I rejected Christianity as I understood it, but soon realized that I could not live without religious faith. I sought another way. This process began with a rereading of the Bible, and a rediscovery of the consolation, comfort, and joy that was to be found in those texts. The search continued as I began to explore other Christian traditions, and found in the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions forms of Christianity that were to change my vision of the faith. In the Book of Common Prayer, I discovered theological concepts that were foreign to my childhood faith—the most important of these being that Christians sin and regularly seek God's forgiveness without fear of rejection or damnation. Another factor was more profound, and has remained a guiding force in my life—mystical, healing encounters with Christ in the Eucharist. Having devoted the last year of my undergraduate studies to ecclesiastical history and polity, I decided to pursue graduate studies in Medieval and Reformation theology.

As I began the study of historical theology at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, I longed to gain a better understanding of the Roman Catholic tradition. My desire was soon satisfied by friendship with one of the few Roman Catholics on campus, a Benedictine monk. His community was located in the Mojave desert, only an hour from the seminary. I became a frequent visitor. As my studies at Fuller progressed, I found myself increasingly drawn to the way of life at Saint Andrew's Abbey. It became clear that if the holiness faith of my family represented one pole of my religious life, this Benedictine community represented the other pole of my faith experience. During the second year of my studies, the community generously invited me to live with them as a Protestant observer. It was a turning point in my life.

While they were faithful to the historic faith shared by all Roman Catholics, they were different. They dressed differently, spoke differently, and behaved differently. We were a people set apart. Their lives were committed to a regular regime of prayer and meditation on the scriptures. They renounced marriage and lived without personal property. They lived in obedience to a superior. Those who came as visitors and retreatants were visibly moved by this radical witness to the truth that life is about more than money, sex, and power. Because I lived in the community for a time, I was aware of the failings and weaknesses of the brethren. Yet this only strengthened the appeal, for here were broken men, in need of healing, who had nevertheless answered the call to grow into holy and sanctified ways of living.

I was deeply attracted to this way of life, but academic goals proved more compelling. I decided to complete my graduate work, and was accepted for doctoral stud-
The summer before entering Saint Andrew’s, a wise old monk in Belgium warned that one did not truly understand the demands of monastic life until it was lived. His words proved to be true. It was not simply adjusting to a new daily rhythm or the brethren in the monastery. I felt parts of me dying—and that was frightening.

For more than a decade I had grown accustomed to almost complete freedom in ordering my day. Though well-disciplined and hard-working as a student and scholar, my schedule revolved around my interests and desires. At Saint Andrew’s each day was structured around five liturgical services and two periods of lectio divina. There were two work periods and classes each weekday, as well as kitchen duties for each meal. My primary work tasks were sweeping, mopping, dusting, and cleaning toilets and showers. The only time that was free of responsibilities was an hour and a half each afternoon.

Having moved to new locations seven times in thirteen years, ways of dealing with new places, people, and circumstances had developed. However, Saint Andrew’s Abbey thwarted all of these coping mechanisms. The most profound difference was that unlike other living situations, the abbey was a place to which I was committed—not a temporary stop on the way to something better. I had to learn to live with the men around me, not simply cope with them for a time. It became obvious that this ideal was fraught with difficulties, created by others and myself.

I was also jolted by the realization that while the brethren valued my past accomplishments, these made little difference in the role I played in community. While the solemnly professed monks discussed community matters in chapter, I was assigned to clean toilets. When Protestants arrived to talk about the Catholic experience, I served coffee and then swept and mopped the kitchen floor.

This is not to say that I did not comply. Indeed, I sought to excel in living within the new restrictions, feeling very keenly my “virtue” in so doing. As I sweated, mopping the kitchen and refectory floors, I reflected on the marvel that a “Cambridge Ph.D.” should do such work. While wiping scum off neglected toilets, I meditated on this great sacrifice of time that could be devoted to teaching and writing. With self-satisfaction, I took pleasure in publicly asking permissions—demonstrating my obedience to those in authority over me.

Yet one cannot live forever in a romantic haze; nor will the brethren conspire in its preservation. As one day followed another, I felt very keenly the routine, the unrelenting regularity of the life. While I soon excelled in its simple demands, I found myself judgmental and contemptuous of brethren who could not or would not conform. I discovered in myself a capacity for rage and hatred that had previously been con-
sealed and repressed. Before many months had passed, I felt that I no longer rec-
ognized the person I had become.

In Primo Levi’s powerful and perceptive reflections on human nature “researched”
in the crucible of Auschwitz, he observed,

Imagine now a man who is deprived of everyone he loves, and at the same
time of his house, his habits, his clothes, in short, of everything he possesses; he
will become a hollow man, reduced to suffering and needs, forgetful of dignity
and restraint, for he who loses all often loses himself.¹⁹

What confronted me at Saint Andrew’s Abbey was the deconstruction of a carefully
cultivated image of myself. There I had to face the fact that I had spent many years
hiding behind that image, refusing to face dimensions of myself that did not confirm
that I was a good, even holy person. Before life in the monastery, the impulse to strike
another person had not occurred; the desire to see someone dead and “out of the
way” had not crossed my mind; the cold purity of profound hatred was something I
had not known. My first impulse was to blame the monastery for this interior turmoil.
The person emerging was not the Kenneth Parker I knew. He was a horrible distor-
tion.

In Benedictine life I found the things that had provided identity and security
stripped away: my academic degrees and education were of no value in the work I
was doing; I had little time for study, writing, and long, engaging conversations; and I
lived without the freedom of movement and access to money that had provided
escapes from situations that threatened my sense of well-being. I felt naked and vul-
nerable.

It was in this crucible of suffering and hollowness that I began to discover deeper
dimensions of my faith—and life. The old questions had to be asked again, but in the
light of new experiences: what do I identify; what is important; what is neces-
sary? Am I the degrees that have been earned, the works I publish, the financial secur-
ity I possess? Do I need freedom of movement and mastery over my time?

While definitive answers to these questions were not found, I discovered a way of
approaching the questions. The way was not new or unique; for it was the call that I
had heard in childhood, read and studied about in my youth, and found compelling in
Benedictine life. It was the call to sanctification: finding God in all that happens each
day. It is the simple profundity of this approach that conceals and obscures its value—
for it seems too obvious—yet it is not mastered in this lifetime.

As my monastic life progressed, the search for God’s presence in each daily action
and task became the focus of my reflections and prayer life. Though I remained
unable to find God at all times and in all that I experienced, it became possible with
the passing of time to live in the knowledge that my life and actions, conversations
and prayers, are all experiences of being in the presence of God. Intellectual interests
were not dismissed or rejected, but confirmed the value of this way of life. Most
remarkable for me was a previously unknown joy in the performance of ordinary
tasks, for I found God among the pots and pans, in the mundane tasks of life. I discov-
ered that the Benedictine way to sanctification is attentiveness to God’s presence in

¹⁹ See Primo Levi, The Periodic Table.
The little things in life, growing in holiness through cooperation in God’s work in the world.

After my simple profession as a monk, the superior of the monastery sent me to pursue further theological studies at the University of Fribourg. It was a painful transition, for I left the routine of my community with much regret for the academic life that was all too familiar. It was an important and wise test of my vocation to the monastic life; for during this time I came to realize that my reasons for entering the monastery were not sufficient for remaining there. I had discovered the way of sanctification that I had sought, but realized that it did not require that an academic career or marriage be sacrificed. After five years as a monk, I returned to academic life, enriched and nourished by the time spent as a Benedictine.

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When Friedrich von Huegel’s three elements of religion are applied to this brief autobiographical reflection, they highlight important issues as one analyzes one’s response to the call to sanctification in childhood and early adulthood. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this account was my childhood confusion of the first element of religion with the third element. Because of the gap between a childhood understanding of life and the faith I was encouraged to lead, I comprehended only the objectified, external definitions of sin and religious practice. However, the external experience of religion which provided a focus for my Christian world view, also called for interior responses that were only imperfectly understood at that point in my life. This confusion led to much anxiety and fear, and the construction of a self-understanding that denied the reality of sin in my life.

Adolescence brought further complications, as the second element of religion became the central focus of my religious experience. As I began to question and seek reasons for beliefs that were cherished, my religious mentors experienced this quest for reasons and explanations as a challenge to their authority. Issues of power and control obscured and detracted from theological and spiritual concerns that were shared and valued. This conflict seemed to jeopardize my integrity as a thinking human being, and I felt compelled to search for a mature understanding of Christianity elsewhere. This search was nourished by academic study and the rediscovery of the Christian sacramental tradition. The decision to become Roman Catholic was the culmination of my adolescent search for a faith experience to which I could respond with heart and intellect.

Yet the Benedictine life proved attractive, in part, because it bore striking similarities to the external religion of my childhood. The distinctiveness of the Benedictine way, manifested in dress, speech, lifestyle, and public and private prayer, were compelling aspects of my childhood understanding of true religious practice. To be Christian in the fullest sense, I desired to identify with a people who were set apart. I also brought into my Benedictine experience the childhood desire to excel in all the external demands made of me, seeking through this discipline to achieve the experience of sanctification that remained my goal in life. Indeed, I found in monastic life the heroic sacrifice of cherished goals and aspirations that my childhood faith stressed.
However, it was that very discipline and sacrifice that tested and purified my conception of the call to sanctification. I was forced to look beyond action and identity, to my interior motivation and response. My childhood understanding of sin had been stylized and objectified, something out there that could be shunned and avoided. By confronting and acknowledging the sin that separated me from God and other humans, I discovered the joy of living each day in the presence of God and experiencing God's presence in the ordinary events of life. It was the sanctification of the ordinary, to desire to find God in all people, things, and experiences, that brought into clearer focus the meaning of the call to sanctification—and the joy and peace that can come from responding to that call.

I had entered Benedictine life, responding to a model of Christianity that had been formed in childhood. Ironically, it was through the discipline of the Benedictine life, that I came to realize that an academic career and marriage need not be offered up as a sacrifice to a demanding and exacting God. I understood the truth of Psalm 40 (39),

You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings,  
but an open ear.  
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.  
Instead, here am I.

This brief reflection raises issues that deserve serious discussion. It highlights the need to respect the developmental stages of children as they are formed in the faith, avoiding pressure to respond to religion in ways that is not appropriate at their level of understanding. It illustrates the importance of responding to adolescent questions with clarity and without judgment. Finally, this study emphasizes that childhood models of religious faith and practice are powerful forces in the life of adults. This is especially important to Benedictines, as women and men increasingly enter communities in adulthood. These childhood models must be examined and understood as one seeks to grow into the Benedictine way.

In early childhood, I came to the altar of my father's church seeking the second work of grace which my Holiness faith stressed. Adolescence brought with it a struggle to comprehend this call and give it meaning and structure. In Benedictine life, I came to understand the deeper meaning and value of that ancient call, summarized in the Rule of Saint Benedict: "let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life." It is this call to sanctification that sustains me as a lay Roman Catholic theologian, who values and continues to live in the elements of religion formed in him by the Methodist and Benedictine traditions.

NOTES
2. Ibid., p. 51.
3. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
4. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
5. Ibid., p. 57.
6. Ibid., p. 54.
7. Ibid., pp. 60-65.
CONVERSION IN THE BENEDICTINE AND WESLEYAN TRADITIONS

PATRICK LYONS

SANCTIFICATION OR CONVERSION?

In a symposium on sanctification in our two traditions I have chosen to address the topic of conversion, so I need to spend some little time explaining why I have done so before undertaking it and endeavouring to formulate some questions.

The term sanctification is immediately recognisable as belonging to the tradition of John Wesley and of later Methodism. It has remained central to that tradition in the modern era when the heightened interest in ecclesiology, which it shares with other Christians, might well have lessened the emphasis on the individual quest for holiness. Modern Methodism, in its ecumenical outreach, its contribution to the developing sense of the corporateness of the Christian life, is in a sense re-discovering the earliest, Wesleyan, emphasis which did not allow the pursuit of holiness in isolation from others. John Wesley's dictum: "...no holiness but social holiness," said it all, and still does so, but the word "social" now has a wide and profoundly ecumenical connotation, as Christians explore together the idea of the church as communion. But with all the changes of emphasis there have been, sanctification remains prominent in the Methodist tradition. The convoking of this symposium is an indication that such is the case.

The situation is somewhat more complex in the Roman Catholic tradition.
and, within it, in the monastic one. In fact, among us the term "sacristanization" could have a slightly old-fashioned ring about it, harking back to Tridentine Catholicism and its habitual concern with being sanctified by grace, especially sacramental grace, with gaining merit—to use terms familiar from old controversies. Present-day Catholicism uses the language of "conversion" much more readily in connection with the Christian life, and seems more concerned with the process of change than with discerning in a quantitative way the stage reached, the degree of sanctification. The word metanoia crops up not just in textbooks but in practical parish manuals, and it belongs too in the terminology of monastic ascesis. What is understood here, however, is not simply a conversion event of the kind antecedent to justification by faith in the Reformation tradition but a process which belongs or realises itself in a liturgical context and by that fact has an ongoing and communitarian aspect. It thus merges into a phase of the Christian life which in the later Reformation tradition is called sanctification.

An excellent example of how this thinking has affected the post-conciliar reform of our liturgy may be seen in the Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults, which provides the ritual for the stages of conversion in the life of an adult who wishes to be baptised into the Roman Catholic Church. This is often presented as having relevance for Catholics baptised in infancy, and so may be used in modified form for the reconciliation of those who, while baptised, have never been practising members of the church or have long been lapsed. That it should have this wider relevance follows from the way initiation is understood in the rite itself. The conversion of the adult is presented as an essentially ecclesial event, occurring through the development of a network of relationships within the community. It is seen too as a comprehensive life process involving gradual maturation through a series of stages, though this does not exclude a possible sudden moment of illumination. In any case, the person's transformation embraces the dimensions of cognitive development, affective growth and developmental change. Clearly, when a person exhibiting these characteristics seeks gradual assimilation into, and is welcomed by, a community which is itself in via, those who are already members are challenged to reflect in their own lives a similar programme of conversion, so that the journey of the neophyte becomes one shared with the community. The R.C.I.A. has as a result come to be seen as an important instrument of renewal in the church as a whole, one which, because it is integrated into its liturgical life, has more profound possibilities than the charismatic movement with its outwardly similar challenges. Consequently, renewal courses based on this notion of conversion are not unknown, especially in the U.S., where the highly developed organizational skills ensure that this interior exercise will have a visible dimension—resulting in evenings spent with programme kits on laps in parish halls.

There's something of a contrast there with early mornings long ago listening to a field-preacher on a hillside, but in a sense it's a shared enterprise. The very evocative word 'conversion' makes one think of those early days, though of course the long gap of the years makes it all the more problematic to establish a basis for comparing like with like. It has been too an ambiguous term in the Evangelical tradition. Wesley himself was troubled over claims made by some about the completeness of conversion in their lives, and its significance among his followers did change in the various periods..
Conversion in the Benedictine and Methodist Traditions

from the Oxford days to the time of field-preaching to the nineteenth-century American camp-meetings. For all that, it is fascinating that the idea of conversion should be a point of contact between our two traditions, a more understandable one than sanctification, I think, in the present state of things. What each of our traditions might learn from that fact is what I should like to explore, while confining myself, on the Roman Catholic side, to considering Benedictine life as a special form of church membership, one which has of course been charged with elitism, from within as well as from without the Catholic tradition. The judgment of David Knowles is I think fair as well as concise: "While in one aspect monasticism is the first great fragmentation of the image of the single Christian family, seen from another angle it is an example of the inevitability and value of development giving birth to a speciality of which the surplus can, so to say, be ploughed back into the common store."

There are important differences of context between conversion in the monastic life and that of which the progress is marked by the stages of the R.C.L.A. The most obvious one is that the monk, rather than preparing for baptism is seeking to live out the implications of baptism already received. But there is a continuity also between the two ideas of conversion—as already pointed out in relation to the church community which receives a convert in baptism. The monk's search for God derives its constantly developing and communitarian nature from the liturgy by which he is daily nourished: the monk is in fact more dependent than most for his spiritual progress on the liturgy. To see what conversion means in Benedictine life, however, it will be necessary to give first a brief account of the totality of that tradition.

CONVERSION IN MONASTIC LIFE

The Benedictine Tradition

Benedictine monachism is an institutional form of the Christian life based on observance of the Rule of Benedict. Cistercians and some others follow it as well as ourselves, but these remarks are confined to Benedictines. Our monasteries are largely autonomous. A man or woman joins a particular community and in general belongs to it for life. We do not spend some years in one house and then transfer to another as do members of the various religious orders and congregations. Accordingly, membership of the monastic community is initiated, not by the well-known triple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, which are a medieval formulation, but by an older declaration: first, a promise of stability, which is an opting for that particular community as one's choice for life; then, of fidelity to monastic life—the Latin text conversatio has implications of conversion; and, thirdly, of obedience—and all of these say something, I think, about the idea of conversion with which we are concerned. This promise, or triple promise, is given in one sentence of the Rule (RB 58:17), and the Rule remains at the heart of the monastic enterprise. It is not, it should be said, a book of rules, a code of laws, creating an environment of Law rather than Gospel, but an inspirational text, full of Scriptural quotations. To such an extent is this true that nowadays, because of the complexities of modern life, documents known as Constitutions, which serve groups of monasteries, are used to regulate the affairs of a monastery, how it conducts its internal management and external business, though these
Constitutions tend also to have an inspirational as much as a legal character. It could hardly be otherwise, because the Rule itself rarely lays down anything absolutely. Benedict the legislator was always conscious of the importance and the needs of the individual.

The intention of the Rule, the purpose for which it was written, is set out in its prologue. Its very first word is: “Listen.” There follows quickly the exhortation: “If you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts…” (Ps. 95:8), and it then asks if there is anyone here who yearns for life (Ps. 34:13). There follows the significant sentence: “Clothed then with faith and the performance of good works, let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide, that we may deserve to see him who has called us to his kingdom” (1 Thess. 2:12).

I think it a pity that just two hundred years after the dissolution of the monasteries, and with copies of the Rule available in the Bodleian Library, John Wesley, the Oxford student, gives no indication of having read it. How much it might have challenged and inspired him if he had been introduced to it by one of his friends as he was to Taylor’s Rules for Holy Living, Stanhope’s paraphrase of a Kempis and the critically important A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life of William Law.

The Rule is a call to life in a community under the leadership of an abbot, a life characterized by prayer in community several times a day, prayerful reading, especially of Scripture, work, much of it simple domestic work necessary to sustain the life of a community which tried to be self-sufficient. Down through the ages what the observance of the Rule has tended to make of a man has been variously described. Newman’s description of the life in the early centuries is very beautiful, and gets to the heart of the matter: “To the monk, Heaven was next door; he formed no plans, he had no cares… He went forth in his youth to his work and to his labour until the evening of life… He ploughed and sowed, he prayed, he meditated, he studied, he wrote, he taught, and then he died and went to Heaven.”

That was said of the early centuries of monasticism. By the middle ages, the monastic life had become much more cultic, monks spent a great part of their day in choir, at the liturgy, and the word conversus, “converted,” enters the vocabulary of the monasteries with the introduction of a new type of membership designed for those of limited educational attainment and unsophisticated spirituality who performed the manual work, leaving the choir monks free to devote themselves to protracted liturgical services. These lay brothers were called the conversi and were thought of as having been “converted” from the world.

The choir monks were usually people brought up in the school system of the monasteries and could be thought of as growing into the idea of sanctification through the round of liturgical offices and of course of ascetical practices, especially humble obedience.

To simplify matters greatly and condense a great deal of history, let me say that the choir monk came thus to be seen as a ver liturgiae. The liturgy had become his special task. Many monasteries were in fact founded and endowed by noble patrons precisely so that this round of prayer might bring blessings on the founder and his family and territories here, and come to their aid hereafter. This role came gradually to subsume the entire identity of the monk. Even in the last century, the monasteries’ contribution
to the liturgical revival strengthened that impression, not least in the minds of monks themselves.

But the modern desire for the return to sources, sparked off both by the Second Vatican Council and by the celebration in 1980 of the fifteenth centenary of Benedict’s death, has led to the realisation that this is not quite the vision of the Rule itself. There is a good deal of detail in the Rule about what psalms are to be said and when, but the core teaching in the Rule is about something else: the monk’s response to God in humility and obedience, good works, as well as, of course, community prayer. It says little about private prayer.

Conversion and Humility

I said that the monk responds to God in humility and obedience. In the Rule there is a wonderful interplay between these two distinct yet inseparable qualities, but if a priority has to be established between humility and obedience I think it clearly belongs to humility. A chapter is given to each and each is referred to in the chapter given to the other, but that on humility (RB 7) is more fundamental, and sums up the preceding chapters of ascetical teaching. In it the way of humility is presented as a double movement of ascent and descent, the genuine “ascent” extending over a descending movement of self-emptying (Cf. Phil. 2:5-11). This way of describing humility is found in the tradition of monastic literature, and draws upon the biblical episode of Jacob’s ladder (Gen. 28:12). To recount RB 7’s treatment of the twelve steps of humility would be beyond the scope of this study. But it is important to note that they describe a transition from fear to love; the first step on the ladder of humility is that a man “keeps the fear of God always before his eyes” (RB 7:10). I think the last, the twelfth, step will be familiar and attractive to Methodist ears: “after ascending all these steps of humility the monk will quickly arrive at that perfect love of God which casts out fear. . . . All this will the Lord by the Holy Spirit graciously manifest in his workman now cleansed of vices and sins” (RB 7:67, 70).

The gift of perfect love was the subject of dispute within Methodism in the 1750s as many who were converted through field-preaching claimed to have received it instantly, and the same problem arose later on in American Methodism. Wesley himself was cautious about accepting such claims. He recognised the complexity of the issue. He had no timetable for the emergence of this gift and neither does the Rule in its much-quoted reference, at the end of the prologue, to progress in the monastic life and in faith: “we shall run on the path of God’s commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delights of love” (RB Prov. 49). Wesley was more concerned with the newly converted showing evidence of their conversion in the steadfastness of their faith and in their style of life. The Rule too, and the tradition of the desert fathers on which it draws, is concerned above all else with the conversion of the monk, in the sense of the re-creation of his heart by the power of the Spirit.

But if we were to analyse the whole chapter concerned with this conversion it might not appear to turn on the notion of faith, and therefore not be in accord with the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith. In fact, the word faith does not occur even once in the entire chapter, but I would still think that the teaching is in
accord with that of Wesley on reconciliation and re-birth, and justification and sanctification. The basis of the Rule's teaching on humility, and, to speak more generally, on conversion is the conviction, inherited from the desert fathers, that because of the fall of our race the human heart needs to be recreated. This need remains even when the person is baptised; has received the benefit of Christ's redeeming death and thus has the Spirit of God within; in fact it becomes possible because the person is baptised. All of this could be considered a paraphrase of Wesley's sermon on "The Circumcision of the Heart" where he says:

...that the distinguishing mark of a true follower of Christ, of one who is in a state of acceptance to God, is not either outward circumcision, or baptism, or any other outward form, but a right state of soul, a mind and spirit renewed after the image of him that created it; is one of those important truths that can only be spiritually discerned... Circumcision of heart implies humility, faith, hope, and charity."

The monk's recognition of this need for "circumcision of the heart" underlies all the steps of humility but is particularly clear in step no. 7: "...a man not only admits with his tongue but is also convinced in his heart that he is inferior to all and of less value..." (RB 7:51). Recognising that this is the case is the critical step towards recreating the heart. It is enough to allow the Spirit to make a "break-through" in his life. Until the final breakthrough between the two parts of the new Channel Tunnel between France and England had taken place all that had been done up to that could not achieve the desired result—travel from one side to the other. But once that was made the situation changed fundamentally. In the monk the breakthrough by the Spirit occurs when the grace of God comes up against his self-will and conquers it, and he acknowledges his helplessness. Wesley put the same truth in this way: "At the same time we are convinced that we are not sufficient of ourselves; that without the Spirit of God, we can do nothing but add sin to sin." There is much battering to be done before that break-through occurs, however. It's interesting that the great penitential psalm, Psalm 51, uses the term "contrite" for the heart acceptable to God; contrite comes from "cornerere," to batter. "Batter my heart, three-personed God," John Donne said.

Break-through does tend to give the impression of suddenness, but in the monastic tradition the idea is rather more a decisiveness which need not be inconsistent with gradual progress and the upward struggle involved in the twelve steps of humility." Another favored image is of the Holy Spirit planting new life in the human heart and breaking up the hard soil it finds there in order to send its roots deeper. There's a strong suggestion there of how painful and gradual the whole process is.

WESLEY'S "CONVERSION"

Can all that be thought to have anything in common with Wesley's own journey and the teaching which emerged from his reflection on his own experience and on the manifest results of his preaching in the lives of others? At first sight the differences appear significant. The Rule and the monastic tradition are concerned with recognizing
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the need for the Spirit’s decisive though possibly gradual action. Wesley, for his part, distinguished between justification and sanctification, a distinction introduced in the second generation of the Reformation and developed particularly by Calvin. According to this, justification is instantaneous but sanctification gradual.\(^{22}\) A look at the story of what is traditionally described as Wesley’s own ‘conversion’ experience may be helpful, however. If we may concentrate here on the period beginning with his return journey from the United States in January 1738, we note that his diary entries were typically: “I went to America to convert the Indians; but oh, who will convert me? Who, what is it that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief?”\(^{23}\) His quest is for conversion but is expressed very much in terms of faith,\(^{24}\) of which, as noted above, there is no mention in the decisive teaching on conversion in the Rule. I would suggest though that the thought pattern of an eighteenth-century Anglican, one who was attracted by the Moravian understanding of grace, would be much influenced by the insistence in the Reformation tradition on the believer’s adherence to his own act of faith. The Catholic reservation about this approach, as you know, is to consider that the act of faith can thereby become unduly reflexive, a preoccupation with the act of belief, so that instead of resting simply on its object, Christ, it remains in some sense centered on its subject, the believer. I think that can give rise to a very subjective view of reality and this seems to have been the case with Wesley. A few days after the climactic, “heart-warming,” experience at Aldersgate Street, when he felt that now he did trust in Christ, he informed the company in James Hutton’s house that “five days before he was not a Christian,” and for his trouble received Hutton’s rebuke: “Have a care, Mr. Wesley, how you despise the benefits received by the two sacraments.”\(^{25}\) As an Anglican he should not have forgotten his baptism; but it is true too that his attitude was based on a distinction he made between the sacrament and its effects.\(^{26}\) I hesitate over such criticism, however, because of the demonstrably beneficial effects Wesley’s new experiential grasp of faith had on his subsequent life and teaching. Certainly, I do not wish to deny the reality of the assurance of faith he received in that experience, nor its significance as the point of departure in the pneumatological soteriology he was to develop, but I make the point in order to suggest that while he was wedded to a particular theological view, the human and spiritual reality was that he was engaged in the same process of surrender and acceptance of the mercy and grace of God as the monk who endeavours to practice humility. His own description of what had happened, as opposed to his analysis of his prior state, was that he did now trust in Christ.\(^{27}\)

CONVERGENCE AND QUESTIONS

I think Methodists may find reason to be pleased with this comparison. The monastic ascetic of humility and obedience, which it has not been possible to describe in detail here, is much concerned with the breaking up of the ground, the destruction of the ‘flesh’, so that the new life may send its roots deeper. I think this is in accord with Wesley’s doctrine of prevenient grace and repentance, which I believe to be an important contribution of his to, and development of, the Reformation doctrine of justification. The imagery used by our two traditions is interesting. There is the attractive
description by Wesley himself of repentance, faith and holiness being, as it were, respectively porch, door, and the reality of religion. The prologue to the Rule sees the conversion I have been describing as the narrow way leading to pure love, but the distinction between repentance and faith (porch and door) is not clear, the conscious act of faith not critically important. The monk progresses almost imperceptibly from fear to love, and the community dimension of his life, one senses largely in defining the narrow path (RB Prol. 48). The promise of stability (of commitment to a community), and of obedience, concern the exterior context in which the inner journey of conversion takes place.

The question of works in relation to justification is in the background to any comparative discussion of the process of conversion in our two traditions. I quoted earlier from the prologue: "Clothed then with faith and the performance of good works, let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide, that we may deserve to see him who has called us to his kingdom" (RB Prol. 21). "The performance of good works..."; It is interesting in this regard to recall Wesley's instinct, after his return from a visit to the Moravian community at Herrnhut in the autumn of 1738, to look again at the Anglican doctrine of justification by faith. By 1744, as the Minutes of Conference indicate, he had reached an understanding of the place of works after justification, and he could say in the Minutes of 1770: "every believer works for as well as from life." These Minutes did prove controversial but the ensuing clarification, in 1771, shows that while Wesley held fast to justification by faith, he knew that "no one is a real believer who doth not do good works, where there is time and opportunity..." Like the author of the Rule, and like St. James, he knew that faith must be evidenced in the lifestyle of the believer. Wesley was not so much concerned with the performance of good works as with the attitude of obedience to God in which they were done. He would have appreciated the significance of a subtle phrase in the prologue to the Rule: it refers, not to the obedient works of the monk as having saving significance, but to the "work of obedience" (RB Prol. 2).

The value of works in the life of the justified, has always been a sensitive issue in the relationship between the Reformation and Roman traditions. It would obviously be less of a problem if there were more common ground established at the level of justification and sanctification. In this area, the report of the English R.C. Methodists Committee on Justification (1988) is helpful. It holds that "difference of usage with regard to terms like justification and sanctification does not appear to indicate any real difference in overall belief," though it acknowledges that difficulties remain with the category of "merit." These are difficulties at a very theoretical level, however. Historically, Methodism as well as monasticism has had a tradition of work as well as prayer and it is true to say that not only did the good works for which Wesley and his group became well-known, notorious if you like, in Oxford continue as his followers increased to vast numbers, but Methodists in his lifetime and afterwards became universally known for their social consciousness. In every study of the recent times much social progress in England has been attributed to the influence of Methodism.

This fact establishes a clear point of contact with the monastic tradition, which at least in earlier centuries contributed much to the rebuilding of a Christian civilization
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in Europe. As a result, the perennial debate in monasticism, about the need to be concerned with the world outside our walls, appears in a new light and we can pose this question: whether our emphasis on monastic seclusion amounts at times to an expression of community egoism, concerned about our affairs only, to the neglect of the sufferings of the world at our gate.

And there is a challenge for Methodism in the fact that the Rule of Benedict remains a normative document for monks. Do the foundational documents of Methodism hold the same place? We, like Methodists, produce up-dated constitutional documents but the Rule somehow does not lose its primary place. One can ask to what extent is that true of Methodism, but as there is in Methodism no single, original legislative document which would have a role corresponding to Benedict’s Rule, perhaps it is better to speak of structures rather than documents, and ask what place now for the classes and select societies and bands which were so important in creating and regulating and inspiring the original Methodist community? This would be an important issue should the question arise once more of Methodism re-establishing links with Anglicanism, especially if this were now to be envisaged in terms of a society within the worldwide communion of Anglicanism, and as a preliminary step towards the emergence of a communion embracing all of our traditions.

These are questions which tend towards our ecumenical horizons. But the more immediate question which follows from the analysis of the idea of conversion in our two traditions is whether there is in the end a fundamental difference between the monastic tradition’s understanding of the life of grace, expressed at a particular moment in history in the formulas of the Council of Trent, and that of John Wesley, articulated in those of the Reformation.

NOTES
4. Cf. D. Power, “Life in the Catechumenal Stream: A North American Experience,” Doctrine and Life, vol. 35 (October 1985), p. 436: “The United States, especially in urban centres, has a host of modern problems such as alcoholism, drug addiction, divorce…, and it was remarked that parishes that adopted the adult catechumenate often became much more conscious of what it meant to be a Christian community in the midst of such reality. They learned both from sharing their faith with catechumens and from sharing the catechumens’ own spiritual journey.”


9. He read Taylor in 1725, when he was 22, a Kempis in 1726 and Law "a year or two after." Works, vol. XI, p. 367.


11. D. Knowles, op. cit., p. 64.

12. For a brief but excellent discussion of the recovery in contemporary monasticism of the idea of the monk as vir Dei rather than vir liturgias, see A. Kavanagh, "Notes on the baptismal ethos of monasticism," in E. Carr et al., EULOGHEMA, Essays in honor of Robert Taft SJ, Studia Anselmiana 110, Analecta Liturgica 17 (Rome: Centro Studi S. Anselmo, 1993), pp. 235-44.


15. At the Conference of 1759 he published "Thoughts on Christian Perfection" with a preface which included: "Not that 'to feel all love and no sin' is a sufficient proof of Scriptural holiness! Several have experienced this for a time, before their souls were fully renewed. None therefore ought to believe that the work is done, till there is added the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing his entire sanctification, as clearly as his justification." Ibid., pp. 401-2. In a later version of this text he noted: "In the year 1762, there was a great increase of the work of God in London...and a considerable number of persons believed that God had saved them from all sin," p. 406. In "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," he wrote: "But some who have much love, peace, and joy, yet have not the direct witness, and others who think they have, are, nevertheless, manifestly wanting in the fruit." Ibid., pp. 424-25. Cf. D.L. Watson, art. cit., pp. 253-63.

16. From his Journal for 19 November 1739: "I earnestly exhorted those who had believed, to beware of two opposite extremes—the one, the thinking while they were in light and joy, that the work was ended: when it was just begun: the other, the thinking when they were in heaviness, that it was not begun, because they found it not ended." The Works of John Wesley, vol 19, Journals and Diaries 1735-38, W.R. Ward and R.P. Heiligenrater, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), p. 122.


18. Worth noting here is Wesley's brief statement in a Pamphlet of 1762: "True humility is a kind of self annihilation; and this is the centre of all virtues." Works, vol. XI, p. 437.

19. While this is the teaching of the desert fathers, a personal element entered into Benedict's formulation of it, according to A. Laufer: "Benedict had undergone the searing experience of his own weakness during his first years in solitude when, tempted by the flesh—I quote literally
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from St. Gregory—"he already considered leaving the desert, being overcome by desire; but suddenly divine grace looked on him and he came back to himself" (ch. 2). This near defeat, this semi-victory, in which not he but the grace of God finished by triumphing in his weakness, remained in Benedict's memory. In his Rule, the monk would be a man of broken and humbled heart, but always rejoicing in the mercy of God." "St. Benedict: A man of God for all times," Cistercian Studies, vol. XV, 1980:3, pp. 225-26.

20. Sermon on the "Circumcision of the Heart," Works, vol. V, pp. 203-4. Cf. C. Peifer, "Reclaiming the Monastic Tradition," American Benedictine Review, 42:2 (1991), p. 213: "Hence the prerequisite for spiritual growth is the 'redimis ad cor.,' the 'return to the heart.' The monk has to 'come to himself,' like the prodigal son (Luke 15:17) and become conscious of his own inner disintegration and misery, the emptiness of a heart that has squandered its energies pursuing things that cannot satisfy the deepest void."

21. Cf. C. Peifer, art. cit.: "This (the return to the heart) is the essential conversion, an ongoing dynamism rather than a one-time enthusiasm. It opens the heart to the continual inner action of the Holy Spirit and sets us on the path of the return, the re-making of the likeness of God in us." p. 213.

22. "Justifying faith implies not only a divine conviction that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, but a sure trust and confidence that God died for my sins, that he loved me and gave himself for me. And the moment a penitent sinner thus believes, God pardons and absolves him." "Principle of Methodism Further Explained," Works, vol. VIII, p. 428. But he also held: "Neither dare we affirm, as some have done, that all this salvation is given at once. There is indeed an instantaneous, as well as a gradual work of God in his children." Ibid., vol. XI, p. 380. Cf. C. Williams, John Wesley's Theology Today (London: Epworth Press, 1960), p. 40.


24. From the journal of 29 February 1738: "The faith I want is, 'A sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favour of God... I want that faith which none can have without knowing that he hath it.' Works, vol. I, p. 77. In the course of his conversations with the Moravian, Peter Böhler, (up to April 1738) he could not understand how this faith could be given in a moment, but he searched the Scriptures and 'found scarce any instances there of other than instantaneous conversions, to my utter astonishment.' Ibid., p. 234.


26. "There is a justification conveyed to us in our baptism or, properly, this state is then begun." Works, vol. VIII, p. 430. This needs to be read in conjunction with his saying in a sermon on The New Birth: "...as the new birth is not the same thing with baptism, so it does not always accompany baptism. They do not constantly go together. I do not speak now with regard to infants. It is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptised in their infancy are at the same time born again..." Works Sermons II, vol. VI, p. 74, His view of what occurred in his own life was expressed in the "Premises" to the events of May 24, 1738: "I believe, till I was about 10 years old, I had not sinned away that 'washing of the Holy Ghost' which was given me in baptism." The Works of John Wesley, Journals and Diaries 1735-1738, vol. 18, W.R. Ward and R.P. Heitzenrater eds. (1988), p. 46.

27. Since this was written, Methodist friends have kindly brought to my attention the volume of essays commemorating the 250th anniversary of Aldersgate, Aldersgate Reconsidered, R.L. Maddox, ed. (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1990). These essays, of revisionist intent, analyze comprehensively the nature and significance of Wesley's experience. I am gratified that their scientific findings, especially those of R. Heitzenrater in "Great Expectations: Aldersgate and the Evidences of Genuine Christianity," do not appear to invalidate my simple observations made from a Roman Catholic theological standpoint, and so the comparison I suggest may perhaps..."
stand. My comments appear to be supported by one of R. Hoitzentrager’s statements: “But one soon discovers that Wesley is often more facile at describing his experience than at analyzing it.” p. 51.
30. “True faith must be lively, productive of good works, which are its proper fruits, the marks whereby it is known... These may be considered as internal or external... (Outward works) will be necessary conditions of preserving our justification.” He had not used “conditions” until now, being “more scrupulous than was necessary.” ‘Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained,” Works, vol. VIII, p. 430. Cf. C. Williams, op. cit., p. 63.
31. In a set of ‘Cautions and Directions given to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies,’ by which he meant warnings to the antinomian party led by G. Bell and W. Maxfield, he declared that “... the Holy Spirit works the same in our hearts, not merely creating desires after holiness in general, but thoroughly inclining us to every particular grace, leading us to every particular part of whatever is lovely.” And this with the greatest propriety: For as ‘by works faith is made perfect,’ so the completing or destroying of the works of faith, and enjoying the favour, or suffering the displeasure, of God, greatly depends on every single act of obedience or disobedience.” Works, vol. VIII, p. 432.
32. “... ut ad eum per obedientiae laborem reddas, a quo per inobedientiae desidiam recesseris.”
33. Cf., for example, his A Roman Catechism... With a Reply Thereto, Section II: Of Repentance and Obedience. “Truly to deserve it to make God our debtor.” He quotes Rom. 4:4, “If a man has work to show, his wages are not considered as a favour but as his due.” Works, vol. X, p. 95.
35. Wesley, of course, considered them “the very sinews of our Society,” Works, vol. XI, p. 433—text of a pamphlet of 1762.
ORA ET LABORA: BENEDICTINES AND WESLEYANS AT PRAYER AND AT WORK

GEOFFREY WAINEWRIGHT

I. STRANGE COMPANY?

Pray and work: the supposedly ancient Benedictine motto of ora et labora has lately been shown to date not from the origins of Benedictinism but rather—with a near miss in the fifteenth-century Augustinian Thomas à Kempis—to be the invention of Abbot Maur Wolter of Beuron in the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the same historical investigation has demonstrated that, even in the absence of the Latin play on words, the nature and purpose of prayer and work, and particularly the relationship between them, have been concerns of monasticism since its earliest days. These are questions, indeed, not simply for those devoted to the religious life in the technical sense of monks and nuns, but for every Christian and for the whole Church. Recent though it may be as a Benedictine motto, ora et labora may therefore appropriately be taken as a rubric under which to explore a theme of holiness as it occurs in the Methodist tradition in comparison with its manifestation among Benedictines.

At first blush, it may seem odd to bring Methodism and Benedictinism together in this way. While declaring it necessary for Christians to "retreat" from the evil in the world, nevertheless Charles Wesley (1707-1788), the hymn-writer of Methodism's two founding brothers, immediately made a polemical point:

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Not in the tombs we pine to dwell,
Not in the dark monastic cell,
By vows and grates confined;
Freely 'to all ourselves we give,
Constrained by Jesus's love to live
The servants of mankind.

This correspondence to the statements of his elder brother John Wesley (1703-1791) that "Christianity is essentially a social religion," and that "there is no holiness but social holiness." Given their time and place in eighteenth-century England, the Wesleys would not have known any living examples of monasticism. And Benedictineism is not necessarily, or properly, struck by their strictures. The vocation of a hermit is reckoned to be exceptional, and the regular form of Benedictism is cenobitic or communitarian, with ample opportunity for the service, in one form or another, of humankind. Benedictineism may therefore be considered, with no obstacle on the Methodist side, as a possible expression of that love of God and love of neighbor in which the Wesleys judged holiness to consist.

Let us then cheerfully take *ora et labora* as a binome under which to treat a Methodist understanding and practice of sanctification as well as a Benedictine, comparing and contrasting the two traditions where necessary and useful. The relationship between prayer and work is usually seen as a matter of personal spirituality (the contemplative versus the active, "Mary" versus "Martha"), or of ecclesial ethos (the liturgical versus the diaconal). A first solution to the relationship, whether in the case of the individual or in the case of the community, resides in the alternance or the equilibrium between prayer and work, while a more subtle solution lies in the compenetration between prayer and work. Behind these somewhat stylistic questions of personal spirituality and ecclesial ethos, however, stand deeper theological (soteriological) matters concerning the way in which salvation itself is appropriated and the role of the Church in its mediation; and it will, therefore, also be necessary to face issues concerning the relationship of prayer and works to grace and faith, and the status of the Church as the place and instrument of the gospel. All of this, moreover, occurs within the framework of God's salutary purpose for humankind and the history of redemption; and with that the present chapter will begin, taking prayer and work, done within the Christian community, as manifestations of our incipient restoration to the image of God in which we were made and as anticipations of our full and final attainment to God's likeness.

On the Benedictine side, the main resources will be early monasticism, the *Rule for Monks* of St. Benedict, and (very selectively) the history of Benedictism.* On the Methodist side, the chief theological texts will be John Wesley's brief portrait of "The Character of a Methodist" (1742)* and his Sermon 88, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation With Fear And Trembling" (1785), with supporting material from the hymns of Charles Wesley (so important in the *lex orandi* of classic Methodism) and illustrations from the life and practice of the Wesleys and of other early and later Methodists. Wesleyanism will be used eponymously for Methodism, although Methodism has broadened somewhat from its origins and has been variously faithful to its founders.
II. RENEWAL IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Recognizing the beneficent purpose of the Triune Creator, the fallerness of humankind, and the redemptive work of God in Christ, John Wesley views our salvation—and it is arguably the governing category in Wesley's soteriology—as our renewal in the image of God. This renewal is appropriately attributed to the Holy Spirit. Among the truths of Revelation, Wesley refers in Sermon 85 to "two grand heads of doctrine": "those which relate to the eternal Son of God, and the Spirit of God—to the Son, giving himself to be 'a propitiation for the sins of the world' [1 John 2:2] and to the Spirit of God, renewing men in that image of God wherein they were created [cf. Col. 3:10]." And, according to "The Character of a Methodist," "the marks of a true Methodist," which "are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity...the plain old Christianity that I teach," include this: "His soul is renewed after the image of God [cf. Col. 3:10, 'in righteousness and in all true holiness'] [cf. Eph. 4:24]."

While his terminology is not always consistent, for Wesley the *imago Dei* has a spiritual, a political, and a moral aspect. In his Sermon 39, "The New Birth," Wesley gives this three-fold meaning to God's creation of humankind in the divine image at Gen. 1:27-28:

Not barely in his *natural image*, a picture of his own immortality, a spiritual being, endowed with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections; nor merely in his *political image*, the governor of this lower world, having "dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over all the earth;" but chiefly in his *moral image*, which, according to the Apostle, is "righteousness and true holiness" [Eph. 4:24]. In this image of God was man made. "God is love" [1 John 4:8, 16]: accordingly man at his creation was full of love, which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth: so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator...

This corresponds neatly to the three main strands in the traditional Christian interpretation of the *imago Dei*: the human creature is ontologically capable of communion with God (our spiritual nature); is cosmologically located to "til the ground" (Gen. 2:6) or administer the earth on God's behalf; is constitutionally a society of neighbors with the opportunity for a life of mutual love. Fallen humankind needs redemption and restoration if it is to fulfill its divinely set ends.

Here, then, Wesley is rejoining a common theme of evangelical, catholic, orthodox Christianity. Eastern Orthodox theologians, reaching back at least as far as St. Irenaeus, have viewed humankind as a royal priesthood, called to be the steward of the earthly creation and the voice of its divine praise, offering the eucharistic sacrifice to God; and this human vocation is essentially a corporate one.

All this fits nicely with the themes of prayer and work which have characterized the Benedictine tradition. Prayer is our communion with God. Work is our stewardship of the earthly creation on God's behalf. To the motto of *ora et labora*, the later moderns have added a communal dimension. According to Fr. A. Waterleaf, president of the Congregation of the Annunciation, *ora et labora* truly defines Benedictine life only if one adds *in communione fraterna*. Fr. Frédéric Debuyst entitled his booklet of 1980 "Prie et travaille au milieu de tes frères."
III. ALTERNANCE OR BALANCE OF PRAYER AND WORK

The Benedictine and Wesleyan traditions are here examined in turn.

a. Benedictines at Prayer

In the Rule of St. Benedict, the communal office (opus Dei) figures most prominently (chapters 8-19), though spiritual reading is also enjoined (chapter 48) and private prayer envisaged (chapters 20, 49, and 52). The original simplicity of prayer according to the divine office gave way to greater complexity and elaborateness in the ninth century under the influence of Abbot Benedict of Aniane and the "liturgical enthusiasm of the Carolingian epoch" more generally; and again in the tenth century, the Cluniac model made of the monastic office "only the basis on which were erected another edifice of prayers. Thus votive offices and processions and repeated celebrations of Masses with many preces (intercessory prayers) were added. The simplicity of the celebration was abandoned also, and its place taken by a rich ceremonial." In the twelfth century, the Cistercian movement sought a return to older and simpler forms of the choir office and to more intense meditation on the Scriptures, including the sermo or conference from the abbot.

Skipping over the ups and downs in the intervening centuries of Benedictine history, it may simply be noted that the Liturgical Movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has found radiant centers in the abbeys of Solesmes, Beuron, Maria Laach, and Collegeville; and that the rosters of modern liturgical scholarship are graced by such names as Lambert Beauduin, Femand Cabrol, Odo Casel, Bernard Botte, L.C. Mohlberg, Burkhard Neunheuser, Ambrosius Verheul, Anscar Chupungco, and the Anglican Benedictine Gregory Dix.

b. Benedictines at Work

Like the desert fathers before him, St. Benedict saw work as having the disciplinary or ascetical role of warding off idleness, or even accidie, the characteristic vice of the monastic profession: "Idleness is the enemy of the soul" (Rule 48, 1). More positively, Benedict declared in the same chapter on work that "they will be true monks if they live from the work of their hands, as our Fathers and the Apostles did" (Rule 48, 8). This points to the recovery of that aspect of the imago Dei that consists in the proper use of the material creation or stewardship of the earth. Such work need not be limited to providing for the life of the monastic community. There are indications from the early days of monasticism that the produce of labor may go towards helping the needy neighbor: A further monastic duty has consisted in hospitality towards the visitor, the traveler, and the stranger (as in St. Benedict's Rule 53). Such charitable actions extend beyond the bounds of the monastic community the fulfillment of a further aspect of the imago Dei, namely the constitution of social existence, and indeed a fellowship of love.
It appears that manual labor figured prominently in early monasticism and in the early years of Benedictinism. Among Benedictines, however, the monasteries came to employ serfs, renters, and secular servants for agricultural and domestic work, and somewhat later there spread from the abbey of Hirsau in the Black Forest (founded in 1050) the institution of lay brothers, "who made the vow of obedience and stability to the monastery, lived outside the cloister and took part in the divine services of the monks only on Sundays. They took care of the manual work and left the monks free for the contemplative life." Again, the Cistercian reform reintroduced the monks to domestic service and to manual labor in the fields.

What work had the Benedictines then fallen to? They had devoted themselves above all to intellectual work; and it is probably still to achievements of learning and scholarship—typified by the Congregation of Saint Maur—that the proverbial travail de bénédictin most commonly applies. This work naturally led Benedictines into the educational realm, and gave them an important place in the transmission of the higher culture. The needs of the Church at large also summoned Benedictines into pastoral and missionary work, as indeed St. Benedict himself had been directed from Subiaco to Cassino in order to convert the pagans.

2. Wesleyans at Prayer and at Work

One rough equivalent to the monastic pair of prayer and work may be found in a binome contained in John Wesley's Sermon 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation." There he preaches that our "zeal for good works" (Titus 2:14) must include both "works of piety" and "works of mercy," thus moving the emphasis in the latter case from labor to charity. At this point, Wesley does not offer any closer specification of the relationship between duty to God and duty to neighbor. In either case, John Wesley was concerned that the time should be "redeemed," not a moment spent "triflingly"; his own diaries show that he typically accounted for every quarter-hour of the day, whether in prayer (corporate or private), reading (often during travel), preaching, good works, or serious company.

a. Works of Piety

Here is how Wesley lists the "works of piety" in his Sermon 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation":

Use family prayer, and cry to God in secret. Fast in secret, and "your Father which seeth in secret, he will reward you openly" (cf. Matt. 6:4, 6, 18). "Search the Scriptures" (John 5:39); hear them in public, read them in private, and meditate therein. At every opportunity be a partaker of the Lord's Supper. "Do this in remembrance of him" (cf. Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:26), and he will meet you at his own table. Let your conversation be with the children of God, and see that it "be in grace, seasoned with salt" (cf. Col. 4:6).

A few comments may elaborate the Wesleyan practice of each of those "means of grace," as Wesley more usually calls them (thus emphasizing their character as divine gift).

Family and private prayer: For personal devotion, John Wesley compiled, with heavy indebtedness to an earlier collection by Nathan Spinkes, a Collection of Forms of Prayer for
Every Day in the Week. First published in 1733, it went through at least fifteen editions in Wesley’s lifetime. He also provided A Collection of Prayers for Families (1744, with at least ten editions) and Prayers for Children (1772). It should further be noted that the early Methodists occupied themselves in prayer when they met in the small groups known as “classes” and “bands.”

Fasting: Wesley’s fullest teaching on fasting is contained in Sermon 27, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, VII” (1748). The early Methodist societies practiced Quarterly Fast Days. John Wesley himself practiced and encouraged a modest individual discipline in regular fasting and abstinence.

The Scriptures: Wesley’s language in the passage quoted from Sermon 85 echoes the collect for the Second Sunday in Advent in the Book of Common Prayer: “Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Wesley’s use of the Scriptures will be presented in a little more detail later.

The Lord’s Supper: At a time when the Lord’s Supper was celebrated as rarely as four times a year in the parishes of the Church of England, John Wesley’s diaries shown him to have received communion on an average of once every four or five days. He encouraged the Methodist people to request communion more frequently at their parish churches (indeed he spoke more precisely of “constant communion”), and he and those of his preachers who were Anglican priests celebrated the sacrament at Methodist gatherings. When, in 1784, he sent ministers and a liturgy for “The Sunday Service” to the Methodist people in the newly independent United States of America, Wesley “advised the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord’s Day.”

Conversation: “Conference,” among the preachers in particular, was a vital part of the early Methodist discipline, and the members of the Methodist societies, when they gathered in classes and bands, joined in mutual examination and exhortation.

b. Works of Mercy

Of the “works of mercy,” Wesley says in Sermon 85 simply: “As ye have time, do good unto all men (cf. Gal. 6:10), to their souls and to their bodies.” This had been further spelled out in “The Character of a Methodist”:

As he has time, he “does good unto all men” (cf. Gal. 6:10); unto neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies: And that in every possible kind; not only to their bodies, by “feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are sick or in prison” (cf. Matt. 25:35-36); but much more does he labour to do good to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth (cf. 1 Pet. 4:11); to awaken those that sleep in death; to bring those who are awakened to the atoning blood, that, “being justified by faith, they may have peace with God” (cf. Rom. 5:1); and to provoke those who have peace with God to abound more in love and in good works. And he is willing to “spend and to be spent herein” (cf. 2 Cor. 12:15); even to “be offered upon the sacrifice and service of their faith” (cf. Phil. 2:17), so they may “all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (cf. Eph. 4:13).
Wesley himself visited the imprisoned and worked for prison reform, set up dispensaries for the sick, and established schools for children. Most notably, however, he traveled 250,000 miles on eighteenth-century roads and seaways in the direct pursuit of evangelization to save souls by preaching.

IV. COMPENETRATION OF PRAYER AND WORK

Prayer and work (whether, in the latter case, labor or charity) are both necessary to the Christian life. They are, moreover, closely intertwined, and even essentially related. The Benedictine and the Wesleyan understandings and practice of this compenetration will be reviewed in turn and convergences noted.

1. The Monastic Pattern

In the words of St. Isidore of Seville, stimulated by Psalm 28: "To pray without working is to lift up one's heart without lifting up one's hands; to work without praying is to lift up one's hands without lifting up one's heart; therefore it is necessary both to pray and to work." But how to do both without interruption— for did not the Apostle Paul both give order to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17) and himself claim to "work night and day" (2 Thess. 3:8)?

Rather simply, Aurelian of Arles, a younger contemporary of St. Benedict, developed a counsel of his predecessor Caesarius: "At vigils, while a lesson is being read, work with your hands by plaiting reeds or twisting hemp or something similar, to avoid falling asleep," and conversely: "While doing manual work all day long, do not cease to recite the sacred texts that you know by heart, on account of the Apostle's instruction, 'Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God in your hearts' (Col. 3:16)."

With greater theological depth, St. Basil, whom Benedict called his "holy father," had already written in the Great Rule, which Benedict doubtless knew in the translation by Rufinus: "While our hands are occupied in work, we can praise God with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with the tongue if it is possible, but if not, then in the heart. In this way we thank Him who has given both strength of hand to work and wisdom of brain to know how to work, and also bestowed means by which to work both in the tools we use and the arts we practice, whatever the work may be. We pray moreover that the works of our hands may be directed towards the mark of pleasing God."

St. Benedict mentions nothing of "mixing" work and prayer. Although he may have known the Rule of Caesarius, he says nothing about his monks doing handwork during the divine office nor about reciting psalms from memory during worktime. At least implicitly, he shares the deeper theological insight of St. Basil concerning the compenetration of prayer and work. Benedict considers the prayer of the divine office to be the supreme work of God: "Let nothing be preferred to the Opus Dei" (Rule 43, 3). (The desert fathers had already treated prayer as "hard work," a topos.) And all the monk's life, every activity, including work, is to be accomplished under God's regard, with attention to God's will and sensitivity to God's presence—"in order that God may be glorified in all things" (ut in omnibus glorificentur Deus)."
2. The Wesleyan Pattern

In describing "The Character of a Methodist," John Wesley declares that such a one "prays without ceasing." Wesley affirms both public and private worship and teaches that its spirit should extend to all times and places; echoing the eucharistic preface, he states that the raising of the heart to God is always and everywhere right and fitting (Sursum corda... Dignum et iustum est, semper et ubique...).

It is given him "always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:11). Not that he is always in the house of prayer—though he neglects no opportunity of being there. Neither is he always on his knees, although he often is, or on his face, before the Lord his God. Nor yet is he always crying aloud to God, or calling upon him in words: for many times "the Spirit maketh intercession for him with groans that cannot be uttered." Icf. Rom. 8:26f. But at all times the language of his heart is this: "Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto thee is my heart, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee." And this is true prayer, and this alone. But his heart is ever lifted up to God, at all times and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted, by any person or thing. In retirement or company, in leisure, business, or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether he lie down or rise up, "God is in all his thoughts" Icf. Ps. 10:4f; he "walks with God." Icf. Gen. 6:9f continually, having the loving eye of his mind still fixed upon Him, and everywhere "seeing Him that is invisible" (Heb. 11:27).49

This love towards God is constantly accompanied by love towards neighbor: "And while he thus always exercises his love to God, by praying without ceasing, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks, this commandment is written in his heart, that 'he who loveth God, love his brother also' (I John 4:21). And he accordingly 'loves his neighbor as himself.' Icf. Mark 12:33f; he loves every man as his own soul. His heart is full of love to all mankind, to every child of 'the Father of the spirits of all flesh' (Heb. 12:9).50

Such a person's "one intention at all times and in all things is, not to please himself, but Him whom his soul loveth.""51 "And therefore, loving God with all his heart, he serves him with all his strength. He continually presents his soul and body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God."52 Thus all his works are done to God's glory:

By consequence, whatsoever he doeth, it is all to the glory of God. In all his employments of every kind, he not only aims at this, (which is implied in having a single eye,) but actually attains it. His business and refreshments, as well as his prayers, all serve this great end. Whether he sit in his house or walk by the way, whether he lie down or rise up, he is promoting, in all he speaks or does, the one business of his life; whether he put on his apparel, or labour, or eat and drink, or divert himself from too wasting labour, it all tends to advance the glory of God, by peace and good will among men. His one invariable rule is this, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him."53
Hymnically, Charles Wesley expresses the matter thus:

Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go,
My daily labour to pursue,
Thee, only thee, resolved to know
In all I think, or speak, or do.

The task thy wisdom hath assigned
O let me cheerfully fulfil.
In all my works thy presence find,
And prove thy acceptable will.

Thee may I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes my inmost substance see,
And labour on at thy command,
And offer all my works to thee.

Give me to bear thy easy yoke,
And every moment watch and pray,
And still to things eternal look,
And hasten to thy glorious day:

For thee delightfully employ
Whate'er thy bounteous grace hath given,
And run my course with even joy,
And closely walk with thee to heaven.  

Thus the Wesleys fuse the euchological and the ethical: prayer and work are subsumed in a single doxology.

Two examples may now be briefly offered of convergence between Methodists and Benedictines in the compenetration of prayer and work. First, singing plays an important part in the worship of both traditions. Psalms and hymns figure prominently in the divine office of the Benedictines (Rule, 8-19), while it has been aptly said that “Methodism was born in song.”  

Singing is a liturgical action in which the body clearly works to raise the spirit towards God.

Second, the interplay between liturgy and ethics is well captured in Wesley’s dictum echoing St. Augustine to the effect that the service of God is “to imitate him you worship” (imitari quem colis): “They who resemble [God] in the spirit of their minds are transformed into the same image. They are merciful even as he is merciful.... Yea, they are, like him, loving unto every man, and their mercy extends to all his works.”  

Benedictines share the Roman rite at the ordination of presbyters, where the priests are charged to “imitate what you handle” (imitamin quod tractatis); and, in fact, all who share in the sacramental body and blood of Christ are expected, as several post-communion prayers make clear (especially in the Easter season), to live conformably to his death and resurrection.
V. GRACE, FAITH, PRAYER, AND WORK(S)

Behind discussion of prayer and work stands the theological question of the respective roles of God and humankind in the attainment of our salvation. This issue is perennially, or at least periodically, controversial. The period of monastic, and particularly Benedictine, origins saw the Catholic struggle to exclude pelagianism and semi-pelagianism yet without endorsing an extreme Augustinianism. Within Protestantism, Lutherans and Calvinists, who themselves lay claim to St. Augustine, have often suspected Methodism of pelagian tendencies, and therefore of falling back into what they think of as “Catholicism.” Now, Dom Cipriano Vagaggini has argued that St. Benedict, while aware of the problem, deliberately took no side in what came to be known as the semi-pelagian controversy: at times Benedict sounds semi-pelagian, but he can always be read in an orthodox way, and some of his phraseology bears strongly Augustinian marks. For his part, Wesley clearly teaches in his Sermon 85, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” that even our first movement towards God is a work of divine grace, and yet his exhortations to the hearer imply freedom of the will. It appears, therefore, that Benedictines and Methodists may on this delicate matter come close to convergence at a point in the evangelical, catholic, orthodox faith.

A first approach may be made by way of Benedict’s and Wesley’s attitudes towards reading, and particularly towards the Scriptures. For to recognize the primacy of the Scriptures is to recognize the priority of divine Revelation and of the history of redemption in any account of the provision of salvation; and to highlight the process of reading is to discern an instance of the “active receptivity” that properly characterizes the human appropriation of salvation.

Reading figures prominently—as part of the divine office (18:18), at meals (38), and as individual responsibility (48) in the Rule of St. Benedict, whose prologue and opening chapters are themselves largely a tissue of scriptural texts. The reading of the Scriptures takes pride of place, followed by the Fathers who help in its interpretation and application (see, typically, 9:8, 73:3-9). As meditation, reading may fall on the side of prayer; as study, it may fall on the side of work; in any case, the compenetration of prayer and work is thereby once more illustrated. The point that presently is of interest finds expression in a tripartite formula from some Carthusian “Statutes for Novices”: *Nunc lege, nunc ora, nunc cura forore labore.*

In calling my attention to that injunction to “read the Scriptures and the patristic and spiritual writers,” my old friend Dom Ottmar Bauer, of Engelberg and Mont Féréol, commented: “Sans la lectio divina, il n’y a pas l’intégralité du monachisme bénédictin.”

(John Wesley called himself “a man of one Book” homo unius libri. Here is how he valued the Scriptures:

I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air (cf. Wisdom 5:9-13). I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God (cf. Eccles. 12:7); just hovering over the great gulf; till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen (cf. Ps. 39:13). I drop into an unchanged eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven—how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way: for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be homo unius libri.”

The “one Book” of the Holy Scriptures constituted for Wesley not so much the “bound-
ary of his reading" as "the center of gravity in his thinking." On account of their scriptural faithfulness, he assembled from the writings of the early Fathers and the spiritual writers a fifty-volume "Christian Library" for his Methodists people. 

To stress the lexio divina is, then, to acknowledge the primacy and priority of grace in all soteriology while calling also for the human response. According to St. Benedict, the purpose of the monks' life is to "magnify the Lord at work in them" (operantem in se Dominum magnificam).

Those who fear the Lord do not become proud of their good deeds but, considering that what is good in them cannot come from themselves but from the Lord, they magnify the Lord at work in them, saying with the prophet, "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give the glory" (Ps. 115:11), just as the Apostle Paul, too, claimed nothing for his own preaching but said: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10) and "Whoever glories should glory in the Lord" (2 Cor. 10:17).

"To magnify the Lord at work in you" would in fact have constituted a suitable motto for John Wesley's Sermon 55, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," which is in fact based in the Pauline text "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

The Pauline text, says Wesley, "gives God the whole glory of his own work": "If we are thoroughly sensible that we have nothing which we have not received, how can we glory as if we had not received it? If we know and feel that the very first motion of God is from above, as well as the power which conducts it to the end—if it is God that not only infuses every good desire, but that accomplishes and follows it, else it vanishes away—then it evidently follows that 'he who glorieth must glory in the Lord'" (1 Cor. 1:31).

Wesley then goes on to trace the several stages in the appropriation of salvation:

Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) "preventing grace"; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight, transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life, some degree of salvation, the beginning of a deliverance from a blinder, unfailing heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God.

Salvation is carried on by "convincing grace," usually in Scripture termed "repentance," which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone (cf. Ezek. 11:19).

Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation, whereby "through grace" we "are saved by faith" (Eph. 2:8), consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God.

Wesley goes on to show that there is no contradiction in saying "God works; therefore do
ye work,” but rather the closest connection: “For, first, God works; therefore you can work. Secondly, God works, therefore you must work.”

As to the ability to work: Christ truly said, “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5), yet every believer can say “I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

As to the necessity of working:

You must be “workers together with God” (they are the very words of the Apostle 2 Cor. 6:11); otherwise he will cease working. The general rule on which his gracious dispensations invariably proceed is this: “Unto him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not,” that does not improve the grace already given, “shall be taken away what he assuredly hath” (Luke 8:18) (so the words ought to be rendered). Even St. Augustine, who is generally supposed to favour the contrary doctrine, makes that just remark, Qui fecit nos sine nobis, non salvabit nos sine nobis: “he that made us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves.” He will not save us unless we “save ourselves from this untoward generation” (cf. Acts 2:40); unless we ourselves “fight the good fight, and lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:12); unless we “agonize to enter in at the strait gate” (Luke 13:24); “deny ourselves and take up our cross daily” (Luke 9:23), and labour, by every possible means, to “make our own calling and election sure” (cf. 2 Pet. 1:10).

And the peroration of Wesley’s sermon “On Working Out Our Own Salvation” becomes a catena of New Testament texts exhorting believers to work:

“Labour” then, brethren, “not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life.” Say with our blessed Lord, though in a somewhat different sense, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). In consideration that he still worketh in you, be never “weary of well-doing” (cf. Gal. 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:13). Go on, in virtue of the grace of God preventing, accompanying, and following you, in “the work of faith in the patience of hope, and in the labour of love” (cf. 1 Thess. 1:3). Be ye steadfast and immovable; always abounding in the work of the Lord” (cf. 1 Cor. 15:58). And “the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep”—Jesus—“make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever” (Heb. 13:20-21).

In a different literary genre, the Methodist sense of these delicate matters of grace, prayer, faith, and work(s) is captured in the tensions between and within the following two hymns by Charles Wesley:

Behold the servant of the Lord!
I wait thy guiding eye to feel,
To hear and keep thy every word,
To prove and do thy perfect will,
Joyful from my own works to cease.
Glad to fulfill all righteousness.
Me, if thy grace vouchsafe to use,
Meanest of all thy creatures, me:
The deed, the time, the manner choose,
Let all my fruit be found of thee;
Let all my works in thee be wrought,
By thee to full perfection brought.

My every weak, though good design,
O'ermule, or change, as seems thee meet;
Jesus, let all my work be thine!
Thy work, O Lord, is all complete,
And pleasing in thy Father's sight;
Thou only hast done all things right.

Here then to thee thy own I leave;
Mould as thou wilt thy passive clay;
But let me all thy stamp receive,
But let me all thy words obey,
Serve with a single heart and eye,
And to thy glory live and die.36

And then:

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky:

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil:
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care,
As in thy sight to live,
And O thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray,
And on thyself rely,
Assured, if I my trust betray,
I shall for ever die.37

If one were to reflect more fully than John Wesley did on the theological implications
for ecclesiology of this view of the appropriation of salvation, it would land Wesley rather on the "Catholic" side in the debates concerning the instrumentality of the Church, in which some contemporary ecumenists have located "the basic difference" between Roman Catholics and Protestants. In its active reception of the gospel, the Church is by that same motion launched on its task of transmitting it. In practical terms, the early and traditional Methodist institutions of the annual conference and the quarterly meeting illustrate in communal form the concomitance of grace, faith, prayer, and work(s): there the Methodists at appropriate geographical levels gathered in faith to pray, to sing, to partake in the Lord's Supper and the love feast, and to hold "conversation on the work of God," by which they meant what God was doing among them and through their mission in the world. A nice historical example is found in the conference service of a small Methodist denomination in Britain for the sending of missionaries overseas (with even a quotation, in garbled form, of our "ancient Benedictine motto"):

There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh in all Icf. I Cor. 12:6. This truth is nowhere shown more clearly than in the field of Foreign Missions. Some are called to be preachers of the Gospel, some to be teachers in schools, some to be translators of the Scriptures, some to the ministry of healing, whilst others are engaged in industrial, or agricultural work. All these forms of service are necessary; all are sacred; work done in the right spirit is a form of worship.

It was truly said in old times: "To labour is to pray."!

That practice of mission to lands overseas—which has been strongly characteristic of historic Methodism—rejoins the evangelizing endeavors of the early medieval Benedictines, whereby Pope Gregory I had sent Augustine to the English, and in turn the insular figures of Willibald, Boniface, and Wigbert became apostles to the Netherlands and to central Germany.

VI. MUTUAL RECOGNITION?

In the foregoing, it has chiefly been a matter of the "ideal," whether Benedictine or Wesleyan. In ecumenical affairs, it is always important to compare either ideal with ideal, or actual with actual. The greater difficulty, for the ecumenical utility of the present exercise, resides therefore rather in the differences between the kinds of entity under comparison: on the one hand, a religious order within the Roman Catholic Church, wherein (according to its own claim) the sole Church of Christ "subsists" (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, 8); and on the other hand, a denominational family of Methodist Churches which claim their own place within the Body of Christ that is held to include others also. Yet a Roman Catholic writer has felt able to compare Methodism's relationship to Wesley with the way in which "a religious order or spiritual family, within the Roman Catholic Church, owes its spirit to its founder." And the late Methodist historian Albert Outler wanted to see Methodism as an "evangelical order of witness and worship, discipline and nurture" that needs "a catholic church" within which to function. In searching for possible "ways of being one Church," the joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council has noted an analogy between John Wesley's Methodist movement and figures such as Benedict of Norcia 'whose divine calling was
similarly to a spiritual reform," "which gave rise to religious orders, characterized by special forms of life and prayer, work, evangelization and their own internal organization.""

If contemporary Methodists could find renewal according to the Wesleyan ideal, it is possible that they might encounter supporters among the Benedictines to advocate their recognition within the Church catholic. Certainly there are Methodists who have discovered, as I have done, striking embodiments of the Benedictine ideal within living monastic communities and have thereby been helped in our recognition of the ecclesiality of Roman Catholicism.

Let me leave you with a memory, which may also be an anticipation of the future. From the time of the Methodist celebrations in May 1988 of the two-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the evangelical conversions of the Wesley brothers, it is the sight of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and former Abbot of Ampleforth, Dom Basil Hurne, coming to Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, dressed in the simple habit of a Benedictine monk, and kneeling in silent prayer at the tomb of John Wesley.

NOTES
1. See Marie-Benoit Meeus, "Ora et labora: devise bénédictine," in Collectanea Cisterciensia 54 (1992):193-219. On this fine article—which is "spiritual" in the two French senses of religious and witty—I have drawn heavily for the literary history of the connection between prayer and work in monasticism, and among the Benedictines in particular. I am deeply grateful to Sister Marie-Benoit, of the Bethany Priory at Loppem (Belgium), for her initiative in sending me a copy of her text.
3. Sermon 24, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, IV" (1748), in The Works of John Wesley (Bicentennial Edition), vol. 1, Albert C. Outler, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), pp. 533-534. Wesley goes on: "By Christianity I mean that method of worshipping God which is here revealed to man by Jesus Christ. When I say this 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 men.
Wainwright

14. See, for example, Alexander Schmemann, For the Life of the World (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, revised edition, 1974).
15. These last two cases are recounted anecdotally in Meeus, p. 219.
18. Ibid., p. 79-80.
19. Dorn Ildephonse Schuster, a former Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, noted the social and cultural novelty of Benedict’s attitude: “Whereas the ancient Romans looked upon labor as a punishment for slaves, and the barbarians disdained it as an occupation not suited to warlike peoples, St. Benedict elevated work to the dignity of religion and consecrated the ranks of his disciples to it” (19. Benedict and His Times (St. Louis: Herder, 1951), p. 102).
21. The works of mercy are listed in Benedict’s Rule, 4:14-19.
22. Ibid., p. 62.
23. Ibid., pp. 76-77.
26. Wesley’s (public) and (private) Diaries have appeared, as far as 1786, in Works (Bicentennial Edition), vol. 18-23.
30. See Sermon 16, "The Means of Grace" (1746), in Works (Bicentennial Edition), vol. 1, Albert C. Outler, ed., p. 381, where Wesley lists as "the chief": "Prayer, whether in secret or with the grace of congregation; reading the Scriptures (which implies reading, hearing, and meditating thereon); and receiving the Lord’s Supper." In the "Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies" (1743), Wesley names "the ordinances of God" as "the public worship of God; the ministry of the word, either read or expounded; the Supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting, or abstinence" (see Works [Bicentennial Edition], vol. 9, Davies, ed., p. 73). To these "instituted" means of grace, Wesley sometimes adds several of a "prudential" kind; such particular rules in order to grow in grace or "arts of holy living" are intended to serve "watching against the world, the devil, and one’s besetting sin, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God"; see the so-called "Large Minutes," in Works, Thomas Jackson, ed. (1827), 8:322-24.
35. Ibid., The Works of John Wesley, 3:206.
37. Isidore of Seville, Sententiar III.7.18 (Migne, Patrologia Latina 83:675-676).
38. St. Basil juxtaposes these two texts in the Great Rule, 37; see above (as in note 21), p. 207.
40. Aurelian, Rule for Monks, §24, p. 235. The same two-directional motion is found in the Rule of Taranis 56, 4-5; 58.7 and 14-15 (in Desprez, Règles monastiques, pp. 267-68, 270-71).
41. Great Rule, 37; see above (as in note 21), p. 206.
42. That Caesarius served as a model for Benedict was strongly asserted by Theodore Schuster in a writing of 1940, translated as Historical Notes on St. Benedict’s “Rule for Monks” (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1962); see in particular pp. 18-31. But even the likelihood of any borrowings from Caesarius is treated rather lightly by A. de Vogüé in his more recent scholarly edition of Benedict’s Rule (as in note 5; see in particular volume I, pp. 148, 170-71). The chief source of Benedict’s Rule is now widely recognized to be the so-called Rule of the Master, which is in all probability the work of another author, not an earlier work of Benedict himself; see de Vogüé, volume I, pp. 14-23, 29-44, 135-43, 173-314 (especially pp. 303-12).
43. See, for example, Agathon, 9: “There is no labor greater than that of prayer to God” (The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, Benedicta Ward, trans., p. 18-19).
46. Ibid., 9:37.
47. Ibid., 9:38.
50. No. 315 in the 1780 Collection (590 in the British Methodist Hymn Book of 1933; 381 in the British Hymns and Psalms of 1983; and 438 in the American United Methodist Hymnal of 1989).
51. Thus the Preface to the 1933 British Methodist Hymn Book. The classic text was the 1780 Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists (modern scientific edition in The Works of John Wesley, volume 7, Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983; reprinted as part of the Bicentennial Edition of The Works; Nashville: Abingdon, 1989]). The 1780 Collection was arranged “according to the experience of real Christians.” Methodists have subsequently added other Wesleyan hymns for the church year and for the eucharist (the latter drawn from the Hymns on the Lord’s Supper of 1748). In the twentieth century especially, the sources have been expanded ecumenically.
53. For a positive reading of Wesley in this matter by a Roman Catholic writer, whose title (in the original French, though less so as modified for the English translation!) precisely appears to confirm Lutheran and Calvinist fears, see Maximin Pietre, La réaction de John Wesley dans l’évolution du protestantisme (Brussels: La Lecture au Foyer, and Librairie Albert Dewit, 2nd. ed., 1927; English translation: John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism [London: Sheed and Ward, 1937, reprinted 1979]).
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cui tratta di queste questioni si risorta assai della fraseologia semipelagiana, ma si sono anche fonti traette di fraseologia d'origine agostiniana, senza che si prova sinceramente decidere se il pensiero pendeva più in un senso che in un altro. Poiché s. Benedetto non ignorava la questione, si deve ammettere che questo sarà posición agnostica non è casuale, ma calcolata" (p. 82). My attention was directed to Vargianni's article by my friend Dom Emmanuel Lanne of Chevetogne (Letter of 14 June 1994).

55. The text is contained in L. Holstein's Codex Regularum monasticarum et canonicanum (Paris 1663); as expanded by M. Brockie (Augsburg: Veith, 1759; reprinted Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1957), in the second tome, fifteenth addition, p. 335.


57. Preface to "Sermons on Several Occasions" (1746), in Outler, The Works of John Wesley, 1:104-105.


59. It is reported that Francis Asbury, one of the first two bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, would place children on his knee and teach them the rhyme: Learn to read, and learn to pray; Learn to work, and learn to obey. See Henry Boethius, Reminiscences; Historical and Biographical; Joseph B. Wakeley, ed. (New York: Carlson and Porter, 1865), p. 447.

60. Rule, prologue, 29.32 (my translation from de Vogüé and Neufville, volume 1, pp. 418-21).

61. Of this sermon, the editor of the current scholarly edition of Wesley's Sermons, Albert C. Outler, writes: "This must be considered as a landmark sermon, for it stands as the late Wesley's most complete and careful exposition of the mystery of divine-human interaction, his subtlest probing of the paradox of prevenient grace and human agency. ... In any dozen of his sermons most crucial for an accurate essay of Wesley's theology, this one would certainly deserve inclusion." See Outler, The Works of John Wesley, 3:199.


63. Later in the sermon, Wesley makes a characteristic attempt to stay away from a Calvinist notion of predestination: "Allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none; seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called 'natural conscience.' But this is not natural; it is more properly termed 'prevailing grace.' Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which wareth not for the call of man. Everyone has sooner or later good desires, although the generality of men still them before they can take deep root and produce any considerable fruit. Everyone has some measure of that light, some faint glimmering ray, which sooner or later, more or less, enlightens every man that cometh into the world. And everyone, unless he be one of the small number whose conscience is scared as with a hot iron [11 Tit. 4:21], feels more or less uneasy when he acts contrary to the light of his own conscience. So that no man sineth because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath" (Outler, The Works of John Wesley, 3:207). This is the point at which Calvinsists may find it difficult to excuse Wesley from semipelagianism; yet in another place, Wesley makes clear that sufficient freedom of will to accept the gospel has been retained (admittedly, universally) to humankind (in virtue of Christ's redemptive work for all): "every man has a measure of free will restored to him by grace" (see "Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's "Review of all the Doctrines taught by Mr. John Wesley," in Works of the Rev. John Wesley, Thomas Jackson, ed. [London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872], 10:392).


65. Ibid., 3:206.


67. It is a smart move on Wesley's part to cite Augustine against the Calvinists, even though he
appears to be quoting from memory: "Qui ergo facit te sine te, non te justificat sine te" (Sermon 169, 11(13); Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 38:922-923). Wesley had given the same text, in his own form, in Sermon 63, "The General Spread of the Gospel" (1781) in Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, 2:490.

69. Ibid., 3:209.
71. No. 309 in the 1780 Collection (578 in the British Methodist *Hymn Book* of 1933; 785 in *Hymns and Psalms*; and 413 in the American *United Methodist Hymnal* of 1989).
Much of the world sees life as a struggle between good and evil, with humanity caught in the cross fire. Individual human beings or even whole cultures have to choose sides: to follow the way of darkness or the way of light; to take the narrow road or the broad road; to choose blessing or curse; to follow the way to Paradise or the way to Gehenna, etc. Our Christian heritage takes us to our roots in Judaism, where the "two-ways theory" was widely understood and accepted. When Jesus of Nazareth spoke of "the narrow road" and "the broad road," his message drew upon traditional imagery and needed no modern-day exegesis before its hearers could grasp its meaning and be moved by the message. While we can understand the same message with relative ease in our day, we can still benefit from a brief look at the tradition that our Lord found available two thousand years ago.

In Jesus' immediate culture, those who spoke of an afterlife readily used various images to talk about life after death and how one might achieve everlasting life. The experience of seeing a great city after passing through a narrow gate in its walls was easily joined to the imagery of one's passing through difficulties and the observance of the Torah to everlasting life. Another image that was often used spoke of a road that is smooth in the beginning but ends in thorns; while another way has thorns at the beginning, but then becomes smooth at the end. For the most part, all of these

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images were meant to encourage one to persevere in appropriate behavior all through life so that one may have joy in the next life or “in the world to come.” Jesus’ own image of the narrow gate and narrow road as opposed to the wide gate and broad road to destruction (cf. Matt. 7:13) is equally eschatological in outlook, but the right way to live is to be found specifically in doing the will of the Father (cf. Matt. 7:21) as distinct from a meticulous observance of religious legalisms. Early Christian literature outside of the New Testament also made use of the “two ways” metaphor, as in the Didache (1:6) and the Epistle of Barnabas (1:8-20).

FLESH VS. SPIRIT

The entanglement of contradictions that we experience between what we profess in our hearts as opposed to what we do in practice is seen by St. Paul as a struggle between the flesh and the spirit (cf. Gal. 5:16ff.). This image is but another form of the two ways theory and refines it to some extent. In early Christian and monastic usage, “flesh” represented all of the sinful inclinations to which one’s body and soul were subject. Consequently, self-will (propria voluntas), which proceeds from one’s own soul, is the broad road to destruction and must be voluntarily rooted out so that the divine will can be accomplished in a person. This entails seeking guidance and advice from appropriate authorities and teachers who can help a person discern God’s will or who can even mediate God’s will because of their God-given authority and adherence to the Lord’s commands. With scriptural passages such as John 21:17 (“Feed my sheep”), Matt. 28:20 (“Teach them to do whatever I have commanded you”), and Luke 10:16 (“He who hears you hears me”), the beginnings of western monasticism developed and supported its concept of obedience to a superior. “To submit to superiors is to set out on the road of trial, indeed of martyrdom.” This is the narrow road to life that monastic life chooses to follow.

THE NARROW ROAD IN MONASTIC LIFE

In the Rule of Benedict (RB), the most significant passage that speaks of the narrow road to salvation is found in the Prologue 45-49, in the context of “the school for the Lord’s service”:

Therefore we intend to establish a school for the Lord’s service. In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome. The good of all concerned, however, may prompt us to a little strictness in order to amend faults and to safeguard love. Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation. It is bound to be narrow at the outset. But as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God’s commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love.

Benedict’s employment of the expression and image of the monastery as the “school for the Lord’s service” is taken directly from the Rule of the Master (RM 4), where the image is the climax to the Master’s picture of humanity coming to Christ to receive Baptism and then entering into the Lord’s school in order to persevere in one’s renunciation of the world. Monastic life is thus seen as “an immediate prolongation of Baptism” and is a matter of “not returning” after baptismal regeneration to the “burden of sin,” once it has been laid.
aside.... For the man who is crushed by the consciousness of his faults, the law of Christ obtains an unspeakable 'relief', a marvellous impression of 'lightness.' This passage from guilt to innocence, from a sinful conscience to justice and holiness, will have its end in the perfect 'repose' of eternity."

The treatment given to the above material by the Master and Benedict brings together two logia from Matthew that seem to contradict each other. In Matt. 7:13f, the road to life is narrow, difficult, and few find it. But in Matt. 11:28-30, Jesus' burden is easy and the invitation is given to all who are burdened. However, our monastic legislators resolve the seeming contradiction by equating Jesus' yoke with the narrow road while all other burdens are the burden of sin, which is thus equivalent to the broad road to perdition. "Monastic life then appears as the natural development of the being who is 'renewed' by baptism and as the normal existence of the 'risen.' ...Consequently, it consists in submitting to the divine law, and more precisely to the 'Christian law', the Lord's commandments." This means further that the disciple of Christ must be ready and willing to share in the Lord's sufferings so as to be able to follow him to glory: "Never swerving from his [Christ's] instructions, then, but faithfully observing his teaching in the monastery until death, we shall through patience share in the suffering of Christ that we may deserve also to share in his kingdom" (RB Prol. 50).

Although this paper is not intended to be a study in contrasts and similarities between the Master and Saint Benedict, it is occasionally appropriate to note a particular difference or similarity so that one may better appreciate and evaluate these two monastic legislators. One of the differences is the pronounced suspicion and pessimism found in the Master in contrast to Benedict. The Master, for instance, sees life here below as suffering upon suffering, Benedict, in contrast, sees matters in a more optimistic light as is evidenced by his addition to the Master's treatment of the school for the Lord's service: namely, the promise of the expansion of the heart through love, and progress in faith and an unspeakable sweetness to be found in running the way of God's commandments once one has passed through the initial narrowness of the way. The effect of this promise is the balance that is struck between a purely eschatological view of the narrow way to life eternal and our present life as a foretaste of the life to come. Those who are well-developed spiritually may be inscrutable to us who are not; but they are not mystical hypochondriacs pining away in this life while longing for eternal life and ineffable bliss.

THE WAY OF OBEDIENCE

Benedict's "formula for sainthood" is summed up in chapter 72 of his Rule: The Good Zeal of Monks. This zeal is to be shown especially in patient, mutual obedience, service to each other, and attention to the needs of one another. "To their fellow monks they show the pure love of brothers; to God, loving fear; to their abbot, unfeigned and humble love. Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life."

Loving obedience is central to the RB and the pursuit of the narrow way. In RB 5, On Obedience, Benedict could not be clearer about this:

It is love that impels them to pursue everlasting life; therefore, they are eager to take the narrow road of which the Lord says: Narrow is the road that leads to life. They
no longer live by their own judgment, giving in to their whims and appetites; rather they walk according to another’s decisions and directions, choosing to live in monasteries and to have an abbot over them. Men of this resolve unquestionably conform to the saying of the Lord: I have come not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. (Cf John 6:38).

THE WAY OF DISCIPLINE

In our examination of the metaphor of the narrow way, we have now arrived at the concept of obedience. Indeed, one may wonder if “Obedience: The Narrow Road” would not be the more apt title for this paper. Such a title could be defended; however, it could also be so narrowly construed that the road we are examining would be made even narrower than it need be. The term “discipline” includes obedience and more, but it could possibly be construed so broadly that the “narrow road” ends up looking more like some kind of broad road. Be that as it may, we will proceed to look at the concept of discipline and apply it, mutatis mutandis, to the theme of this paper and of this conference.

DISCIPLINE IN WISDOM LITERATURE

Even no more than “a passing acquaintance” with the Bible and the RB reveals the intentional parallel that the monastic founders drew between their Rule and the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. The RB begins with “Listen carefully, my son,” which clearly imitates Prov. 1:8 and other passages from wisdom literature. When Proverbs says “listen,” it also means “obey.” Obedience is thus a clear theme of wisdom literature and is associated with the somewhat broader theme of discipline.

Prov. 1:2 asserts that the purpose of these sage remarks is “that men may appreciate wisdom and discipline.” In 5:23, wisdom and discipline are virtually synonymous; for the wicked man “will die from lack of discipline; through the greatness of his folly he will be lost.” In 6:23, “the reproofs of discipline” are necessary to resist the temptations of the adulteress.

Sirach 6:18 emphasizes that discipline is a prerequisite for wisdom: “My son, from your youth embrace discipline, thus will you find wisdom with graying hair.” Sirach 32:14 is unequivocally direct about the need for discipline if one is to achieve life’s ultimate goal: “He who would find God must accept discipline.” While “discipline” here would have meant observance of the law to the pious Jew of Sirach’s time, the passage readily reminds one of St. Benedict’s insistence that the novice in monastic life is to be tested to see if he is truly seeking God (RB 58.7).

Much of what can be said of wisdom in the Old Testament can also be said of the New Testament, even though one may well question the extent or degree of the similarities. However, Heb. 12:5-11 quotes from Prov. 3:11-12 in order to encourage Christians who are facing numerous trials and persecution to accept their sufferings in the spirit of salutary discipline: “Endure your trials as ‘discipline’: God treats you as sons. For what ‘son’ is there whom the father does not discipline?” We need not belabor the point any longer: Discipline is a well-respected topic in both the Old and the New Testaments. Therefore, we now turn our attention to “fine tuning” the meaning of “discipline” for the purposes of this paper.
DISCIPLINE IN THE RULE OF BENEDICT

The North American Benedictine publication, RB 1980, commemorating the fifteen hundredth anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict of Nursia (c. A.D. 480), lists 22 references for the word disciplina in the RB. Exactly one half of these references are to the “discipline of the Rule,” that is, the imposition of some sort of punishment or sanction for unacceptable behavior. “Discipline” in this sense is only obliquely related to the topic at hand. Several of the references to discipline mean “good order” (e.g., RB 56.3 and 63.9), while other references treat discipline as a virtue related especially to humility (RB 7.9) and obedience (RB 64.2). Discipline as various manifestations of and exercises in humility and obedience will be our main concern here; that is to say, “discipline,” as used in this paper, means primarily humility and obedience.

Our first encounter with the word disciplina in the RB is in 2.14 where the abbot of the monastery is admonished to be exemplary in his behavior and observance of the Rule lest “God some day call to him in his sin: How is it that you repeat my just commands and mouth my covenant when you hate discipline and toss my words behind you?” (Ps. 49:16-17). Discipline in this passage is more akin to conversatio morum or “the monastic way of life,” which is not essentially different from a Christian way of life marked by good morals and virtue. On the other hand, a lack of discipline includes a disregard for God’s words and commands. Thus is it also a disregard for one’s salvation.

Concern for salvation is also the major motivating factor in the case of the more severe forms of discipline that the RB prescribes for offending monks. An offender may be excluded from the table and the oratory and forbidden to associate with others in the community while he ponders “that fearful judgment of the Apostle: Such a man is handed over for the destruction of his flesh that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord” (RB 25.3-4; 1 Cor. 5:5). When all efforts, including the prayers of the community, have failed to reform the recalcitrant monk, then the abbot may expel him from the monastery for the sake of the community “lest one diseased sheep infect the whole flock” (RB 28.6); for such persons may seriously erode the community’s holiness. Nevertheless, even in the case of expulsion from the monastery, St. Benedict wants the abbot to act that the offender’s spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

DISCIPLINE IN OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY

Thus far in our inquiry into the monastic view of “the narrow road” and discipline, we have seen that obedience and humility delineate best what is meant by “discipline” in the title of this paper. The monk is to be obedient in the spirit of Christ’s obedience to his heavenly Father. Such obedience must be voluntary, free of self-serving will, motivated by love of Christ and one’s superiors and conferees, and so on. Such obedience, however, requires humility. On the other hand, obedience helps one acquire humility and grow in it.

This is not a vicious circle, but a fact of life known from experience: One can potentially grow in humility through obedience even if one is at first reluctant to be obedient. Yet St. Benedict shows little patience for reluctantly given obedience and even says obedience given with a grumbling heart will merit punishment rather than reward, “unless he changes for the better and makes amends” (RB 5.19). On the one hand, it is clear that Benedict sees the possibility of growth from begrudging obedience to humble obedience that is
given, as it were, simultaneously with the command (RB 5.9). But it is equally clear that he does not want to encourage merely halfhearted obedience. Indeed he has less patience for such obedience than we might otherwise expect. Certainly he would have known the parable of the two sons who were asked by their father to work in the vineyard, with one saying "yes" immediately, but not going into the vineyard, and the other son saying "no," but then repenting and going into the vineyard and ultimately being acknowledged as obedient (cf. Matt. 21:28-31a). St. Benedict's more stringent treatment is easily explained in view of the fact that he is legislating at this point rather than giving pastoral counseling, and also because he is legislating for cenobitic monks: that is, for men who have chosen that way of life because, at least in theory, they want "to live in monasteries and to have an abbot over them" (RB 5.12).14

DISCIPLINE IN THE LIFE OF BENEDICT

Before we proceed farther with our abstract considerations about the monastic life and its view of the narrow road of discipline in arriving at salvation, it might be an informative and a welcome diversion to look at the topic in the context of the life of Benedict. The only drawback here is that we know very little about Benedict's life. Pope Gregory I wrote a biography of Benedict15 in A.D. 593-594, some fifty years after the death of St. Benedict (A.D. 543?). Moreover, there is not only the question of the passage of time and the fading or transformation of memories to take into consideration, there is also the fact that Gregory never met Benedict and, following the literary conventions of his day, wrote in a genre that was more interested in presenting the supposed inner qualities of a person than in reproducing a factual description of a person's life.

Consequently, the qualities that Gregory sees portrayed in the life of Benedict may be qualities that Gregory himself especially values and therefore projects onto Benedict. It is not our purpose here to discern in every detail what is of Benedict and what is of Gregory; for those elements that reflect Gregory's values and character more than Benedict's actual life still fit the purpose of this study inasmuch as they reflect monastic values of the times and environs of Benedict and Gregory. Thus we proceed with this caveat lector now in place.

MORAL DISCIPLINE VS. INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINE

According to Gregory, Benedict was born in Nursia (now Norcia), in very mountainous country some seventy miles northeast of Rome. Benedict's family must have been relatively well off since Benedict was eventually sent to Rome to round out his education. However, that did not last long. The licentious lives of the students proved all too disgust- ing for Benedict, who then struck out on his own to seek a life of solitude. For Gregory, this action was an indication that Benedict preferred a discipline different from that of intel- lectual learning. His discipline was to please God rather than self. From a more modern point of view, Benedict engaged in a process of the ego purging itself of egoism, the goal of true contemplation being "to please God" rather than "to see God."16

At Subiaco, about 35 miles from Rome, St. Benedict met Romanus, a monk, who clothed him in the garb of a monk. This action indicates Benedict's desire to pursue a tradi- tion of discipline that leads to holy wisdom rather than secular wisdom. The next three
years of Benedict's life are spent in a cave. During this time and in later years as well, he is subjected to three forms of temptation and overcomes them with the help of God's grace. These temptations, reminiscent of the three temptations of Christ in the desert, correspond to the three principal regions of the soul or psyche according to the psychology of Gregory's day. The first is the rational aspect of the soul, which St. Benedict mastered by overcoming temptations to vainglory when he secretly withdrew from the public's eyes and acclaims after his first miracle, the perfect rejoining of a dish that his nurserymaid accidentally broke. In mastering temptations to lust and in his practice of fasting, St. Benedict takes control of the second region of the soul, that of concupiscence. Finally, he masters the third region of the soul, the irascible aspect, by subduing desires to be aggressive and violent, and by returning good for evil. All of these spiritual conquests may be viewed as aspects of discipline, and a lack of discipline is equivalent to a lack of moral character and, if willful or due to negligence, also a sign of one's rejection of divine grace and disregard for one's salvation.

HUMILITY, THE FINAL LESSON

Toward the conclusion of his *Life of Benedict*, Gregory the Great introduces the reader to Scholastica, the twin sister of St. Benedict. On this occasion, Scholastica has come to visit her brother, who meets with her in a house belonging to the monastery but located some distance from the cloister. At day's end, Benedict wants to return to the monastery, but his sister prefers to continue their holy conversation. When she sees that Benedict is determined to abide by the rule and return to the monastery before dark, Scholastica puts her head down on her hands and prays. Suddenly, the clear sky is completely filled with clouds, lightning, and a downpour of rain that prevents Benedict from leaving the house to return to his cloistered quarters. Thus, he is forced to continue their holy discourse through the night. Gregory concludes from this account that God, who is love, heard Scholastica's prayer over Benedict's protest because "hers was the greater love."

The effect of St. Scholastica's prevailing over her brother is twofold. First, it marks the end to the miraculous powers of Benedict, and, secondly, it is a final lesson in humility for Benedict, who had to learn that love is greater than adherence to the letter of the law. But, at least in Gregory's eyes, there is still another effect for St. Benedict. It is that of advancing to a still higher plane of sanctity; for now he is granted eyes to behold life everlasting, beginning with a vision of Scholastica's soul ascending to Heaven upon her death three days after her all night conversation with her brother. The significance of this account is made clear at the beginning of Gregory's fourth book of the *Dialogues*, where he explains that the mind's eye of one who has been cleansed by pure faith and prolonged prayer is capable of seeing a soul which has left the body. This all fits very well into Gregory's interest in contemplation as a religious phenomenon, a subject that St. Benedict does not concern himself with in any depth or detail. But this is a matter that also goes beyond the scope of this paper except to the extent that it illustrates the thesis that discipline in its various religious forms is the narrow beginning of the road to life upon which we hope eventually to run, "hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love" (RB Prol. 49).
OBEEDIENCE IN BROAD PERSPECTIVE

We return now to another look at the main ingredients of discipline: humility and obedience. We will consider obedience first and attempt to see its importance to the monk.

Ideally, a monk is someone who truly seeks God through "eagerness for the Work of God," for obedience and for trials" (RB 58.7). The role of obedience is not merely to insure good order.21 Instead, the way of obedience is prized as a response to God's call to his people to follow in the footsteps of Christ our Lord.22 "The third step of humility is that a man submits to his superior in all obedience for the love of God, imitating the Lord of whom the Apostle says: He became obedient even to death" (RB 7.24; Phil. 2:8). Obedience is viewed as the condition for retaining Paradise (Gen. 2:16-17), an image that is persistently in the back of a monk's mind and close to his heart.23 Obedience to God's voice and covenant makes his people dearer to him than all other peoples (Exod. 19:5).

And most significantly, Christ's obedience reversed the effects of "one man's" (Adam's) disobedience (Rom. 5:19). The monk is brought to Christ and partakes of the fruits of Christ's salvific work through "the labor of obedience" (RB Prol. 2), an expression which implies that sin is very much akin to taking the easy course, the path of least resistance, indeed, the broad road to destruction.

The place that obedience is to hold in a monk's life becomes perhaps most pronounced in RB 68: Assignment of Impossible Tasks to a Brother. St. Benedict explains here that a monk is to accept a burdensome or impossible task "with complete gentleness and obedience." He may still consult with his superior and "without pride, obstinacy or refusal" explain why he finds the task impossible. But "if after the explanation the superior is still determined to hold to his original order, the junior must recognize that this is best for him. Trusting in God's help, he must in love obey."24

No doubt our modern age (or, if one insists, our "post-modern age") finds little or no value in obedience and would pronounce a person to be of unsound mind for taking RB 68 seriously. Much could be said at this point about the problems of our modern age and the unfortunate "reasons" it finds authority and obedience distasteful and despisable, but that would take us much too far afield from the real topic at hand.25 Instead, let us note especially the conditions of faith and love that St. Benedict attaches to obedience. It is not obedience for its own sake or for the sake of good order or for a quasi-military motive of accomplishing a task regardless of the internal attitudes of those carrying out the order. Instead, it is obedience that learns to trust in God and to act out of love in spite of all other difficulties.

The relation of obedience to faith and love is well attested in the New Testament: "Those who hear the word of God and keep it" are the truly blessed (Luke 11:28); the true disciple is one who bends to the loving will of the Father just as Jesus did (Matt. 16:21, 26:54, and 5:45-48); and love of God and Christ is identified with keeping the commands of God and Christ (John 14:15-21, 15:10, and 1 John 2:3-6). While these passages are not quoted in the RB, other passages that support the position taken here are quoted in the RB and sometimes cited elsewhere in this paper.

HUMILITY AND FEAR OF THE LORD

It is tempting to place value judgments on humility and obedience and make them compete with each other. However, that process will not be undertaken here. For our pur-
poses, we shall consider them to be the two sides of the same coin that we have called "discipline." Obedience may also be seen as a "more external" virtue since it is more easily noted in a person's behavior. Humility is "more internal," but also affects the whole of one's behavior. Since it is "more internal" and lays claim to being the longest chapter in the RB, we may be inclined to place a greater moral value on humility over obedience. One modern commentator notes: "Humility was for our fathers what love is for us—the keyword which sums up everything." But even before chapter 7, On Humility, St. Benedict notes in RB 5, On Obedience, that "The first step of humility is unhesitating obedience, which comes naturally to those who cherish Christ above all." Thus in some respects, Benedict appears to value obedience over humility. However, another question is raised at this point: Does this union of humility and obedience in RB 5 contradict chapter 7 where the first step of humility "is that a man keeps the fear of God always before his eyes and never forgets it"?

To date, there are no fully convincing explanations that reconcile RB 5, 1 and 7.10. It has been referred to as "a classic difficulty in Benedictine exegesis" that is perhaps best explained by Benedict's desire in RB 7 to follow the RM in treating of humility as a ladder of twelve rungs that one is to ascend. Inasmuch as "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 1:7 and 9:10) and wisdom literature greatly influenced St. Benedict, there is a congruity in Benedict's designation of fear of the Lord as the beginning of humility. Prov. 22:4 states that "The reward of humility and fear of the Lord is riches, honor, and life." In Prov. 15:33 we read "The fear of the Lord is training for wisdom, and humility goes before honor."

While fear of the Lord and humility are not to be purely and simply identified with each other, it is clear from the above that they are at least first cousins if not siblings in the spiritual life. It is not necessary here to define the relationship with hair-splitting exactitude. Rather, we only need note the fact that they can appear in the same breath and in the same context in Scripture, albeit the goal of fear of the Lord and humility is still "this worldly" in Proverbs while, as we should expect, the goal is "other worldly" for Benedict: The degrees of humility are the rungs of the ladder of ascent to "exaltation in heaven" (RB 7.5) in place of riches and honor in this life. The love that casts out our fear does not obviate the fear of the Lord that characterizes humility.

ASCENT BY HUMILITY

In the ascent of the ladder of humility that leads one to "that perfect love of God which casts out fear" (RB 7.67), we note that there is no mention of grace—which might tempt a modern Christian to accuse St. Benedict of Pelagianism. However, the chapter ends with an admission that the ascent of the ladder of humility is accomplished by the Holy Spirit "in his workman now cleansed of vices and sins" (RB 7.70). This rather belated acknowledgment of humility as the work of grace, i.e., the Holy Spirit, may be due either to a desire to place the concept of grace near the end as a sort of literary climax, or, what seems more likely, we are again confronted with the fact that the RB is primarily a book of legislation rather than a practical treatise on pastoral counseling and the theology of grace.

Another matter that strikes the reader in the chapter on humility is the paucity of examples of humility from the life of Christ in spite of the fact that the RM 13.72 refers to Christ...
as "the Lord of humility" (Christo humilitatis Dominus). Again, we can only speculate as to the reasons. Perhaps the paucity of references was a reaction to Arianism, which was still rather virulent in Benedict's day and viewed Christ as less than truly divine. Or was it because a distinction is to be made between "following Christ" (RB Pro. 7:4.10) and "imitating Christ" (RB 5.13; 7.32 & 34; 27.8)? Nevertheless, whatever the reason or reasons, St. Benedict points to Christ's humble obedience in doing "the will of him who sent [me]" (John 6:38) and to our Lord's acceptance of death on a cross (Phil. 2:8) as the motives for a monk's renunciation of his own will and for his obedience to superiors (RB 7.31-34).

**RENUNCIATION: THE WAY OF HUMILITY**

Perhaps the image of a monk that comes to mind most readily for the average person on the street is that of either a black-robed, bearded man walking placidly in a peaceful wilderness or garden setting with his cowl drawn up over his downcast head and holding his prayer book open in his hand, or a gaunt, scantily dressed, wry old guru, wrinkled with years and harsh asceticism, giving holy advice to someone considerably better dressed and better fed than he himself. In the first case, the monk is felt to be one who has enough of everything he needs or wants so that now he can go about as one of "God's holy loafers." In the second case, the monk is viewed as one who has made himself so unattractive through his life of renunciation, that now he becomes an attraction and a curiosity because of his physical unattractiveness and apparent mastery of the appetites that drive others to a variety of excesses. Both images are overdrawn, but both have their elements of truth in them. A mature monk may very well be able to go about unhurt and in peace of mind once he has overcome the allurements of the various appetites. The ascetic practices or disciplines of monasticism have their purpose and their effect. One purpose is to aid the monk to flee from sin. Another purpose, clearly related to the avoidance of sin, is the attainment of humility. Humility, however, is primarily directed to being the way in which a monk conforms and gives over his life to Christ, who is "meek and humble of heart" (Matt. 11:29).

Another popular image of a monk is that he is a man of silence. Again, the image may be overdrawn, but it is squarely on target inasmuch as silence is at the heart of monastic asceticism and spirituality. "It reminds us that monastic life consists in imposing on oneself certain renunciations." Clearly the most significant renunciation for the monk is that of his own will, as we have already seen. All other renunciations directly or indirectly serve the purpose of reinforcing this basic renunciation.

In the case of renunciation of property and ownership, St. Benedict does not elaborate; he just legislates (RB 33; Monks and Private Ownership). In calling private ownership a vice that "must be uprooted and removed from the monastery," Benedict implies that private ownership in the monastery is opposed to the virtues that a monk is to acquire and exhibit. It does not take much imagination to see how a person can become proud and vain about possessions and use them to manipulate others and to curry their favor. Possessions can easily tempt a monk to exercise a material and psychological independence from the community that ultimately can be the monk's undoing, and possibly even the undoing of the community. Benedict implies as much when he cites Acts 4:32 (All things should be the common possession of all so that no one presumes to call anything his own) as the scriptural basis for
the monk's personal poverty. This conclusion becomes more evident in RB 57: The Artisans of the Monastery, where the tragic example of the fate of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) is given to dissuade artisan monks from becoming proud of their skills and from practicing any sort of fraud in the sale of their products lest they and all who perpetrate fraud in monastery affairs suffer spiritual death.

Since monks are to belong entirely to Christ, they "may not have the free disposal even of their own bodies and wills." Such radical dispossession of oneself finds an equally radical rejection in today's modern societies. But the concept is saturated with the New Testament's admonitions to those who would be Christ's disciples. A passage such as Rom. 12:1 readily comes to mind: ...offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Other passages inform us that we are members of the body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 6:15 and Eph. 5:28). In the final analysis, the renunciation of private ownership in the monastic tradition is aimed at producing a community of one heart and mind in its faith in divine Providence. The radical nature of this disappropriation of goods and renunciation of ownership is highlighted by the concrete naming of some simple items such as books, writing tablets and stylus (RB 33.3) that monks may not own but for which "they are to look to the father of the monastery." Thus the monk's individual poverty does not even allow for the possession of the few simple items (the peculium) that ancient Roman law permitted to slaves. While poverty may be humiliating to those who have it thrust upon them by unavoidable circumstances, it is virtually humbling for those who voluntarily accept it.

"TO LOVE FASTING"

We conclude our consideration of monastic renunciations with a brief look at abstinence and fasting, though the list of renunciations can be further expanded. Food and drink, as is the case with property, are morally indifferent in themselves. But as "occasions" for disorderly inclinations and excesses, they are "fair game" for monastic discipline and ascetic. Fasting and abstinence (especially from flesh meat) in Christian monasticism are not practiced due to any belief about "unclean foods" (as in ancient Judaism) or for Gnostic notions (as in Manichaeism). Instead, such practices are meant as aids to mastering desires so that one is not mastered by desire.

In recent years, fasting has become less meaningful and significant as a religious practice even for Catholics. Ironically, at the same time, it has become more and more a political statement. But either as a religious practice or a political statement, "fasting witnesses to the intensity of the pain, the gravity of the concern, and the will to overcome evil." Fasting among people of earlier times was virtually taken for granted and "enjoyed" widespread support from the "world of sports" as St. Paul himself states in 1 Cor. 9:25: Everyone who competes in a contest abides from everything. In modern translations, this passage may not always use the term "abstain," but the Latin Vulgate that was well known to the early monks is quite unambiguous: Omnis autem qui in agone contendit, ab omnibus se abstinet. Now let us establish the connection between the ascetical use of food and the spiritual dimensions of humility and obedience.

There is no difficulty in referring to ascetic practices as "discipline." But in our use of the term, we are referring primarily to ways of implementing humility and obedience.
However, when we consider that monastic life is a continuation of the penitential life developed by the early church, then we have an association of ascetic practices such as fasting and abstinence with the life of obedience and humility. The direct relationship between the renunciation of one's own will (propria volutta) and obedience finds its counterpart in the renunciation of the appetites which, like one's self-will, can control and enslave a person and prevent genuine openness and charity toward others. In fasting, monks, like early Christians in general, hope to be able to expend fewer resources on themselves and thus have more to expend on the “economically disadvantaged” (to use today’s “politically correct” terminology). When the Master and Benedict invite the monk in two successive maxims to ‘love fasting’ and to ‘relieve the poor’, there is no doubt that a connection of cause and effect unites these two ‘Instruments’ “...of good works). Moreover, in the desire to assist the poor, it makes good sense spiritually for the monk “to love fasting,” since that is part and parcel of exercising love toward the poor. Otherwise, it seems virtually impossible to love fasting unless undertaken for reasons of health and/or vanity, which are motives far removed from the agape-love that Christ calls us to exercise. But the monk is to love Christ above all (RB 4.21), and it is particularly in the poor that Christ is received and served (RB 53.15).

**IN CONCLUSION**

‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you’ (John 14:27). In similar fashion, the freedom of the children of God (Rom. 8:21) is not the freedom that the world exalts. The world’s freedom is freedom in license that ultimately enslaves one to pride, appetites, etc. The freedom of the children of God is founded in truth. If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8:31-32). But the truth that is meant here is not some sort of intellectual grasp of facts; rather it is Christ himself: the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The whole of monastic life is aimed at removing a variety of illusions from the monk so that he will face up squarely to himself and to God and seek the right relationship between himself and God. That is the goal of all the monk’s discipline. It is a process of learning at the most basic levels of one’s existence. One can learn about hunger only by experiencing hunger. One can learn about the freedom of the children of God only by experiencing it. But that requires freedom from any elements that hold us to the world’s way of thinking and behaving, which is the broad way to destruction. The only genuine freedom is the freedom that comes with one’s union or identity with Christ. The monk’s goal is “to put on Christ” (Rom. 13:14). But he cannot achieve this goal without the grace of Christ which is granted to him on the narrow road to life. To pursue that road means to forgo any number of choices and “lifestyles” that others might look upon as necessary for one’s self-fulfillment. It is a free choice to limit one’s outreach to various pleasures, pursuits, and material gains and to expand one’s horizons beyond the immediate desires and concerns of this present life in a pursuit of God and ultimate truth. The monastic form of discipline associated with this pursuit is not everyone’s cup of tea or everyone’s call from God, though the pursuit of God and ultimate truth is everyone’s moral responsibility, whether readily embraced or not.

The topic of freedom is addressed here because we can all too easily criticize an institu...
tionalized form of religious life as something that destroys a Christian’s God-given freedom and responsibility toward oneself. Indeed, in recent times, we have seen the emergence of any number of religious cults that have so effectively robbed their members of their freedom that they have allowed themselves to be led to the strangest of beliefs and the most bizarre of behaviors, resulting in the death of others or in mass suicide. So the concern is understandable. However, Benedictine monastic life, if we date it from the time of St. Benedict, is the second oldest surviving institution in Western culture. Only the Church itself is older. There is something to be said for the test of time. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

The monastic way of life, its disciplina, exists ultimately to serve the monk, and not vice versa. No institution in Christianity, not even the church, may exist for its own sake and make its members subservient to it. The witness of history has shown us the sad results when this principle is violated too often and too long. Yet no Christian institution or denomination is entirely immune to this possibility. Virtually any institution that survives more than a generation will have its share of skeletons sequestered away in the closet. Still, we live in the hope of Christ’s promise to be with his ekklesia through all times and tribulations (Matt. 16:18). Regardless of our various concepts and definitions of ekklesia, we are keenly aware, perhaps as never before, that the church of Christ is found wherever two or three are gathered in his name (Matt. 18:20). Today, in this place, we are gathered in his name. Every encounter with Christ must change our lives for the better if it is not to be changed for the worse as we see so graphically portrayed in Judas Iscariot. We have been entrusted with the Good News of Christ, both a treasure and responsibility. May we treasure the responsibility and be faithful porters of the Good News.

NOTES
3. RM, Ths 45. The Rule of the Master, an anonymous monastic rule that St. Benedict drew upon very heavily, has been most recently and thoroughly researched by Adelbert de Vogüé in his seven-volume work on the RB: La Règle de saint Benoît (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1971-72).
5. Cf. ibid., p. 18.
7. To those more acquainted with Latin than most modern people are, the word audire, meaning “to listen,” that forms the root of obeyire, “to obey,” is immediately apparent. Because carefu, obedient listening is at the heart of the monastic life, silence (aeternitas) is stressed as the necessary condition for faithful listening.
8. White Strach for Ecclesiastics, not to be confused with Ecclesiast in Qoheleth, is not considered a canonical work among most Protestants, it is still held in high regard by biblical scholars and further develops the theme of wisdom.
10. Modern Catholic theology often does not treat obedience as a virtue in itself, mainly
because Thomas Aquinas did not consider it to be a virtue in itself. Instead, he treats it as a part of the virtue of justice. Cf. Summa Theologica, 2 I, p. 104.

11. In the RM and the RB, these forms of discipline are called "excommunication." That is not, however, the same as expulsion from the community, which is used only as a last resort for the sake of the community's welfare. The RM 13, 2.3 refers to one who is to be expelled as "a heretic" and as "the devil's workman." For a more complete treatment of this topic and passage, cf. RB 1980, pp. 421-23.


13. Cf. K. Hein, "St. Benedict and the Second Coming of Christ," in The American Benedictine Review, 36:3 (Sept. 1985), pp. 318-24, where it is argued that St. Benedict and, indeed, the monastic tendency of his day was to eschew the theme of the Second Coming but to continue to emphasize the idea of Final Judgment.

14. Beginning several centuries before Benedict's time, obedience to properly appointed ecclesiastical authorities took on additional significance as a result of the increase of heretical divisions in the church and the threat that Gnosticism presented to the church. Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons and the "Father of Catholic Dogmatics," had to shepherd a flock of mostly illiterate people who could not avail themselves of the written word of Scripture. On the other hand, he had to face down heretics who knew Scripture inside out. Under these conditions, he noted that true orthodoxy is a matter of being true to apostolic tradition, which includes "apostolic succession." Therefore, for Irenaeus, being able to quote Scripture in abundance is secondary to adherence to proper authority. Cf. K. Hein, "Eucharist and Excommunication: A Study in Early Christian Doctrine and Discipline," in: European University Papers, XXIII/1-9 (Bern, 1973), pp. 252-54. The connection made between orthodoxy and recognition of one's apostolic authority, however, was not invented by men like Irenaeus. St. Paul himself was quite insistent on it when he found himself under attack from the "super apostles" (cf. 2 Cor. 10:13; K. Hein, "Eucharist and Excommunication," pp. 87-89). Finally, as a footnote to this note, one must not overlook the fact that Johann Gutenberg's invention, movable type, was virtually essential for Martin Luther's principle of sola scriptura and Protestantism's consequent emphasis on Bible reading and private interpretation of Scripture.

15. St. Benedict's biography is Book II of the four books that constitute the Dialogues by St. Gregory the Great.


17. Cf. ibid., pp. 55-56.

18. Fasting and discipline in regard to food were especially significant to early Christians and monks in view of the New Testament's presentation of Christ in the desert where the first temptation was to turn stones into bread. Lack of food and water led the Israelites during the Exodus to complain and sin. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Adam and Eve are pictured in Genesis 3 as having sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit. Thus the fall of the human race appears to have resulted from lack of discipline in regard to eating. These ideas seem to resonate in St. Benedict's statement in RB Prol. 2: "The labor of obedience will bring you back to him from whom you had drifted through the sloth of disobedience."


20. "The Work of God" is St. Benedict's preferred expression for the communal prayer of the monastery. This prayer consisted mostly of Psalms and readings from Scripture and the early fathers of the church. This form of prayer is still the "official" prayer of Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and other Christian denominations.

21. It is often asserted that St. Augustine's rule for religious encourages obedience primarily for the sake of good order (Proc. 7.1 and 41. While good order is a blessing not to be belittled, as the primary purpose of obedience, it seems more suited to the life of a soldier than that of a
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monk who is truly seeking God.

22. The dichotomy between Gospel and law was scarcely the issue in early Christian monasticism that it later became at the time of the Protestant Reformation. K. Goldammer and F.K. Schuman in their article on obedience ("Gehorsam," in: Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, vol. 11 [Tübingen, 1958], col. 1263-1265) present the rather typical Protestant view of past years that monastic obedience is essentially a kind of spiritual childhood shown by the religious to their superiors, or that of a pupil to teacher, and which has parallels in other religious bodies such as the Islamic Dervish order. But a more thorough investigation of Christian monasticism, which at any rate predates Islam, reveals deeper and genuinely Christian motives for monasticism's "preferential option" for obedience that go well beyond the parent/child or teacher/pupil models and emphasize instead the obedience of Christ to his heavenly Father.

23. The monastic custom of not eating the flesh of animals was not merely an ascetic practice or much less a matter of promoting better health or the like. It was, at least in some instances, meant to be a reminder of the supposed harmony of creation in its original state, as yet unaltered by sin. Meat and wine are consumed only after the great flood. Cf. Basil, Hom. de aionio 1.3-5; Jerome, Adv. Iuv. II. 15.

24. For an interesting and insightful treatment of the problem of obedience in today's culture, especially in America, cf. Henri Nouwen, The Wounded Healer (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 30ff. Nouwen notes with poignant accuracy more than 20 years ago that "We are facing a generation which has parents but no fathers."

25. Cf. A. de Vogüé, The Rule, p. 121. Charity or love in much of the monastic tradition was "the virtue marking the end, not the beginning or intermediate progress.... Of charity they had a very high idea—too high perhaps—like the one modern people even yet usually have of the mystical life." (Ibid.)


27. The British monk Pelagius (born c. A.D. 354), denied Original Sin and taught that no divine grace is needed to do good works. He was excommunicated in A.D. 417. However, the belief that grace is needed to perform good works but not to will to do good works, i.e., "semi-Pelagianism," was still being debated in Benedict's day. It may be that some semi-Pelagian influence underlies RB Prol. 4: "First of all, every time you begin a good work, you must pray to him most earnestly to bring it to perfection." Cf. RB 1980, p. 158, fn.

28. Throughout the chapter on humility, St. Benedict makes abundant use of scriptural quotations, but mostly from the Old Testament and especially from the Psalms. Nevertheless, given the early church's prevailing interpretation of the Psalms as generally prophetic and messianic, Benedict expects his monks to see and imitate Christ in these passages as well. Thus, for example, we read in RB 7.51-52: "The seventh step of humility is that a man not only admits with his tongue but is also convinced in his heart that he is inferior to all and of less value, humbling himself and saying with the Prophet: I am truly a worm, not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people" (Ps. 22:7). In our modern age with its technological and accompanying psychological complexities, humility as a conviction in one's heart of one's inferiority may be rejected out of hand. Clearly, monastic life is not for every personality type, especially if one is prone to an inferiority complex to begin with. In defense of this degree of humility, it should be noted that it is presented as a goal for one who has already ascended half of the ladder of humility. But more importantly, it is presented as a way of conforming one's whole life to the life of Christ, who, according to Mark 15:34 and Matt. 27:46, intoned this Psalm from the cross—"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

29. The monastic asceticism we are considering here is not derived from the eastern denial of the world. Instead it is founded in the asceticism that Christianity inherited from its Jewish roots and which was developed in the catechumenate (course of instructions) and practices for con-
verts). “As such, it can be seen as the elaboration of the simple moral catechesis of the ‘two ways’ of the Didache (1.1-2.7) and Pseudo-Barnabas (18.1-20.2).” Cf. T.R. O’Connor, Asceticism, in: New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 1, 1967, p. 937. With the passing of “the age of martyrs” and the adult catechumenate, monastic life became the idealized way of continuing the fervor and faith that were associated with conversion and martyrdom. For a more thorough treatment of this matter, cf RB 1980, pp. 3-64 and 437-66.


31. Benedict does not invoke the concept of divine Providence at this point. However, the monastic tradition that he drew upon, namely St. Augustine and the RM, are quite explicit on the matter of union of hearts and dependence on Providence. Cf. ibid., pp. 210-11 and 218-19.


33. Cf. ibid., pp. 233-34.

34. Though the modern Waldensian-Methodist accord and spirituality are rooted in a religious tradition only remotely related to Benedictine monasticism, there is clearly a similarity of spirit in several outstanding points as can be seen in the words of Pastor Giorgio Bouchard, Italy, 1986: “To be bearers of Waldensian identity, Protestant progressive-democratic culture, and the tradition of freedom is not enough. Christ is our identity! We aim to live out biblical culture! With our freedom we must stand up for the irrevocable demands of hungering and thirsting after justice!” Cf. Giorgio Tourn and Associates, You Are My Witnesses, The Waldensians Across 800 Years, Claudiana Editrice, 1989, p. 271.
I would like to begin with an experience that brought to life this topic for me. About two years ago at the funeral vigil of one of our sisters, as I saw the coffin in the middle of the church, covered by the white pall, with the Rule of Benedict resting on top of it, and the superior standing alone in front of the altar at the head of the coffin, it seemed to me a perfect symbol of the fact that we live under a rule and a superior...our whole life from the beginning of religious life until death. The superior spoke of her last meeting with this sister who had been "honed by suffering" in her last illness, and she said it was as if she were all light. She had lived a particular way of life in our community, under a rule and a superior, and it had brought her to holiness.

There are many discussions about the meaning of the word conversatio, but without going into details, I will simply say that I am taking it to mean the way of life we take on when we vow stability, conversion of life and obedience. It is the way Benedict uses the word in the Prologue 49: "As we progress in this way of life (conversatio) and in faith...,' or in the last chapter of the Rule: "The reason we have written this rule is that, by observing it in monasteries, we can show that we have some degree of virtue and the beginnings of monastic life (conversationis). And for anyone hastening on to the perfection of monastic life (conversationis), there are the teachings of the holy Fathers" (RB 73:1-2).

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The notion of conversatio morum as one of the three traditional Benedictine vows, is translated in R8 1980 as fidelity to monastic life. There is then a suggestion of external practices that through being observed, eventually lead to inner transformation that is holiness. It is the notion of a process, a way of life that will lead us to holiness.

And in what sense do I mean holiness? I suspect that the way I would think about it would fit very much with how the word Sanctification is seen in the Methodist tradition. It is a gift, the work of the Holy Spirit, the presence of Christ in us, the remaking of our lives according to the pattern of Christ, the transformation of ourselves into Christ's likeness. Holiness is in fact perfect love, and this is of course the work of the Holy Spirit, to spread love abroad in one's heart.

This is to be the perfect man to be sanctified throughout, to have a heart so all flaming with the love of God as continually to offer up every thought, word and work as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ (Wesley X 1 384).

And again,

So it is, that love, entire love, is the point on which all the lines of our holy religion centres. This is the very happiness which Christ lived and died to establish among us... In our love of God alone, therefore can we find fullness of life which he revealed and offered us in Christ. As he alone merits our love, so he alone rewar ds its faithfulness with happiness.

This concept would be very familiar to Benedictines who so often read and quote the Prologue 49. "But as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love." Or the end of chapter 7: "Now therefore, after ascending all these steps of humility, the monk will quickly arrive at that perfect love of God which casts out fear. Through this love, all that he once performed with dread, he will now begin to observe without effort, as though naturally, from habit, no longer out of fear of hell, but out of love for Christ, good habit and delight in virtue. All this the Lord will by the Holy Spirit graciously manifest in his workman now, cleansed of vices and sins" (RB 7:67-70).

We believe we have a way of life that can and does lead us to this perfect love. In this paper I will refer to a particular aspect of this way of life, a rather all-embracing one. This is that we live under a rule and an abbot. (I have used the word superior, which I know is not a good word, but is inclusive, gender wise as well as for a community like my own which is not a traditional abbey in the European sense, or even in the American sense. We were founded in Australia by an English Benedictine from Downside, Archbishop Polding, and since he wanted us to be not enclosed in this needy Australian land, he adapted the Rule of Benedict for us and called us Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St. Benedict.)

What I am discussing of course, is the role of obedience and authority in our lives, and the place that these have in our quest for holiness. I will do this by first looking at the question of Obedience and the Word of God, then Mutual Obedience, obedience to each other in community. Then in this context, I will discuss Obedience and the Rule and Obedience and the Superior.
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OBEDIENCE AND THE GOSPEL

In another oft-quoted passage from the Prologue, after the call to live this way of life has been described, Benedict uses the phrase, "...let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide," (Prologue 21).

Basic to every significant aspect of Benedictine life is its ultimate grounding in the Gospel. The Gospel is the source of Benedict’s vision.  

If one never knew this before, or at least knew the extent of it, it was an interesting experience to first pick up the text we call RB 1980, the new translation of the Rule of Benedict, published in that year, and to see the scripture texts within the Rule printed in italics, together with the references. There seems to be at times more italics than text in another style. Benedict was steeped in the word of God, and so too do we have to be. Is not every page of every book of the Old and New Testaments the truest of guides for human life? (RB 73:3)

This is very evident in the way of life that is proposed for us in chapter 4, The Tools for Good Works, where the Gospel teaching is spelt out so clearly. The gospel gives individuals and communities meaning and purpose.

In a Rule that begins with the word Listen, and speaks of attending “with the ear of your heart,” we surely have a way of life that invites us as disciples, learners, to listen closely to the word of God with every fibre of our being. The word listen, is from the same root as the word obedience, and each person is called to take time and to make listening to the word of God central in his/her life. I believe that it is only through constant fidelity to this listening that we can ever be transformed by the love of God, and then in our living be able to be obedient. It is through this that all can be judged in the light of that word, and that all our actions can be informed by it.

I do not want to over emphasize obedience in its individual ascetical elements, though this aspect is there in Benedict out of the tradition that flows from the Rule of the Master. Yet I believe that it is in our individual lives, and in a disciplined way, in faithfully, daily, listening to the word of God in our personal and communal prayer, that we will deepen our understanding of what God wants of us, and therefore of what obedience is for us. Only then, can we be faithful in the community dimension.

We have been called to discipleship, to follow and to listen, and we have to be obedient to Christ and with Christ. Jesus’ life was a listening-in-process. It is never just trying to find the will of God for which there is a blueprint held by God. It is a process of waiting and not being sure, and that means that we must absolutely trust God who will lead us as disciples to holiness.

In this era of our religious lives we speak so easily of discernment. I have wondered how this will ever work properly if we are not all convinced what depths and effort this demands from each of us, as we ponder God’s word. It is never simple to know and seek the will of God. We are so easily prone to self-will and delusion, and we often lack the deep intimacy with God that can make us surer in our search. That is why I am so convinced that we, like Benedict must be steeped in the word of God. We must seek God’s will in the depths of our hearts, and then because we have chosen to live in a community, we must also see how God’s will is mediated for us in the
way of life we live and the events of our lives, through our communities, our rule and our superior. We will never recognize this will however, unless we are in a process of being transformed by the word of God. Our constitutions express this insight thus:

All sisters are called to recognize that formation is a life-long process, and to allow themselves to be formed in gospel living by their vigilance in listening to the Word and their commitment to our corporate life. (Const. 6.3)

Benedict calls us to return to God by the labour of obedience (Prologue 2), and we must never forget that it is a labour, in relation to our fidelity to listening to God's word as well as in all other aspects of our obedience. If we are to be identified with Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, we are called to be identified with the suffering of Christ. This is not a life of comfort and complacency. It is a living out of the call to renounce ourselves in order to follow Christ. It is a challenge to understand these words, A painless theology of obedience is a false one.  

We express some of these ideas in our constitutions in the following ways:

The Word of God, listened to in the Scriptures and in our life, celebrated in liturgy, accepted and obeyed in faith, and responded to in the signs of the times, gives unity and vitality to our community life. (3.2)

So the promise and hope is, that as we are transformed by constant listening to the word of God, we become

strong and obedient disciples of Benedict...like the maturing disciples of Jesus in the Gospels, themselves good news incarnate, heralding the reign of God. We are ever being sent, going out to serve as messengers of the word of God.

And indeed we do not do this only as individuals, but as members of a community.

OBEEDIENCE TO EACH OTHER IN COMMUNITY

Another experience to relate, one that has led to us as a community realizing the value of what Benedict teaches about the role of obedience in the community—we live in small groups which are our local communities, and we are spread over a large part of Australia. Until just over six years ago we lived with a person appointed as a local superior, responsible for one community or a grouping of communities. At the General chapter of 1987 a decision was made not to continue this. I believe that this helped us (not without pain) to understand two things—the fact that we have one superior, and secondly in our daily living that we are mutually responsible for our lives together, and that we have to listen and be obedient to each other. It is that latter point that I want to develop in this section.

This aspect is expressed very frequently in our constitutions, and I can only use a sample:

Our seeking of God is not simply an individual reality but is lived out in a community of persons united in Christ, attentive to his Word, and mutually dependent on one another in responding to his call. (5.2)
By practising mutual obedience and service, holding all things in common, bearing one another’s burdens and supporting and encouraging one another, we experience and express in community the love of Christ. (3.4)

Here is the word of mutual obedience, obedience and listening one to another in a community. Our living with each other in the joy, as well as in the demands, of mutual obedience leads to great freedom and fullness of life. There comes a sense of being responsible, working together with a group towards common ideals, the putting aside of self demanded by this, the living with the basic attitudes of respect, support, forgiveness, real love and service. Through this we discover that love costs, that it is not just a matter of living together, but of living out of the same reservoir of values and the same centre of love. To do this well demands a great maturity.

The way of life we live leads us not just as individuals to holiness, but as a whole community. We lose our life for the sake of the Gospel and then find our real self in God—fullness of life. The quality of our interactions with each other enrich us. We do not blame the past, or others or circumstances when difficulties arise; we do not run away, but know that real life is found in the present situation. And again we are reminded that this requires the labour of obedience, and indeed it is the basis and the need for our vow of stability, staying with the sisters with whom we live.

Scholars remind us that the more "vertical" approach of Obedience in the earlier chapters of the Rule gradually gives way in the later chapters to an acknowledgement that obedience is exercised in a community and to one another. Even though many would not respond well to chapter 63, "Community Rank," or to the notions of rank in chapter 71 on "Mutual Obedience," it seems obvious to me that order and rank are ways that Benedict sees of not disturbing the flock, or of seeing that no one will be disturbed in the house of God. Within those chapters there are many expressions of mutual obedience and love: “The younger monks, then, must respect their seniors, and the seniors must love the juniors” (RB 63.10).

The clearest expression of mutual obedience is at the opening of chapter 71 “Obedience is a blessing to be shown by all, not only to the abbot but also to one another as brothers, since we know it is by this way of obedience that we go to God” (RB 71.1). We may not want to accept the ritual way in which a monk is to ask for forgiveness. If a monk is reproved in any way by his abbot or by one of his seniors, even for some very small matter, or if he gets the impression that one of his seniors is angry or disturbed with him, however slightly, he must then and there without delay, cast himself on the ground at the other’s feet to make satisfaction, and lie there until the disturbance is calmed by a blessing (RB 71.8). However, if this ritual is not effective in this age, it behooves us to find others that are so, ways of seeking and showing forgiveness, in the communion of disciples that is still learning, still finding its way, still making mistakes, as it is still being transformed into a community, into koinonia.

The Good Zeal of chapter 72 sums up what mutual obedience means. It is a challenging framework and a gospel call for us in our lives together:

This then is the good zeal which monks must foster with fervent love: They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other, supporting one
another's weaknesses of body or behaviour, and earnestly competing in obedience to one another. No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else. To their fellow monks they show the pure love of brothers; to God loving fear, to their abbot, unfeigned and humble love. Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life. (RB 72.3-11)

To live like this is no doubt to live a way of life that leads to holiness.

OBEEDIENCE TO THE RULE

When Benedict is describing the different kinds of monks in chapter 1, he speaks first of the cenobites, those who belong to a monastery where they serve under a rule and an abbot (RB 1.12). In the same chapter he speaks of the Sarabaites, the most detestable kind of monks, "who with no experience to guide them, no rule to try them as gold is tried in a furnace, have a character as soft as lead...." Their law is what they like to do, whatever strikes their fancy. Anything they believe in and choose, they call holy; anything they dislike, they consider forbidden (RB 1.6-9).

In the prologue, Benedict relates the written prescriptions that are to be made, to the establishment of the school for the Lord's service. "Therefore we intend to establish a school for the Lord's service. In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome" (Prologue 45-46). This seems a very gentle approach to the notion of rule. In the description of the cenobites as those who belong to a monastery, where they serve under a rule and an abbot, the word regula is used: *militans sub regula vel abbate*. This has something of the notion of struggle and battle. Here there is a sense that if we give ourselves to a particular way of living, a discipline where we learn, we will become worthy followers of Christ. I would tend to think of the *sub regula* more in the sense that we stand under it and hence will come to understand.

However, whichever way it is interpreted, it is obvious that the *Rule* was simply a plan for life for those who are in the school for the Lord's service. It is nearer to a set of principles than what we have come to expect rule or law to mean. The word *regula* could mean a guidepost or railing, something to hang on to in the dark, something that leads in a given direction, something that points out the road, something that gives us support as we climb. It is not a list of directives, but a way of life.¹⁹

Parts of the *Rule* are in the genre of Wisdom literature. Benedict sets the tone of his work by the Prologue, borrowed almost completely from the *Rule of the Master*, and this is set in the Wisdom mode. This of course has implications for its interpretation. It then contains principles and attitudes that are a particular way of interpreting a gospel way of living. It is part of a living tradition, and is never meant to be lived literally in all its aspects.

Part of the value of studying the *Rule* is that it does present us with an alternative view that at times will jolt us out of our complacency in a different era. Obedience demands that we pay attention to these challenges. The *Rule* acts on our minds and hearts. It plays a special part for those who live in the tradition because we have a sort of family access to it.¹² It is like heart speaking to heart. Through paying attention to it
we will develop a monastic heart ourselves. In the same way that listening to (and obeying) the word of God in Scripture will transform our hearts into the heart of Christ, so will pondering the Rule of Benedict, transform us into those who hold dear the great Benedictine values. It is in this sense that obedience to the rule is demanded of us.

Our way of life is also expressed by Constitutions which express in livable ways the principles of the Benedictine way of life. The opening of our Constitutions express this well.

This statement of our way of life does not stand by itself. It draws its vitality from the basic document in our tradition, the Rule of Benedict, and from the Rules of Polding by which the tradition is interpreted to give us our particular character and mission.

Together with the Statutes, the Acts of the General Chapter and the Chapter Handbook, these Constitutions form the laws of the congregations which provide for us a framework for living the gospel in fidelity to our charism.

**OBEDIENCE TO A SUPERIOR**

We have spoken of obedience to the word of God, to the community, to the rule, and now we come to the role of the superior. Our constitutions express it thus:

We elect a sister who is seen to embody the spirit of the congregation and ask her to serve us as our superior, holding the place of Christ in the community as leader and teacher. The service of authority which she offers to the community leads us forward in our way of life and in faith (7.4).

Benedict speaks of the Superior in tandem with the Rule in chapter 1. The cenobites are those who live in a monastery and serve under a rule and an abbot. (Here are the three pillars of the Benedictine community, community, rule and abbot). Chapter 5 speaks of those who choose to live in monasteries and to have an abbot over them. This chapter is devoted to the nature of the obedience we offer to the one who is chosen as abbot. It is unhesitating obedience (RB 5.1), it is a ready step of obedience (RB 5.7), it is based on love (RB 5.10), it is conforming to the Lord who said, “I came not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me” (RB 5.13), and it must be done without grumbling, even in the heart (RB 5.17). Is this the kind of obedience that is asked of us in this day of consultation, participation, personal responsibility? It seems to me these are crucial questions.

Tomes have been written on the role of the abbot and here it will only be possible to make a few points.

For those who live in the Benedictine tradition it is obvious that the abbot or superior plays a central role. He or she is the one single ultimate authority. As every commentator would note, the place that Benedict gives the abbot in the Rule signifies this. There are two full chapters dealing with the abbot, and many other chapters that note
his role in so many of the daily functions of the community. He is mentioned in the Rule 126 times.

The abbot and prioress are the centre of the community in Benedictine spirituality. They are the one voice, the one light, the one heart that the entire community can trust to act always in its true and total interest.\(^\text{13}\)

Benedict speaks in Chapter 2, *The Qualities of the Abbot*, of the abbot as the one who "is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery, since he is addressed by a title of Christ" (*RB* 2.2). This title is Christ as Father which was commonly used in earlier literature. The abbot holds the place of Christ.

He acts in the place of Christ in the sense that he first allows himself to be saturated in the teaching of Christ, totally dedicated to seeking out and implementing the will of God....

The abbot's task is to act in Christ's place, to imitate his way of life and to mediate his presence and teaching to the members of the community.\(^\text{14}\)

A Benedictine community cannot be merely about leadership. There has been a kind of reaction to the use of the word authority because of the authoritarianism that many religious experienced. But we need to reclaim the word. The source of authority in the community is the Spirit, and in a sense all of course share in it. However, we ask someone to accept the role of abbot or superior in the community, and thence he or she has been given authority to carry out this role, and will be seen to be exercising this authority.

Leadership is a gift given to many, and it is an enduring gift, not assumed for a certain time and laid down at the end of a mandate. It is found in many spheres other than government and it exists apart from authority. Religious authority is given to the person elected as superior in order for the goals of the congregation to be achieved, for the spread of the gospel and for the growth and service of the sisters.\(^\text{15}\) Power, the much misunderstood word is part of this and is used as service for the sake of the mission. Authority is given for a specified time to those elected or appointed. Of course it would be hoped that leadership would be a gift that such a person would possess, but the two things are not synonymous and not interchangeable. Authority is a faith reality, and because of this obedience is the response.

The question asked above as to how this fits into modern terms of sharing and participation and responsibility has to be seen in the light of the process of giving and taking of counsel. Chapter 3 of the Rule, "Summoning the Community for Counsel," is often very well accepted because it acknowledges that the abbot must always listen to the community on important matters. The chapter (total community) is the basic reality, and to this total community the abbot must listen. Chapter 2 has also stated that the abbot has to be responsible, must always be aware of the needs of the community, and chapter 64 repeats these ideas and speaks of him as needing to be discerning and moderate. He too must keep the rule in every particular.

The giving and taking of counsel is the central mode of governance in a
Benedictine community, and we have to believe in the desire and the ability of the superior to listen. However, in the end it is hers/his to decide, and the decision may not necessarily be what each member thought best. The superior may share the burdens, but she does not simply delegate them. "To share authority is not to give it away."16

We are speaking of the fact that we live under a superior, and the surety we then have in this way of life that we live, is that the superior will help to unite us in Christ, will give direction to our corporate life and will call us to continuing growth in response to the Spirit. She will teach by word and example (RB 2.11), and in short, lead us individually and communally into a mature response to God's word in our lives. To live under a rule and a superior is indeed a way of life that leads to holiness. The superior has to listen with the ear of her heart, and so does the community.

We have to keep studying our heritage, and keep trying to ask what it all means for us here and now. It is too precious to lose, and I was struck by a poem of Anne Udy's that is published in the book Dig or Die, a collection of papers given at the Wesley Heritage Conference, Sydney 1980.17 With that I would like to end.

HERITAGE
We are not self-sufficient, all brand new.
We cannot struggle across here and now without the treasures others buried with care in caskets burnished by long forgotten hands. We cannot light our beacon in the dark until we find beneath time's dust a hoard where potent resource waits discovery.
We will fall short, collapse before the end unless we dig with strength and, having found, reshape fashioning from ancient germs, jewels for today.

—Anne B. Udy.

NOTES
1. Terrence Kardong, Benedictines Gloried (Wilmington 1988). There is a particularly clear discussion of this on pp. 94-98.
7. Collins, Rule and Gospel, p. 44.
14. Casey, Benedictine Studies, Unit 02.
17. A. Udy, *Dig or Die*, p. 5.
SANCTIFICATION AND LIBERATION

JOSE MIGUEZ BONINO

SANCTIFICATION AND LIBERATION

No Christian theology can forgo the question of sanctification. It is unavoidably posed both by the Scripture and by the tradition of the Church. It is demanded by the very nature of the Gospel. Moreover, there are, at least three basic affirmations which mark the scope and structure of any reflection on sanctification: (1) The triune God claims the total existence of the human being; in Jesus Christ, God "sanctified" the whole human race: has made it God's own; (2) The believer recognizes and honors this claim by "consecrating" himself/herself to God and God's purpose: the objective sanctification is subjectively appropriated; (3) This "sanctity" is lived out in concrete historical and social forms—in biblical terms, this "sanctity" is "a way of walking," a particular kind of "conversation" carried by the believer in the world.

In the Reformation tradition, the dominant concern with regard to sanctification is to make clear the total—and even the "exclusive"—priority of God's initiative. This was usually done by making a clear-cut distinction between justification and sanctification. Then, it was not always easy to speak with equal force and clarity of the relation between the two. Recent formulations have tried—in my view successfully—to overcome the dichotomy. Barth has expressed it saying: "justification as origin and sanctification as goal are priori-

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tary just as justification as presupposition and sanctification as consequence come second...therefore both are super- and sub-ordinated" (KD, IV:507f). Otto Weber makes the same point in a different way: "Justification is not just the original cause of sanctification but its constant ground. Sanctification, in turn, is not just the consequence of justification but rather its living and continual effect in the concrete life of man" (Foundation of Dogmatics, II:329).

For Wesley, if I see it correctly, the main question is "how is the active Christian subject constituted?" His definition of what such active Christian subject does may not be very original—it synthesizes the best ascetic, philanthropic and devotional counsels of his day. But how does this subject come into being? He comes to the answer "listening to the Reformation." One could put it by saying that Wesley received from Luther a doctrine of sanctification by grace through faith. I have tried to express it saying that, "Sanctification continues to be for Wesley the goal of redemption and of Christian life. He has to preach faith because it is the only means of access into the ambit of sanctification."

Why begin in this way? Because I think that a theology seen in the perspective of liberation should (from the point of view of a Latin-American Methodist Protestant) build on this double foundation: the priority of God's action and God's active claim of the total life of the Christian that incorporates him/her in God's purpose and action in the world. The question becomes, then, what does such a Liberation perspective bring to the understanding of sanctification? Or how would a doctrine of sanctification be articulated within the parameters of a theology of liberation?

In particular, Latin American Liberation Theology has been perceived in the North Atlantic world as predominantly—or even exclusively—concerned with structural, macrosocial phenomena. Such perception is not altogether wrong but it is somewhat superficial. Class structure, the phenomenon of dependence, the relations of production, the ideological question are instrumental to the understanding of "the human condition" of the people—particularly the poor, oppressed, marginal or excluded, and to the transformation of that condition in the direction of God's salvific purpose for humankind. It is possible that, in this concern—and confronted with a theological tradition that refused to relate to structural questions—our theological expression has not been able to adequately express the relation between the macro-social and micro-social, the collective and the personal, the objective and the subjective. But the pastoral praxis of this theology has always been concerned precisely with this relation. I think this is precisely what a theology of liberation can bring to the consideration of sanctification.

Let me quote at this point a few sentences of Hugo Assmann which seem to me to put the question in a strikingly clear and fruitful way:

With respect to the rich experience in which the personal need to love and be loved is realized, what is the meaning of giving one's life for one's brother in the wider context of the historical process? Is there not a need to enlarge the parameters of our experiential references in our understanding of the gratuitousness of love?"
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In what follows I will simply try to show how the centrality of love in the thought and praxis of Liberation Theology relates the microsocial, personal and subjective dimension to the structural concerns and social struggles. Due to the limitations of time I can only point very briefly to three areas: the reconstruction of the human subject, the building of society, and spirituality.

THE REBIRTH OF THE PERSON

Gustavo Gutiérrez has contended that, while evangelization means to the North Atlantic world leading the secularized person to accept the existence of God, in Latin America it is to help the non-person to the awareness that God is their father. The first part of the statement may or may not be correct; the second undoubtedly is. The category of “the non-person” is not merely an impressionistic description: it designates a phenomenon which results from a particular history and social conditions which affect large majorities in Latin America (but also in other areas of the so-called Third World and increasingly important groups in the industrialized countries) and which has specific social and psychological characteristics. “Non-person” designates, on the one hand, the negative evaluation of such people by the dominant system (and as a consequence also to some extent their own negative self-evaluation) and, on the other hand, the destruction of the cultural, social, and personal self-identity through the diverse forms of exclusion, oppression, and repression.

We will not now take the time to trace the historical conditions which have created this situation or analyze the economic policies and the corresponding political and social factors which extend it now even beyond the “traditional poor” to sectors of the middle classes. But we do face a new kind of “poverty,” which produces what Durkheim, R.K. Merton and others have analyzed as “anomia” and father Joseph Wresinski has so realistically and dramatically described in his writings on “the poorest of the poor.”

When people try to describe this situation they use words with a deep biblical and theological resonance: death, destruction, disintegration, corruption. And when we try to characterize the way out of such a situation we also lay hands on terms like new life, rebirth, renewal. These are the words which, in Pauline language, are used to describe the direction of “the old age,” captive to the “powers,” immersed in the “flesh” and moving towards death or living already the impending death. And, on the other hand, the words that express redemption as entering into a new sphere of life, “a new time,” as it were, a new atmosphere of existence (being “in Christ” or “in the Spirit”), which is not anymore dominated by the powers of destruction but dynamized by the righteousness of Christ and the power of love.

How can this movement take place? Certainly, in the power of the Spirit. But what are the mediations and ways by which the Spirit operates in the concrete conditions of our situation? I will refer here to the pastoral experience of Base Christian Communities—whether Catholic or Protestant—because they illustrate in a very special way the relation between personal, communal, and structural, objective and subjective, which Liberation Theology tries to articulate theologically. But we see similar processes of personalization and community, although perhaps more “intro-
verted," in other religious experiences—like Pentecostal communities. And we have
to ask ourselves whether and how we can recognize and celebrate the action of the
same Spirit in other forms of associations and movements among the poor.

1. Becoming a person means claiming the dignity of children of God
which is proclaimed in the Gospel and being recognized as such by sisters
and brothers. A short story also from Mexico—which repeats itself almost literally
in most of our countries—illuminates this point. The story of an illiterate, poor woman,
who supports her family with her work. She is regularly battered by her husband
who comes home drunk. One day a neighbor invites her to the community. She
goes one, two, several times. She discovers that reading the Bible and reflecting on
it is the central source of strength and wisdom. It takes her some time to have the
courage to admit that she cannot read. But slowly, on the pages of the Bible, she is
taught to read. And one day she faces her husband: "Listen to me. I have learned
about the Gospel. How we are living is not right. It should be different. You should
not hit me and the children. It will be different." Things did change. And she shares
her reflection with us: "God has given wisdom to women. Men have strength, but it
is useless because they lack the wisdom of women. And women do not discover
their wisdom until they read the gospel." The Bible and the Church have now
become their own. God speaks and they can listen, converse, respond.

2. Becoming a person means claiming and receiving "the word," the right
to speak and be heard. Pablo Richard tells of his experience in a small base com-
community in Central America. He was presiding over a celebration. The Gospel had
been read and everybody had expressed their response...with the exception of an
Indian, who had remained silent. Pablo thought it would be good to hear him and
invited him to say "what he thought" about this text. The man began to cry and
Pablo thought he had embarrassed him and apologized. "No", the man answered,
"you have not embarrassed me. I cry for joy because it is the first time in my life
that anybody asks me what I think." The anonymous man and woman in the shanty
town, the receiver of orders, the passive subject of somebody else's word now has a
name. He/she can respond; he/she can utter a word and be heard. His/her suffer-
ing, his/her hope, his/her reality as a person can now be projected and built togeth-
er with others their common identity.

3. Becoming a person means becoming a maker of decisions. They will
build a road. They will address the authorities (ecclesiastical or civilian). They will
start a mission in another place. The decisions will be reached by consensus, where
every person will have a right to participate. Some decisions will be easy. Others
will be costly and dangerous—to accept or resist eviction, to join in a strike, to occu-
py a piece of idle land. Their very life will be at stake. Some decisions will prove
wrong. But they have become women and men who can take their lives into their
own hands.

4. Becoming a person means opting for or taking on a project for the
future, to give an earthly shape to their hope. This happens slowly as local and
immediate issues become related to larger ones: for instance, entering trade unions,
or involving themselves in different political movements, addressing Church ques-
tions. There will be differences and the community will define the limits of their pluralism. But differences will be related to a global goal: to build a new society of justice and solidarity. Commenting on the Magnificat, a Mexican woman from a community said: “This is the message that Mary brought to Mexico. It is the word of her Son. We don’t think any more just about our family, we think of Mexico.” Faith is not related exclusively to a personal destiny, it embraces the destiny of a people.

Thus, common reflection, celebration and action are the cradle of a new identity. The non-person claims and is given the word. They become decision-makers. God speaks with them in the Gospel and they can respond. The Holy Spirit gathers the ekklelesia as they come and celebrate together. Thus, my personal identity is not re-created over against the other but together with him/her. And social identity is not achieved by suppressing the individual (as in the mass) or in naked competition (in the neoliberal ideology), but by projecting, acting, praying together in freedom. It would be illusory to think that things happen as smoothly as this summary may suggest. Rivalry, competition and confrontation are ever present and invade every area of human life—family, church, neighborhood, friendship. All these are present in the community. The important thing is the universe of meanings and symbols in which the whole ambiguous process of this recreation of the person takes place. Personal self-realization and the building of the world are conceived and approached as a project of love, an active, responsive, constructive and lucid love in which the free acceptance of God’s love and the openness in trust to the neighbor presuppose and implicate each other.

THE SHAPE OF A NEW SOCIETY

There is, to be sure, nothing new in this spiritual event. It is an event of grace. It is simply the announcement that “you are accepted.” But how this announcement is mediated is here the key question. We have almost exclusively relied on “proclamation,” usually understood as oral proclamation. But we know that words take their meanings in terms of the language code and the social relations in which they are used. How can the “non-person,” for whom the name of God has been related to an experience of unilateral submission and domination, receive the message of “unconditional acceptance” as a word of empowerment and hope, unless a community of mutual acceptance, of freedom and decision, of life and action gives content to that message. The community is for the non-person the concrete historical locus where the experience of re-humanization takes place. To be “in Christ” is to be in the community of love and mutual acceptance. We are not speaking of two things, but of a single event which needs to be accounted for in the two propositions: “I am accepted by God” and “I belong in the community of love.”

Such communities have existed throughout history in many forms. But in many cases their inner coherence has been established through isolation from the rest of society. The contrary happens in this case. On the one hand, there is a universality in their understanding of God’s concern which makes the boundaries of the community extraordinarily flexible and fluid. Anybody who comes belongs. Membership—insofar as it exists formally—is determined by closeness to the center.
meeting, celebration, participation, action, rather than by reference to a frontier. On the other hand, oneness is ensured by the relation between local action and global concern: “from exclusive concern for the family to the concern for Mexico,” as the woman of our story put it.

This larger project is governed by a basic option: the paramount concern for the poor. Of course, in a situation characterized by oppression and marginalization such an option sets a frontier and involves confrontation. This should concern us at a later point. But before turning to this question I would like to explore briefly the meaning of this process of evangelization and personalization in community for political existence and the political project.

1. A first observation has to do with the question of power. In his _Microphysics of Power_, Michel Foucault has taught us that power cannot be understood simply as a thing that some people have and others have not. Rather, it is a movement, a relation, a network. He offers “an ascending analysis of power” for which “the infinitesimal mechanisms” of a society—perhaps the family, the Church, the school—are invaded, colonized, used, dominated, displaced or extended by more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination.” Global domination becomes possible because it universalizes power relations at the micro-social level. Once established, though, global domination infiltrates and strengthens domination at the smaller level. How can the vicious circle be broken? The only answer is: working simultaneously at both points.

If global domination is stable to the extent that all relations are pervaded by the same conception and exercise of power, changes in the conception and exercise of global power—structural or revolutionary change—can only be profound and lasting to the extent that they are continually generated and supported by changes in micro-relations. It is in this sense that the human transformation that takes in the base community is a source of transforming power, not only because it provides a model and a stimulus for organization but because it establishes a form of identity and relationship which “puts in circulation” a different conception and operation of power. Several instances of such influence both at the level of social and ecclesiastical organizations, could here be cited as illustrations.

2. But this process “from below” cannot subsist by itself unless it is placed within a larger, structural change. Again Assmann has expressed it sharply in a discussion of Wesley’s social holiness: “Social holiness depends on the historic mediations which articulate it. Social holiness is not enough.” In other words, if “holiness” is to become really social, it has to find an understanding of society, a view of the total social reality—an “ideology” if one uses the word positively—a concrete project for social construction and a strategy for action. All these elements are, in a way, “secular,” they belong to society as a whole. But they are not “neutral,” they represent different views of life, different locations in society and different understandings of the world. Has the community of faith, the women and men “born anew” and committed to God’s purpose, any direction when they try to find the historic mediations? Are we, in fact, in our struggle for change, forced to choose between the capitalistic “technocratic” neoliberal model where human life is sacrificed to the
so-called "objective" mechanisms of the universal market or the authoritarian and bureaucratic so-called socialism which has failed to deliver both its material and its social promises?

It seems to me that the kind of "social holiness" generated in the new Christian identity-in-community is here relevant at several points:

A. The only protection from authoritarianism is active participation: in this sense the community is the seedbed of a participative democracy as it seeks forms of organization, control and operation which disperse power and make it accountable to the highest degree compatible with order and efficacy;

B. The basic motivation for social construction which emerges from this experience is solidarity, not merely as an abstract "ontological" principle, but as something that has to be "built" into the forms of political, social and economic organization;

C. Such a participative, solidarity construction of society in a situation of oppression and inequality, runs against individual and collective interests, authoritarian traditions and existing structures. It therefore generates struggle: the image of the "enemy" is always present and we are tempted to define our identity as a function of the "enemy." But in the experience of the community the deeper identity is not primarily related "to those on the other side," but born in the encounter with the sister and brother who listens to me, who sustains me in the struggle to the point of laying down their life for me. Opposition to the enemy—necessary as it is—is not an end in itself but a temporary function of a solidarity that seeks to enlarge the circle of belonging: the militants, the community, the poor and oppressed outside the community, those engaged in the struggle for liberation elsewhere in the world, the people from other social groups and classes who make an option for the poor and potentially "all" as the conditions of oppression are overcome;

D. Finally, the choice of "solidarity" as the form of "holiness" in social construction, represents a theological perspective on political and social praxis, which I would call "the perspective of the greater good" over against the perspective of the lesser evil which predominates in so much Christian political ethics. Here Wesley's idea of "perfection" has a social relevance because the ever-present possibility of achieving a greater good is not based on a purely utopian vision or a superficial "anthropological optimism" but on the power of God's grace and the action of the Holy Spirit to which no artificial limit or blockage can be established. Sin, on the other hand, is not a fixed quantity or an absolute limit, but a negative force, with which a permanent struggle has to be waged. In other words, the eschatological distance is not a pre-set limit, but an ever-moving target, or better, an absolute future that challenges us to discern the relative futures striving to be born from the womb of present reality. Love, which is the only absolute future and the only absolute opposition to sin, is the power that gives an insight into new possibilities and motivates the struggle for "the greater good."

A NEW SPIRITUALITY

We must recognize the ambiguity of the word "spirituality." However, we must also reflect on the fact that new understandings and new forms of acting out the
Christian faith have been related to new forms of experience, celebration, personal and communal discipline, which, for lack of a better term, we can call "spirituality." Speaking of this fact, J. Hernández Pico S.J. from Nicaragua says that "the theology of liberation has been born from a spirituality of liberation." And his colleague Jon Sobrino defines that theology as rooted in "the experience of meeting God in the encounter with the poor." Liberation sanctification, if such an expression can be used, cannot be understood if it is considered only a theology or a praxis—if it is not seen as discipline, prayer, and celebration. Let me simply recall some aspects of what I mean by "liberation spirituality." 

1. It is, first of all, an understanding of spirituality as "walking in the Spirit" in the Pauline sense of an existence inspired and led by the highest gift of the Spirit which is love and therefore furthest removed from boasting, self-satisfaction, and the contempt for others which are the way of "the flesh." It is in this sense that the Sao Paulo Conference of EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, 1980) has defined a true spirituality:

"Spirituality is not only a moment in the process of the liberation of the poor. It is the mystique of the experience of God throughout this process. It is the encounter with the living God of Jesus Christ in collective history and in everyday and personal life. Prayer and commitment are not alternative practices. They require and reinforce each other. Prayer is not an evasion but a fundamental way of following Christ, which renders us always available for the encounter with the Father and for the demands of mission (Para. 56).

2. A spirituality is necessarily linked with a discipline of life, a way of organizing personal and communal life and the relation to the world. In a liberation spirituality this involves at least two important aspects:

A. What are the concrete forms in which the life of the Christian person and community becomes transformed into solidarity with the poor and oppressed? The responses—particularly for priests and for middle-class militants and theologians—have been varied: some have given up their places in society and literally moved to live among the poor, sharing their condition; others have established a pattern of commuting, trying to keep a certain leverage for action, acting as advocates while also risking—and paying for—their solidarity in terms of rejection, persecution, and even death. Others have joined organizations of defense and protection—trade unions, neighborhood organizations, human rights movements. It is clear that we can never achieve the "total emptying" of the Incarnation, but it remains as the pattern—"the form of the servant"—which permanently challenges us.

B. What are the communal forms of discipline? I have already mentioned the Base Ecclesial Community as one of the most significant instances of liberation spirituality. But it is also necessary to refer to "religious life" (in the classical sense of religious communities or religious orders—and here we remember several studies which have spoken of Wesleyan societies in their similarity to religious communities or a religious order). The subject has not been as carefully studied as it deserves. But it would not be difficult to show that (1) religious orders and societies (of several
types) have usually appeared when the Church confronts a new historical situation and is called to generate a new missionary response, and (2) such movements centrally represent a will of “total availability” to respond to the situation. In Latin America this response has not resulted in the creation of new orders or societies but in a significant renewal and reconsecration of existing ones. From my limited experience as a non-Catholic I seem to see an impressive witness of religious orders to the “option for the poor.” The thousands of women and men of religious orders and congregations which have taken up the most difficult and risky tasks, sustaining and animating communities in the remotest places, serving as a network of communication and mutual support among such communities, working to feed the religious life of these communities with the theological, liturgical and biblical tools necessary for their nurture are simply a witness of that renewal. The fact that many have already fulfilled this self-giving in martyrdom measures the depth of the commitment.1

3. Finally, there is the area of worship and celebration. What Pablo Richard calls “the original and originating experience” of the theology of liberation as “a spiritual experience” has found varied and rich forms of expression. We can follow them in prayers of persons and communities—for instance as Father Cardenal has gathered them in Psalms and in The Gospel in Solentiname, in biblical meditation (reflected in the Community Bible Readings gathered in Brazil or in the memories of visits to BEC by C. Boff in Teologia pes o chao y Deus e o Homen no Inferno Verde). But it is perhaps the explosion of song and music that could best illustrate the vitality of the new ecclesial reality related to the church of the poor, a phenomenon comparable with the deep spirituality of the black slave community in America. The contrast life/death and its overcoming in the contrast death/resurrection, the celebration of the unity in the Spirit (“Because the Spirit unites us; for the Spirit is life, love and freedom”), the constant affirmation of trust in God (“Let nothing shock you, let nothing frighten you; Whoever lives in God has always enough”) and the commitment to follow Christ in his solidarity with the poor and rejected mark the dominating themes of the songs which have spread all over the continent.

The experience of God’s grace in the rebirth of the person in community, the acceptance of “the yoke of the Kingdom” as commitment to a “social holiness” which tries to relate interpersonal, community, and structural issues and the celebration of hope seem to be the ways in which the Christian communities who understand the Gospel as a word of liberation try to respond to the promise and the call of sanctification.

NOTES
1. From “Conversion—a Latin-American re-reading,” in Faith Born in the Struggle for Life (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1987), p. 4. In this and the following chapter I have tried to give an interpretation of Wesley’s emphasis on conversion and sanctification from a Latin American perspective.
3. “Is ‘social holiness enough’—A Catholic Reading,” in Dow Kirkpatrick, ed., Faith Born in
Bonino


4. There is an abundant and increasing amount of literature on this theme in which we can include works of Pablo Richard, Segundo Galilea, Jaci Marachin, Gustavo Gutiérrez, José Bonino, Leonardo Boff, Jon Sobrino among others.

5. An issue of the journal Vida Religiosa published in 1987, to which I contributed a brief comment, explores this issue more carefully.
Near the end of his life, John Wesley proposed that propagation of the message of entire sanctification was the chief reason why God had raised up his Methodist movement. Whatever one makes of this claim to providential purpose, the doctrine of Christian Perfection clearly became the focus of Methodism's most vigorous early debates, both with opponents and within the movement. Nowhere were the internal debates more polarized than among North American Methodists. Partisan factions emerged in the early nineteenth century, dividing on a spectrum that ran from denial of any need for or possibility of entire sanctification to insistence that it was a state of Christian victory that could be entered instantaneously by any believer (however young in their Christian life) who simply claimed it in faith.

There have been several attempts to account for this divergence among Wesley's American descendants. Some have ascribed it primarily to the impact of incompati-

ble temporal variations in Wesley's views on entire sanctification that are reflected in the materials he bequeathed to his movement. Others (who often assume more consistency to Wesley's own understanding) highlight tensions between his teachings on Christian Perfection and those of some of his co-workers and early followers. The question that either of these suggestions leaves is how the character and dynamics of the early Methodist experience in North America may have itself contributed to divergence over the issue of entire sanctification. In one of the first con-

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siderations of this question, John Peters attributed deviation from Wesley’s understanding to a (claimed) omission of his Plain Account of Christian Perfection from American Methodist publication and influence in the crucial years of 1812–32. A more widely held suggestion is that the Enlightenment optimism and stress on individual human liberty that permeated culture in the new United States of America made it increasingly difficult to maintain the traditional Protestant assumption of original sin—the eradication of which was (supposedly) Wesley’s defining purpose for entire sanctification. In some contrast, the other major proposal is that the alien influence of subtly Reformed models of divine/human interaction in sanctification heightened the tendency of the “holiness” wing of American Methodism to equate Christian Perfection with the event of the “baptism of Holy Spirit,” thereby accenting its instantaneous character at the expense of growth—in significant contrast from Wesley.

While there is much that is helpful in these various suggestions, I have become convinced that there was another significant factor involved that has not received due attention. Put briefly, early American Methodists decisively (though, initially, without recognizing it) abandoned Wesley’s basic understanding of how humans make moral choices and enact them (i.e., his “moral psychology”) for a very different model. On the terms of this new model, Wesley’s central emphasis concerning sanctification and Christian Perfection no longer made sense or held together. As a result, his American descendants were left to fight over fragments of their heritage, or to turn elsewhere for views more congenial to their adopted moral psychology.

To develop this suggestion, I will need to outline Wesley’s assumptions about moral psychology and their connection to his understanding of sanctification. I will then turn attention to the abandonment of this moral psychology in American Methodism. Finally, I will suggest how this change helps account for the debates over entire sanctification among Wesley’s American descendants. I believe this process will put us in an enlightening position to reflect on what lessons we might learn from this American Methodist saga about the dynamics of spiritual growth and the possibility of Christian Perfection.

1. WESLEY’S “AFFECTIONAL” MODEL OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

Let me begin with some observations about Wesley’s eighteenth-century British context. Early Anglican moral thought was dominated by an “intellectualist” model, where virtue was a matter of reason suppressing the distractions of the irrational passions to enable morally free and correct acts of will. This reigning model was aggressively challenged in the eighteenth century by the empiricist turn in English philosophy. For empiricism truth is something experienced receptively by the human intellect, not imposed by it, or simply preexistent within it. In relation to moral psychology, this philosophical conviction led to the insistence that the human will can likewise be moved to action only by being experientially affected. While intellectual assessment of the conditions and consequences of a proposed course of action may take place, personal action will ensue only if the “affections” are also engaged, inclining the person toward the action.

This emphasis on the indispensable contribution of the affections to human action was not limited to philosophers in eighteenth-century England. It found strong advocates as well among theologians seeking to counteract the emerging deistic reductions
of religion to mere reverence for the truths of natural revelation and reason. One of the strongest voices arguing that reason alone was not sufficient to motivate or enable spiritual life was Isaac Watts. Wesley agreed strongly enough with Watts' argument in this regard to abridge it and republish it for his Methodist people.

When Wesley's endorsement of Watts is combined with his lifelong commitment to an empiricist epistemology, the natural expectation is that he would have been dissatisfied with an intellectualist moral psychology, preferring the model which had a deep appreciation for the contribution of the affections to human action. Such a preference is easy to demonstrate. More to the point, this preference was not simply a tangential concern for Wesley. It found central expression in his understanding of human nature, the human problem, and the Way of Salvation.

Consider first his understanding of human nature. Wesley's typical list of faculties that constitute the Image of God in humanity included the understanding, the will, liberty, and conscience. In evaluating this list one must recognize that Wesley was not using "will" to designate a human faculty of rational self-determination, as is typical in current usage; rather, he specifically equated the will with the affections. And how did he conceive these affections? To begin with, they are not simply "feelings," they are the indispensable motivating inclinations behind all human action. On the other hand, they are neither mere intellectual assent nor blind attraction; rather, in their ideal expression, the affections integrate the rational and emotional dimensions of human life into a holistic inclination toward particular choices or acts. Finally, while provocative of human action, the affections have a crucial receptive dimension as well. They are not self-causative, but are awakened and thrive in response to experience of external reality. In what Wesley held forth as the crucial instance, it is only in response to our experience of God's gracious love for us, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that the human affection of love for God and others is awakened and grows.

While the affections are responsive, they need not be simply transitory. Wesley was clear that they can be habituated into enduring dispositions. Drawing on a characteristic eighteenth-century use of the term, he called such habituated dispositions "tempers." The major positive example of such a temper (or habituated affection) for Wesley was precisely love of God and neighbor. Indeed, he summarized holiness itself in terms of this temper. As he once put it, "From the true love of God and brother humans directly flows every Christian grace, every holy and happy temper. And from these springs uniform holiness of conversation." "

Wesley's language of holy actions flowing from holy tempers suggests that he appreciated the sense in which habituated affections bring "freedom" for human actions—the freedom that comes from disciplined practice (e.g., the freedom to play a Bach concerto). Yet, he was also aware that some contemporary thinkers (e.g., Hume) were presenting the influence of our affections on our actions as invincible, thereby undermining human freedom. To avoid such implications Wesley carefully distinguished "liberty" from will. He understood liberty as our capacity to enact (or refuse to enact) our desires and inclinations. This capacity is what allowed Wesley to appreciate the contributions of habit, education, and argument to human willing, without rendering such willing totally determined.

It is because our actions are not totally determined that Wesley took the issues of
human sin and salvation so seriously. The role of the affections was central to his understanding of both of these topics. In the case of sin, Wesley insisted that the issue was more than individual wrong actions. He frequently discussed sin in terms of a three-fold division: sinful nature or tempers; sinful words, and sinful actions. The point of this division was that our sinful actions and words flow from corrupted tempers, so the problem of sin must ultimately be addressed at this affecional level. This point is also reflected in the way that the mature Wesley shifted his discussion of the classic Western doctrine of Original Sin away from questions of inherited guilt, focusing instead on the present disordering impact of Inbeing Sin.13 While some have occasionally accused Wesley of viewing this Inbeing Sin as a foreign substance or entity that causes sinful actions, it was really more relational in character. The most basic cause of our present infirmity for Wesley was not some “thing” that we inherit, but the distortion of our nature resulting from being born into this world already separated from the empowering Divine Presence. Deprived of the effect of this essential relationship, our various faculties inevitably become debilitated, leaving us morally depraved. For one particular, our weakened affections take on unholy tempers.

As a corollary of his understanding of our human problem, Wesley’s chief complaint against the models of Christian salvation which he discerned among his fellow Anglican clergy was that they restricted themselves to outward matters, neglecting the affecational dimension of human life. His own typical definition of Christian life placed primary emphasis on renewing this inward dimension, described in such terms as: “the life of God in the human soul; a participation of the divine nature; the mind that was in Christ; or, the renewal of our heart after the image of God who created us.”14 Involved here would be both an awakening of the affections in response to the effect of God’s graciously empowering Presence, and a shaping of those affections into holy dispositions (tempers). Since holiness of thought, word, and action would flow from such renewal, Wesley once identified the essential goal of all true religion as the recovery of holy tempers.15

But how does this recovery take place? How are our sin-debilitated affections reempowered and the sinful distortions of their patterning influence reshaped? Wesley was quite clear that we cannot accomplish this through our human efforts alone. Its possibility lies instead in the regenerating impact of God’s graciously restored pardoning Presence in the lives of believers. Yet God’s grace does not infuse holy tempers instantaneously complete. Rather, God awakens in believers the “seed” of every virtue.16 These seeds then strengthen and take shape as we responsively “grow in grace.”

It is crucial to note that Wesley assumed this growth would be a “cooperant” affair, because it is grounded in God’s responsible grace, which both enables our ability to respond and respects our integrity in that response. This assumption is central to Wesley’s recommended set of “means of grace.” He valued the means of grace both as avenues by which God conveys the gracious Presence that enables our responsive growth in holiness and as “exercises” by which we responsibly nurture that holiness. Since holiness is rooted in the affections, he also highlighted the way in which various means of grace serve to enliven our affectional motivation and/or to shape our affectional disposition. Indeed, Wesley’s developed set of recommended means of grace manifests a conscious concern to balance these two effects.17
This leaves only the question of how far the recovery of holy tempers can be realized in this life. Probably Wesley’s most well-known claim is that entire sanctification is a present possibility for Christians. What exactly did he mean by this? Perhaps the best place to start an explanation is to make clear that entire sanctification (or Christian Perfection) is not an isolated reality, but a dynamic level of maturity within the larger process of sanctification, the level characteristic of “adult” Christian life. We noted above that Wesley considered love to be the essence of Christian life. Thus, when he wanted to be more specific, he would define Christian Perfection as “the humble, gentle, patient love of God, and our neighbor, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.”

It is important to notice that love is not only said to be present, it is ruling. God’s love is shed abroad in the lives of all Christians, awakening their responsive love for God and others. But this love is weak, sporadic, and offset by contrary affections in new believers. In the lives of the entirely sanctified Wesley maintained that it rules “to the point that there is no mixture of any contrary affections—all is peace and harmony.”

Affections contrary to love would be “inward sin.” Wesley believed that this inward sin was overcome in entire sanctification. In a few instances he described this overcoming as a “rooting out” or “destruction” of inward sin. As he came to realize, this language is problematic, because talk of the destruction of sinful affections can clothe the impossibility of their return. By contrast, Wesley became convinced of the sad reality that sinful affections (and resulting outward sins) may reemerge in lives that had been ruled by love. How could one express the benefits of Christian Perfection without obscuring this fact? When Wesley was pressed directly on this point he offered the alternative account that in the soul of an entirely sanctified person holy tempers are presently reigning to the point of “driving out” opposing tempers (although these may return).

At this juncture, I must reemphasize that Wesley’s focus on affections in describing Christian Perfection was not intended as an alternative to actions. He understood that acts of love flow from a temper of love. Yet, he also recognized that ignorance, mistakes, and other human frailties often distort the passage from affection to action. It was in this sense that he tired of the debate over whether Christian Perfection was “sinless.” He did indeed believe that it consisted in holy tempers, but not that it was characterized by infallible expression of those tempers in actions.

Perhaps the best way to capture Wesley’s affectional view of entire sanctification, then, is to say that he was convinced that the Christian life did not have to remain a life of perpetual struggle. He believed that both Scripture and Christian tradition attested that God’s loving grace can transform sinful human lives to the point where our own love for God and others becomes a free response. Christians can aspire to take on the disposition of Christ, and live out that disposition within the constraints of our human infirmities. To deny this possibility would be to deny the sufficiency of God’s empowering grace—to make the power of sin greater than that of grace.

II. EARLY AMERICAN REJECTION OF WESLEY’S MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

If the preceding discussion has been successful in establishing a connection between Wesley’s moral psychology and his characteristic emphases concerning entire sanctification, it will provide good perspective for considering any divergence of early American
Methodists from Wesley. One clear divergence is the broad rejection of Wesley’s moral psychology among his American descendants. It would be helpful to place this rejection in historical context.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century the empiricist emphasis on the role of the affections in human willing found some extreme formulations in British philosophy. The most notorious example was David Hume, who essentially reduced all human sense of moral obligation and inclination to functions of the physical passions. The deterministic implications of Hume’s position called forth strong reactions—most notably, that of Thomas Reid. In an attempt to rebut Hume, Reid championed an account of duty and obligation that returned to an intellectualist moral psychology, with emphasis on rational control of the passions or affections. Central to his argument was the insistence that the psychological faculty of the will should not be identified with the affections, but was instead our free rational ability to choose between (or suppress) the various stimuli that motivate action. In this distinction, Reid removed rational intentionality from the affections, implying that they were actually irrational. Moreover, his maxim that only intentional acts have moral status led him to depict habituated tendencies (tempers) as strictly amoral—if not indeed opposed to truly moral acts—since they operate with minimal conscious intentionality.

The importance of Reid to our topic is the consistency with which his basic position was adopted in North American circles to critique theological expressions of a determinist affectional moral psychology. The leading target for such criticism was, of course, Jonathan Edwards. An affectional moral psychology was central to Edwards’ Treatise Concerning Religious Affections (1746). His major purpose in this treatise was to defend the role of appeals to the affections in current revival efforts by arguing that the affections were integral to Christian life—as the “springs” from which holy actions flow. It should not be surprising that John Wesley found this basic affectional psychology congenial enough to republish an abridged edition of Edwards’ treatise for his Methodist people. This congeniality was heightened by the fact that the edition of this treatise that Wesley read and republished omitted the passages in Edwards’ original edition that most explicitly characterized the holy affections as an “infused habitus,” i.e., a gift from God that unilaterally represses evil affections and effects holy acts. Edwards’ background conviction hinted at in these omitted passages became central to his later essay on Freedom of the Will, where he argued that the will is not itself a real entity, but simply an expression of the strongest motive (affection) in a person’s character. Thus a sinful human nature cannot desire to please God unless God—by a miraculous infusion of created grace (i.e., holy affections)—changes the sinner’s character. Edwards develops this point in extended contrast with Arminianism, arguing that the Arminian stress on human liberty results in a psychology that cannot explain why we would ever make choices, and a moral philosophy that does not value virtuous habits and inclinations. In his posthumously published thoughts “Concerning Efficacious Grace” Edwards gave this the sharpest edge, repeatedly rejecting the (Wesleyan) use of Philippians 2:12-13 to teach cooperator grace. In a concern to argue that God was solely responsible for our holiness and salvation, Edwards had to reject any notion that virtues are “habits” that are developed in a gradual and insensible way. He was not even content to say the Spirit infuses the potential for virtuous habits;
rather God infuses the fully-formed holy habits or disposition of the heart immediately. As a result, the change from being a vicious person to having a virtuous character is instantaneous.

Such a strong model of Divine grace operating unilaterally through the human will inevitably gave rise to debate, even within New England Calvinism.\(^{40}\) In their attempt to develop a more compatibilist model of Divine grace and human action, revisionary (or "New Divinity") Calvinists typically turned from Edwards to the intellectualist moral psychology of Thomas Reid and his disciples.\(^{41}\) The theological voices among early American Methodists were drawn into this intra-Calvinist debate. They found themselves in an awkward position. On the one hand, they criticized the New Divinity theologians as being inconsistent with their Reformed tradition. On the other hand, they insisted that both the New Divinity model and Edwards' model resulted in a determinism that undermined the moral integrity and love of God.\(^{42}\) Throughout, their theological concern was focused much more on how to avoid any infringements on human freedom in the emotional/intellectual dynamics of spiritual life than on Wesley's focal issue of how to awaken affectional commitment in persons who were already conventional (i.e., merely intellectual) Christians.

The crucial thing to note, for our purposes, is that these American Methodist theologians also appropriated Reid's intellectualist psychology to articulate their alternative model of the dynamics of spiritual life.\(^{43}\) This move took nearly "official" status with the publication of excerpts from two prominent expositors of Reid's moral psychology in the first volume of the Methodist Review (1818), and the release of an American edition of Reid's Writings from the Methodist publishers in 1822.\(^{44}\)

There is no better indicator of the extent of this appropriation of Reid's moral psychology than the consistency with which these early American Methodist theologians distinguished the affections from the will, and defined the latter as the principle of independent rational choice.\(^{45}\) In place of Wesley's enumeration of our psychological faculties as understanding, will, liberty, and conscience, the typical American Methodist list became that of Reid: understanding, affections (or sensibilities), and will.\(^{46}\) In further consonance with Reid, these American theologians demonstrated a tendency to portray the affections as inherently irrational, needing regulation by the more primary human faculty of understanding.\(^{47}\) Likewise, they typically judged habits and inclinations to have moral status only when voluntarily embraced, and were prone to evaluate them more as obstacles to—than as facilitators of—free action.\(^{48}\)

It must be admitted that these changes from Wesley appear to have taken place with little initial consciousness of the fact. The first instance that I have found where debate erupted over how Wesley's faculty psychology might relate to that assumed in American Methodist dialogue was in 1841!\(^{49}\) And it was 1888 before there was the clear concession that Wesley identified the will with the affections, while contemporary American Methodist theologians did not. However, this was assumed to be only a semantic difference—Kant had taught contemporary theologians to use "will" to designate what Wesley called "liberty."\(^{50}\)

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

In reality, the difference between Wesley and Reid (or Wesley and Kant) was more
than a matter of semantics. It involved alternative emphases concerning the role of the affections in processes of human choice and action. As such, it was inevitable that the switch in moral psychology that we have traced in early American Methodism would have effects on their appropriation of Wesley's "affectional" understanding of Christian Perfection. It is time to turn our attention to these effects.

A. Impact Through Mid-Nineteenth Century

The fortunes of Wesley's understanding of entire sanctification during the initial generation of American Methodism (1772–1816, the tenure of Francis Asbury's ministry) can be summarized in several generalizations. First, even if their preoccupation was with calling sinners to conversion, the concern for holiness of heart and life pervaded the preaching of the early Methodist itinerants. Second, the status of early Methodism as a countercultural movement within the dominant "culture of honor and deference" in the surrounding society fostered a social coherence that minimalized doctrinal debate. Third, the most defining influence on early American Methodism was actually Asbury, but his characteristic emphases on sanctification reflected the "mature" balance of Wesley, valuing preaching the possibility of entire sanctification as much for how it fosters present growth in holy affections as for any actual attainment. Yet, fourth, Asbury could also affirm proclaiming Christian Perfection because of the way it distracted the early Methodists from contending for the right of their (unordained) preachers to serve eucharist. In this evaluation one senses that the central role of the means of grace to Wesley's understanding of sanctification was beginning to slip among his American descendants.

The role of the means of grace would be further diminished in the years following Asbury's death, as the impact of the switch to an intellectualist moral psychology spread among American Methodists. This impact might seem hard to discern, since nineteenth-century American Methodism remained heavily dependent upon British treatments of Christian Perfection through mid-century. However, there was a noticeable increase of influence of British voices other than Wesley—and in some tension with Wesley—as this period progressed, an increase that can be correlated with the shifting moral psychology traced above.

The first case to consider is John Fletcher. As one of Wesley's closest coworkers, Fletcher imbibed and echoed many of Wesley's major themes. In particular, he strongly endorsed the point that the goal of sanctification (Christian Perfection) is not merely a deliverance from the power of sin, but most properly a recovery of the holy temper. At the same time, Fletcher was more defined by controversial dialogue with the Calvinists than Wesley. As a result, in his attempt to counter Edwards' deterministic equation of affections with the will Fletcher moved toward identifying the will as the power of rational self-determination, and emphasized that true freedom comes from rationally controlling the affections, appetites, and passions. When this move is combined with Fletcher's association (in direct contrast to Wesley) of the entrance into Christian Perfection with the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," the framework was laid for a model of entire sanctification focused largely in one volitional event. While Fletcher himself continued to affirm the importance of growth throughout the Christian life, he could also advise believers not to "wait idly" in the means of grace for the perfecting work of God, but to "take it by force"
in prayer. This latter advice found a growing audience among American Methodists in the nineteenth century. By mid-century it could vie for authority with Wesley's own treatments.

Another British voice that gained an increased hearing by mid-century was Adam Clarke. Clarke's somewhat ambiguous position further heightened the contrast with Wesley's affectional model of sanctification. To begin with, Clarke was even more explicit than Fletcher in equating the will with liberty. At the same time, he described both sin and holiness in nearly deterministic terms: as long as unholy affections were present in our life we cannot live truly holy lives; but once God fills us with holy tempers such lives will flow forth naturally. Most importantly, both the destruction of the unholy tempers and the filling with holy tempers were presented as God's unilateral and instantaneous acts (reminiscent of Edwards!). Clarke strongly rejected any notion of gradual purification from unholy tempers. The result was a model of Christian Perfection as instantaneous purification, with little or no role of "character formation" in overcoming vice, though it may play some role in developing the implanted seeds of virtue.

The major tendencies we have been noting continued (though with some moderation) in our other major British voice, Richard Watson. Watson is of particular importance to our story because his Theological Institutes became the standard text in American Methodist theological education for the middle five decades of the nineteenth century. As such, it is significant that Watson clearly turned to an intellectualist moral psychology (apparently drawing on Reid) to critique Edwards' model of Christian life. Given his dependence upon Wesley, Watson did keep affection language in his descriptions of sanctification. But, like Clarke, he portrayed the deliverance from all unholy affections and the introduction of the seeds of holy affections as an instantaneous event. At the same time, Watson stressed more than Clarke the necessary development of holy habits and virtues that must follow this event, and could talk of the period between regeneration and entire sanctification as "advancing" toward this event. While this would seem to keep Watson more in line with Wesley's model of how holy character is developed, it must be balanced by the recognition that Watson's intellectualist psychology also led him to evaluate the means of grace primarily in terms of "duty." For example, he treats the sacraments of baptism and Lord's Supper as signs that confirm (but do not convey!) God's grace; and argues in specific relation to prayer that it is not an instrument of grace but a "condition" of grace. As such, his warning about missing the Lord's Supper habitually is not that one loses its empowering and formative benefits, but only that it is a violation of Christ's plain command.

To test the extent to which these additional British voices were congruent with (and influential on) American Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century, we need only note characteristic emphases of those American writers who addressed Christian Perfection in this period. First, the Americans clearly use the intellectualist moral psychology of the will controlling the affections as the interpretive framework for discussing Christian Perfection. Second, there is a growing noomen among the American writers to identification of entire sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and portrayal of this event as a time when evil affections are instantly removed and holy tempers instilled. Third, given this more instantaneous focus, if means of grace are mentioned, it is often only a call to attend preaching on entire sanctification and to pray earnestly for it. Even when...
the broader set of means of grace are invoked, it is more in terms of duties than as formative disciplines. In light of this reconception, the noticeable decline in the use of means of grace among Methodists through the nineteenth-century is less surprising.

As this summary demonstrates, differences were developing in nineteenth-century American Methodism with central assumptions of Wesley's understanding of Christian Perfection. These differences would spark open debates in the second half of the century. I will consider the debates in the Northern and Southern churches separately. In each case my main concern is not to give an exhaustive survey, but to suggest how the change in moral psychology that we have been tracing contributed to them.B.

Debates over Christian Perfection in Northern Methodism, 1850–1900

American debate over the authentic “Wesleyan” understanding of entire sanctification broke out first in the Northern church. Importantly, the majority of participants on all sides of this debate accepted an intellectualist moral psychology as self-evident, differing only on its implications for Christian Perfection. Such dominance by the intellectualist psychology is not hard to explain. It continued to be used in influential apologetic responses against the Calvinists. It was the perspective defended in the texts on moral philosophy placed on the required Course of Study for traveling elders. And it remained central to discussions of anthropology in standard Methodist systematic theologies.

The first shots in the Northern debate actually began their flight from outside. In 1839 Asa Mahan (a Congregationalist) published a defense of Christian Perfection articulated rigorously within the assumptions of the intellectualist moral psychology of Thomas Reid. On these terms, perfection became the full and perfect voluntary discharge of our rational duty to God and all other beings! More specifically, it was the ever vigilant use of our will to impose rational control on our passions, appetites, and propensities, so that our every choice might be freed for obedience to God’s command. When it was protested that such an ideal was impossible, Mahan responded that it becomes possible when Christians accept (subsequent to justification) the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, for this baptism strengthens their rational self-control.

At first glance the gap between Mahan’s understanding of Christian Perfection and that of Wesley would seem unbridgeable. Holiness is no longer a matter of the graciously empowered and guided progressive transformation of our affectional nature into the holistic disposition of Christ, it is the simple maintenance (with some help by the Holy Spirit) of an ongoing series of “free” (i.e., regardless of inner inclinations) rational choices to fulfill our duties. The only means of grace central to the latter model would be ones that are conditions of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, or that exhort us regularly concerning our duty—e.g., sermon, Scripture reading, and prayer.

Despite these differences, Mahan’s model of Christian Perfection proved congenial to many Methodists. Surely its most enthusiastic appropriation was in the writings of Phoebe Palmer. While Palmer “lowered the standard” of our duty to the single matter of total surrender or devotion to God, she kept Mahan’s emphasis that such devotion is possible by a perpetual rational exercise of will. The congruence of Palmer’s model of holiness with Reid’s intellectualist psychology is best evidenced by its appropriation in Thomas Upham, who had become a leading exponent of this psychology.
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The strong intellectualism of Upham's model of Christian Perfection is most clear in his claim that those entirely sanctified would experience temptation only "theoretically," not sensibly. This claim sparked a prolonged rejoinder from Merritt Caldwell, explicitly based on disagreement over spiritual/moral psychology. Caldwell took it as obvious that no Christian reaches the point of not being occasionally "sensibly" tempted or inclined to sinful acts. But drawing on the Reidian tradition of moral psychology, he argued that such inclinations, tempers, passions, or affections are only natural "feelings" and have no moral status. As such, one can indeed be delivered from all sin and still feel these temptations.

Caldwell's attempt to correct Upham served to ignite debate over the nature and possibility of Christian Perfection in the Northern church. On one side of this debate were those who insisted against Caldwell that inward inclinations to sinful acts were indeed of moral character—they are the "evil constitutional principle" of Original Sin that remains in believers following justification. On this reading, the very purpose of entire sanctification became the eradication of this constitutional principle. Importantly, those who developed this reading were heavily influenced by Fletcher and Clarke. As such, they connected entire sanctification to the dramatic event of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and argued that in this event all unholy inclinations are instantaneously destroyed and at least the seeds of holy inclinations installed.

Partisans to this position understood themselves to be defending "Wesleyan" Holiness. But while they were indeed defending the possibility of entire sanctification, their dependence upon an intellectualist moral psychology led them to a very different understanding of its nature than Wesley. This is most evident in their discomfort with any emphasis on the role of discipline and nurture in "unwinding" our sinful inclinations. They insisted that all such efforts are fruitless, that the constitutional principle of evil can only be removed unilaterally by God, and that any role for nurture or growth would only come after this had taken place. On these terms, Christian Perfection is distinguished sharply from character formation—a distinction they drew by contrasting "purity" and "maturity" in the Christian life.

Christian Perfection, for them, was a state of simple purity entered instantaneously when all evil inclinations are destroyed. Maturity awaited subsequent growth in the holy virtues. Not only is this quite different from Wesley's identification of Christian Perfection with the full "disposition" of Christ, they typically give little guidance on how subsequent growth in character is nurtured (often portraying it as inevitable). While they championed the holiness meeting as a means to the crisis experience of entire sanctification, one finds little emphasis on formative means of grace or discipline. At times it appeared that their interest lay more in determining just which "imperfections" could remain in a person who was pure. Given their moral psychology, arguments over this issue focused on actions and frequently degenerated into legalistic moralism.

I hasten to add that those reacting to this overall model of entire sanctification could be just as moralistic. These reactions were particularly concerned to deny that Christians must wait a second work of grace before they can be expected to live holy lives. As one example put it, "The Christian may, and is required by God, to be perfect every day of his life in the sense of keeping the whole moral law as the fruit of his for her regeneration." Given the terms in which the holiness camp had framed the argument, these writers ended up arguing that the liberating and empowering benefits of sanctification all come in
our initial regeneration.64 This allowed (some of) them to emphasize the process of growing in grace after regeneration, and to highlight the contribution of the means of grace to such growth. But what was the character of this growth? They insisted against the holiness camp that nothing in the believer’s “nature” needed fundamental change, in order for free obedience to be possible. Yet they were also clear that believers struggle to control temptation or inclinations to sinful acts. Their main concern was to maintain (echoing the argument, and intellectualist psychology, of Caldwell) that these inclinations should not be seen as having moral status, or subject to salvific transformation. If Wesley had disagreed on this point, it was because of his inadequate psychology.65 And if there was any sense in which Christian Perfection is a distinct state in the process of sanctification, it is only in the heightened ability that practice brings to repress our lower (affectional) nature and live in unreserved rational consecration to God.66

It is hard to imagine how such strongly contrasting readings could be reconciled, though there were some valiant efforts to do so.67 I would suggest that the major reason these efforts failed is that they continued to assume the intellectualist moral psychology.68 It strikes me as no accident that, operating within this psychology, leading theologians of the nineteenth-century Methodist Episcopal Church were often reduced to admitting that they simply could not explain the dynamics of entire sanctification.69 Nor is it surprising that folk who were confident of their ability to explain these dynamics (in “holiness” terms) increasingly found themselves in new denominational contexts.

C. Debates over Christian Perfection in Southern Methodism, 1850–1900

Vigorous debate over Christian Perfection in the Methodist Episcopal Church South came a generation later than in the North, and largely echoed the earlier Northern debates. One of the clear similarities is that it was again fought against the background of an assumed intellectualist moral psychology. The particular prominence of this psychology in Southern Methodism can be attributed to one man—Albert Bledsoe. Bledsoe was a convert to Methodism from Congregationalism, and his conversion had come through a detailed critique of Edwards’ affectional psychology. His standard in this critique was the intellectualist psychology of Thomas Reid.70 Thus, it is no accident that the same psychology is represented in the moral philosophy texts on the course of study for the Southern church.71

From its beginnings through the mid-1880s, the “holiness” reading we encountered in the Northern church appears to have enjoyed quiet privilege in the Methodist Episcopal Church South.72 The quiet was shattered when Jeremiah Boland published a feisty critique of this reading in 1887.73 His points basically repeat those of the Northern critics: regeneration brings all the purification of our nature necessary for enabling growth in holiness; there is no residue of Original Sin remaining in believers; the inclinations to sin that remain in believers are natural and have no moral culpability; and Christian Perfection is simply the consistent obedient free exercise of our wills that comes with maturity. If there is anything new in Boland, it is the clarity with which he grounds his position in an intellectualist psychology, and criticizes Wesley for the inadequacy of his alternative psychology (calling it a “blot on our Arminian Methodism!”).74

As one might expect, Boland’s argument called forth a string of defenses of the “holi-
ness" claim that Christian Perfection marks the eradication of evil inclinations remaining in believers—arguing that it was the biblical position, the position confirmed by experience, Wesley's position, and the "standard" position of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.51 A more unique response to Boland was offered by George Hayes, who argued that the debate could be solved by modifying the claims of both sides. Against Boland, Hayes insisted that an inherited depravity remains in believers which is not simply "natural"; while against the eradicationists, he argued that this depravity is not sin in itself and will never be removed in this life. Holiness then becomes a process (made possible by regeneration and discipline) of increasing our ability to resist this depravity through strengthening of our character, and Christian Perfection the mature establishment of that character.52 While this sounds a little closer to Wesley, it does not take long to see that Hayes views character in intellectual terms alone, defining it as "doing the best we know."

This is particularly disappointing, because there were at least a few in the Southern church who were uncomfortable with the reigning intellectualist psychology and struggled to articulate an alternative in connection with the nature of holiness.53 Overall, such voices were rare. More common were protests about the way that some were reducing holiness to "more emotionalism," protests that often carried themselves the tone of legalistic moralism.54 Against this background, the truly surprising thing is that Southern ironic attempts to mediate between competing groups were somewhat more successful than in the North.55

D. Twentieth-Century Developments?

The next logical step would be to carry our story on through the twentieth century. But there is actually very little to tell! To borrow an image that I believe Albert Outler first used, Christian Perfection, which was a cornerstone of Wesley's theology, had become by the twentieth century an annoying pebble in the shoe of American Methodism. While a few sought to remove it, most studiously ignored it as they limped along. In part this was due to exhaustion with the infighting that we have been tracing. But it also reflected the fact that none of the competing sides had been able to articulate a compelling model of the dynamics of sanctification and the ideal of Christian Perfection.

I have argued that a major obstacle to the nineteenth-century attempts to retrieve Wesley's understanding of Christian Perfection was the intellectualist moral psychology that they all assumed. If this was indeed the case, then we can understand why the notion of Christian Perfection became even less conceivable or attractive to American Methodists in the twentieth century. It is true that by the turn of the century the influence of Reid's philosophical and moral tradition was fading. But it was widely replaced by neo-Kantian assumptions that were as intellectualist in their moral psychology as Reid had ever been. If anything, the new trends heightened the "decisionistic" aspect of this psychology—locating moral value in the independence of each choice from any personal inclinations or desires. Such neo-Kantian assumptions were particularly prevalent in Methodist theology, due to the dominance of Boston Personalism in these circles. A leading theme of this school of thought was the need to rationalize religion by purifying it of all mystical and ceremonial overlays.56 Thus, it should be no surprise that they found Wesley's conception of Christian Perfection difficult to appreciate, or that they (and most others) offer in its place largely an emphasis on rational control of our emotions and fulfillment of our duty to God and others.57
IV. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Such is the American Methodist saga with the notion of Christian Perfection. What lessons might we learn from the journey? I would suggest that the first lesson is simply to recognize how integrally connected models of spirituality are to assumptions about moral psychology. We cannot presume that every model can be convincingly translated into different sets of assumptions. Likewise, we cannot presume that every set of assumptions about moral psychology is equally adequate for understanding spiritual life or models of its development.

A second lesson is the insight that this case-study provides into some of the characteristics that an intellectualist moral psychology imposes on conceptions of spiritual life. For example, emotions or affections enter into such a spirituality primarily as adversaries to overcome or hindrances to be controlled. Likewise, spiritual victory becomes a result either of increased rational competence cultivated by careful discipline, or of a decisive purgative event. Either option creates significant tensions concerning Divine/human interaction in salvation. On the first account, Divine grace may be affirmed as the source of our power, but the accent is on what we do with it. On the second account, there is typically the suggestion of a requisite act on our part before God's gracious purgative work in our lives, and an emphasis on our obligation to "retain" the blessing. Thus, both accounts are open to a subtle Pelagianism and to degenerating into legalistic moralism. This is because neither has a compelling answer to what attracts or inclines us toward obedient response.

This leads to my third lesson, which is that a recovered appreciation for the role of habit and character in action is not necessarily a sufficient response to the limits of the "decisionist" model of morality and spirituality prevalent in the Western world. We encountered more than enough examples to know that an emphasis on character can be constructed within the constraints of the intellectualist model—conceiving character as the strengthening of a rational tendency through repetition and modeling. But such a model would still lack an appreciation for the affective dimension of inclination.

I am convinced that the fourth lesson the history of American Methodist discussion of Christian Perfection should teach us is the necessity of recovering a positive appreciation for the affectional dimension of human life and spirituality. I use the word "affection" here purposefully in an attempt to retain a connection between two emphases that are sometimes separated in terms of emotions and passions. Emotions are often construed with primary emphasis on their motivating role as inclinations to action. The defining characteristic of passions, by contrast, is their receptive nature, responding to external stimuli or agents. While an intellectualist model would see such receptivity in negative terms as loss of control, it can be seen instead as a positive trait—allowing the person to be responsively empowered and shaped (for example, by encounter with God's gracious Presence). On this reading, emotions and passions would be inherently intertwined, for our motivating inclinations would be grounded in and shaped by responsive interaction with God and others.

This leads me to a final lesson: an increased appreciation for the affectional dimension of spiritual life is necessarily connected to a recognition of the contribution of the full range of the means of grace in empowering and shaping our affections. This connection was suf-
sufficiently demonstrated (in reverse) in the history of American Methodism; as an intellectual model of spirituality took over, Wesley’s recommended pattern of means of grace was progressively trimmed down to those that address folk intellectually—e.g., Word, sermon, and prayer.

All of this leads me to say that American Methodists will only begin to understand anew what Wesley meant by Christian Perfection as they sense the limitations of the intellectualist models of human action that surround them and recover Wesley’s appreciation for the affections and the means of grace. If this ever happens, then they will find that Wesley meant something very much like Benedict, in his description of a monk who has ascended the steps of discipline in humility:

The monk will quickly arrive at that perfect love of God which casts out fear. Through this love, all that he once performed with dread, he will now begin to observe without effort, as though naturally, from habit, no longer out of fear of hell, but out of love for Christ, good habit and delight in virtue. All this the Lord will by the Holy Spirit graciously manifest in his workman now cleansed of vices and sins.104

Notes
1. This study admittedly focuses only on the Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist Protestant Church, Methodist Episcopal Church South, and their later unions. I believe the account would be similar among the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and Christian Methodist Episcopal traditions. For one thing, the Course of Study for traveling preachers in these traditions was largely shared with the MEC, MPC, and MECS through the nineteenth century. Beyond that general point, I did not have sufficient resources to trace a distinctive course in the African-American traditions. There would also be strong similarities (that I did not have room to develop) in the Evangelical Association and the United Brethren. For some orientation to theological discussions in these groups, see William H. Naumann, “Theology and German-American Evangelicalism” (Yale University Ph.D. thesis, 1966); and J Wesley Corbin, “Christian Perfection and the Evangelical Association through 1875,” Methodist History 7.2 (1969): 25-44.
3. Perhaps the earliest example of this explanation is A.S. Graves, “Wesley’s Variations of Belief, and the Influence of the Same on Methodism,” Methodist Review 69 (1887): 192-211.
7. The most accessible entrance to this interpretive approach is Donald W. Dayton, Theological Roots of Pentecostalism (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), pp. 71ff.
9. The work in question is Watts, Treatise on the Love of God and On the Use and Abuse of the Passions (London, 1729). See Wesley's comment on abridging this work in Journal (17 Feb. 1769); Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley, Frank Baker, ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1984ff), 22:171. This abridgement was later published in serial form in Arminian Magazine 5 (1782); 200-202, 587-593, 648-651. Note the comments Wesley retained in his abridgement on the affections (for Watts, passions) assisting the feeble influences of our reason in the practice of duty, and helping make the duties of life and religion easier and more delightful (pp. 587-591).
10. This point has been demonstrated conclusively by Richard B. Steele, "Gracious Affections" and "True Virtue" according to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1994); and Gregory S. Clapp, John Wesley on Religious Affections: His Virus on Experience and Emotion and Their Role in the Christian Life and Theology (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1989).
11. For further discussion and documentation of the following summary of Wesley, see Randy L. Maddox, Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology (Nashville, Tenn.: Kingswood Books, 1994).
15. See Maddox, Responsible Grace, pp. 74-75.
26. As Richard Steele has demonstrated, Wesley's abridged republication of Edwards' Treatise Concerning Religious Affections is based on a previous abridgement by William Gordon (London: T. Field, 1762). The first appearance of Wesley's version was in volume 23 of the 1773 edition of his Works. I will refer to the reprint of it in the second edition of A Christian Library, 30 vols. (London:
Cordeux, 1819–27, 30:310ff.


31. Reid and his disciples are typically grouped as “Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy.” Two studies that highlight the impact of their moral psychology and philosophy in America are Donald H. Meyer, The Inscrutable Conscience: The Shaping of the American National Ideal (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972); and Thomas Edward Frank, Theology, Ethics, and the Nineteenth-Century American College (San Francisco, Calif.: Mellon Research University Press, 1993).


36. Conscience is usually subsumed into one of the other three among American Methodists—as either an aspect of the understanding, or the moral sensibility, or the deliberative power of the will.

37. See especially Shinn, Plan of Salvation, pp. 410–16; Fisk, Calvinistic Controversy, pp. 197–98; and Shinn, Benevolence of Supreme Being, p. vi.


39. The debate in question is a series of exchanges on “Theory of Temptation” between

This concession and attribution to Kant is found in Thomas Summers, Systematic Theology (Nashville, Tenn.: MECS Publishing House, 1888), 2:66.


45. For example, Timothy Merritt's The Christian Manual, a Treatise on Christian Perfection with Directions for Obtaining that State (New York: Bangs & Estony, 1829) relies heavily on Wesley and Fletcher in the expository chapters. Again, American Methodists chose to respond to Calvinist criticisms in 1838 by publishing Entire Sanctification, or, Christian Perfection, stated and defended by Rev. J. Wesley, A. Watnough, A. Clark, R. Watson, and R. Treffiy (Baltimore: Armstrong & Berry); Watnough (the apparent editor) was the only American contributor. Likewise, George Peck’s influential The Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection Satisfied and Defined (New York: Lane is Sanford, 1842) was primarily an exposition of Wesley, Fletcher, and Watson. The major contemporary book-length publications that were more independently American were Timothy Merritt, An Address to Christians and Ministers on Gospel Perfection, especially to such as Deny that State to be Attainable (New York: Bangs & Mason, 1821); and Aaron Luman, Essays on Holiness (Boston: Timothy Ashley, 1820).


49. Compare "Last Check on Antinomianism," §§, Works, 2:499; to "Appeal to Matter of Fact and Common Sense, Concluding Address," §§, Works, 3:355. Note also that the only means of grace that he recommends to those seeking the sanctifying Spirit is communal prayer, in “Last Check on Antinomianism,” §§, Works, 2:648.

50. An American edition of Fletcher’s Treatise on Christian Perfection (the Seventh of his Checks) was published in 1791 and reissued twice by 1820. An abridged edition was reissued in 1837 that was reprinted regularly to 1917.

51. Remember that Fletcher was used to “supplement” Wesley in Merritt, Christian’s Manual; Watnough, Entire Sanctification; and Peck, Scripture Doctrine of Perfection. When the first American Methodist text for theological instruction was published, it chose simply to reprint Fletcher (rather than Wesley) for the chapter on Christian Perfection, cf. Thomas Neely Ralphson, Elements of Divinity (Louisville, Ky.: E. Stevenson, 1854), pp. 362ff.

52. A collection of Clarke’s comments on Christian Perfection was printed in Methodist Review 11...
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(1828): 103-5, 141-46; and then included in the broader selected compend from his works edited by Samuel Dunn and titled Christian Theology (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1835).

53. See his insistence that "If man has a will at all, it must be free; any other kind of will is an absurd contradiction," in Miscellaneous Works, James Everett, ed. (London: T. Tegg & Son, 1836-37), 5:237-38.


55. On these points, see Richard Watson, Theological Institutes (New York: Lane & Tippett, 1849), 1:278-79; 2:9-11, 2:439-42.

56. Cf. Watson, Institutes, 2:450-52, 16. Note he uses one of the two amenable quotes in Wesley (discussed in note 17 above) in his support.

57. Ibid., 2:452-54.

58. Ibid., 2:487ff, 611ff. For the comment on prayer, see pp. 489-90.

59. Ibid., 2:671.

60. The best example is A. Watnough's "Essay on Entire Sanctification" that he uses to preface Wesley, et al in Entire Sanctification, see esp. pp. 14, 25-26, 33-34.

61. The best example (and earliest American use of baptism language) is Merritt, Address on Gospel Perfection, esp. pp. 8, 12-13.


65. The most comprehensive attempt so far to identify the different strands in these debates is Park, "Concepts of Holiness." Park notes the importance of the Scottish Common Sense moral psychology to some schools in the debate (especially Oberlin Perfectionism and the Progressive Methodists), but appears to portray the Wesleyan Holiness school as mainly resisting this influence. I would contend that they were shaped as much by it as any of the other groups.


67. Relevant texts found on the course of study in the MEC, MPC, and UBC include Dugald Stewart, Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind (Boston, 1821); Francis Wayland, The Elements of Moral Science, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1837); Thomas Upham, Elements of Mental Philosophy, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1840-41); and Noah Porter, The Elements of Intellectual Science (New York: Charles Scribner & Co., 1871).

68. For example, Samuel Wakefield made this psychology more evident in his update of Watson: A Complete System of Christian Theology (Pittsburgh, Pa.; J.L. Read and Son, 1869), esp. pp. 314-16. It was also central to the first full original systematic theology by an American Methodist, Miner Raymond, Systematic Theology (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1877-79), esp. 2:151, 3:17-23; and the later, but more influential, John Miley, Systematic Theology (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1892-94), 1:410-12, 2:272ff.


70. Cf. Mahan, Doctrine of Perfection, pp. 7-12.
73. Palmer’s views are best expressed in The Way of Holiness (New York: Lane & Tippett, 1845), see pp. 19-38; and Present to my Christian Friend (New York: Palmer & Hughes, 1853).
74. See especially Upham, Principles of the Interior or Hidden Life (Liverpool: Howell, 1857), pp. 139ff. Upham became a regular participant in Palmer’s Tuesday meetings.
78. Perhaps the clearest articulation of this psychology in Daniel Steele, Mile-Stone Papers (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1878), p. 134: “The great work of the Sanctifier by his powerful and usually instantaneous inworking, is to rectify the will, to purify the affections, to give a check to all impure appetites, and to enthrone the conscience over a realm in which no rebel lurks.” See also Foster, Christian Purity, p. 74.
79. See especially Wood, Purity and Maturity, pp. 29ff.; Dunn, Holiness to the Lord, pp. 56-57; Steele’s remarks about habits in Love Enthroned, p. 44; and Foster’s distinction between habits and the "soul-nature" (which God alone can change) in Christian Purity, pp. 328-63.
80. See especially Wood, Purity and Maturity, p. 186ff (which stresses maturity but gives no guidelines for cultivating it); and Keen, Pentacostal Papers, pp. 118-21. Somewhat more positive are Dunn, Holiness to the Lord, pp. 181ff; and Foster, Christian Purity, pp. 217-18.
82. In addition to Franklin, Critical View of Perfection, others arguing this basic line include Daniel Whedon, "Doctrines of Methodism," Bibilotheca Sacra 19 (1862):241-74, see pp. 269-70; DeWitt Clinton Huntingdon, What Is It to Be Holy? or, The Theory of Entire Sanctification (Cincinnati, Ohio: Jennings & Pye, 1896 first edition, 1869); Jonathan Townley Crane, Holiness the Birthright of All God’s Children (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1874); James Mudge, Growth in Holiness Toward Perfection (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1895); and James Mudge, The Perfect Life in Experience and Doctrine (Cincinnati, Ohio: Jennings & Graham, 1911).
83. Note the extended defense of the intellectualist psychology in explicit contrast with Wesley in Huntingdon, What Is It to Be Holy? pp. 13-18, 35ff. 133.
in Holiness, p. 155; Mudge, The Perfect Life, pp. 209-10; and Huntington, What Is It to Be Holy?, pp. 152-53 (note his insistence that love is not an emotion, though it may be accompanied by emotion, p. 164). Interestingly, Crane correlates this heightened state with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Holiness the Birthright, p. 113).


87. See especially Minter, Systematic Theology, 2:383; and Miley, Systematic Theology, 2:365.


92. This point is made most graphically in Jeremiah M. Boland, “A Psychological View of Sin and Holiness,” Methodist Quarterly Review 35 (1892):342-54. See also Boland, Problem of Methodism, pp. 34-56.


97. The most lively example is L. Pierce, *A Miscellaneous Essay on Entire Sanctification: Showing How It Was Lost from the Church, and How It May and Must Be Regained* (Nashville, Tenn.: MECS Publishing House, 1892), esp. pp. 4-16.


The attainment of Christian perfection as a Wesleyan/Holiness re-interpretation of the Anglican rite of confirmation

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The intent of this paper is to explore some similarities between the theology of confirmation and the theology of Christian perfection espoused by John Wesley and John Fletcher and later popularized in the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement. This paper does not try to establish that there was an intentional Wesleyan reinterpretation of the rite of confirmation, yet it will establish that there is a close connection with striking similarities nonetheless. It will also be seen, however, that these similarities stem in part from the same theological-biblical considerations. The most obvious similarity between the rite of confirmation in the Anglican tradition and the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection is the emphasis on a post-conversion experience of the Spirit which gives to the believer an increase in sanctifying grace.

James Dunn, a friendly critic of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement and whose theology reflects a typical Reformed interpretation of the Holy Spirit, points out that "within Christianity down through the centuries, there has always been a strain of teaching" that every believer should receive the Spirit of Pentecost subsequent to their conversion. He further acknowledges that "it was the [Wesleyan] Holiness Movement which brought belief in Spirit-baptism into prominence as a distinct doctrine." This doctrine is more than a "strain of teaching" within Christianity. Dunn allows that it was held "without question" until Wyclif. It is
still the prevailing assumption within catholic Christianity. Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicanism, the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism, and the Charismatic Movement make up a larger share of Christian thought than Lutherans and Calvinists.

The Continental Reformers rejected the concept of a post-conversion experience of the Spirit. This rejection was accompanied by a moralistic misunderstanding of sanctification based on the idea of performance rather than on the ethic of intent and love. It is no mere coincidence that the Reformers' denial of Christian perfection in this life is connected to their denial of a post-conversion experience of the Spirit. Jürgen Moltmann, a Reformed theologian himself, says the Lutheran/Reformed doctrines "left out...the kingdom of the Spirit..." and "combined it with the kingdom of the Son." This merging of the Spirit into the Word (Christ) eliminated a basis for full sanctification until the eschaton.

To underscore the difference between the Lutheran and the Methodist idea of sanctification, Moltmann records in his book, The Spirit of Life, Wesley's controversial debate with the Moravian leader, Count Zinzendorff. In that debate (which Moltmann quotes in full), Wesley's argument for Christian perfection is linked to his belief that the disciples were justified before Pentecost and that after the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost they were made more holy. Wesley asked Zinzendorff, "Were not the apostles justified before the death of Christ...? But were they no more holy after the day of Pentecost, than before Christ's death...? Were they not on that day filled with the Holy Ghost?" The point of Wesley's debate with Zinzendorff was to show that his concept of Christian perfection was a post-conversion experience of the Spirit. This connection between an increase in holiness and the infilling of the Spirit is the main point of similarity between the Wesleyan doctrine of holiness and the Anglican rite of confirmation.

I. THE BESTOWAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONFIRMATION

The complex development surrounding the emergence of the rite of confirmation is beyond the scope of this paper, but a brief sampling abstracted from the more involved and intricate development of the rite of confirmation will serve to show that the sacramental concerns of confirmation became the concerns of Wesleyan theology, even though implicitly so. It is generally recognized that the pre-Nicene Fathers set the stage for it becoming a separate rite because they had a more inclusive doctrine of baptism which consisted of the act of water-baptism which granted forgiveness of sins and a subsequent anointing with oil accompanied by the laying on of hands which bestowed the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit. Water-baptism and Spirit-baptism were thus conjoined as two distinct events under the larger umbrella of the baptismal liturgy. Anglican G.W.H. Lampe admits that "this is the general pre-Nicene understanding of the rite," though he himself embraced a Reformed interpretation of confirmation as a ratification of baptism rather than a bestowal of the Spirit. He blames the emergence of the catholic concept of confirmation on the early Church Fathers who focused on sanctification rather than justification. For Wesley, this emphasis of the early Church Fathers on sanctification represented the true essence of the gospel. The connection
which Lampe sees, however, between the emphasis on sanctification and a post-conversion experience of the Spirit is sound.

This two-stage view of baptism is implicit in Irenaeus¹ (ca. 185) and is made explicit in Tertullian (ca. 160-222) who composed the first treatise ever written on baptism.⁹ Cyprian (ca. 251), following Tertullian as the second great Latin theologian of the Church, says water baptism grants forgiveness of sins and prepares the believer for the reception of the Spirit through whom we “are made perfect with the Lord’s seal.”¹⁰ Being made “perfect” through “the descent of the Spirit” is called by Clement of Alexandria a “deification” in Padagogus (6.25-26).¹¹ By the fifth century the rite of laying on of hands and bestowal of the Spirit was generally separated from baptism and performed by the bishop.¹² Augustine says this has been a uniform practice of the Church in all ages.¹³ He refers to “the imposition of the hands” as the “sacrament of the Spirit” who is given after one is born of the Spirit.¹⁴ Benedictine abbot, Rabanus Maurus, in the mid-ninth century established the theology of confirmation.¹⁵ Peter Lombard around 1150 A.D. listed confirmation as one of seven sacraments.¹⁶ The development of the theology of confirmation was, of course, not always clear, nor is it clearly agreed upon by Roman Catholic theologians today. Gerard Austin shows that “no other sacrament has had such a checkered history. No other sacrament has changed so frequently in ritual, prayers, and meaning through the centuries.”¹⁷

In the process of this development of a theology of confirmation, Gregory Dix has shown that originally baptism with water and baptism with the Spirit were two distinct parts of a larger meaning of Christian baptism. He shows that baptism with the Spirit was not optional or supplemental to water baptism, but an essential aspect of the meaning of the Christian life. Baptism with the Spirit was “a sealing unto the day of redemption.” It was a foretaste of the eternal salvation. Dix notes that in the fifth century a change in terminology occurred. Baptism with the Spirit which had been originally called a “sealing” was renamed with “the new term confirmatio.” Dix saw this change in terminology to be a weakening of the meaning of the baptism with the Spirit. He writes:

The change of term has its own significance. A document which needs ‘sealing’ is not valid until the seal has been affixed. The ‘confirmation’ of a document, though it may add to its authority, implies that it was already operative before it was confirmed. This is precisely the change of emphasis which was now taking place in the West.”¹⁸

Thomas Aquinas (13th Century) preserved both the meaning of “strengthening” and “sacratifying grace” for the rite of Confirmation: “This sacrament gives the Holy Spirit to the baptized for their strengthening just as he was given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and as he was given to the baptized through the imposition of hands by the apostles.... The sending or giving of the Holy Spirit is always accompanied by sanctifying grace.”¹⁹ In addition to the public rite of confirmation, St. Thomas also exhorted all believers to experience personally in this life the perfection of love through the Spirit which he defines as a perfection of intent (“precepts”), not performance (“counsels”).²⁰
Thomas allowed that the effects of confirmation—the fullness of the Spirit in sanctifying and empowering grace—could be experienced independently of the sacrament of confirmation itself. He cites the experience of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, as an example of this spontaneous and non-sacramental dispensing of the grace of confirmation. As it will be pointed out below, this allowance for a non-sacramental experience of the sanctifying fullness of the Spirit became the normal pattern and expectation among English Protestants such as some of the Puritan Divines in the seventeenth century, the Wesley brothers and John Fletcher in the eighteenth century, culminating in the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement in the nineteenth century.

The English Reformers, like Cranmer, did not reject the rite of confirmation as a conferring of the Spirit of Pentecost, whereas the Continental Reformers did. In the Anglican ritual of confirmation, which was revised in 1662 and used in Wesley's day, the following is found in one of the prayers:

"Confirm and settle the godly Resolutions They have now made. Sanctify Them throughout Italics minel that They may become the Temples of the Holy Ghost."

Here the similarity between Wesley's concept of full sanctification, or Christian perfection, and the Anglican rite of confirmation is made obvious.

Wesley, like Calvin, rejected confirmation as a sacrament. Wesley also seemed to discard it as a ritual altogether because he did not include it in The Sunday Service which he prepared for the American Methodists. In a letter to a Roman Catholic, Wesley objected both to the concept of confirmation as a sacrament and to its elaborate ceremony. Wesley does not say he rejected the rite of confirmation as an ordinance, but only its sacramental status and its extravagant symbolism as practiced in Roman Catholicism. He writes:

In consecration of the chris, the Bishop blows upon it, to signify the descent of the Holy Ghost for the sanctification of it... and that it hath [hes] a power of sanctification as the instrument of God... so the Bishop prays in the consecration of it, that God "in bestowing spiritual grace upon this ointment, would pour out the fullness of sanctification, and that it may be to all that are to be anointed with it, for the adoption of sons by the Holy Spirit."

Notice in this prayer of confirmation cited by Wesley the connection between "pour out" (a reference to the pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit) and the "fullness of sanctification." For Wesley, "the fullness of sanctification" was given through the Spirit in a personal, evangelical, and non-sacramental way, and the connection between full sanctification and the pouring out of the Spirit was to be highlighted in John Fletcher.

II. WESLEY'S REPLACEMENT OF CONFIRMATION WITH AN EVANGELICAL EXPERIENCE

Though a High Churchman, Wesley's emphasis was upon a personal, evangelical faith more than upon the sacramental means of grace. The combination of his Puritan heritage, along with the Moravian influence upon his early thinking, put him in a con-
flicting situation with his high church Anglican loyalties. Yet the focus on salvation by faith (which he derived more from the English Reformers than the Continental Reformers) became his passion, and he insisted that salvation by faith means we are fully sanctified by faith as well as justified by faith.

Though he ignored the rite of confirmation, he did not ignore the reality which confirmation signified. As he put it in the closing paragraph of A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, "we expect...to be sanctified wholly through His Spirit." Wesley's writings are replete with references to the Holy Spirit who conforms us to the image of Christ. There is no competition between Christ and the Spirit. The objective work of Christ's redeeming life, death, and resurrection had to be finished before the subjective work of the Holy Spirit could seal the believer with the imprint of Christ's likeness. Hence the primary reason why the Spirit of Christ is called the Holy Spirit is because his task, Wesley says, is to make us holy like Christ.

He also refers to Christians who have been perfected in love as being "full of His Spirit." "To those who deny perfection to be attainable in this life," Wesley asks: "Has there not been a larger measure of the Holy Spirit given under the Gospel than under the Jewish dispensation? If not, in what sense was the Spirit not given before Christ was glorified? (John vii.39)." To those who thought a person ought not to expect to be made perfect in love until a lengthy period after their conversion, Wesley wrote: "Is it neither wise nor modest to affirm that a person must be a believer for any length of time before he is capable of receiving a high degree of the Spirit of holiness." He further advises those who are seeking perfection of love to pray much: "God hardly gives His Spirit [italics mine] even to those whom He has established in grace, if they do not pray for it on all occasions, not only once, but many times." He specifically linked the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit to the meaning of full sanctification. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given in His sanctifying graces, as He was after Jesus was glorified.... And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, then [italics mine], they who 'waited for the promise of the Father' were made more than conquerors over sin [italics mine] sanctification for Wesley, italics mine] by the Holy Ghost given unto them."

In his sermon on "Scriptural Christianity" (1744), based on Acts 4:31—"they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," Wesley shows that the call to be filled with the Spirit is a call to appropriate the sanctifying grace and fruit of the Spirit. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost," Wesley says, "to give them...the mind which was in Christ, those holy fruits of the Spirit." He further defines the fullness of the Spirit to mean that the disciples "were all of one heart and of one soul" and who, "one and all, have the love of God filling their hearts and constraining them to love their neighbor as themselves."

This sermon is remarkably similar in substance to Homily XIX in the so-called Marcarius the Egyptian in the fourth century. His theme was: "Be filled with the Spirit," which he equated with perfection of love, the fruit of the Spirit, and cleansing from indwelling sin. His appeal was for believers to accept God's offer of grace without any reference to the sacraments as such. Wesley cited pseudo-Marcarius to show that the early Church Fathers also said that believers still need to be cleansed from indwelling sin after their initial conversion.

Another similarity between confirmation and Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfec-
tion is found in his *Explanatory upon the New Testament* which translates Acts 19:2: “Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” Of course, this is the same translation of the King James Version and this particular text reflected the Anglican theology of confirmation where believing precedes the right to receive the Pentecostal Spirit. If Wesley thought that Paul intended to say that these disciples should have received the Spirit at the time of their conversion in this particular text, its grammatical construction could have been translated, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed.” Such variations from the King James Version he promised to make in his “Preface” to the *Explanatory Notes*, and he often did. But here he agreed with the King James Version. In his commentary, he suggests the Holy Spirit was given to the Ephesians for their sanctification. This corresponds with his comment on Acts 2:38: “The gift of the Holy Ghost does not mean, in this place, the power of speaking with tongues; for the promise of this was not given to all that were afar off, in distant ages and nations: but rather the constant fruits of faith, even righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (=sanctification).” In *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, the following verse is written as an interpretation of Acts 19:6, “The Holy Ghost came on them”:

Still the Holy Ghost descends  
The Indwelling Comforter,  
All the griefs and troubles ends  
Of those that Christ revere;  
Works His miracles within,  
Renews their hearts, and tongues, and eyes;  
Makes an utter end of sin,  
And wholly sanctifies.”

III. JOHN FLETCHER—
THE LINKING OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AND CONFIRMATION

John Fletcher was a Geneva-trained scholar who had gone to England and became a Methodist. He also became the widely-known vicar of Madeley Church of England. He became Wesley’s personally-designated successor, though he declined. His premature death would have prevented it anyway. Fletcher brought this connection between perfection and Pentecost into clearer focus. His emphasis on “a sanctifying baptism with the Holy Spirit” was prominently featured throughout his *Checks to Antinomianism*, which were intended to be an apologetic for Wesley’s theological emphases. Wesley edited, published, and fully endorsed them. Fletcher’s writings became standard reading for all Methodist preachers, both in England and in America. And his primary category for defining Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection was his doctrine of dispensations (not to be confused with Schofield’s dispensationalism).

According to his doctrine of dispensations, Fletcher interpreted one’s relation to God according to varying degrees of faith. That is, one may be living experientially in the dispensation of the Father, or the Son, or the Spirit. Fletcher believed in the unity of the Triune God and the togetherness of the distinct functions of the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit. For Fletcher, it was no more tritheistic to say that experientially there are those who experience varying degrees of faith which can be categorized as "Faith in the Father," "Faith in the Son," and "Faith in the Spirit," even as it is not tritheistic or modalistic to say that God revealed Himself in history, first as Father, then as Son, and finally as Holy Spirit, just as it is not modalistic to pray to the Father, to the Son, or to the Holy Spirit. So Fletcher interpreted the individual history of salvation for each person in correlation with the dispensations of the Father, Son, and Spirit as revealed in the biblical history of salvation. Some have a relationship to God which is even pre-Abrahamic as righteous heathens, or it may be Abrahamic and Mosaic as the dispensation of the Father unfolded in the Old Testament, or it may be pre-pentecostal as the disciples of John and Jesus' disciples during his early existence who thus lived in the dispensation of the Son, or it may be fully Christian as the disciples became on the day of Pentecost, who lived in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. "Pentecostal Christianity" represented the highest stage of faith which he identified with the meaning of full sanctification."

Wesley had the profoundest appreciation for Fletcher's doctrine of dispensations. Wesley recommended and approved Fletcher's doctrine of dispensations in 1773: "Mr. Fletcher has given us a wonderful view of the different dispensations which we are under. I believe that difficult subject was never placed in so clear a light before. It seems God has raised him up for this very thing (italics mine)." In 1773, Wesley personally designated Fletcher to be his successor of the Methodists because of his "clear understanding of "Methodist doctrine."

Fletcher referred to the seventeenth-century Puritan Divines as support for his views of perfection, especially calling attention to their idea of full assurance of faith as a postconversion experience of the Spirit. One such Arminian Puritan was John Goodwin. Interestingly enough, Wesley published an abridged edition of his Justification by Faith. This seventeenth-century Arminian Puritan also wrote another book, A Being Filled with the Spirit. It defines the fullness of the Spirit in terms of a postconversion experience which grants full assurance, perfection of love, and spiritual strength to live the Christian life. A century before Wesley and Fletcher, John Goodwin was already promoting the doctrine of holiness and doing it quite explicitly! Because of this emphasis on infused righteousness, he even before Wesley was called a "methodist." He exhorts all believers to "be filled with the Spirit." His two books Justification by Faith and A Being Filled with the Spirit are the equivalent (whether consciously so or not) of an evangelical, non-sacramental re-interpretation of the rites of baptism and confirmation that anticipated in a remarkable way Fletcher's thinking.

Wesley was frequently accused of not being truly Anglican in his theology of Christian perfection. Fletcher came to his defense, noting that Wesley's doctrine of perfection was only implementing in the lives of believers the reality of the Spirit promised in the rite of confirmation. To the Anglican clergymen who rejected Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection, Fletcher reminded them at their baptism that they "were ranked among Christ's soldiers and received a Christian name, in token that...they! would keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of..."
IV. THE WESLEYAN/HOLINESS MOVEMENT AND THE SACTIFYING SPIRIT

John Fletcher is the bridge between Wesley and the Wesleyan/Holiness movement, and his influence extends indirectly beyond Methodism in general to Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement, though Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement did not maintain his focus on sanctification. Fletcher is also a way back to an appreciation for our Anglican roots and to catholic Christianity. For Fletcher synthesized with a clarity and a focus hitherto unknown in the history of catholic Christianity the internal reality and feeling of a personal doctrine of the Holy Spirit implicit in the Anglican rite of confirmation. And he did it with Wesley’s blessing and commendation. His “favourite subject” (as Wesley reported it) was the sanctifying baptism with the Holy Spirit which is quite literally splashed on the pages throughout his Checks to Antinomianism. Wesley commented in his diary after Fletcher had preached a sermon on this theme at the Methodist Conferences in 1781: “I do not wonder he should be so popular.” In describing Fletcher’s writings in general, Wesley spoke about the “clearness of the arguments” “the purity of the language” along with his “clear understanding” of “Methodist doctrine.”

Wesley’s high commendation is why the early Methodists cited Fletcher alongside Wesley in their preaching and devotional writings, which is especially evident among the American Methodists. Because Wesley’s writings had been largely completed before Fletcher’s Checks, Fletcher had the perspective of hindsight to view the whole of Wesley’s writings with an intellectual penetration which even Wesley greatly admired.

In fact, the theology of Wesley as synthesized into a consistent whole in Fletcher’s Checks to Antinomianism was the textbook of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement. The subsequent theological and devotional literature which sustained the nineteenth century Wesleyan/Holiness Movement was largely an extended commentary on Fletcher’s central ideas.

We cannot trace the details of the historical developments of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement within the limits of this paper, except briefly to note its phenomenat rise in the
early 1800s and its subsequent spread throughout North America, England, France, Germany, the Scandinavian Countries, and around the globe through its missionary activity. Its predominant message was the sanctifying baptism with the Spirit. The date of 1839 could be considered a discernible point for the beginning of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement with the publication of a journal under the title of A Guide to Christian Perfection. Its editor was Timothy Merritt, a prominent New England minister who had extensive experience as an editor in the Methodist Publishing House. Earlier he had published a book entitled, The Christian’s Manual; a Treatise on Christian Perfection, with Directions for Obtaining That State (1825). The influences of John Wesley and John Fletcher were equally evident in his treatise. Fletcher’s emphasis on the infilling of the Spirit as the means of being made perfect in love was highlighted in his book as well as in the journal, A Guide to Christian Perfection, which was published monthly for the promotion of holiness. The spread of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement extended beyond the Methodist Church, first through the efforts of leaders like Phoebe Palmer, a doctor’s wife in New York who held the so-called “Parlor Meetings” in her home designed to promote the holiness message. She also became the editor of The Guide to Christian Perfection, which was renamed the Herald of Holiness. Thomas Oden refers to her as one, if not the leading woman theologian in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He writes: “It would be difficult to identify a more influential and substantive Protestant woman theological writer of the time than Mrs. Palmer because of the extraordinary range, depth, and international character of her ministry and authorship.” Other means for spreading the holiness message were through the camp meetings which were organized largely under the leadership of the Rev. J.A. Wood, a highly respected and scholarly Methodist minister. The promotion of holiness throughout the United States focused on being filled with the Spirit as its central theme. A holiness revival also highly impacted the Methodist Church during the years immediately following the Civil War. Numerous conferences reported that special meetings were being held where many believers were being entirely sanctified. This occasioned considerable conflict within the Methodist Church since not everyone was sympathetic to the Wesleyan/Holiness emphasis. Consequently, offshoot denominations of the Methodist Church were started, such as the Nazarene Church, the Wesleyan Church, and the Free Methodist Church. In spite of the fragmentation into splinter groups, the cause of the Wesleyan message of holiness continued to grow, and institutions such as Asbury Theological Seminary were founded to promote, not only the Wesleyan theological distinctives, but the historic Christian faith as well. Henry Clay Morrison, a prominent Methodist minister in Kentucky, evangelist, and college president, was the founder of Asbury Theological Seminary which was established in 1923.

In recent years the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement has found itself in transition. Its greatest challenge, however, has been to re-think its doctrine of holiness in the light of the rise of Pentecostalism. The preference for speaking of perfect love as attainable through the Pentecostal baptism with the Holy Spirit turned acidic when Pentecostalism (often referred to as “the tongues movement”) emerged from within its own ranks in the early 1900s. The ethical concepts of purity of heart, the fruit of the Spirit, and perfection of love as the meaning of the Spirit-filled life were substituted with miracles, wonders, and the divine possession of ecstatic power in pentecostalism.
This development has also given further rise to the Charismatic Movement which has swept across mainline denominations.

It is interesting to note that Karl Rahner has interpreted the Charismatic Movement within Roman Catholicism with its emphasis on the baptism with the Holy Spirit as a personalizing of the meaning of the sacrament of confirmation. As Donald Dayton has shown, the Pentecostalist and Charismatic movements are rooted in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition with its emphasis upon the baptism with the Holy Spirit. This connection shows the historical significance of Fletcher's influence and shows that he is by way of the Wesleyan/Holiness movement the primary link between the Anglican rite of confirmation and the twentieth century emphasis upon an evangelical, personalized experience of the fullness of the Spirit. As it has also been pointed out, being filled with the Spirit, being made perfect in love, and enjoying the full assurance of faith were also themes found in seventeenth century Puritan divines, especially as seen in John Goodwin's, A Being Filled with the Spirit. Yet it was Fletcher who highlighted the sanctification aspect of being filled with the Spirit which was popularized by the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement. The Pentecostalist/Charismatic movement retained an emphasis upon the baptism with the Spirit, but largely substituted the emphasis on sanctification with a focus on the gifts of the Spirit.

V. THE PROMOTION OF HOLINESS AND THE BAPTISMAL LITURGY

If the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement thinks the Pentecostalists are too subjective and emotional, Wesley thought the Roman Catholics were too objectivistic. Wesley perceived their rite of confirmation to be too formalistic, as if sanctification could be objectively dispensed to a believer through a chrism. Perhaps it could be said that Wesley's disregard of the formal, objective rite of the laying on of hands ("confirmation") influenced the progressive subjectivizing of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit by way of Fletcher, the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement, and finally the Pentecostalist denominations. A path leads from Roman Catholicism with its formal/sacramentalist dispensing of the Spirit in confirmation, to Anglicanism with its redefining of confirmation as an ordinance, to Methodism and the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement with its substitution of confirmation with an evangelical experience of holiness, and finally to Pentecostalism which totally subjectivized the work of the Holy Spirit by marketing an emotional and powerful feeling of divine possession. At least, from the perspective of the present standpoint, such a development seems to have occurred, even though the historical connections may not be easily confirmed and documented and there is no indication that such a path was deliberately chosen. At least, Fletcher interpreted confirmation as implying the infilling of the Spirit and the perfection of love, and his influence is highly visible as the source of the Wesleyan and consequent Pentecostal and Charismatic developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. And with the general recognition that the Charismatic Renewal Movement is in part a personalizing of the meaning of confirmation, such a path from Roman Catholicism through the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement to the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements seems to be evident. Thomas Oden has described this subjectivizing shift from Anglicanism to Pentecostalism as involving several interrelated factors:

The journey from Wesley to modern Holiness, Pentecostal, and charismatic
movements is ostensibly a stark transition from episcopal leadership to greater lay leadership, from Anglican assumptions about the sacraments to those resembling Quaker and Baptist, from a greater stress upon reasonable religion to emotive intensity, from the Prayer-Book to glossalia, from a relatively hierarchical patriarchal form of leadership to one in which women take an increasing part, from trinitarian theology to a greater focus upon the Holy Spirit, and from water baptism to Spirit baptism. Yet those who look more closely at these transitions see that the changes were subtle, involving gradual shifts, but with momentous effect.\(^7\)

A detailed analysis of the rise of Pentecostalism from within the theological framework of the Wesleyan/Holiness movement is found in Donald Dayton, The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism. Dayton locates the immediate source of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement with its emphasis on the fullness of the Spirit in John Fletcher, but I have indicated here that its ultimate roots extend to John Goodwin (and other seventeenth century Puritan Divines), and indirectly to the theology of confirmation in Anglican/Roman Catholic traditions (as Fletcher so interpreted) with confirmation being an extension of baptism as found in the teachings of the Early Church Fathers, as Lampe and Dix have shown.

The Wesleyan/Holiness Movement has had little dialogue with its Anglican heritage, though the liturgists within The United Methodist Church have had extensive dialogue with Anglican thought. Instead, its major dialogical partner has been the Reformed tradition within American Evangelicalism with whom it has the least in common. One way to recover the true identity of the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement is for it to reconsider the significance of liturgy and its evangelical benefits and to align itself more directly with its Anglican roots. A discovery of the significance of the Anglican liturgical tradition and especially a re-focusing of its attention on the rite of the imposition of hands and the bestowal of the Spirit as an aspect of baptism could serve as a revitalization of the holiness message. For it would provide the liturgical context of the objective, historical event of Pentecost and prevent a further slide into emotionalism and a gnostic-like privatization of faith. For then the call to holiness would be rooted in the public worshipping experience of the entire body of Christ as each believer participates liturgically in the event of Pentecost. This public participation in the meaning of holiness would enforce upon Methodists the importance of personally experiencing Christian perfection and would help alleviate the fears which Wesley expressed that Methodists would forget that their special calling was "to promote holiness across these lands." As Gregory Dix points out, "because liturgy is the vital act of the Church's life, in the end it will mould the ideas of those who live that life."\(^9\)

The logo of the United Methodist Church includes the dual symbols of Easter and Pentecost. Throughout the history of the Christian Church, the sacrament of water baptism has been identified with the meaning of Easter, as Paul puts it in Romans 6:4: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Easter is for the New Testament what the Exodus event was for the Old Testament.\(^10\)

Likewise, the baptism with the Spirit ("the laying on of hands") is identified with Pentecost and means being "sealed" unto the day of redemption. Paul shows that this "sealing" occurs after one has believed: The King James Version, reinforcing the theol-
ogy of Anglicanism and its doctrine of confirmation, makes the subsequent aspect of being sealed with the Spirit prominent: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Pentecost is for the New Testament what the Conquest event was for the Old Testament. For the Conquest meant the establishment of the kingdom of Israel and the condition for living in the kingdom was "loving the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your soul." This perfection of love, Moses explained, was possible only because the seal of the Lord would be placed upon his people through a circumcision of the heart (Deut. 30:6). The prophets predicted a new conquest when God would place His Spirit within his people and they would be faithful to the promise God made with Abraham. The promise initially made to Abraham had its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost. Paul writes in Galatians 4:6: "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father." Notice the two "sending"—"God sent his Son" and "God sent the Spirit." Notice that "sonship" is the condition for receiving the seal of the Spirit of the Son in our hearts. Paul says God's initial promise to Abraham to give him and his posterity a kingdom where he would be their God had its ultimate fulfillment in the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ at Pentecost: "In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:14). Likewise Peter quotes the prophet Joel to show that the promise of God to send his Spirit was now fulfilled (Acts 2:16). As we have already seen, this twofold stage of initiation into the Church as the body of Christ is reflected in the baptismal liturgy of the early Church Fathers. Being justified by faith (water baptism) and being fully sanctified and made perfect (in love) is through the agency of the Holy Spirit (the laying on of hands).

The meaning of sanctifying grace is thus begun in the first step of the Christian life symbolized in water baptism and brought to fulfillment in Spirit baptism. Water baptism and Spirit baptism are thus two interrelated and inseparable moments which together constitute the foundation of the Christian life. Hence the United Methodist logo captures these two moments in a theologically precise and illuminating manner. As we shall point out shortly, the United Methodist Book of Hymnal (1989) and Book of Worship (1992) also now include both water baptism and Spirit baptism ("laying on of hands") as part of the baptismal liturgy and membership in the Church.

Wesley says: "We expect...to be sanctified wholly through His Spirit." Perhaps the public rite of the laying on of hands (traditionally called confirmation) would at least serve to reinforce the evangelical experience of full sanctification, even as water-baptism reinforces the evangelical experience of the new birth. Does not Jesus' command to baptize (Matt. 28:19) imply baptism with water and baptism with the Spirit? Are not the dual symbols of water (being buried with Christ signifying forgiveness of sins) and also the laying on of hands (the descent of the Spirit signifying sanctifying grace) both
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included in the larger meaning of Christian baptism? The writings of the early Church Fathers say "Yes." Then it could be argued that "confirmation" is a sacrament as well since it is an extension of baptism. The general Protestant position is that the act of water baptism is a sacrament, not the laying of hands since Jesus did not explicitly command the laying on of hands (baptism with the Spirit). However, Jesus did command the disciples to tarry for the endowment of the Spirit after his resurrection had occurred. This is why the laying on of hands was included as part of the baptism liturgy during the pre-Nicene period. For both baptism with water and baptism with the Spirit constituted the meaning of the Christian life. This twofold meaning of Christian baptism was obscured when the second aspect of the laying on of hands was delayed in time from baptism with water and called confirmation in the Fifth Century.

If we take seriously Wesley's interpretative role which he assigns to the tradition of the early Church Fathers because they stood the closest to the New Testament days, then this larger meaning of baptism should be a significant part of our evaluation of the validity of "confirmation" or whatever it might be called. However, there is one obvious difference in application of water and the laying on of hands. For water baptism occurs only once, since Jesus died and rose again only once, whereas the imposition of hands and reception of the Spirit's fullness may be repeated on several occasions. If the laying on of hands is part of the larger meaning of the sacrament of baptism as the early Church Fathers believed, then the act of laying on of hands could be a repeated experience even as the Lord's Supper is, though the act of water baptism is a once-for-all event. Certainly, the instances of new converts in the early church being both baptized with water and subsequently receiving the fullness of the Spirit through the laying on of hands in Acts 8:15, and Acts 19:6, has interpretative significance for the larger meaning of baptism. And by all means, our Lord's baptism as a pattern for all Christians included both the act of water baptism and the subsequent descent of the Spirit.

Rudolf Bultmann has shown that though the act of water-baptism and the reception of the Spirit occurred separately in the book of Acts, they were still thought of as a larger single event. Yet Bultmann shows that Paul clearly distinguished between "babes in Christ" and "Spirit-endowed Christians" (1 Cor. 3:1)." James Dunn, who agrees with Calvin's denial of a post-conversion experience of the Spirit, fails to appreciate this Pauline concept. In a typical Reformed way, Dunn complains of the way the Sacramentals and the Wesleyans "disjointed" water baptism and Spirit baptism. Actually he is right that the two aspects are not to be "disjointed;" however, they should be "conjoined," but Dunn "dissolves" the distinction. The work of sanctification completed through the infilling of the Spirit is really begun in the birth of the Spirit. Easter and Pentecost form a continuum of grace, not a disjointing of isolated events.

The Continental Protestant reformers assumed that the practice of baptism in the New Testament only had reference to the act of water baptism itself, not noticing that such was not the case with the apostolic and early Church Fathers and thus probably not in the New Testament either. Paul says, "By one Spirit we have all been baptized into Christ" (1 Cor. 12:13). Baptism is twofold—water baptism and Spirit baptism are conjoined as distinct but inseparable parts of one larger complex saving experience. Entrance into the Church is thus to be understood as an interrelated two-stage experi-
ence of Easter and Pentecost. The letters of the New Testament are largely pastoral exhortations to implement in our lives the salvation-historical events of Easter and Pentecost which initiate us into the Church.

The Continental Reformers actually deformed the larger meaning of baptism by reducing it only to the application of water which symbolized being buried with Christ and raised to newness of life, but they disregarded the laying on of hands as the outpouring of His Spirit. Perhaps this reduced meaning of the reformers developed because the rite of confirmation had become so separated from baptism that the baptism liturgy of the early Church Fathers with its balance between the two aspects was lost from view.74

An emphasis on ritual slowly has developed over the years within the history of The United Methodist Church. Wesley developed the order of service and ritual for the American Methodists in 1784. It was a revision of the Book of Common Prayer and Wesley called it, The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America. One conspicuous omission from the Anglican liturgy was the order of confirmation and church membership.73 The Sunday services in Methodist Churches were informal (corresponding to the informal services held in the Methodist preaching houses in England) and largely lacking the liturgical worship services characteristic of Anglicanism. But over the years, American Methodism has become more liturgical and has developed a stronger emphasis on the sacramental nature of Christian experience, especially as its liturgists have participated in ecumenical discussions in recent years and sought a "recovery of its antecedents in the theology and practice of the early Christian church."75 It is not my intention to address this issue, except briefly as it relates to the rite on confirmation.

In the 1964 Methodist Hymnal, the order for confirmation followed the Anglican tradition in recognizing the laying on of hands as the act of confirmation for those already baptized and instructed in the doctrines and duties of the Christian faith. The minister laid his hands on the baptized young people and said: "The Lord defend you with his heavenly grace and by his Spirit confirm you in the faith and fellowship of all true disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen." The minister then addressed the congregation with these words: "Brethren, I commend to your love and care these persons whom we this day receive into the membership of this congregation. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love." What is included in this rite of confirmation is the Anglican/Catholic emphasis that initiation into the Church is composed of both water baptism and confirmation. Church membership is conditioned both upon water baptism (Easter) and the laying on of hands (Pentecost),77 though this dual emphasis is not so clearly emphasized in the United Methodist teaching as it is in the Anglican and Roman Catholic tradition.78 Significantly enough, this Methodist rite of confirmation is directly related to the doctrine of being made perfect in love (=full sanctification) in the concluding prayer of confirmation in the ritual.

As a result of ecumenical dialogue and closer examination of patristic sources, further reforms made their way into the initiation rites of The United Methodist Church in 1976 with the publication of A Service of Baptism, Confirmation, and Renewal.79 The
baptism liturgy now included both the act of water baptism itself (signifying Jesus' death-resurrection) and the laying on of hands (signifying the descent of the Spirit). After the application of water, the minister lays his hands on the head of the person and says: "The power of the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful witness of Jesus Christ. Amen." This reform later made its way into The United Methodist Hymnal in 1989, and The United Methodist Book of Worship in 1992. The alternate words for the laying on of hands uses sealing: "You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever." This wording is more fitting and corresponds more closely to the usage of the early Church Fathers, as Gregory Dix has shown in his exposition of the meaning of confirmation in the Anglican tradition.

It also more pointedly captures the meaning of sanctification as being stamped with the image of God, which is one of the distinctive teachings of Methodism. Unfortunately many United Methodist ministers have apparently not taken notice of this change in their baptismal liturgy. For this author has attended many baptisms and has never observed the new baptismal liturgy being used.

The new liturgy for The United Methodist Church includes the laying on of hands in infant baptism as well. Gregory Dix has argued for the usefulness of a rite of confirmation for young persons who were baptized in infancy since the New Testament emphasized "a conscious, adherence and response to the Gospel of God." However, initiation into the body of Christ for infants ought to include both water baptism and Spirit baptism ("laying on of hands"). And yet, adolescents can still be confirmed with the laying on of hands, even though they were baptized with water in infancy and hands were laid upon them for the giving of the Spirit. While water baptism is not repeated for a young person baptized in infancy (since Jesus died once and for all and hence our burial with him in water baptism is once and for all), yet the laying on of hands is not a once and for all event. For the Holy Spirit is received in his fullness again and again for the forming of one's relationship with Christ. Consequently, the rite of confirmation as an adolescent ritual can be a meaningful experience as the youth is taught more clearly the way of Christ and is offered the opportunity to make a public confession of his or her adherence to Christ.

Independently of Gregory Dix's similar conclusions, a Nazarene scholar and a leading Wesleyan/Holiness theologian, Paul Bassett, has noted in his work on the relation between entire sanctification and the bestowal of the Spirit among the early Church Fathers that by the late fourth century "the second part of the baptismal ritual was often believed to express primarily the coming and presence of the Spirit to strengthen or fortify the believer. In fact, little by little, the second part of the ritual was separated from the first and referred to as confirmation (confirmatio, which means affirmation, strengthening, encouragement). The note of purification or sanctification or perfection was not lost but it was muted, especially in the West." This emphasis upon full sanctification as related to the meaning of the fullness of the Spirit needs to be made prominent in our understanding of the laying on of hands among Methodist believers who participate in baptism. As it now stands, this understanding is muted in spite of the fact that the baptism liturgy in The United Methodist Hymnal now
includes the laying on of hands as an essential part of Christian baptism.

Gregory Dix has argued that the original meaning of the laying on of hands (bap-
tism with the Spirit) was more than water baptism. Nor was it a ratification of water
baptism. Rather, it was “the sealing of the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of redemp-
tion.” Unlike some critics who misinterpret Dix, he does not put baptism with water
and baptism with the Spirit in opposition to each other. The latter is a perfection of
the former. Dix writes: “These two aspects of water baptism and Spirit baptism are
not opposed to one another; they are different aspects of the same redemption.” He
further shows that “if this scriptural duality were to be fully and widely restored in our
teaching, Confirmation (the laying on of hands and baptism with the Spirit) would, in
the course of time, automatically regain its proper importance in the Christian life in
the minds of our people.” Likewise, the same could be said among Methodists if the
meaning of the laying on of hands as a sealing of the Spirit unto the day of redemption
would be emphasized.

As we have already emphasized, Dix believes there are at least two reasons why
the baptism with the Spirit has been minimized in the Church today. First, it was
reduced in its meaning to a mere strengthening of the Christian life rather than a seal-
ing unto the day of redemption. This weakening of the meaning of the baptism with
the Spirit occurred in the fifth century with the adoption of the word confirmation to
describe its meaning. This reduced meaning of the laying on of hands was standard-
ized as its fundamental interpretation through the Forged Decretals of Pope
Melchiades. A second reason for the misunderstanding of the meaning of the bap-
tism with the Spirit was the Western practice of postponing the time of confirmation
until years after water baptism. Dix accepts the practical convenience of this post-
ponement of the laying on of hands in confirmation, especially since infant baptism
does not allow for a conscious decision of faith. Yet he acknowledges that it con-
tributed to a decline in the appreciation and understanding of the significance of the
baptism with the Spirit.

Dix calls for a renewed appreciation of the baptism with the Spirit as an essential
aspect of the meaning of the Christian life. With that understanding would develop an
increased appreciation for the reality of the divine mystery in our imperfect world,
Dix believes. Dix writes:

First, it seems difficult to exaggerate the importance of the fact that for the
Christian as for the Church, baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ
and the Pentecostal Baptism of the Spirit are not one thing but two, both of
them necessary and inseparably connected, but not the same. It is after our
Lord’s own Baptism in the Jordan—separately connected henceforth in his
own mind with the coming passion and resurrection—it is immediately after, but
after this that the Messianic Spirit descends upon Him. It is after Jesus is ‘glori-
ified’ in death, and resurrection—soon after, but after—that the Spirit is given, first
to the Apostles and then to the Church corporately as associated with them.
These are two moments in a single salvation into eternity, inseparably connected
but not one and the same. The gift of the Spirit is not for those who receive
Him a mere consequence of a previous salvation by the Son. Rather is it the Spirit
who actually operates the salvation of each Christian, though the Spirit is shed forth only upon those already united to the crucified and risen Christ by faith and regenerated and incorporated into Him. Such, I take it, is the fundamental meaning of the striking duality of the primitive liturgy of Initiation, Baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ being followed by the Sealing unto the day of Redemption—the layer of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.99

The Methodist emphasis upon full sanctification as a post-conversion experience of the Spirit was contradicted by the liturgical practice of its tradition until the recent liturgical developments within United Methodism. For it focused only on water baptism signifying our being buried with Christ. Without the laying on of hands as the completion of the meaning of our baptism this created a liturgical vacuum which eroded the meaning of the Spirit’s fullness by suggesting it is to be postponed eschatologically as in Protestant Orthodoxy, or else it succumbed to a gnostic, individualistic, or fanatical experience which is not integrated into the larger experience of the worshipping community.

One point of clarification regarding the phrase, “receiving” or “giving” the Spirit might be helpful at this point, since some will assume that any talk about receiving the Spirit subsequent to the initial step of faith might suggest that the Spirit is not involved in the larger work of conversion and all the subsequent stages of the Christian life. New Testament scholarship throughout the Christian tradition has largely assumed that the phrases, “baptism with the Spirit” (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:15-16), “receiving the Spirit” (John 7:39; 14:17; 20:22; Acts 1:8; 2:38; 8:15, 17, 19; 10:47; 19:2), the Spirit “falling upon” (Acts 8:16, 10:44; 11:15), the Spirit “coming upon” (Acts 1:8; 19:6), “filled with the Spirit” (Acts 2:4; 9:17) are equivalent phrases and are used interchangeably.98 Of course, the Holy Spirit is operative at every stage of the Christian life. Certainly, the Spirit regenerates which water baptism signifies. And truly the Spirit begins his sanctifying work at the very point of one’s new birth. In fact, the Holy Spirit works for the betterment and help of all persons even before their conversion. Yet, in the strict New Testament usage, phrases like “receive the Spirit” and “be filled with the Spirit” are like technical terms to denote the special giving of the Spirit as the meaning of Pentecost.

Karl Barth in his exegesis of the Pentecostal passages in the book of Acts draws a clear distinction between baptism with water and baptism with the Spirit. He shows that baptism with water is the first step of the Christian life97 and represents the sacrament of Easter (i.e., Jesus’ death-resurrection).98 He says Pentecost is the “confirmation” of Easter.99 The baptism with the Spirit follows baptism with water and denotes more specifically the “perfection” and “full sanctification” of the Christian life.100 He sees the Pentecostal passages in the book of Acts subsequent to the Day of Pentecost, such as the disciples being filled with the Spirit in Acts 4:8, 31, as the progressive realization of the perfection of the Christian life.101 While water baptism is a once-for-all event, there may be many times when the believer will be filled with the Spirit as one grows in sanctifying grace, according to Barth. While Barth is a Reformed theologian, his exposition of the meaning of Pentecost is highly illuminating. And his emphasis upon the repeated nature of the infilling of the Spirit underscores that, unlike water baptism, the
work of the Spirit is an always ongoing and dynamic experience in one's life. This point is also found, as we have pointed out, in the so-called Marcarius the Egyptian whose Homilies often summon the believer to experience the infilling of the Spirit, freedom from indwelling sin, and the perfection of love, but nowhere does he call for a rebaptism with water.

Thomas Oden in his third volume of systematic theology, Life in the Spirit, suggests that the "baptism with the Spirit" is initiation language and ought to be related to Christian baptism, whereas being "filled with the Spirit" is devotional language of daily wholehearted commitment to Christ. I believe this distinction is a practical one, only if the twofold distinction of baptism with water and baptism with the Spirit are conjoined as distinct events within the larger meaning of Christian baptism as taught by the early Church Fathers and which is now implied in the baptism liturgy of The United Methodist Church.

Wesley was concerned that the Methodists would drop the doctrine of holiness. And at best Methodism in general has done little more than paid lip-service to its holiness heritage. Now that the laying on of hands and the descent of the Spirit is incorporated within the larger baptismal liturgy of The United Methodist Hymnal, this could serve with proper theological instruction as the liturgical foundation for the wider experience of the worshiping community in reinforcing the call for believers to be "sanctified wholly through the Spirit." Certainly the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement within The United Methodist Church should embrace this new liturgical practice.

Finally, what then, can be done to promote the doctrine of holiness in our day? Would it be too much to suggest a rediscovery of the significance of the rite of confirmation might be helpful? Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Holy Dying highly influenced Wesley in his pursuit of holiness, but what is not usually known is that Taylor also promoted the rite of confirmation as a means of promoting holy living. Taylor emphasized that the ordinance, if met with faith, would make the baptized believer a "perfect Christian" Likewise in our day, the Anglican Benedictine Gregory Dix has called for the restoration of the importance of the laying on of hands and the baptism with the Spirit as a means of revitalizing the Anglican Church.

Would not a proper understanding of the public ordinance of the laying on of hands as proposed by Taylor and Dix advance Wesley's original vision "to spread Scriptural holiness across these lands." Wesley apparently did not think so. Undoubtedly because he wanted to enforce its inner, personal appropriation. Also Wesley did not have the material we have available today concerning the initiatory practices of the early Church Fathers. Perhaps Wesley was also too strongly influenced by the Puritan over-reaction to the Sacramentalists of their day, though Wesley strongly emphasized the importance of Holy Communion, Are we today too deeply engrafted with the anti-sacramentalist disposition of our Puritan forefathers to reconsider the theology of confirmation (laying on of hands)? Fletcher used it effectively to enforce an understanding of the importance of implementing in one's own life the reality of sanctifying grace. Why can it not be so interpreted and practiced today—even among Methodists, especially in the light of the new understanding and greater awareness of the patristic sources concerning the unity of the baptismal liturgy with its dual emphasis on water baptism and Spirit baptism!
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NOTES
2. Ibid., p. 397. Gregory Dix has shown that Roman Catholic medieval theologians, such as Alexander of Hales, declared that confirmation was not a sacrament. Dix writes: "But if we are to find the source of this tragic aberration we must look behind the Reformation, into the history of the Mediaeval Latin Church." He believes Western Christianity had driven a wedge between baptism and confirmation that had the effect of making it appear that confirmation was superfluous (The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism [Westminster: Dacree Press, 1946], p. 39).
5. Cf. Gerard Austin, The Rite of Confirmation, Anointing with the Spirit, for a historical survey and theological examination of the rite of confirmation with a concluding discussion of the eumserical dialogue currently in process (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1985). For a discussion of the new liturgical considerations within the Episcopal Church, see Liturgy for Living by Charles P. Price and Louis Weil and a group of editorial advisors under the direction of the Church's Teaching Series Committee. This book reports that it is "an Episcopal commonplace that confirmation is the rite which bestows the Spirit and shows how that confirmation has always had an ambiguous status within the Anglican and Episcopal tradition and that it still retains that uncertain character in the New Prayer Book (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979, pp. 115-31). Austin P. Milner, The Theology of Confirmation, provides a detailed discussion of the history of confirmation with a view toward contributing to a better understanding of its meaning in the light of the contemporary debate which began in the 1940s.
8. "For our bodies have received the unity which brings us to immortality by means of the washing (of baptism), our souls receive it by means of the gift of the Spirit. Thus both of these are needed, for together they advance man's progress toward the life of God." Adversus Haereses III. vii. 2, cited in The Early Christian Fathers, Henry Bettenson, ed. and trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 94; cf. C.A. Hall, Confirmation (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900), p. 65. For a detailed discussion of this distinction between the act of water baptism itself and the imposition of hands as the bestowal of the Spirit in the early Church Fathers, see Paul Bassett, Exploring Christian Holiness (Kansas City, Mo., 1985). II, pp. 23-87. Bassett writes: "There seems to be sufficient, if not conclusive, evidence that Irenaeus sees some sort of perfection as having been given by the work of the Spirit at the outset of the Christian life, but given to the one already declared a believer" (ibid., p. 49).
12. Ibid., p. 21.
15. Finn, Early Christian Baptism, p. 21; cf. Gregory Dix who sees Rabanus Maurus as standing between the original view of the laying on of hands as a sealing of the Spirit and the new view of the rite as a strengthening and confirming (The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism [Westminster: Dacree Press, 1945], p. 26).
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20. Ibid., XLVII, 29 (ST 2a2ae.184,3); XLVII, 21 (ST 2a2ae.184,1); XXXIV, 59-61 (ST 2a2ae.9).
21. Ibid., LVII, 201 (ST 3a.72,4); LVII, 193 (ST 3a.72,2).
25. Calvin writes: "But the Papists are worthy of no pardon, who being not content with the ancient rite, must thrust in rotten and filthy anointings, that it might be not only a confirmation of baptism, but also a more worthy sacrament, whereby they imagine that the faithful are made perfect who were before only half perfect—whereby those are armed against the battle, who before had their sin only forgiven them. For they have not been afraid to spew out these horrible blasphemies" Commentary on the Book of Acts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), II, p. 211.
33. Ibid., p. 61.
34. Ibid., p. 60.
35. Ibid., p. 100.
43. The Works of Fletcher, III, pp. 177-78.
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44. Ibid. II, pp. 356-57.
45. The Letters of John Wesley, VI, p. 137; cf. Tyrman, Wesley's Designated Successor, p. 310.
46. The Letters of John Wesley, VI, p. 11.
47. The Works of John Fletcher, I, pp. 576, 578, 580.
48. A Treatise on Justification, Extracted from Mr. John Goodwin, by John Wesley (Bristol: William Pire, 1765).
49. John Goodwin, like other Puritan Divines, attributed the witness of the Spirit to a post-conversion experience. "A being filled with the Spirit" means not only that one is enabled to love God with all one's heart, and enjoying a larger communion with Christ than they "entirely love" (p. 448), but that they enjoy a conscious assurance of their acceptance with the Father. The "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," does not mean that all Christians have this inner witness, but rather it means that the "Spirit being once received... will advance his presence to such a fullness of degree, that they shall be able by means of that strong testimony to cry, Abba, Father." A Being Filled with the Spirit (London, 1670; reprinted, Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1867), pp. 448, 450. Reminiscent of Wesley's insistence that we should expect to receive the fullness of sanctification, Goodwin writes that we must be "clear and thoroughly satisfied about the possibility of the thing" of being filled with the Spirit. We must also "resolve that nothing shall interpose, as far as we are able to prevent and hinder it, between our desire and the thing desired" (p. 224). He also insisted that believers should "give testimony, both of the presence of the Spirit of God in them, and likewise of the goodness of this Spirit" (p. 305).
50. Goodwin writes: "It is a matter of duty lying upon all men, especially those who do profess Christianity, to be filled with the Spirit" (p. 16). He argues that it is imperative for Christians to be satisfied with nothing less than the greatest measure of the Spirit. If it is our duty to have the Spirit, then it is our duty to have the Spirit "in the highest degree, and with the greatest perfection. If it be our duty to love simply, then certainly to love him to a greater degree, yea, to the greatest degree of all, is our duty also—namely, to love him 'with all our hearts, souls, mind, and strength,' Mark xii.30. So likewise, if it be our duty to love our neighbor, then it is our duty also to love him 'with a pure heart fervently,' 1 Peter 1:22.... So that this scripture doth prove plainly enough the truth of the doctrine in hand—viz., that it is the duty of all Christians to be filled with the Spirit" (p. 17). He further shows that "a being filled with the Spirit" means enjoying "a free, and full, and large communion with God" (p. 446). Some have a "free communion" with God, but only those filled with the Spirit have a "full communion" (p. 457). His exposition of 1 John 4:18—"perfect love casts out fear"—concludes that the meaning of "a being filled with the Spirit" is that we are enabled to have perfect communion with God through the "sanctifying presence of the Holy Ghost" (p. 444-48). His explanation of the various kinds of perfection is a precursor to Wesley's distinction between absolute, angelic, and Christian perfection. Goodwin writes: "By perfect love here he cannot mean love which is absolutely and completely perfect, which is not capable of any more increase or further enlargement; for there is no such love of God to be found amongst men that dwell in houses of clay, no, not among the greatest of the saints; yea, it is a question whether the love of the angels themselves be perfect in this sense or not. The word perfect and, perfection are most frequently used when applied to men, or any other creature, not in a strict or absolute, but a limited and diminutive sense. Things are said to be perfect when they are grown to any good degree of perfection... so love to God, when it is grown to a considerable strength in a man, that it yieldeth forth fruit in abundance, then it is called perfect love.... Indeed, when applied to God, it is to be taken in the strictest sense, but when applied to the creature, in a lower sense" (p. 446).
54. Check, I, pp. 590-94.
57. "slight"
58. The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 42; The Letters of John Wesley, VI, p. 11. Wesley had a "slight difference" (as Wesley put it) from Fletcher who used "received the Spirit" as a designation of Christian perfection. For Wesley insisted all believers have the Spirit. See Wood, Pentecostal Grace (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).
63. Dieter, Holiness Revival, p. 104.
67. Oden, p. 17.
68. The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1946), p. 39. Dix is pointing out here that without confirmation the life of holiness which confirmation represents is not sufficiently enforced upon believers. He complains that some Medieval theologians simply saw confirmation as a strengthening of the Christian life instead of relating it to the sealing of the Christian life in perfecting grace (ibid., pp. 30, 32).
73. Dix, The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism, pp. 33ff.
74. Ibid., pp. 38-39.
77. Ibid., p. 168.
78. Ibid., p. 176.
82. Ibid., p. 37.
83. Paul M. Basset and William M. Greathouse, Exploring Christian Holiness (Kansas City, Mo.:
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84. Ibid., p. 42.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid., pp. 25, 32.
87. Ibid., p. 37.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid., pp. 36-37.
92. Ibid., p. 84.
93. Ibid., p. 89.
94. Ibid., pp. 14-27.
97. It is my understanding that Dom Gregory Dix’s liturgical writings have been influential in formulating the new liturgy of the United Methodist Hymnal. The Rev. Dr. Karen Westerfield Tucker, Duke Divinity School, reported this information in a paper entitled, “Benedictines and Methodists in Liturgical Renewal: Currents and Cross-Currents,” given at “A World Ecumenical Conference on Sanctification in the Benedictine and Methodist Traditions,” July 9, 1994, held in Rome, Italy. William Sydnor in The Real Prayer Book reports the positive influence of Gregory Dix in the formulation of the Proposed Book of Common Prayer of 1976 for the Episcopal Church of the United States. Dix’s Shape of the Liturgy (1945) has thus had significant influence in the recent changes in liturgical understanding (p. 87). Sydnor points out that “we know infinitely more about the Early Church and its liturgy” because of the discovery of ancient documents. The changes in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer are the “result of the new awareness of, and, to as great an extent as possible, a return to the liturgical practice of the Early Church” (p. 108).
98. Gerard Austin has shown that the English reformer, Thomas Cranmer, “lacked much of the material available today for understanding the early history of initiatory practice,” who nonetheless retained the rite of confirmation and at the same time attempted to restore the lost unity of the baptismal liturgy (The Rite of Confirmation, Anointing with the Spirit (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1985), p. 701.
100. The Works of John Fletcher, I, p. 594.
THE HOLINESS TRADITION IN GERMAN-SPEAKING METHODISM

MICHEL WEYER

This paper is an attempt to chart the course of the idea of sanctification within German-speaking United Methodism. The historical roots of that Methodism are to be seen in the nineteenth century-missionary work of three former Methodist bodies. The Wesleyan Conference of Great Britain started its work by 1830 in Swabia; by 1850, the German-speaking section of the former Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States sent its first missionaries to Bremen, while, at the same time, the American Evangelical Association started its Germany-Mission in Stuttgart. It required three decades to spread out from these three missionary bridgeheads and to gain a foothold in German-speaking Europe. Methodism established itself later as three distinct Free Churches which have been united since 1968. As a matter of fact, the period of the establishment of Methodism on our continent was the great time of the holiness revival within American Methodism. So we have to be prepared to meet with a young European German speaking Methodism, which will be very strongly influenced by both the traditional Wesleyan emphasis on sanctification as Christian perfection and by the special understanding of the doctrine within the American holiness revival. Present German-speaking Methodism is still considering that sanctification is the central point of its theology "inasmuch as it is willing to be faithful to its original calling and heritage." But in fact, a serious theological revision has taken place in

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modern German-speaking Methodism as to the understanding and interpretation of the
heritage. My purpose is to take you now on a short journey through a hundred and
fifty years of Methodist history, showing you, firstly, how deeply committed to Wesley's
emphasis on Christian perfection and to the holiness revival young German and Swiss
Methodism was. Secondly, I would like to make a clear why and how that Methodism
became more and more critical of its traditional views, and why it modified its early
theology of holiness. Since I have to be brief, I refer you for more details and evidence
to a former study on the subject.\footnote{1}

I
There is considerable evidence that the message of early Methodist preachers in
German-speaking Europe gave primary attention to both conversion and sanctifica-
tion. The very first publications of young German-speaking Methodists are typical of
its deep concern for promotion of holiness of heart and life in the congregations.
Besides Mr. Wesley's The Character of a Methodist and A Plain Account of Christian
Perfection, German translations of classics of British methodist piety like The Life of
William Carvosso\footnote{2} or The Life and Experience of Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers were instrumental
in moulding the piety of the first German Methodist generations.\footnote{3} From its very begin-
ning, German Methodism made it clear that he was considering holiness as the heart
of its message and theology. This is obvious in Sigmund Jacoby's three editions
(1853, 1855, and 1870) of a Handbook of Methodism\footnote{4} in which the pioneer of German
Methodism pictured Methodist history, doctrine and discipline, not only for the use of
the Methodist congregations but as information for German public and Protestant
opinion as well. Christian perfection is the distinctive feature of Methodism, Jacoby
claimed, and he defended Wesley's view of holiness against all possible objections.
Theological disapproval, of course, was never lacking in the country of Luther's
Reformation. Wesleyan holiness would be in all the ensuing years for most German-
speaking Protestant theologians the evangelical version of the old mystical and
Roman-Catholic enthusiasm; in any case a great danger to the centrality of the
Reformation principles sola fide et sola gratia.\footnote{5} In spite of the theological resistance
which hindered their European missionary work, Methodists did not reduce their
Wesleyan emphasis on sanctification. On the contrary, Dr. William F. Warren,\footnote{6} the
first professor of theology at the Methodist Episcopal Seminary in Bremen,\footnote{7} stressed
the great difference between Wesley and the Continental Reformers. While
Reformation theology considers justification as its "formal principle," Warren claimed,
Methodism has its "formal principle" in Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection.\footnote{8} As
Warren put it: Calvin's ideal is the Christian as the servant of God, Luther's ideal is the
child of God, but Wesley's ideal is "the perfect man, the mature manhood, to the
measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The main deficiency of
the dominant German-Lutheran theology was in Warren's eyes its "astonishing igno-
rance of the Holy Spirit."\footnote{9} Consequently, German Methodist theology saw from its
very beginning in the stressing of a "second work of grace and of the Spirit," following
the "work of justification," its own necessary and distinctive theological contribution to
German Protestantism.
Just that “perfect love” sounded sometimes like something theoretical, not only in Warren’s theology but also in most of the Methodist works of these first decades. Therefore, when the European holiness revival broke out, German Methodists welcomed it thankfully, seeing in it, with regard to “perfect love,” the “step which leads from theory to praxis.” During the years 1873–1875, the holiness revival, pictured in his dissertation by Dr. Melvin E. Dieter, spilled over from America into Europe. But we have to be aware of the fact that the revival had already started within German Methodism a few months before Robert Pearsall Smith’s well-known holiness crusade began on the continent. Under the influence of many reports in German Methodist magazines on what was happening in American camp-meetings for the promotion of holiness, and at the invitation of the preachers and their strong emphasis on the necessary “second blessing,” first “experiences of entire sanctification” had already occurred in German and Swiss Methodist congregations. Since the creation, in 1867, of the “National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness,” the readers of the German Methodist press had acquainted themselves with the main aspects of the holiness revival, with the convictions of a John Inskip or other American holiness-movement leaders. Most of the leaders of German-speaking Methodism in Europe were from the very beginning in contact with that American holiness revival. Heinrich Nuelsen for instance, the head of the Methodist Publishing House in Bremen, was since 1846 an enthusiastic reader of the American Guide to Holiness, and desired the publication of a similar magazine in German.

As soon as the first experiences of full sanctification in German congregations were reported, a long extract of Warren’s Dogmatics was reprinted in the Methodist press. This is meaningful: It had to be made clear that what happened was the realization of what Wesley considered as the summit of the Christian life!

German Methodism was not isolated in its reception of the holiness message and of the revival coming from America. There was great openness for it in important sections of German Pietism within the established churches. What is meant here is the so-called deutsche Gemeinschaftsbewegung. Many of the German and Swiss churchmen who were invited by Robert Pearsall Smith to participate in the famous convention for the promotion of holiness, in Brighton, were members of the Pietist Gemeinschaftsbewegung, with a typical Pietistic concern for the work of sanctification in Christian life. The ten Methodist ministers who participated in the meetings could observe with a certain satisfaction what they tended to consider as a “Methodization” of a Protestant world which was until now quite reluctant to accept their special holiness theology. Now, German Methodists could go so far as to express their hope that the traditional disinclination on the question of sanctification could disappear thanks to the continental holiness revival. The revival also encouraged Methodists to go on preaching holiness, without compromise and without a theological inferiority complex. It seems that some Methodist preachers, whose formal theological training was still poor, had sometimes been impressed by the theological arguments of the critics. Unlike the American holiness movement, which had a deep concern for social reform with emancipatory consequences, the German Methodist holiness revival—in spite of some social achievements that need to be mentioned—was characterized by a most individualistic understanding of holiness, which is true for the movement within German Lutheran Pietism as well. This can be
seen in the two most influential Methodist books of that period.

William Orwig's volume, *Die Heilsfrage*, which means "The fulness of salvation," the classic of holiness theology from the American Evangelical Association, published in German in Cleveland in 1872, just after the great "Union camp meeting of Easton, Pa.," became in the ensuing years a bestseller in each of the three German Methodist bodies, a "must" for the private library of all local preachers, exhorters, and class-leaders. Orwig was the spokesman of the victorious understanding of holiness within the American Evangelical Association after years of theological debates. He makes out of the experience of full salvation as a distinct "second blessing" the shibboleth of true Christianity. Methodist people, Orwig claimed drastically, have no alternative but "full salvation" or "apostasy." It is really not easy to determine if this was still Wesleyan or not. This view of holiness, with reference to Wesley, but certainly more to American holiness revival theologians, had been strongly contended within the American Evangelical Association by people like Superintendent Salomon Neitz, who represented a more Lutheran view of holiness. A theological debate had taken place from 1856 to 1867 which ended with the victory of the Wesleyan view and its main spokesmen, Orwig and the future bishop Johann Jakob Escher. During all these years, the Evangelical Association in Europe was acquainted solely with the view of the victorious party. A similar holiness controversy had taken place within American Episcopal Methodism. But whatever crossed the Atlantic had been favourably inclined to the views of the holiness movement. The same holds true for the Evangelical Association and for Episcopal Methodism as well. In 1875 the German-Swiss Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church engaged August Rodemeyer, one of its ministers, to write a book on holiness in order to respond to the great need of holiness literature made evident by the young European holiness revival. The Conference reminded its members that the "calling of Methodism is to spread holiness over the lands." As a result, Rodemeyer published in 1876 his monograph *Biblical Holiness.*

Basically, the volume is not a serious biblical study on the subject but a kind of compilation of former authors, a mixing and matching of about 200 quotations of more than 70 different promoters of holiness. Rodemeyer is not aware enough of the diversity of accentuations represented by his many spokesmen. Besides the classical British Methodist tradition represented by Wesley, Fletcher, Adam Clarke and Richard Watson, the book contains references to William Arthur's famous book *The Tongue of Fire* (1856) and to most of the holiness works John L. Peters has treated of in his dissertation on "Christian Perfection and American Methodism." Like William Orwig, Rodemeyer put the accent deliberately on the instantaneous experience of a "second blessing," never forgetting, however, to point out that Wesley's understanding of sanctification was both, a gradual and an instantaneous one, faith and nurture, process and crisis. Like Orwig, Rodemeyer was a strong supporter of the well-known "altar theology," which was so typical of Phoebe Palmer, the mother of the Methodist holiness revival, whose publications our author knew. This "altar theology" was a part of the holiness theology which Robert Pearsall and Hannah Whitall Smith had brought to Europe. That short and sure way to holiness, by an act of faith, with a dimension of shocking automatism, had been contended within American Methodism with refer-
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ence to Wesley himself, who always respected the sovereignty of God and the mystery of the action of the Holy Spirit. The "altar theology" shaped the German Methodist exhortative preaching style. One of the favorite sayings in many Methodist predications and prayers of the following decades were Rode'meyer's words "I lay on the altar and I am waiting on the fire." This kind of piety influenced German Methodist hymnody as well. It is not unimportant to mention the support found by the transmission of the American holiness ideal to German-speaking Methodism in the two bishops Matthew Simpson and Johann Jakob Escher who often crossed the Atlantic to preside at the European conferences. So German Methodism got totally involved in the ideas, the hopes, the standard of life and the way of preaching the American holiness movement of these years provided. It must be added that this was a time of strong missionary expansion.

The revival lasted only a few years—and the expansion as well. When in the eighties German Methodists were confronted with the new reality they reacted in a typical manner. They could not accept stagnation and exhorted themselves: 'let us go on to perfection!' They were convinced that holiness is not only the secret of a happy life but of the missionary success of the church as well. As a result, the conviction that there is a close relationship between holiness and the progression of the kingdom of God led German Methodism to an intensification of its efforts to promote holiness in the old manner. Once again, translations of American and British holiness literature were propagated in the local churches. A German Guide to Holiness, the so-called Wegweiser zur Heiligung became instrumental in many circles. But what attracts the attention of the observer of that Methodism by the end of that century is the fact that holiness is no more the all-dominating subject of discussion, neither in the periodicals for collaborators nor in the pastoral meetings. The range of theological themes became now wider and wider. Holiness became one issue among others. Nevertheless, German Methodism paid attention to the renewed exhortation of the 1888 General Conference which pointed out that "the experience of entire sanctification" remains the secret of Methodism's "efficiency." And Bishop W.F. Mallalieu, an outstanding promoter of holiness who visited European Episcopal Methodism in the same year, working intensively with the ministers and preaching the holiness message in many congregations, did his best to convince his hearers that, if they remained faithful to the inherited holiness ideal this would soon or later lead to a "baptism of the Spirit for preachers and for the whole population." The theological training of the ministers at the Seminary in Frankfurt was placed under the motto "Holy to the Lord," and holiness periodicals from England and America like Living Epistle or The King's Highway found their way into the seminary library.

II

But the time of the mystical experience of God's love poured into the heart in one moment of grace seemed to be over. Marks of a changing situation and mood are to be found in our sources. Some ministers were no longer ready to preach "Without sanctification no one will see the Lord." A more Lutheran sensitivity was expressed by a new generation of preachers whose theological training was now more sophisticated
than at the beginning. It seemed that the first critical discussion of the traditional holiness doctrine in comparison to the German occurred in 1892. Lutheran theology was influencing Methodist thinking. The sensitivity to Lutheran or Reformed criticisms of traditional Methodist understanding was growing, all the more considering the fact that the criticisms came from Pietist circles, themselves much concerned about sanctification, but not willing to understand it in a Wesleyan sense. Johannes Haarbeck, for example, the head of a training school for evangelism in Barmen, declared in 1896 at a most important conference of one group of the German "Gemeinschaftsbewegung," the so-called Pfingstkonferenz des Gnadauererverbands, how difficult it was for him to come to terms with the "non-biblical" Methodist holiness-theology which had continued to influence many German Pietists. Other speakers at this conference pleaded for a more "German" theology of sanctification. By the end of the century, many German Methodists were drawn into the orbit of Theodore Jellinghaus, a Lutheran churchman who had been much influenced by the holiness movement in Brighton. Not satisfied with the holiness theology he found there, he tried in his famous book *Das völlig gegenwärtige Heil durch Christum,* well-known as the "Dogmatics of the German holiness movement," to bring the concern of holiness in better harmony with the Lutheran central doctrine of justification. This is certainly the first root of the theological revisionism which is to be noted within German Methodism. Nevertheless, it wasn't until many years later that traditional Methodist theological categories underwent more visible revision. German Methodist seminary teaching in Frankfurt (Episcopal Methodism) and in Reutlingen (Evangelical Association) remained on the traditional path until World War I seen in the absolutely dominant use of the textbooks of Arnold Sulzberger (Episcopal Methodism), J. Escher or Johannes Schempp, Sr. (Evangelical Association).

It seems that a pentecostal crisis was necessary for a revision of German Methodism. But the role of that crisis was a most ambivalent one. It was obviously a delaying element as well. The pentecostal controversy which caused so much trouble in the whole Pietist and revivalistic influences in the German-speaking Protestant world just before World War I is very symptomatic of both the will and the difficulty of German Methodism to distance itself from the attitudes and convictions of its origins. I have pointed to the conviction of Methodism that the holiness of the church is the condition for its missionary growth. As a result, Methodism was most interested in all news of holiness revivals everywhere in the world. German Methodists reacted passionately as soon as the first news of the revival in Wales reached the continent. They interpreted the events of the years 1904 and 1905 as a continuation of the holiness revival of the former generation. It gave new hope to their own mission, which had seemed more difficult because of growing secularization. So we observe a strong return to the old one-sided concentration on our topic, with the only difference being that a more pentecostal terminology was being used. Was not the Wales revival the best proof that holiness preaching would continue in the old manner? The German Gemeinschaftsbewegung was organized in two bodies. The one, the so-called Gnadauererverband, reacted with utmost reserve, while the Blankenburg Konferenz showed great enthusiasm for the new revival. German Methodists had better fellowship with the people of Blankenburg because of their greater receptivity to Wesleyan categories. The emergence of glossolalia and the Pentecostal movement, which
caused such a great trouble within the German *Gemeinschaftsbewegung,* did not disturb Methodists in that early phase. On the contrary, efforts were made by the German Methodists to play down everything in the “new holiness movement” that could be shocking for German Protestants. The fact that T.B. Barratt, one of the leaders of the new movement, was a Norwegian Methodist minister was even a source of satisfaction. But warnings about enthusiasm can be observed already in this early stage.

The pentecostal agitation led in 1907 to public unrest in some congregations of the state churches. As a result, E. Chr. Achelis, a Lutheran theologian attacked German Methodism in the Protestant press. The perfectionist views of Reverend Jonathan Paul, a Lutheran pastor and without doubt the most eminent of the theological leaders of the early pentecostal movement in Germany, was nothing but the bitter fruit of Wesleyanism, Achelis claimed. So Methodist writers had to try to distinguish the differences between Wesley and Rev. Paul in regard to the purity of the heart. Two years later, in the famous Declaration of Berlin, German pietists condemned Pentecostalism as “a movement from below.” German Methodists approved, but many who were willing to avoid what they considered a non-Wesleyan enthusiasm, were not ready at all to consider the “new holiness movement,” as they called it, a movement from below.

Perhaps Elias Schrenk, the admired evangelist of the established church impressed German Methodism when he broke publicly in 1910 with the holiness revolt, warning German Protestantism against further receptiveness to Wesleyan theology: “We must do everything possible,” he said, “to give more room to the healthy doctrine of sin and grace which came to us through Luther”; “What Jonathan Paul teaches,” he added, “is closer to what Tersteegen and Wesley taught than to the sound theology of our Reformation. And we do have a sounder theology than Englishmen!”

After World War I things changed very rapidly. Adolf Schlatter and Karl Heim, two pietistic-oriented German Protestant scholars, greatly influenced on German Methodism. Methodist pastors, whose much more sophisticated formal theological teaching had led to a more open attitude towards modern scholarship, learned more about analyzing the Bible. Even more decisive was the influence of Professor Adolf Köberle, a student of Karl Heim. His book *Justification und Sancification,* published in 1928, was for many Methodist ministers a real turning point in their understanding of holiness. The German Wesley-research of the ensuing years also contributed to the emergence of the general assumption that a fundamental revision was necessary.

The revision can be best illustrated by the modification of the doctrinal tract on entire sanctification in the Discipline of the Evangelical Association. This modification was prepared also by what Dr. Johannes Schrenpp had taught all these years at Reutlingen Seminary. His lecture in dogmatics shows how critical he was to Wesley’s view of holiness and to the holiness movement. He could not find a biblical foundation for “a special high of the experience of salvation.” The Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection was in his eyes a danger to the doctrine of assurance. It is not by accident that most of his students did not come to terms with the Discipline. So after World War II they pleaded for a new formulation of the doctrine of holiness. It is interesting to note that this happened without consultation with the American church. The European Central Conference of Heidelberg
in 1947 simply made use of its right to adapt the Discipline. The imperative speech was replaced by an indicative-descriptive one. The man who is regenerated must no more "strive to holiness," but "have the deep desire" to do so. Many of the traditional terms were modified, for instance "stand of perfection," a term which misleads one to the false idea of holiness as a higher position. The gradual character of sanctification became absolutely dominant. The regenerate person was invited to maturity in faith, love, and hope. The new text did not mention full liberation from sin any more, because this type of traditional doctrine applied only to a special, problematic and non-biblical understanding of sin. Christian life was presented as something that is fundamentally incomplete, but in which the joyful hope remains that God won't leave his work unfinished. The notion of a "second blessing," similar to the first work of justification and regeneration, surpassing and completing what God did in his first work—this notion was dropped. What later German Methodists considered as a deficiency of this new version is the absence of all reference to experience, what is probably a consequence of the dominant influence of dialectical theology at that time. Another criticism was that this new understanding of holiness was not less individualistic than the traditional one.

German Episcopalian Methodism also developed a new theology of sanctification with similar modifications. Dr. Theophil Spörri, trained under Adolf Schlatter and Karl Heim in Tübingen, was influential through his teaching at the Seminary in Frankfort. In the fifties he questioned the relevance of the traditional view in a recapitulation of what was in his eyes essential to Methodism. He made Wesley's "lack of clarity," his inconsistencies and "oscillations" responsible for the "aberrations of the holiness movements" of the past. Spörri saw the "task of modern Methodism" to be a better definition of the doctrine of holiness. This is possible, he said, only in the light of modern biblical and theological knowledge. Methodists, he added, must also be ready to take into account the results of modern psychology. Wilhelm Thomas, Spörri's colleague at the Seminary in Frankfort, backed this attack with a study on "Holiness in the New Testament compared with Wesley's doctrine." The pictured theological reflection prepared and accompanied a revision of the traditional question to the candidates connected with the conference. The Central Conference of Central and South Europe on Episcopal Methodism replaced the traditional "Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?" with the question: "Do you earnestly endeavor that perfect love determine more and more your character and your life?" It is not uninteresting to mention that the historical questions going back to Wesley are nowadays absent in the Discipline of the German Central Conference of the U.M.C.

Does this mean that German-speaking Methodists have left the holiness tradition of their fathers and mothers? Not entirely. Certainly, an important shift has occurred in the theological interpretation of what Christian perfection is, but holiness of heart and life is always the goal for German Methodists. Gelebte Gnade, the recent major presentation of Methodist theology in the German-speaking area by Dr. Klaiber and Dr. Marquardt reflects the dominant response to the issue of sanctification. Not everyone agrees with this position. Twenty years ago, a session of the Commission on theology of the European Council of The United Methodist Church in Wels, Austria, pointed out that there is no "consensus omnium" on the relevance of the Wesleyan doc-
trine of sanctification within European Methodism. The old doctrine seems to be appreciated differently among Continental and Scandinavian Methodists, and among German-speaking Methodists as well. Some German Methodists are considering the former commitment of Methodism to the holiness movement as a most dangerous phase of our history which led Methodism to sectarianism. Consequently, these German Methodists are tending to forget this sectarian past, playing down its importance and duration, speaking of eccentric holiness groups which soon disappeared from the church scene. This is a sanitization of the early history, psychologically comprehensible but historically untenable. On the other side, some German Methodists seem to desire the renewal of the old holiness theology, though lightly revised. It is surely not without significance that a collaboration has been established between German Methodist charismatics and the British Methodist Cliff-College, a conventional center of Wesleyan holiness.

**Notes**

1. The United Methodist Church represents mainstream Methodism in today’s Germany, Switzerland and Austria, the continental European German-speaking countries. The Church of the Nazarene which is presently also represented in this part of Europe, and in which the traditional Wesleyan view of sanctification is still central, will be intentionally left aside because this blend of Methodism was not a part of German-speaking Methodism from the beginning.


7. See, for instance, Der Evangelist (Episcopal Methodism) 1867, p. 32. The first edition of Mrs. Rogers’ ‘experience’ (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1855), for the use of American German Methodism, was soon in circulation within European Methodism as well, the European edition (Bremen, 1867) is to be seen in connection with the news concerning the post-war American holiness revival and the accompanying demand of holiness literature, while the second edition (Bremen, 1876) arose from the holiness revival on the European continent itself.

8. Ludwig S. Jacoby, Handbuch des Methodismus (Bremen, 1853 and 1855), pp. 253-70; L.S.
Jacoby, Geschichte des Methodismus (Bremen, 1870), pp. 443-58.

9. For Protestant reactions to the Methodist theology of sanctification, which reached their climax with the emergence of the holiness revival, and its repercussions, see: Joh. Jüngst, Amerikanischer der Jacoby, Fleisch, Revivan. Boardman 9. methodistischer Rietschel, taught max professor Deutsch/and the

und Wameck, the" Dos Glieder October 22. Versammlungen 14. 13. 10. William F. Warren (1833-1929) was an American who studied in Halle and Berlin, then taught in Bremen from 1861 until 1866, when he returned to the United States to become a professor and later the first president of Boston University.


13. Ibid., p. 167.


18. Ibid., pp. 65ff.


20. For the official report, see: Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness (1875), Record of the Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness: Held at Brighton, May 29th to June 7th 1875 (Brighton: W.J. Smith; London: S.W. Partridge, 1875; reprint ed. [New York: Garland, 1985]). Two important German reports are: H.T. Wangemann, Pearsall Smith und die Versammlungen zu Brighton in ihrer Bedeutung für Deutschland (Berlin, 1876 2nd ed.); Gustav Warmeck, Briefe über die Versammlungen zu Brighton. Versuch einer zusammenhängender Darstellung und Beleuchtung der Grundgedanken der Smith'schen Bewegung deutscher Christen zur Prüfung noch einmal angeboten (Hamburg: Johannes Walther, 1876).


22. J. Zipperer wrote in the German Episcopal Methodist Magazine Die Wächterstimmen (Bremen, October 1876): 'Nachdem seit einigen Jahren durch die Heiligungsbewegung manche Prediger und Glieder der evangelischen Landeskirche die Lehre von der christlichen Vollkommenheit nur
theoretisch, sondern erfahrungsgemäss akzeptiert haben, kann kaum mehr mit Recht, wie früher, gesagt werden, dass die Lehre von der Christlichen Vollkommenheit zwischen der Bischöflchen Methodistenkirche und der Evangelischen Landeskirche eine Unterscheidungsllehre biete."


27. Der Evangelist 1872, p. 201; Die Wächterstimmen 1873, pp. 1-3.


29. Der Evangelist 1873, pp. 209-212.


33. The story of the holiness movement within the German-speaking part of the American Episcopal Methodist Church is still an unfulfilled task of Methodist historiography. An important source would be the magazine Der Wegweiser zur Heiligung; see M. Weyer, "Der 'Wegweiser zur Heiligung' (1885-1910). Eine wenig bekannte Quelle zur methodistischen Heiligungserung," in: Mitteilungen der Studiengemeinschaft für Geschichte der Ernak, October 1992, vol. 2, pp. 17-30, 1893, 139-140.

34. Verhandlungen der jährliche Konferenz der Bischöflchen Methodistenkirche 1875, p. 40.

35. A. Rodemeyer, Biblische Heiligung (Bremen 1876, 1879).

36. Dieter, The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century, p. 27. As Dr. Dieter put it, "Mrs. Palmer believed that Scripture taught that Christ was both the sacrifice for her sin and the altar upon which she could offer up her whole heart in consecration to God. She reasoned that the divine promise of fullness of spiritual life, release from self-will and the habit of sinning could be realized in every Christian through entire consecration of the self offered as a gift of faith upon the 'Altar, Christ.' The New Testament, she said, told her, 'the altar sanctifies the gift.' She declared that in the sanctifying efficacy of Christ as the Christian's altar, the exercise of faith was certain to secure to the individual an experience characterized by a freedom from any inclina-
tion which did not spring from love. This remained constant as long as the individual continued to exercise faith and obedience."


40. Rodenmeyer, Biblische Heiligung, p. 296.

41. "Sage dem Herrn: Auf dem Altar lieg' ich und warte auf das Feuer": The hymn "Übergabe" (on Romans 12) of the Wesleyan pastor Paul Schweikher is a good example of such a theology in hymns. See Der Evangelist 1876, p. 114.


43. For the role of Bishop Escher in the transmission of the ideal of the holiness movement to the European Evangelical Association, see O'Malley, "Die Heiligungsbotschaft und der moderne deutsche Protestantismus in Beziehung zum Methodismus und zur Evangelischen Gemeinschaft," in: Mitteilungen der Studiengemeinschaft für Geschichte der Evangelisch-methodistischen Kirche (October 1989), pp. 35-59, especially pp. 36-37.

44. See for instance the magazine of the German Wesleyans, Der Methoweflenherold 1880, pp. 121f.: 139f.: "Lasset uns fortwachen mit der Heiligung"; "Schwierigkeiten im Weg zur Heiligung, und wie sie zu überwinden sind."

45. Der Evangelist 1888, pp. 129-30 ("Heiligung und Mission").


48. See for instance the contents of the Wächterstimmen (Episcopal Methodist) and the Evangelische Bauweise (Evangelical Association).

49. Der Evangelist 1888, p. 212.

50. Member of the Palmer's Tuesday meetings in New York and author of The Fullness of Blessing of the Gospel in Christ (Cincinnati 1903), Mallalieu had a name in the American holiness movement: see Dieter, The Holiness Revival, p. 47.

51. For instance in Niederuzwil, Switzerland (Der Evangelist 1888, p. 269). The agenda of many of the pastoral meetings of these years give evidence that one was not ready to drop the traditional stress on entire sanctification. See for instance Der Evangelist 1892, pp. 272 and 350.

52. His sermon in Geneva on Genesis 5:14 stressed the holy life "in the sense of sinless life, as Mr. Wesley taught us." Der Evangelist 1888, pp. 33ff.; 361ff. In Zwickau, the bishop preached on the gift of the Holy Spirit in a way that shows a shift from Wesleyan Christian perfection to pentecostal terminology: Der Evangelist 1888, pp. 209-10.

53. Der Evangelist 1888, p. 16.
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54. Der Evangelist 1892, p. 389.
56. Der evangelische Botshafter (Evangelical Association) 1892, pp. 268-69.
57. Der Evangelist 1892, p. 350.
60. A. Sulzerberger, Christliche Glaubenslehre (Bremen 1875 and second ed. 1886). For Escher's textbook, see note 37. Johannes Schenmp, Senior, theological teacher in Reutlingen between 1892 and 1920, was more open to Lutheran theology lutherischen Theologie but had a Wesleyan position on the question of Christian perfection.
62. This had already been one of the main reasons for the enthusiastic reception of the American holiness movement in German Methodism of the 1870s. By the end of the 1860s, many German Methodist congregations, which were still 20 or more years old, feared a period of slackness and were waiting on "a fresh wind of the Spirit". Die Wächterstimmen 1870, pp. 44-47; 1871, pp. 65-67.
63. Der Evangelist 1905, p. 83; Der evangelische Botshafter 1905, pp. 132-33; 140-41; 148-49; 156-57; 164-65; 171-72.
64. Der Evangelist 1905, pp. 16-17; 28; 111-12; 116; 187-88; 211-12; 183; 296-97; 413-14; 425-26.
65. Der Evangelist 1905, pp. 50-51; 61-62; 73-74; 85-86; 97-98.
66. Der evangelische Botshafter 1906, pp. 92-93.
69. Der Schweizer Evangelist 1907, pp. 132-33; 141; 148-49; 157. ("Gewiß ist das Zungenreden in dieser merkwürdigen Form nicht das Wesentliche an der Erweckung, in welcher es auftritt. Die nöthigsten Männer der Bewegung betonen immer wieder, daß das wahre Heiligungsehren, der Wandel in der vollen Liebe die Hauptsache sei, worauf alles aufkommt.")
72. Die Wächterstimmen 1907, pp. 97-100.
73. Monatschrift für Pastoraltheologie, March 1907.
78. Paul Fleisch, Die Zungenbewegung in Deutschland (Die moderne Gemeinschaftsbewegung in Deutschland, Bd. 2) (Leipzig 1914), p. 156.


82. Wilhelm Thomas, Heiligung im Neuen Testament und bei John Wesley (Zürich 1965). The booklet arose from a paper presented in 1962 to Methodist ministers of the Swiss Annual Conference of the EMC.


85. W. Klaiber/M. Marquardt, Heiligung aus biblischer und evangelisch-methodistischer Sicht (Beiträge zur Geschichte der EmK) (Stuttgart 1987), contains both a strong commitment to sanctification and a distancing from the "light unbiblical accent and at the failure of Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection" (p. 18).


WORSHIP AND SANCTIFICATION: BENEDICTINE AND METHODIST

In the motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* issued by Pope Pius X on November 22, 1903 and written to provide guiding principles on sacred music, the purpose of the Church’s worship was defined as being for “the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful.” This same definition substantially reappears in later Catholic statements, most notably in Pope Pius XII’s 1947 encyclical letter on worship, *Mediator Dei*, and in the 1963 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) of Vatican II. The twofold assertion that worship is simultaneously doxology and formation constitutes in the latter document the hinge-pin upon which move the liturgical reforms issued after Vatican II.

The relationship between praise of God and sanctification was explored by several Catholic writers in the early twentieth century. The Benedictine Dom Lambert Beauduin, in his 1914 booklet *La pêle liturgique*, discusses these aspects of the liturgy by building directly upon the perspective formulated in the 1903 motu proprio.

Regarding the glorification of God, the liturgy is latreutic: adoration, with all the modalities that the attitude of soul includes, dominates the worship of the Church, in contrast with private worship, which easily becomes focused on the self. Regarding human sanctification, the liturgy is didactic: for without...
faith, holiness is impossible; the liturgy teaches the entire doctrine of Christ with an incomparable power. The liturgy is itself, lastly, sanctifying: in producing grace by the sacraments, in constantly asking for grace, with all the power of the intercession of the Church, and in disposing us to receive grace by the sentiments of faith, of trust, and of compunction that it excites in us.2

Methodists often react as if the delineation of a connection between divine glorification and human sanctification in worship articulated in these Catholic documents was a new and uniquely Catholic idea. Yet similar observations can be found in historic Protestantism. Martin Luther develops the two-way sense allowed by the German expression Gottesdienst: the service of God is primarily God's service to us, the bestowing by word and sacrament of the benefit of redemption in the gospel; our responsive service before God is then an act of the faith and love which God elicits in us, the sacrifice of thanksgiving to God's praise and honor.3 The Westminster Shorter Catechism (1647-1648) sets forth a comparable notion in defining human vocation: "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever."4

John Wesley himself spoke in these terms in his homiletical descriptions of true and appropriate worship, in one sermon quoting that dictum from the Presbyterian catechism.5 To Wesley's mind, Christian religion, as expressed in spiritual worship, "properly and directly consists in the knowledge and love of God, as manifested in the Son of his love, through the eternal Spirit. And this naturally leads to every heavenly temper, and to every good word and work."6 Wesley, echoing St. Augustine in De civitate Dei, repeats this opinion in remarking: "Optimus Dei cultus, imitari quem colis—It is the best worship or service of God, to imitate him you worship."7

The correlation between worship's components of doxology and human sanctification is not delineated for Methodism solely in John Wesley's sermons. Such correspondence is also evident in many of the hymns of Charles Wesley. One hymn which has been in continuous use since the 1780 Collection and is still sung by British and Australasian Methodists today, points beyond the immediate worship of the Church presently on earth to include the anticipation of worship at the last day when the faithful are conformed to the image of God.8

Father of everlasting grace,
Thy goodness and thy truth we praise,
Thy goodness and thy truth we prove;
Thou hast, in honour of thy Son,
The gift unspeakable sent down,
The Spirit of life, and power, and love.

Send us the Spirit of thy Son
To make the depths of Godhead known,
To make us share the life divine,
Send him the sprinkled blood apply,
Send him our souls to sanctify,
And show and seal us ever thine.
So shall we pray, and never cease,
So shall we thankfully confess
Thy wisdom, truth, and power, and love,
With joy unspeakable adore,
And bless, and praise thee evermore,
And serve thee as thy hosts above.

Till added to that heavenly choir
We raise our songs of triumph higher,
And praise thee in a bolder strain,
Out soar the first-born seraph's flight,
And sing, with all our friends in light,
Thy everlasting love to man.

The testimony of these documents, Roman Catholic and Methodist, demonstrates the indispensable place of liturgy in the process and understanding of sanctification.

Methodists and Benedictines have made distinct contributions to the liturgical life of the Church universal, and in some places during the twentieth century, there has been sharing—sometimes even direct borrowing—of liturgical scholarship and liturgical praxis between the two traditions. How have these liturgical currents and cross-currents been configured and where have been the points of contact?

BENEDICTINE AND METHODIST FOUNDATIONS FOR LITURGICAL RENEWAL

The roots of modern liturgical renewal for both the Benedictine and Methodist traditions can be traced to a renaissance in the study of Christian antiquity which characterized the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Numerous works from the first Christian millennium were reprinted during this period; and with the publication of patristic and early medieval liturgical texts and descriptions, such as those found in early Church Orders (e.g., the so-called Apostolic Constitutions), there was a surge of interest in examining and recovering the liturgical praxis of the historic Church.

Jean Mabillon, of the Benedictine congregation of St. Maur, was an historian who, in Le traité des études monastiques (1691), wrote in defense of the scholarly endeavors of monastics and religious. Besides publishing a nine-volume series pertaining to the lives of saints represented in the Benedictine order (Acta sanctorum ordinis sancti Benedicti), Mabillon produced several collections of documents important for later liturgical scholarship. Among these were a three-volume study of the Gallican liturgy (De liturgia galicana libri tres, 1685), and between the years 1687 and 1689, two volumes containing texts collected from libraries and monasteries throughout Italy (Museum italici seu collectio veternum scriptorum ex bibliothecis italici erat). The first volume, co-authored with Dom Michel Germain, set forth various documents including a Gallican mass book dating possibly to the sixth century, the so-called Bobbio Missal. Fifteen ordines Romani, ancient collections of ceremonial directions for the performance of the Roman rite, were included in the second volume which was compiled by Mabillon alone (Musei latini t. II complectens antiquos libros rituales sanctae romanæ ecclesie cum commentario praevio in Ordinem romanum). Though later
scholarship on the early Roman rite generally has superseded Mabillon's collection of the ordines (notably the texts and studies of Michel Andrieu), his work remains valuable: several of the ordines Mabillon published remain accessible only in his edition, and Mabillon's commentary upon the ordines provides a window into an earlier era's understanding of the development of the Roman rite from the fifth to the fifteenth century.9

Like Mabillon, John Wesley studied and sought to recover early Christian thought and praxis, though he practically limited his scope to the first three centuries, for he believed they largely represented the doctrine and practice of true, uncorrupted, scriptural Christianity and therefore could serve as a suitable model for the renewal of the Church.10 Writings from the early Church or accounts of early Christian life were part of Wesley's own literary diet, and he encouraged the Methodists to read in this area as well. To this end, he published full texts or abridgements of such works as the Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch and William Cave's Primitive Christianity in his fifty-volume A Christian Library. Early Christian liturgical praxis received Wesley's attention, at first as presented by the liturgical reforms of the English Non-Jurors, and later as Wesley recognized the spiritual benefit (both individual and corporate) resulting from emulation of certain ancient liturgical forms. Wesley's advocacy of lovefeasts (based on the early Christian agape), watch-nights (following the custom of vigiliae), and frequent communion, for example, springs from his desire to imitate the patterns of Christian antiquity. Even at the end of his life, Wesley advocated the model of early Christian practice: a letter that accompanied his 1784 revision of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, the Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America, declares that the American Methodists are at "full liberty," in matters of liturgy and polity, "to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church."

THE MODERN LITURGICAL MOVEMENT

These two streams of liturgical interest, the one represented in the Benedictine order by the person of Mabillon, and that figured for Methodism by John Wesley, take two very different courses in the nineteenth century. Among the Methodists, the stream of liturgical interest slowed to a trickle, but was kept flowing by some "High Church Wesleyans" such as Benjamin A. Gregory in Great Britain, and by American Methodists like Thomas O. Summers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.12 Occasional publications on worship-related topics in Methodist periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic also kept the issue before the Methodist denominations. In contrast, the Benedictine abbeys of Europe became sites for liturgical discovery and recovery, occasioned during this period by renewed interest in correct usage of ancient liturgical forms, by the retrieval of previously unknown liturgical documents, and by the establishment of dates for known texts.

The vast and widespread contributions made by Benedictine communities in the nineteenth century to what would be called the liturgical movement were duly noted by Pope Pius XII in Mediator Dei.13

You are of course familiar with the fact, venerable brethren, that a remarkably widespread revival of scholarly interest in the sacred liturgy took place toward the end of the last century and has continued through the early years of this one. The movement owed its rise to commendable private initiative and more particularly to
the zealous and persistent labor of several monasteries within the distinguished
Order of St. Benedict. Thus there developed in this field among many European
nations, and in lands beyond the seas as well, a rivalry as welcome as it was produc-
tive of results. Indeed, the salutary fruits of this rivalry among the scholars were
plain for all to see, both in the sphere of the sacred sciences, where the liturgical
rites of the western and eastern churches were made the object of extensive
research and profound study, and in the spiritual life of considerable numbers of
individual Christians.

Although space will permit neither a thorough nor complete examination of
Benedictine foundational work in liturgy during the nineteenth century, nevertheless a
few comments should be made.

Prosper Guéranger purchased the ruined abbey at Solesmes in 1832 with the purpose of
restoring the site in an effort to revitalize the Benedictine order in France using the model of
the medieval monastery of Cluny. In 1837, Pope Gregory XVI established Solesmes as an
abbey and appointed Guéranger its first abbot. Guéranger successfully led the monks of
Solesmes in the study, preservation, and revival of the early medieval liturgy of the Church
in an attempt to return to what he perceived to be the golden age of the Church, namely
the Middle Ages. To Guéranger’s mind, liturgical reform and ecclesiastical unity (at least for
the French Church) could be obtained by enforcing a uniform “Roman” liturgy. 
Unfortunately, Guéranger’s ultramontanism led to the rejection of many local—and some-
times equally old—liturgical expressions.14 Yet one of the most notable and long-lasting con-
tributions of Solesmes has been the research into Gregorian chant and other ancient musical
forms, thereby enabling the reappropriation of chant for worship.

Guéranger was a liturgical scholar. But he also was a popularist, and enabled others,
Benedictine and otherwise, to understand and embrace the work he had begun. The pat-
tern of liturgical research and liturgical life at Solesmes was, by the mid-nineteenth centu-
ry, transplanted into other communities. Monks from Solesmes were sent throughout the
world to establish new communities. Visitors came to Solesmes to immerse themselves in
liturgical studies with an eye to returning home and educating their own communities.
The biological and religious brothers Maurus and Placid Wolter, who represent such visi-
tors, established the community of Beuron in Germany, which, in turn, created a compar-
able community at Maria Laach, also in Germany, and at Maredsous in Belgium. Beuron,
Maredsous, and Maria Laach are well known as centers for liturgical studies. In the twenti-
heth century, the monks of Maria Laach have been responsible for two worthy liturgical
publications: the series Eclesia Orans and the Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft; Maria Laach
also was home to Dom Odo Casel whose emphasis on the mystery (Mysterienlehre) of
Christ and his Church in the eucharist informed the current paschal understanding of that
sacrament.

The nineteenth-century liturgical movement, rooted in Benedictine congregations,
revived or produced rites appropriate for monastic life; parochial manifestations largely
adapted the models of the religious community. Benedictines writing in the early twentieth
century began earnest explorations of the implications of liturgical renewal for parish life,
building upon the foundations laid the century before. One such individual was the already-
mentioned Lambert Beauduin, a Belgian priest who became a monk at the abbey of Mont-

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14 For a comprehensive analysis of Guéranger’s approach to liturgical reform, see J. P. King, The
César which later became an important center for the study of liturgy. In his numerous writings, Beauduin emphasized the pastoral dimensions of the liturgy, stressing that the worship of the Church was the center of Christian life and that the liturgy, parochially centered, was to be truly the work of the faithful. To this end, he organized liturgical "days" and "weeks" for both clergy and laity to learn about worship and to participate in it, and established a liturgical review, Les questions liturgiques et paroissiales. The Centre de Pastorale Liturgique in Paris was founded as the result of Beauduin’s influence.

METHODOLOGICAL MOVEMENT

Methodist books and essays indicate that by the turn of the twentieth century, British and North American Methodists were becoming aware of the liturgical stirrings that were being experienced among many of their Catholic neighbors. Liturgical interest among Methodists was largely manifested in two ways during the first two decades of this century. The first was by the study of Methodism's liturgical roots: in the Wesley hymn collections; and, especially in the United States, by examination of Methodism's departure from the rites established in John Wesley's Sunday Service (notably in the pattern for non-eucharistic Sunday worship). Methodist worship, in the context of a broader history of Christian worship, was also investigated. Secondly, there was the desire by some to recover early Methodist liturgical practices which had been lost, such as frequent (as opposed to quarterly) communion, and the utilization of fixed forms for Sunday morning.

Sentiments toward liturgical (and particularly eucharistic) restoration among Methodists were far from unanimous, however. Many feared that Methodist worship might succumb to ritualism and formality, thereby losing its historic evangelical spirit. In the United States, the title of an article published in the Methodist Episcopal Church's Methodist Review summarizes the attitude of many during this period: "More Liturgy or More Life?"

By the 1930s, Methodist interest in the phenomenon of Christian worship had increased considerably, spurred on by Methodist participation, nationally and internationally, in the growing ecumenical movement. In the British Church, the Methodist Sacramental Fellowships was founded in 1935 as "a Methodist response to the demands of the present and the future—a response which can be paralleled in other communions, being part of a widespread movement towards objectivity and unity both in worship and in evangelism." It was not until 1946 that American Methodists were to create an organization devoted to sacramental and liturgical scholarship and practice, a group which has become known as the Order of St. Luke. Both of these organizations continue—and appear to be thriving—today.

In the United States, the liturgical movement was mediated (from the middle of the 1920s onwards) by the work of the Benedictine Virgil Michel of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. The primary publication of St. John's was the periodical Orate Fratres (now called Worship) which chronicled the latest liturgical developments and provided a forum for Michel's special interest in the interconnection between worship and social justice. Though a direct connection between the work of St. John's Abbey and the liturgical reflection of Methodists cannot be established until the 1940s, the publications that were issued from St. John's had, in all likelihood, at least a limited Methodist audience, given their wide dissemination. By the 1940s and 1950s, some Methodists were
clearly aware of what was happening at St. John's and in Europe, and were familiar with the important documents and essays of the Catholic liturgical movement, which by that time were influencing discussions among some Protestant denominations. The Methodist periodical The Praise (which was published under that name from 1937 to 1956) functioned in part as a forum for essays and ideas on worship-related matters, apparently arising from the initiative of one of the early editors, Woodrow C. Geier. Publications issued by the Order of St. Luke served to educate its own members and other subscribers on the liturgical movement and liturgical issues. Two articles published in the Order's The Verse during the 1950s specifically outlined Benedictine contributions to the liturgical movement both in Europe and in the United States.  

It is worth noting at this point that, since the 1960s, several direct liturgical cross-currents exist between Methodists and the monks of St. John's Abbey. First, Father Godfrey Diekmann, former editor of Worship and liturgical scholar, and the late Wesley scholar Albert Outler had a long-time friendship, growing out of their common attendance at the sessions of Vatican II. An essay written by Diekmann on "The Reform of the Catholic Liturgy," which first appeared in Worship in 1967, was reprinted a year later by the Order of St. Luke. Second, the United Methodist Don E. Saliers, professor of theology and liturgy at Emory University, currently serves as an editorial consultant to Worship. And finally, Methodist students (primarily United Methodist) have pursued graduate study with the liturgical faculty at St. John's University.

By far the most significant Methodist-Benedictine cross-current prior to Vatican II was the wide-spread influence of the book The Shape of the Liturgy, published in 1945 by the Anglican Benedictine Gregory Dix. Because Dix's book was in English, it was immediately accessible to many Methodists and, it can be said, held sway over the English-speaking world for nearly thirty years in the structure of eucharistic revisions. David L. Taylor, in writing his reflections on the work of the Order of St. Luke from 1946 to 1961, notes:

Outside of Methodist materials, probably the most-quoted and studied tome was Dom Gregory Dix's The Shape of the Liturgy, although many other important books in the broader liturgical movement became well known.

Dix's contention that there is a fourfold shape to the eucharistic liturgy (offertory, thanksgiving, fraction, and communion), in fact, has marked the United Methodist sacramental rite since the 1972 revision.

**SHARED FEATURES OF LITURGICAL RENEWAL**

Although Benedictines were not alone in the promotion of the liturgical movement from the nineteenth century to the meeting of the Second Vatican Council, they certainly were at its heart. Benedictine liturgical scholarship and reflection undeniably contributed to the promulgation of Sacrosanctum Concilium and to the shaping of the reformed rites produced thereafter. Since the 1970s, Methodism, in Great Britain, in the United States, in Australia within the Uniting Church, and in other parts of the world, has embraced, in practice, many of the ideas and ideals of the liturgical renewal that prepared for and resulted from Vatican II. Hence, Methodist liturgical revision shares some common features with Catholic (and Benedictine) liturgical renewal. Five of these cross-currents can...
be mentioned.

A Return to Liturgical Sources. Most significantly, Benedictines and Methodists have experienced a retour aux sources: to the respective founders of each movement, and to the beginnings of Christianity itself. Whereas the mid-nineteenth century revival of Benedictinism sought models from the Middle Ages, by the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, Benedictine communities (e.g., Beuron and Mani Laach) looked further back to the ‘spirit of the founder,’ namely St. Benedict, for liturgical, spiritual, and disciplinary guidance. Writers such as Abbot Ildefons Herwegen of Maria Laach advocated a renewal of the essence of Benedictine monasticism by a return to the Rule and theopus Dei. The 1980 celebration of the fifteen hundredth anniversary of the birth of Benedict was also an occasion to reexamine his life and numerous publications were issued around that date. In the United States, a new edition of the Rule with commentary was published which included an examination of the liturgical material delineated in the Rule.

At the same time as Benedict and his Rule were being reclaimed, Benedictines were also broadening their look at early sources by including the patristic theologians of the liturgy, as exemplified by the work of Odo Casel, a monk of Herwegen’s abbey. Directly liturgical texts from the early period were also subjects for Benedictine examination, not only for the sake of scholarship but as a means of uncovering the roots of the Church’s worship by which the worship of the Church of later generations could be judged. Numerous studies and critical editions have been brought forth, including an edition of the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (Dom Bernard Botté), studies on the early Alexandrine form of the liturgy of St. Basil (Dom Bernard Capelle and Dom Emmanuel Lanne), and an examination of the evolution of the eucharistic anaphora (Dom Alain Bouley).

The resurgence of interest in the liturgical contributions of John Wesley can be located, as already noted, in the late nineteenth century. In regard to the liturgical content of early Christian sources, Methodists after John Wesley have generally concentrated on models or forms gleaned from the New Testament or from what is perceived to be apostolic practice. But in the last twenty-five years, Methodist liturgical revision has embraced the return to patristic sources which has characterized the entire liturgical movement. In so doing, Methodist liturgy, like Roman Catholic liturgy, has appropriated patristic forms. The unity of word and sacrament delineated in Justin Martyr (I Apology 67) has become, according to the liturgical texts, the normative pattern for the Sunday liturgy (even though actual practice lags behind on the sacramental side). The adult catechumenate, adopted for Roman Catholic parishes and under consideration for United Methodist congregations, was outlined in Apostolic Tradition and described in the mystagogical catechism of St. John Chrysostom and St. Ambrose and in the Jerusalem travelogue of the Spanish pilgrim Egeria. Methodist recovery of a liturgical form for corporate daily prayer is not only a return to the practice of the early Church, but also a revival of some early Methodist praxis.

Liturgy and Formation. As has been seen, Lambert Beauduin, in commenting upon liturgy as simultaneously glorification of God and human sanctification, notes that in its formative aspect, worship is a school of faith; it is also a school of prayer: La liturgie est l’école où la sainte Église nous apprend à prier/Liturgy is the school where the Holy Church teaches us to pray. Likewise, American Methodists H. Crady Hardin, Joseph D. Quillian, and James F. White, in their book The Celebration of the Gospel:
“Christian worship is celebration that relates us to God and to one another, renewing us in the meaning and power of God’s victory in Jesus Christ.”

On both sides, Methodist and Catholic, this connection of the lex orandi with the lex credendi has had an effect on the way in which Christian doctrine is perceived and taught in theological schools. Among Catholics, mention may be made of the works of Dom Cipriano Vagaggini, Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy, and Dom Aidan Kavanagh, On Liturgical Theology. The British Methodist Geoffrey Wainwright wrote a systematic theology under the title Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life.

**Liturgy as the Work of the People.** The hallmark of twentieth-century Roman Catholic reflection on the liturgy is this: the understanding that liturgy requires the full, conscious, and active participation of the laity. For Catholics, this has meant, practically, such emphases as lay roles in the Mass, worship in the vernacular, liturgical catechesis, inculcation of the liturgy, and particularly as regards the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the involvement of the laity as sponsors and teachers in spiritual formation before baptism.

Under the leadership of a few Anglican priests, the Methodist movement had strong lay participation from the start, lay leadership still is critical for the life and survival of Methodism in many parts of the world. The Methodist love for, in particular, depended upon the active involvement of all participants in song and in testifying publicly to the sanctifying work of God. Over time, Methodist worship developed a tendency toward domination by the clergy in liturgical leadership. Nowhere was this more acute in American Methodism than in the midweek service which initially was lay-led but eventually evolved, in many places, into another duty of the pastor. With the recent liturgical reforms, Methodists have sought to reemphasize their former practices and echo the Catholic call to full, conscious, and active participation of the laity. To meet this goal, some congregations have encouraged lay involvement in the planning of liturgy, lay roles in the service, lay speakers, and the involvement of sponsors in Christian initiation.

For many clergy and congregations, Methodist and Catholic, the liturgical involvement of the laity is a long-anticipated shift in emphasis, while for others it is a difficult transition. What is at stake is a renewed understanding of the sanctifying aspects of the liturgy.

**The Music of Faith.** Benedictines and Methodists concur in the importance of singing—or liturgical music in general—as a form of the proclamation of the Word. The Wesleys encouraged the singing of hymns because it disseminated the gospel and edified the singer; to that end, John Wesley enjoined that hymn singing should be in unison to prevent distortion of the text. The recovery of the practice of plainchant made by the monks of Solesmes reintroduced to the Roman Catholic Church—and the Christian world—an effective medium for the declaration of the text. Two different traditions of music, yet one emphasis: the true hearing and assimilation of the Word of God.

Mutual sharing between Methodists and Roman Catholics is quite evident in the musical arena. Many Methodists are rediscovering the simplicity and beauty of both plainchant and Anglican chant. Roman Catholics, and particularly Benedictines, have become acquainted with the Wesley hymns; the seventh edition of *The Collegeville Hymnal*, published in 1990 by the community at St. John’s Abbey, contains seven Charles Wesley hymns.

**Worship and Work.** Finally, the interrelationship between liturgy (litourgia) and
social justice or service (diaconia) is a significant cross-current. The work initiated in this area by Virgil Michel sparked a recovery of the conviction that the "work" of worship should transcend the gathering of the congregation to encompass all of life. In other words, the language and content of worship should reflect and reinforce the demands of the ministry of discipleship into which Christians are baptized. The issue is both textual and practical: do the liturgical texts or does what is said in worship encourage care for the neighbor for whom Christ died? And does the experience of worship itself move persons to minister in Christ's name? Methodists and Benedictine Roman Catholics can learn from each other on this matter.10

Hopefully, the common liturgical experiences of this conference on sanctification in our two traditions have initiated another cross-current of understanding and sharing between Methodists and Benedictines. For some participants, this may have been the first opportunity to share in the worship of the other tradition. As the currents of our respective liturgical traditions continue to flow, it is hoped that in this ever-rolling stream cross-currents will form to our mutual benefit and to the glory of God.

NOTES

9. One of the most thorough studies of the contributions of Mabillon is the essay by Dom Henri Lecouq in Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, s.v. "Mabillon." A more recent summary is M.D. Knowles, "Jean Mabillon," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 10 (October 1959): 153-73.
11. Letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North-America, September 10, 1784, in

12. Benjamin Gregory’s worship-related writings include the publication of the Fowles Lecture for 1873, The Holy Catholic Church, The Communion of Saints (1873), and the sections on the sacraments in his A Handbook of Scriptural Church Principles and of Wesleyan-Methodist Polity and History (1889). Among the liturgical publications of Summers were a book on Christian initiation (Baptism, 1852), a collection of devotional materials with an essay on prayer and worship (The Golden Center, 1859), and a Commentary on the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (1873). Summers also served as the editor for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South’s reprinting of John Wesley’s Sunday Service in 1867. See L. Edward Phillips, “Thomas Osmond Summers, Methodist Liturgist of the Nineteenth Century,” Methodist History 27 (July 1989): 241-53.


14. R.W. Franklin has shown that the campaign for liturgical uniformity in France was primarily on account of the political motivations of Napoleon III who encouraged the curia in establishing their policies. See “The Nineteenth Century Liturgical Movement,” Worship 53 (January 1979): 24-5; for additional studies on Guéranger and the nineteenth-century liturgical movement, see Franklin’s essays in Worship 49 (June-July 1975): 318-28; 50 (March 1976): 146-62; and 51 (September 1977): 378-99.


16. For example, Richard Joseph Cooke, A History of the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church: With a Commentary on Its Offices, 3rd ed. (Cincinnati: Jennings & Pye, 1900; New York: Eaton & Mains, 1900); Norton B. Harmon, The Rise and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism (Nashville: Publishing House of the M. E. Church, South, 1926); and J. Ernest Rattenbury, Wesley’s Legacy to the World (Nashville: Cokesbury, 1926); the 1928 Quillian Lectures delivered by the British Methodist at Emory University.


21. Throughout its history, members have debated whether the Order should be organized as a fellowship or as a religious order and thereby adopt structural features from Benedictine congregations. In recent years the group has gravitated toward Benedictine models (for example, the current head of the group is designated “Abbot”).

22. The most complete overview of the liturgical contributions of Virgil Michel is Paul B. Marx, Virgil Michel and the Liturgical Movement (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1957).


27. For example, Ildefons Herwegen, Sinn und Geist der Benediktinerregel (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1944).


31. La piété liturgique, p. 37.


THE CENTRALITY OF GRACE IN
WESLEYAN SPIRITUALITY

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All of the papers in the conference thus far have focused on our common concerns for holy living in the Benedictine and Methodist traditions, which is the overall objective of the conference. Yet, hidden within the scope of this paper are some of the major doctrinal perspectives that now divide us. In the topic which was assigned to me are matters of our respective understandings of "the Church" and "the order of salvation," traditional places where we have clashed in a significant way. Happily it is not my assignment to discuss those crucial theological problems, so I will only give you a Methodist "witness" on the subject of The Lord's Supper, leaving the spinning out of differences and their meaning for us to the discussion period which follows this block of lectures.

It is an honor to be in the company of a tradition with which we Methodists have so much in common. Our "Father in God," as the late Methodist historian Albert C. Outler used to call John Wesley, drank deeply from the wells of Roman Catholic spirituality. It is well known that he especially loved the great mystic Thomas á Kempis, as well as many other Catholic thinkers. It is less well known but equally true that he was shaped by much in a Catholic understanding of the Lord's Supper or, as Wesley seemed to prefer, Holy Communion. It was in this Sacrament, he believed, that the uniquely focused presence of Christ was experienced by the faithful community as the people gathered in what were called in
Wesley's day "sacramental meetings," times of song, sermon, and Supper, where participants were more and more formed in likeness to Christ.\(^6\) In this Sacrament the hopes of Benedict and Wesley were not far apart; they believed communicants received in the Supper graces to live the Christian life, extend the Christian mission, and anticipate the Christian hope.

At the outset we recognize that St. Benedict and John Wesley were unusual spiritual leaders who lived at vastly different times and under wholly different circumstances. Nonetheless they did have much in common, such as a desire to live a life that becomes the Gospel to give unbridled zeal in reforming the Church, to make an attempt at influencing others to live the holy life, and in providing organizational skills that in effect thrust them to the forefront of new religious groups. They were both given to a life of prayer. It is for reasons like these that the legacy of both men is enduring.

John Wesley based much of his own quest for "Christian perfection" on early Christian sources. Wesley loved to learn from the past. He believed himself a member of the Church catholic, and one with the best of its holy tradition, and that is one reason we are meeting here this week. Both men, Benedict and Wesley also wanted to be first and foremost men of "the book" the Bible. Both wanted to be men of the Church, but to be honest, on their own terms, terms each one believed were inspired by God. Probably most of us here agree in whole or in part with their separate self-understandings, own for ourselves to some extent their visions for the Christian life, and certainly identify with their desire to relate lovingly to God and neighbor. As Wesleyans it is easy to embrace Benedictines as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

It is my reading of history that Benedict and Wesley accepted their church's teachings on Holy Communion, which is to say, that is, that the Supper of the Lord (or the Holy Eucharist) is a God-ordained opportunity to come face to face, so to speak, with the reality of the risen Lord.\(^7\) Notwithstanding this important similarity in theology, however, it is true Wesley shared some of the standard Protestant criticisms of Roman Catholic wording with respect to the consecrated elements.\(^8\) Strictly speaking, however, Wesley was no Protestant, especially since he distanced himself from the overall Reformation movement in both its Calvinistic and Lutheran expressions.

While it is a matter of speculation what Benedict might think in a post-Vatican II Catholicism, it is my opinion that he would tend to side with the traditionalists (as did John Wesley). Both men would be upset with the contemporary tendency in the Church, at least in America, to look for help from the behavioral sciences more than the spiritual wisdom of the Church in solving the dilemmas of human nature, especially the problem of evil. It would be interesting if Benedict and Wesley could sit down today and talk more definitively about those matters. (Perhaps they have already?) Wesley could do that with ease and I suspect Benedict could as well. We do not read long in Wesley's sermons before being impressed with his sincere desire to engage in ecumenical dialogue with other Christians, of whatever conviction. It is only the seriousness with which Wesley approaches the Gospel that makes him sometimes appear a bit brash. This tendency is noticeable in Benedict as well, and in other Catholic spiritual guides. As with Benedict, for Wesley it was plain talk for plain people, for the glory of God!

The topic originally given to me for this unique conference was THE CENTRALITY
OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN METHODIST SPIRITUALITY. While this is a topic of merit, especially considering Wesley's concern about the neglect of the Lord's Supper in many Anglican congregations, it does not quite catch the realities of his theology and practice of this Sacrament. I suggest that the significance and role of the Lord's Supper for the Wesleyan awakening in eighteenth-century England (and in our own time for Methodists generally) can best be considered under the title of THE CENTRALITY OF GRACE IN WESLEYAN SPIRITUALITY. For in Methodist theology and practice the Lord's Supper is located under the general idea of the manifestation of God's grace, being one of the "chief means" of experiencing the loving saving will of our beneficent and just God. By 'Methodist theology and practice' I mean Wesley's understanding and work, and what I think to be its interpretation in the various main branches of Methodism, with which I am most familiar. This means that for this conference I prefer to stay with the Wesleys, especially John, and influences on him, rather than spend too much time with his modern-day interpreters. This limitation may not be helpful since Benedictines know at this point in our meetings that Methodist groups, so-called, can have less in common among themselves than one might at first think. The plain fact is that just as we are trying to discover our larger common roots at this conference, Methodism is trying to recapture its sacramental past. Both efforts are painful, though the prospect for happiness on all sides is great.

THE CENTRALITY OF GRACE

Like many classical thinkers, Wesley is convinced that human nature is steeped in an original sin brought about by the 'fall' of Adam and Eve. Consequently, he does not place confidence in any unaided human ability to please God and fulfill the moral law. He believes humans tend to use their God-given freedom in ways that eventually break divine law and bring the human community under the just judgment of a moral God. But surprisingly, the divine response is not one of condemning self-centered human beings, rather a reaching out with a love that forgives and reconciles. Judgment thus leads to salvation! So startling is this love, especially in the incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth, that humans can only confess and give thanks. "In this is love," St. John writes, "not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins." Grace or love, however, becomes the foundation for a Christian understanding of God. And the Psalms, our basic prayer book, show us ways of expressing our appreciation and amazement at this God who gives Himself so we might live according to his good will. On the basis of this traditional view of God's self-giving one can see why Wesley will have nothing to do with what he sees as "works-righteousness," that is, attempts to gain God's favor apart from the principle of faith. Humans may, indeed must, cooperate with God's will, but that in no way accrues merit, rather it demonstrates the "prevenient" (or common) grace of God in all human life. Any good accomplished or cooperation in the human family is the direct result of God's graciousness. This is a common theme to both Wesleyan and Roman theology.

Grace, then, is the ground of all life. Recognizing this grace and living it out in the Church and in the world is the agenda for all human life. Since, according to Wesley, we are naturally hindered in grasping the overwhelming reality of divine grace, God helpfully enables us
to both understand (at least its elemental features) and appropriate it. Methodists also have confidence in God's gracious self-display in nature, at least to the showing of God's existence, power, and harmony. St. Paul seems to hint that nature supplies us with enough of the sense of God that we may be led to deeper insights if we apply ourselves diligently to what we know naturally. Wesley had hopes for those people who while never hearing the name of the Redeemer yet would be acceptable to God because of their tireless search for truth as they were given it. Of course, the best is revealed in the person and work of Christ the Lord, and it is the Church's responsibility and joy to be in mission to the world with this good news. Following God's lead, grace translates into compassion for others. The ways God shows compassion, apart from the incarnation, are called, in the Methodist tradition, "means of grace." Ways of demonstrating God's grace through human activity are called "works of mercy" (or "pity"). Means and works are not to be confused because means always precede works. Any way one looks at it, (that is, through Methodist eyes) grace is central to natural and spiritual life. Properly understood, grace surrounds us, energizes us, and, in the words of a popular North American gospel song, "leads us home" (to heaven). This "leading" is a primary function of the Sacraments of the Church, those means of God's self-sharing for our improvement.

A METHODIST UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH

As already suggested, Wesley accepts a pre-seventeenth century Anglican definition of the Church. For him the Church consists of three essential components. As found in the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, these are (1) living faith, (2) true preaching of the Scripture, and (3) the proper administration of the Sacraments. Wesley brought this working definition of the Church into the theology of the Methodist movement and there it remains to this day. The Sacraments (two in number for the Anglicans and early Methodists, at least according to the official doctrinal statement in the Discipline of the Church, to which Wesley implied exceptions) are absolutely necessary to any proper understanding of the nature and work of the Church. No Sacraments, no Church. It is that simple.

The Sacraments become even more significant to a Wesleyan view of the Church when one considers that the "essence" of the Church is not in its structure. Allowing for rather wide varieties of structure, as implied in his ecumenical sermons, Wesley was able to accept other Christian groups without judging their fidelity to Christ's gospel and fitness for worship. But if the essence of the Church is not in its structure, then where is it? For Wesley it is in the living faith of all true believers, whatever their label, in their commitment to the truthfulness of Scripture, in their sincere desire to live out the implications of holy love, and in their active "participation" in the Sacraments. Christ comes near through the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of His followers by enlightening their minds regarding God's will, energizing their faith through the Divine and human fellowship of sacramental life, and in all their Christian living by providing a hope for the future, especially eternal life. Institutions naturally provide order and are necessary, though they are secondary to the principle of faith. Even today, with all of its history, polity, discipline, and liturgy, Methodism, broadly conceived, is more a movement than an institution.
THE "MEANS OF GRACE"

We Methodists believe that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is as important to the spiritual well-being of the faithful as prayer and the reading of Scripture. Actually, liturgically speaking, it is a combination of both.6 As far as ranking the means of grace is concerned, Wesley says prayer is first, the use of the Scriptures is second, and observance of the Sacrament third. Wesley considered these three spiritual "means" (ways God uses to increase grace in the Church) as the "chief means" of grace, that is, the primary ways God uses to communicate Himself to His people. On the face of things, it would seem then that Methodists ought to participate in the Lord's Supper at every possible opportunity, as with daily prayer and Bible study. In fact, this was Wesley's general practice, especially during certain seasons of the Christian year. It is important to note that the "chief means" were not the only means of grace available to the faithful; there were also other instiuted means (fasting and Christian communion) as well as prudential means (means specially suited to the particular gifts of individual Christians). In a very real way, all Christian life is uniformly graced, and every way to increase grace is in one way or another a "means" of grace.7 This is to say that Christian life is sacramental in nature, and whatever one does in faith has in it the potential of being a bearer of God's goodness to someone else. In individual or communal formation, or in mission, the Church receives grace and becomes a means of grace to the world.

This brings us to a very important part of Methodist sacramental life, the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Recent studies in Wesley's life and thought reveal his rather heavy dependence on Orthodox Christian sources.2 So to Wesley, the Holy Communion is a mystery of God. Well, of course it is, but I mean that Wesley believes in Christ's presence in the Supper but without feeling confident about being too prescriptive about details. He sees himself sort of in the middle between two widely divergent views, the ultra-Reformed teaching of Zwingli, who saw the Lord's Supper as a mere memorial, and the Roman view of transubstantiation, though he leans toward the Romans and the Orthodox. Since Anglicanism was highly influenced by the Reformation, Wesley took much criticism from those Protestants who thought he was too comfortable with a more sacramental view. As I have said, he views the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a "Holy Mystery," and is able thereby to hold in tension, at least for himself, the reality of Christ's actual presence to bless without limiting Christ to a material substance.8 Is Wesley then a "closet" Catholic? Many in his day thought so! And perhaps he was, especially when he regards the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a "converting ordinance." Saying this he means that God is uniquely and really present in the totality of the Lord's Supper with the same intensity as He is at prayer and in the study of the Holy Bible, and with grace to save.9 Thus the themes of repentance and faith are automatically included in a right observance of the means of grace. For the present, what this means for confirmation I leave to my colleague, Dr. Laurence Wood.

METHODIST SPIRITUALITY

The grace of God is the ground of all spiritual life, faith is the way in which this grace comes alive in the hearts of the faithful, and the perfection of love is the goal of Christian
existence. Both Benedictine and Methodist spirituality affirm grace, faith, and love as the heartbeat of the life that pleases God. But in a slightly different way, Christian spirituality is an unbalanced combination of God’s action on our behalf and our reaction to what God is doing. As Wesley says, God acts and we react. This is a Wesleyan way of saying, as the Benedictines do, that we seek “conversion of life.”

Wesley wrote and edited a large number of works during his life. It is difficult to single out one or two documents that can in any way be called “the” definitive standard for his spirituality. Even the doctrinal standards of Methodism cannot be found in a single creed or affirmation; one has to look at many selected sermons, Wesley’s Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, as well as the Articles of Religion, to get the sense of what Methodists believe. Yet there is one short statement that remains constant in Wesley’s writings, called “The Character of a Methodist.” This ten paragraph paper (in its short form) stands at the beginning of Wesley’s tract, “On Christian Perfection.” In this tract we get a hint of the essentials of Christian spirituality, at least its expectations. The means to the ends he proposes in “The Character” are: prayer, sermon, liturgy, Sacrament, and good works. In sum, the holy life is characterized by happiness in God, hope for one’s salvation, a life of prayer, love of God and others, gentleness of spirit and manner, sincerity in following Christ, obedience to the will of God, continued growth in the graces of the Christian life, a lively witness to others of the grace of God, and dogged faithfulness to the essentials of vital faith. These characteristics of Methodist spirituality are matters of faith and practice, not feeling and “quietism” (inactivity, a simple “waiting” for God to act before we act). Spiritual life is vigorous and intentional.

It is common in spiritual writings, at least in some classics, to steer as far away as possible from too much dependence on feelings (“consolations”). Wesley is also extremely distrustful of feelings, his or anyone else’s. In some ways he is a Christian rationalist, with Scripture as a constant guardian of the mind. His sermons betray a penchant for logic, and this sheds some light on the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The Sacrament, for example, is a subjective and objective experience. Subjectively, participation in the Lord’s Supper (Eucharist) may result in some sense of assurance, of deep spiritual warmth, and of love for God. Such a sense of worship is wonderful but it can be misleading, especially if such feelings become criteria for determining the value of worship. On the other hand, the material and liturgical aspects of the Sacrament offer an objective participation in worship. The action of God is recognized and honored in the elements and liturgy of the Sacrament. Such worship is valid because there may be a number of reasons why, subjectively speaking, worship may be less meaningful at the moment. Even in the most formal liturgy of “objective” worship the Sacrament brings help to us because Christ’s actual presence in no way depends on our psychological state. Thus, even when we feel “dry,” so to speak, spiritual formation is happening and the value of the Holy Communion is being actualized.

Like Benedict, Wesley believes spiritual growth takes place best within a community. Although Wesley is in reality something of a loner, unlike his brother Charles, he knows interaction is good when the subjects are God and holy living. Observance of the Lord’s Supper, like baptism, is a public act of identification as well as blessing. We are people of the Supper, the holy meal, the fellowship of the table. Such fellowship produces a sense
of togetherness. Eating has symbolic value for us as well as spiritual benefit. Every meal is a reminder of the Lord’s Supper. We need food and drink in order to sustain life. Correspondingly we need spiritual food and drink (the body and blood of Christ) in order to grow in faith and fellowship. The holy meal fills us with grace and helps us anticipate the common life of the coming marriage supper of the Lamb in the kingdom of God. The joy of the heavenly banquet is anticipated here below when we gather at the Lord’s Table.26 For this reason alone, the Lord’s Supper should be an occasion of happiness and celebration. It is at the Table that our essential unity can best be seen, and Christ be witnessed to as the only legitimate hope for a world on the brink of ruin.

CONCLUSION
Perhaps a brief summary of Wesley's general understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Communion will be helpful.

1. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament, having been instituted by our Lord.
2. The Lord’s Supper is a Holy Mystery in which God is both hidden and revealed.
3. No one phrase, such as Lord’s Supper or Holy Eucharist, is adequate in itself to sum up the significance of this Sacrament.
4. Divine grace flows through the Sacrament when people reach out to God in faith.
5. Through the notion of the means of grace, especially those called “prudential”, Wesley extends the possible number of the Sacraments.
6. Frequent Communion can convey justifying and sanctifying grace to serious persons.
7. This Sacrament is not to become a theological battleground with other Christians.
8. This Supper, when freely shared, witnesses to Christian solidarity.
9. The Holy Supper “leads us” to our eternal destiny in the Kingdom of God.
10. Frequent communion is a necessity for spiritual growth.
11. The themes of repentance, faith, and joy are central to Holy Communion.
12. The Supper of the Lord is not to be denied anyone who sincerely wants to please God and live a holy life.
13. The presence of Christ in the Supper is real, though not understandable.
14. Holy Communion energizes the Church for compassionate ministry in the world.

It was after World War II that many of us were introduced in a serious way to the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran scholar and member of the Confessing Church. Himself a martyr, Bonhoeffer warns the rest of us about the seductiveness of “cheap grace.” This is a grace, he says, that makes no significant demands, troubles no one, demands no cross-bearing. By contrast, the Gospel is “costly grace.” Benedict and Wesley understand Bonhoeffer completely. Costly grace has requirements: self denial, cross-bearing, following Christ every day. It is a daring kind of grace-fullness, the kind that flows from a God who suffers, who is angered by injustice, and who is active in the lives of His people. This is a grace that makes us strangers to the world’s self-serving systems and values. This is a grace that points us to the future, and urges us to cling to each other for mutual comfort and support while waiting for the arrival of that future.

Nowhere is costly grace more visible than when the Church puts consecrated bread
and wine to its lips, for in this act we are brought face to face with the pain that human nature and human society hand us. In this act of blessing and breaking we are also blessed and broken. As the body and blood of Christ are contemplated, we remember that at this table the Church of Jesus Christ is really one people. 23 Every family member is invited to the meal and everyone passes the plates of food. When we hear the words of institution we hear the call of God to follow Him who has no place to lay His head, who is so tired that He falls asleep in a storm at sea, who must constantly cope with being misunderstood and reviled. To rise from the table is to turn in the direction of the kingdom, regardless of the cost, and go with Jesus to crucifixion while hoping for resurrection. 18 Whether we be Benedictines or Methodists will not be important, I think, when we must face Him whom we profess to serve and give an account of the trust placed in our hands. This conference will rise up one day to praise us or judge us, for it seems to me we are saying this week that belonging to one another, as well as to God, is fundamental to our being the real Church. This conference helps us remember our past and move from that remembrance toward unity in holiness, to which our Lord Jesus calls us. Let us work fervently together so that when the day of judgment arrives we all will hear, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” 20

NOTES
1. This lecture was contained in the last grouping of lectures in the week-long conference. This paragraph was inserted in the manuscript after the conference was completed, though it had been written for and presented in the lecture. No attention was given to differences in the discussion period that followed, of which there were two that day.
5. A particularly striking way to describe one’s experience of Christ in the Eucharist for me is Pope Pius XII’s words that in the Sacrament “Christ the Lord [is] hidden beneath the Eucharistic veils...” Encyclical Letter on The Mystical Body of Christ (New York: The Paulist Press, n.d.), p. 28. More recently in Catholic thought, Edward Schillebeeckx uses the term “transignification” as a way to heighten a more personal way of talking about the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Here Schillebeeckx sounds very much like Hans Küng, when Küng writes, “The essential thing regarding
the Lord’s Supper is our approval and affirmation of the fact that Christ is present and active in a particular way in the Lord’s Supper; in the eating and drinking of his body and blood, theological description of how that happens is secondary by comparison; the Lord’s Supper is not about a matter of fact, but about an event of grace; not about sacred objects effective of themselves, but about an encounter with a person... Hans Küng, The Church (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), p. 221. For a discussion of Schillebeeckx, see Horton Davies, Bread of Life and Cup of Joy (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), p. 220ff. For another contemporary Catholic sacramental theology of the Eucharist, see Michael G. Lawler, Symbol and Sacrament (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 126-53.

6. The age in which Wesley lived was more polemic than our own. Judgments could be very harsh as they flowed back and forth between Catholic and Protestant spokespersons. Even though he regarded himself as a “middle way” churchman, more in the line of Erasmus than Calvin, Wesley had some substantial problems with some of the Catholic theology of his time. Cf. Works, Zondervan edition, vol. X, p. 117ff., vol. XI. In spite of his concerns, Wesley’s essential “catholic spirit” it can be seen in a sermon by that title (Outler, Works, vol. I, p. 79ff.) and in his “Letter to A Roman Catholic” (Works, Zondervan edition, vol. X, p. 80ff.). In these pieces he hopes and prays for more of a consensus regarding the practice of love between Christians and less stress on the particulars of doctrine (though he always assumed general Christian agreement on the basics of the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed).

7. “By means of grace!” I understand outward signs, words, or actions ordained of God, and appointed for this end—to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace.” Outler, Works, I 381. Emphasis Wesley’s.


10. In his sermon, “Salvation by Faith,” Wesley says “For all our works, all our righteousness, which were before our believing, merited nothing of God but condemnation, so far were they from deserving faith, which therefore, whenever given, is not of works’ ‘Neither is salvation of the works we do when we believe.’ “ Outler, Works, I 126.

11. Methodist theologian Thomas C. Oden comments: “The Holy Spirit works immediately in the heart and mediately through the word addressed in scripture and sacraments.” Oden, Life in the Spirit, p. 165. It is the same Spirit conveying the same grace immediately and mediately. Such an insight is compatible with John Wesley’s perspectives.

12. Examples of God’s redeeming love are easy to find in Wesley’s works. The following stanza from a hymn for seekers after God catches up both his theology and spirit.

But O how soon thy wrath is o’er,
And pard’ning love takes place!
Assist me, Saviour, to adore
The riches of thy grace.”


15. For Oden, one way to continue the teaching office of the Church and maintain fidelity to the Gospel is in the right use of the liturgy and Sacraments. Thomas C. Oden, The Living God, Systematic

16. Wesley does not have a narrow view of the Church. He regards the word "church" to be very "ambiguous." This was typical of Protestantism in his day. He is quite satisfied with the working statement in the "Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England" to wit, "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance; in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." Jerry L. Mercer, The Destiny of the Church in Wesley's Eschatology (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Southern Methodist University, Perkins School of Theology, 1965), p. 33. In general, Benedictine monasticism could fit quite nicely in this broad understanding of the Church. On the other hand, Methodism will not fit comfortably within a Roman Catholic understanding of the Church.

17. In time Wesley will bend this definition almost to the breaking point in order to establish his "preaching houses" and again in his ordaining missionaries for America.

18. Alas, that statement is more theologically than practically true for Methodist groups in the United States, the ones I know best. North American Methodism, generally speaking, seems unbalanced in favor of preaching, much more Word than Table. This can be explained in part by the combined influences of the camp-meeting movement in the nineteenth century, Calvinistic revivalism in the south in particular, and the general ignorance of many pastors and laity regarding the importance of the Sacraments to Christian identity and witness. Some attempt to repair this imbalance can be found in the most recent publication of The United Methodist Book of Worship, but even there, though better than what had been, not much has been done to re-educate a clergy more apt to see "worship" as evangelistic in intent than adoration of the Almighty God who calls us into being and forms us in His likeness. In the strongly conservative Methodist atmosphere in which I usually minister, it is clear that evangelism takes precedence over worship. This means in Sunday "worship" that the liturgy has the congregation rather than God as its primary referent. If my understanding is correct, and some would obviously disagree, then this is a tragedy of unbelievable proportion. It is my belief that only when personal and social holiness are understood to be the result of the faithful living out of Word and Table can there be an authentic renewal of the church local and the church catholic in the spirit of the New Testament and any hope for a realistic sense of Christian unity among us. For a short but informative article on the attempt in United Methodism to use its new hymnal and book of worship to strike the Wesleyan balance between Word and Table, see Hoyt L. Hickman, "Re-Forming the Sacraments in United Methodist Worship," Doxology, a Journal of the Order of St. Luke (1993), 105-14. I totally agree with Bouyer that "the whole Mass is a single liturgy of the Word." C. Louis Bouyer, Liturgical Purity (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1954), p. 79. It seems that both Benedictine and Wesleyan spirituality agree that the essentially sacramental nature of worship, with all its movements, is a "liturgy of the Word."

19. Historically, Methodism, in its many branches, has understood itself to be a reforming movement. It has, therefore, been a bit suspicious of institutions, including its own. In it is shared the monastic spirit of a renewing call to serious Christian commitment. Only recently (earlier this year, 1994) a group of highly recognized American United Methodist leaders formed a "Confessing Movement" within United Methodism to protest what they see as a dilution of Wesleyan standards in the church as a whole by issuing a call to vigorous adherence to what they see as the church's historical doctrinal confession and ethics (in the spirit of John Wesley). A similar call was issued more than thirty years ago, though more concerned with sacramental than doctrinal renewal, by the Order of St. Luke, an order principally of pastors and other United Methodist leaders. Members of this order hope to encourage spiritual renewal through an application of the sacramental principle to the whole of Christian liturgy and life, with a special focus on the healing ministry of the Church. Thus, through an awkward combination of Word and Sacrament in these two movements there is a challenge being offered to the institutional church to keep faith with its the-
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ological and practical past, not by imitating it but by letting it speak in fresh ways to a church perceived to be in crisis.

20. As we see in the suggested “Prayers of Great Thanksgiving” in The United Methodist Book of Worship.

21. Wesley does not include baptism in his list of the means of grace, although he writes of baptism as “a precious means of God's grace.” Outler, Works, 3:49.

22. An exception to the notion here called “sacramental life” is found in Borgen, Op. Cit., esp. pp. 64-65, in his treatment of John Deschner concerning continental Orthodoxy; also p.272ff., where Borgen concludes that Wesley is really closer to the Reformation tradition (Calvinist rather than Lutheran). To my way of thinking, this is a very difficult position to defend given the Wesley hymns on the Lord’s Supper.

23. In one of Charles Wesley’s sacramental hymns we catch this sense of mystery. (The emphasis is Wesley’s.)

Oh the depth of love Divine,
The unfathomable grace!
Who shall say how bread and wine
God into man conveys!
How the bread his flesh imparts,
How the wine transmits his blood,
Fills his faithful people’s heart
With all the life of God!

Whiting, John and Charles Wesley, p. 259. “Sure and real” is the grace imparted by the sacrament, though we are at a loss to say exactly how that happens. It is part of the mystery. For a helpful ecumenical discussion of this notion of mystierion, see Robert L. Browning and Roy A. Reed, The Sacraments in Religious Education and Liturgy: An Ecumenical Model (Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1985), pp. 36-46. For a compatible Roman Catholic interpretation, see David N. Power, O.M.I., The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition (New York: Crossroad, 1992), p. 292ff. Powers says the reality of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist goes beyond the “substance” of the elements. The presence of Christ, he thinks, both transcends and extends the literal meaning of the Sacrament as a liturgical action.

24. Part of the third stanza of hymn #90 in the hymns for the Lord’s Supper in the 1894 edition of John Wesley’s, A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists, “with a new supplement” (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room) reads: (emphasis mine)

The grace which sure salvation brings
Let us hencewith receive:
Salute the hungry with good things,
The hidden manna give.


26. The kingdom of God, the “kingdom of glory,” is “the ultimate, all-embracing eschatological reality for Wesley.” Cf. Mercer, The Destiny of the Church in Wesley’s Eschatology, p. 67. Receiving the Lord’s Supper is an “infallible pledge” of the hope we have in eternal life. As such, God’s grace in the Supper assures us of participation in the kingdom of glory. Ibid., pp. 48-49.

27. The notion of one people of God at one table is a repeated theme in the Wesley brothers’ Eucharistic hymns. None is more plain than this.

How happy are Thy servants, Lord,
Who thus remember Thee!
What tongue can tell our sweet accord,
Our perfect harmony?
Who Thy mysterious supper share,
Here at Thy table fed,
Many, and yet but one we are,
One undivided bread.

One with the living bread Divine,
Which now by faith we eat,
Our hearts, and minds, and spirits join,
And all in Jesus meet.

So dear the tie where souls agree
In Jesus's dying love:
Then only can it closer be,
When all are joined above.

Cf. J. Earnest Rattenbury, *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1948), no. 165. Not only do Methodists believe there is one loaf and one cup for one people, but we share Wainwright's notion that the Sacrament is more than the "seal" of unity but "the way" to it. Cf. Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 287ff. Wesley insists that admission to the table be in response to an invitation to conversion in the sense of personal confession and a pledge to amend one's life rather than agreement with a creed. Formal theology normally follows experience; in Wesley's mind (though he does appear himself to be an exception to that notion).


29. Here I refer to the essays of Albert C. Outler as edited by Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longene, *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1991), especially pp. 211-26, 258. Outler makes the point that unity in "essentials" does not mean the abandonment of diversity in opinions and that all of us should seek for that Christian "mingling of our memberships, ministries, and sacraments."

30. Matt. 25:34.
By way of introduction let me say that my best childhood friend was a Methodist—perhaps more in name than in practice, however. I dare say, he learned more about Catholicism than I about Methodism in our youthful conversations! Until my recent forays to the library and this present conference, my knowledge of the Wesleys and of Methodism was meager at best. I knew some of the great hymns, but little more. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Randy Maddox and to the speakers and participants in this present conference for the knowledge that has been given and the insights that have come.

In the matter of Benedictinism my knowledge is somewhat more adequate. I was fifteen years old when I first came under the influence of the Benedictine monks at Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon in the United States. I have been there now for more than forty years, and have been a professed member of that community of monks for thirty six years. During these years I have been assigned, among various duties, the offices of junior master and novice master. Such positions involve teaching those who enter the monastery the "way," the Rule of St. Benedict. The following reflections on "holiness of heart and mind," then, are based on a study of the Rule of Benedict and the Benedictine tradition from the sixth century to the present, but also and equally they are based on my attempt through the years to understand, in a practical way, the principles of Benedict's
Rule, and to integrate his ideal for holiness into my own life and to help others to integrate that ideal into their lives.

The composer-compiler of the Rule of Benedict was a practical man and his legacy in that document known as the Rule of Benedict is a practical guide for those who seriously pursue the call to holiness. Benedict's program is not for an elitist group within the Christian body, but rather for ordinary people. On this very general level we find a true common ground between Benedict and John Wesley. The desire to build a plan, to offer a program, that leads the ordinary person to holiness—this was, it seems to me, in the heart of each of these men.

The term "holiness" is not to be found in the Rule, and yet the Rule deals exclusively with the reality that we now generally call "holiness"—the union with God even while here on earth and its expression in the way one thinks, speaks, and acts. A person, in the past and in the present, would in fact only be admitted into a Benedictine community if he desired to live by the Rule and thereby strive to live a holy life. Benedict presumes that one who comes to the monastery and asks to be accepted there is a man of faith in God and that he has come to the monastery, in Benedict's own words, "to seek God." In the chapter of the Rule on receiving new members into the community (ch. 58), Benedict says that the first concern must be whether or not this person "truly seeks God" (ch. 58:7). If he does "truly seek God," then Benedict offers him a program for this "seeking."

This little book of seventy-three chapters, the Rule of Benedict, appears at first glance (and perhaps even at tenth glance) to be a complex document. I hope, in what follows, to show that Benedict's program for holiness is actually a very simple program. I also hope to indicate the compatibility between the mind of St. Benedict and the mind of John Wesley.

Benedict's program, when analyzed, involves four steps. The first step down this path to holiness is summed up in the world "listen"—the first word of the Holy Rule. This path toward holiness is a response—a response to God. For a lifetime, the monk's first obligation is always "to listen." He will listen—and listen to God—in the reading of the Scriptures, in the liturgy, in the Rule, in the tradition, in his abbot, in his reading, in his quiet prayer, in his fellow monks, and in his own heart. Only when he listens is he able to make the journey to holiness, for holiness is the end result of responding to the divine voice one has heard.

Actually, one can properly say that the journey on the path to holiness is itself holiness. The end result would be a holiness similar to Wesley's "Christian perfection." Let me here repeat the quotation with which Dr. Maddox concluded his paper:

Now, therefore, after ascending all these steps of humility, the monk will quickly arrive at that perfect love of God which casts out fear. Through this love, all that he once performed with dread, he will now begin to observe without effort, as though naturally, from habit, no longer out of fear of hell, but out of love for Christ, good habit and delight in virtue. All this the Lord will by the Holy Spirit graciously manifest in his workman now cleansed of vices and sins" (ch. 7:67-70).
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But the way to the state of Christian perfection is a way of maturing, of growing, of developing over a period of time, as the quotation just cited indicates. This process itself can lead to a kind of confirmation of holiness, a state in which one habitually thinks, speaks, and acts in a holy way. In all of this, it is God who speaks through the various means, the ways, to holiness. God is always the initiator in holiness. The individual must respond, to be sure; he must be intimately involved in the process of becoming holy; he must live the Rule; he must "truly seek God." He must be active, not passive. His 'yes' to the divine voice, his authentic personal cooperation—these are essential, without a doubt. Still, the movement toward holiness begins with God's initial grace. His call, and it is carried on with God's subsequent grace, as well as the monk's cooperation with both the initial and subsequent grace of God. In the Rule's final chapter Benedict says: "Then with Christ's help, keep this little rule that we have written for beginners. After that, you can set out for the loftier summits of the teaching and virtues we mentioned above, and under God's protection you will reach them" (ch. 73:8-9). Benedict's language is not theologically precise or specific, but he clearly indicates here that the monk will "keep this little rule" by grace; when he says "with Christ's help" he will do it. The phrase "with Christ's help" is not by any means a passing, unimportant statement. And when he refers to the "loftier summits," he again clearly shows the necessity of grace. He says that the monk will reach those "summits" under God's protection." These are the final words of the Holy Rule and they portray gently, but clearly, that Benedict sees the way to holiness to be the work of God and the work of the monk. God will not coerce the monk to become holy; the monk must employ his own energies and determination in the process.

What actually is the response the monk gives to this listening? How does the follower of Benedict's way respond to the divine invitation? The answer to these questions is found in chapter seven of the Holy Rule, the chapter on humility. This chapter is the heart of Benedict's Rule. It is the center out of which flows all the rest of Benedict's admonitions for living a life of holiness. The monk's response to God's invitation to holiness is an interior attitude, an attitude that we call humility. As usual, Benedict does not define his term, but he describes, and in detail, the way to this essential virtue. One can rightly say that the monastic life is a lifetime of "doing"—of doing particular practices. These exterior practices, which really are Benedict's program for holiness, are in reality, however, worthless as a means of progress in holiness unless they flow out of this interior attitude. In fact, without humility, one simply would reject out of hand many of the practices prescribed by Benedict in his Rule. In his chapter on obedience (ch. 5) Benedict indicates the absolute necessity of this inner spirit of humility. He says:

If a disciple obeys grudgingly and grumbles, not only aloud but also in his heart, then, even though he carried out the order, his action will not be accepted with favor by God who sees that he is grumbling in his heart. He will have no reward for service of this kind; on the contrary, he will incur punishment for grumbling, unless he changes for the better and makes amends (ch. 5:17-19).

In John Wesley's terms, humility would be one of the foundational "tempers" or
"affections"—an inner motivating power or inclination that leads to exterior action. Humility is to be an "enduring disposition" for the monk. The monk who "listens carefully," who hears the divine voice, grows strong, with the passing of time, in this "temper," and as a result he comes to see his own relationship to God and to all other human beings as it really is. The foundational "temper" of humility frees him to live in truth, with no pretense, no false knowledge, no delusions about himself. It frees him from himself so that he can love—can love God, can love fellow monks, can love others. This is a point to which we shall return later. For Benedict, after faith itself, nothing is as important as humility; no interior attitude is as influential for holiness as is humility.

In his chapter on obedience (ch. 5) St. Benedict says: "The first step of humility is unhesitating obedience, which comes naturally to those who cherish Christ above all else." (ch. 5:1-2) Obedience, then, is the third factor in Benedict's plan for holiness. These factors, we should note, are intimately connected with each other; God speaks; the monk listens; his listening leads him to an interior humility; this interior humility leads then naturally to exterior obedience.

Benedict begins the Prologue of the Holy Rule by counseling the one who seeks God to listen to advice a loving father is going to give to his son. Benedict counsels: "...welcome (his advice), and faithfully put it into practice" (Prol. 1). In other words, in the day-to-day, practical order, obey this rule. He continues: "The labor of obedience will bring you back to him from whom you drifted through the sloth of disobedience" (Prol. 2). The "disobedience" Benedict here refers to is sin. Like John Wesley, Benedict took the fact of sin seriously and his way to holiness makes sense only to those for whom sin is a strong reality. Holiness is, in fact, the replacement of sinfulness in a particular life, a particular person. Holiness doesn't exist in itself, but in a person who responds by humble obedience to God's call.

Benedict goes on, speaking in glowing terms, of the one who takes on obedience, and he shows its centrality to the whole schema of things when he says: "This message of mine is for you, then, if you are ready to give up your own will, once and for all, and armed with the strong and noble weapons of obedience to do battle for the true King, Christ the Lord" (Prol. 3). Obedience is clearly not the response of a cowering weakling; it is the response of one imbued with the strength of faith. The pursuit of holiness, even with its underpinning of divine grace, is a battle. The image Benedict uses is that of warfare. But Benedict would not have one intimidated by this war. We can see this from the tone of his statements. Obedience, precisely because it is given to God, assures success in the battle against the evil of sin.

In the Benedictine schema for holiness, obedience holds the place of honor—an honor, one might mention in passing, that is frequently and seriously challenged today in our age of emphatic belief in personal rights. For Benedict obedience is not personal discernment; it is a submission of one's will, of one's whole being, to another person, God's representative, the abbot, and to a way of living, the Rule: It is a submission made in faith and a submission that makes sense only because of faith. The monk believes the Rule to be a valid, concrete expression of the Gospel of Christ (Prol. 21) and he sees the abbot as the living embodiment of the Rule (ch. 64: 20). Benedict boldly asserts in chapter two that the abbot "is believed to hold the place of Christ in
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the monastery" (ch. 2:2). A Benedictine is rightly said, then, to live "under a rule and an abbot"—and this is no small thing, let me assure you! But for the monk, this is the way to holiness.

It is important to take special note, in the quotation from the Rule cited above, when Benedict speaks of the monk's "unhesitating obedience." "Unhesitating obedience," seen in itself, can be a frightening reality, even an inhuman reality. What makes this kind of obedience possible, what makes it also essential in Benedict's plan for holiness of life, is found in the conclusion to the sentence: "...unhesitating obedience, which," he says, "comes naturally to those who cherish Christ above all else" (ch. 5:1-2). Benedict lived long before the "theologies" or "spiritualities" the later Christian centuries would produce. Benedict, for instance, has no specific "Christology" in his Rule. Yet we find, in examining his Rule, an almost laser-beam focus on faith in Jesus Christ—and not just an intellectual faith in Jesus Christ—important as that is. In the words quoted, Benedict says that this kind of obedience will make sense to those who "cherish" Christ, who love Christ—and who love Him "above all else." This is a striking statement of faith, and it is a faith enlivened by that central "temper" for John Wesley—love. Once again, we see how well Benedict and Wesley agree with each other.

A careful search of the Holy Rule and the writings of John Wesley, I am convinced now, would produce several more significant parallels in their approach to Christian holiness of life. The sense of community, for instance, the importance of accountability within the community, regular prayer and fasting, the importance of the psalms, Benedict's chapter on the tools of good works—all these are areas where the minds of Benedict and Wesley find a meeting. Time to pursue these is not now at hand, so let me conclude with one final factor in Benedict's plan that is also central to Wesley's plan.

Regarding the importance of "affections" or "tempers," we can find in the Rule innumerable citations indicating Benedict's "moral psychology," to use the term employed by Dr. Maddox. The initial tone of the Rule is set in the prologue. These are the opening words of the prologue: "Listen, my son, to the master's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart. This is advice from a father who loves you" (Pro!. 1). One might very well expect a "rule" to summon or to command or to demand. Instead, Benedict, like a "loving father," speaks gently and tenderly, addressing a "son," and asking that this "son" listen with "the ear of his heart." What will attract the seeker to listen to Benedict and then follow the way to holiness that he is holding out? It is the heart as well as the mind, and Benedict knows this. Later in the Prologue we hear Benedict speaking in almost poetic terms about the "light" and the "voice" of God: "Let us open our eyes," he says, "to the light that comes from God and our ears to the voice from heaven that every day calls out" (Pro!. 9). These are not logical or rational persuasive terms that Benedict uses, but rather wonderful images that appeal more to the desire of the heart than to the thought of the mind. And again, in the middle of the prologue, Benedict continues: "What, dear brothers, is more delightful than this voice of the Lord calling to us? See how the Lord in his love shows us the way of life" (Pro!. 19-20). It is undoubtedly the winning over of the heart, of the affections, of the inner person, that will compel to action, that will move
a person to take up and live out this rule for holiness. At the prologue's conclusion Benedict urges on the one seeking God with these words: "...as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love" (Prov. 49). We shall "run," he says; not mosey, or dawdle, or even just walk. We shall "run," and with enthusiasm! We shall do so, he says, with "our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love." These are words of joyful excitement! These are the words of one who is himself energized to action by love!

In a sense, Benedict would wonder what we are talking about when we speak of his "moral psychology." But he would know that he had to speak "to the heart," to "capture" the heart, if his, what he calls "way of life," were to be accepted and embraced fully. Love is central to Benedict. His Rule encourages love; his Rule demands love. The single point of his Rule for Monks is love. Listen to his splendid chapter seventy-two, the second-last chapter of the Rule.

Just as there is a wicked zeal of bitterness which separates from God and leads to hell, so there is a good zeal which separates from evil and leads to God and everlasting life. This, then, is the good zeal which monks must foster with fervent love: They should each try to show respect to the other (Rom. 12:10), supporting with the greatest patience one another's weaknesses of body or behavior, and earnestly competing in obedience to one another. No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else. To their fellow monks they show the pure love of brothers; to God, loving fear; to their abbot, unfeigned and humble love. Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life (ch. 72).

St. Benedict is not often referred to in terms of love. Obedience or humility are virtues more generally connected with him and his Rule. The golden thread that runs through the Holy Rule, however, is precisely this thread of love—love of God and love of one another. His Rule is a call to love and is a sure way for one to learn to live in love.

To LISTEN to the divine voice, then to respond to it with HUMBLE OBEDIENCE through the years converts the heart of the monk to LOVE. This is Benedict's "little" program for Christian holiness, and I think John Wesley would like it very much!

Notes
All citations in this paper from Benedict's Rule are taken from: RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in English, Timothy Fry, O.S.B. ed. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1982).
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