

“CHRISTUS VICTOR: A WESLEYAN APPRAISAL OF SUB-SAHARAN POWER CHRISTOLOGY”

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I. Introduction: structure of the investigation

Why do so many Christians in Africa turn to spiritism in times of crisis? Glenn Schwartz asked this probing question and concluded: “So long as the principal power at the center is anyone other than Jesus Christ - even shared with Jesus Christ - the African Christian is open to having his spiritual life subverted by Satan and his myriad of spirits.”¹ Underscored by Schwartz is a concept crucial to the sub-Saharan worldview, namely, power. A brief visit to Accra, Ghana or Lagos, Nigeria is all it takes to see how Christian churches – particularly those founded locally – have placed the theme of power front-and-center.

Often, power is associated with the person and work of Jesus Christ, producing what may be termed “power Christology.” In *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology*, Diane Stinton examined numerous versions of Jesus as seen through African eyes, including Jesus as healer, Jesus as chief, Jesus as king, and Jesus as liberator.² What each of these images has in common is an emphasis upon power, or what might be termed “Jesus power.” This 21st century concern overlaps with the 20th century work of Swedish theologian Gustaf Aulén, who in the classic view of the atonement espoused by Irenaeus saw a decisive victory over sin, death, and the devil, our Lord becoming the Christus Victor.³

The topic of power Christology is many faceted. This paper cannot address every aspect of the topic, but will attempt to answer two questions of interest to those in the Wesleyan-Holiness heritage:

1) *What did John and Charles Wesley teach regarding power as related to Christ?* William Greathouse has developed the Christus Victor theme in the light of sanctification.⁴ The concern of this paper is to move beyond soteriology. It aims to examine the Wesley brothers’ pastoral theology concerning healing and confrontation with powers of darkness. It is hoped that this investigation will assist 21st century Wesleyan-Holiness pastors in Africa to preach with greater confidence about Christ and His power, helping them to speak in both a thoroughly biblical and a thoroughly Wesleyan way.

¹ Glenn J. Schwartz, “A Review of Christian Conversion in an African Context,” n.p. [cited February 8, 2012]. Online: <http://www.wmausa.org/page.aspx?id=83837>.

² Diane B. Stinton, *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christology* (Nairobi, Kenya: Pauline Publications, 2004).

³ Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* (1931; repr., Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, n.d.), 22-28.

⁴ William M. Greathouse, “Sanctification and the Christus Victor Motif,” in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 2003, 38 (2), 217-229. The same material appears in *Africa Speaks: An Anthology of the Africa Nazarene Theology Conference 2003* (Florida, South Africa: Africa Nazarene Publications, 2004), 11-23.

2) *How are some Nazarenes in sub-Saharan Africa incorporating the idea of “Jesus power” into their ministry?*⁵ Once we have seen what our 18th century theological ancestors, John and Charles Wesley, taught on the topic, the paper will consider thirty questionnaire responses received from ministerial practitioners in nine sub-Saharan African countries. This sample is adequate to give some indication of how closely aligned they are with the teachings of the Wesleys. Comments and stories drawn from the questionnaires will also assist the Western reader to better understand the context in which our African brothers and sisters are ministering and the reason that power Christology resonates well with them.

*II. John and Charles Wesley: Christus Victor in 18th Century England*⁶

Before turning to the writings of the Wesley brothers, it is helpful to set the stage for what transpired at the beginning of the Methodist Revival. Regarding John Wesley, Henry Rack noted:

The truth is that at this time and later Wesley was moving in a highly-charged charismatic atmosphere in which he thought he saw the scenes of the Acts of the Apostles, reproduced with all the strange gifts of the Apostolic age, repeated; not only instant conversion but visions, demon possession and healing. His opponents thought that he was claiming miracles, and despite his disclaimers and his careful investigations, he believed that much that he saw was indeed the work of the Spirit, whose work of this kind was not confined to past times, as educated contemporaries thought.⁷

In such an incubator, one would expect at least some mention of power in the writings of John and Charles Wesley. Indeed, a study of their writings yields discoveries that shed light on power Christology, particularly from the hymns of Charles Wesley. It is to these findings that this paper now turns.

⁵ The Wesleyan-Holiness movement is broader than any one denomination. For ease of data collection, however, a questionnaire was distributed to ministers on the Africa Region of the Church of the Nazarene.

⁶ Neither John nor Charles Wesley used the term Christus Victor. However, the language of Christ’s triumph over Satan is replete in their writings, especially those of Charles Wesley.

⁷ Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (3rd ed.; London: Epworth Press, 2002), 187. On Wesley and *charismata*, see Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., “John Wesley and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit,” n.p. [cited February 8, 2012], online: <http://www.ucmpage.org/articles/rtuttle1.html>.

A. *Christ's power in John Wesley's New Testament Notes and Sermons*

What is the nature of Jesus' power? Christ's power – for John Wesley – was first and foremost deliverance from sin's guilt and authority. The 1738 sermon, *Salvation by Faith*, is representative of this theme:

Ye are saved (to comprise all in one word) from sin. This is the salvation which is through faith. This is that great salvation foretold by the angel, before God brought his First-begotten into the world: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." And neither here, nor in other parts of holy writ, is there any limitation or restriction. All his people, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "all that believe in him," he will save from all their sins; from original and actual, past and present sin, "of the flesh and of the spirit." Through faith that is in him, they are saved both from the guilt and from the power of it.⁸

If being saved from guilt is a reference to pardon, then being saved from sin's power relates to sanctification. Wesley pursued this idea in *The First Fruits of the Spirit* (1746):

They who are of Christ, who abide in him, "have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." They abstain from all those works of the flesh; from "adultery and fornication"; from "uncleanness and lasciviousness"; from "idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance "; from "emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings"; from every design, and word, and work, to which the corruption of nature leads. Although they feel the root of bitterness in themselves, yet are they endued with power from on high to trample it continually under foot, so that it cannot "spring up to trouble them"; insomuch that every fresh assault which they undergo, only gives them fresh occasion of praise, of crying out, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁹

In *The Way to the Kingdom* (1746), John Wesley spoke of "holiness and happiness" in terms of the "Kingdom of God" dwelling within us. The results are manifold: "So soon as ever He takes unto himself his mighty power and sets up his throne in our hearts, they are instantly filled with this 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.'"¹⁰ Wesley continued in a spirit of prayer, quoting another: "Thee, Lord, safe shielded by thy power, Thee, Son of God, JEHOVAH, we adore."¹¹ Both *holiness* and *protection* are the bi-products of Christ powerfully at-work in Kingdom ways in the heart of the believer. With protection from the enemy of our souls comes the loss of fear: "Thou art no longer afraid of hell, or death, or him that had once the power of

⁸ *The Works of John Wesley*, Bi-Centennial edition (Frank Baker, ed. 35 vols. projected. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1984 to present), 1:121-22; hereafter *Works*. The idea of salvation from sin's "guilt and power" appears again in the 1746 sermons *Justification by Faith*, in *Works*, 3:191, and *The Righteousness of Faith*, 1:204.

⁹ *Works*, 1:236.

¹⁰ *Works*, 1:224.

¹¹ The poem Wesley cited is from Mark Le Pla (1650-1715), vicar of Finchingfield (Essex). See *Works*, 1:224, fn. 50

death, the devil; no, nor painfully afraid of God himself; only thou hast a tender, filial fear of offending him.”¹²

On the other hand, John Wesley was cautious in the area of the miraculous. He realized that counterfeits abounded, and warned against “enthusiasm,” a synonym in our time of fanaticism. In *The Nature of Enthusiasm* (1750) he observed:

A second sort of enthusiasm is that of those who imagine they have such *gifts* from God as they have not. Thus some have imagined themselves to be endued with power of working miracles, of healing the sick by a word or a touch, of restoring sight to the blind; yea, even of raising the dead. . . Others have undertaken to prophesy, to foretell things to come, and that with the utmost certainty and exactness. But a little time usually convinced these enthusiasts. When plain facts run counter to their predictions, experience performs what reason could not, and sinks them down into their senses.¹³

Regarding deliverance from evil spirits, John Wesley was careful to ground his judgments on the *terra firma* of soteriology. This becomes clear in *A Caution Against Bigotry* (1750) where Wesley set out – among other things – to explain “in what sense men may, and do, cast out devils.”¹⁴ How does the “Minister of Christ” accomplish this? It is the work of salvation:

By the power of God attending his word, he brings these sinners to repentance; an entire inward as well as outward change, from all evil to all good. And this is, in a sound sense, to cast out devils, out of the souls wherein they had hitherto dwelt. The strong one can no longer keep his house. A stronger than he is come upon him, and hath cast him out, and taken possession for himself, and made it an habitation of God through his Spirit. Here, then, the energy of Satan ends, and the Son of God "destroys the works of the devil."¹⁵

Besides his *Sermons*, the *Notes on the New Testament* shed some light on John Wesley’s thinking regarding Christ and His power to heal the sick. In a work that can seem cryptic, Wesley was surprisingly expansive in his comments on James 5:14:

Verse 14. *Having anointed him with oil* – This single conspicuous gift, which Christ committed to his apostles, Mark vi. 13, remained in the church long after the other miraculous gifts were withdrawn. Indeed, it seems to have been designed to remain always; and St. James directs the elders, who were the most, if not the only, gifted men, to administer it. This was the whole process of physic in the Christian church, till it was lost through unbelief. That novel invention of the Romanists, extreme unction, practiced not for cure, but where life is despaired of, bears no manner of resemblance to this.¹⁶

¹² *Works*, 1:230. To be “born of God,” Wesley writes in his *The Witness of the Spirit*, 1 (1746) is to have passed “from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:1). See *Works*, 1:279.

¹³ *Works*, 2:52-53.

¹⁴ *Works*, 2:64.

¹⁵ *Works*, 2:68.

¹⁶ Wesley seems to be speaking of healing through the means of medical practice, as implied by the word “physic.” See fn. 17 below.

It must be admitted, however, that this passage is exceptional. The *NT Notes* typically gives short shrift to the miracles of physical healing in the Gospels with no attempt to apply them practically. An example is Mark 6:7, where Jesus commissioned the twelve and sent them forth two-by-two, giving them “power over unclean spirits.” The verse is reproduced with no commentary. Wesley was more expansive in Luke 5:17, which speaks of the “power of the Lord” that was present to heal them. Importantly, Wesley observed that this power was two-fold, i.e. it healed not only their “bodily diseases” but also the “sickness of their souls.”¹⁷

Where John Wesley did dwell upon power as related to Christ, the outcome of that power was not showy. His comments on Phil. 3:10 are insightful:

Verse 10. The knowledge of Christ, mentioned in the eighth verse, is here more largely explained. *That I may know him* – As my complete Saviour. *And the power of his resurrection* – Raising me from the death of sin, into all the life of love. *And the fellowship of his sufferings* – Being crucified with him. *And made conformable to his death* – So as to be dead to all things here below.

Importantly, the “power of his resurrection” manifested itself not in the miraculous but in holiness, in the “life of love.”

B. Christ’s power in Charles Wesley’s Hymns

John and Charles Wesley were of one mind regarding Jesus’ power to give victory over sin. Stanzas one and two of a hymn based on 1 Cor. 1:30 are representative of this sanctification theme:

Jesu! My life, thyself apply,
Thy Holy Spirit breathe,
My vile affections crucify,
Conform me to thy death.

Conqu’ror of hell, and earth, and sin,
Still with thy rebel strive,
Enter my soul, and work within,
And kill, and make alive.¹⁸

¹⁷ The Jackson edition of the *Works* includes an extended letter to the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton, dated January 4, 1748. See 10:1-79. Wesley denied Middleton’s claim that Christ performed no miracles and that miracles were absent in the primitive Church, though he cites Chrysostom to explain the subsequent cessation of miracles (including healings and raising the dead) as due to “want of faith, and virtue, and piety in those times” (10:2).

¹⁸ John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: Strahan, 1740), 81. All hymns cited are contained in the online collection of Charles Wesley’s verse hosted by Duke Divinity School, <http://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/cswt/wesley-texts/charles-wesley>.

More often than his brother, however, Charles Wesley – especially in the early hymn collections – connected Christ’s power to direct confrontation with the powers of darkness. When George Whitefield was sailing for Georgia in 1739, Charles wrote a hymn for the occasion, exhorting the evangelist in stanzas five and six:

Go where the darkest tempest low’rs,
Thy foes triumphant wrestler foil;
Thrones, principalities, and powers,
Engage, o’ercome, and take the spoil.

The weapons of thy warfare take,
With truth and meekness arm’d ride on;
Mighty, through God, hell’s kingdom shake,
Satan’s strong holds, through God, pull down.¹⁹

A second hymn on the same occasion continued the theme, in nine stanzas warning him of the battle that lay ahead, but the victory over “hell’s prince” and the “world” that would be his if Whitefield were able to “prove the strength of Jesus thine.”²⁰

The theme continues in “To be sung in a tumult,” a fourteen stanza hymn found in the same collection. Stanzas two through four insist:

Power is all to Jesus given,
Lord of hell, and earth, and heaven,
Every knee to him shall bow—
Satan hear, and tremble now!

Roaring lion, own his power:
Us thou never canst devour,
Pluck’d we are out of thy teeth,
Sav’d by Christ from hell and death.

Tho’ thou bruise in us his heel,
Sorer vengeance shalt thou feel:
Christ, the woman’s conqu’ring seed,
Christ in us shall bruise thy head.²¹

The hymn concludes with Christ’s victory over Satan, who is “bruised beneath our feet” even as the “evil angels” suffer “doom” at the hands of the believers.²²

In 1741, the Wesleys published another hymnal.²³ In the *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, two of special note appeared at the back, entitled “Prayer for One That is Lunatick and Sore Vex’d” and

¹⁹ HSP [1740], 28.

²⁰ HSP [1740], 29-30.

²¹ HSP [1740], 116.

²² HSP [1740], 117-18.

“Thanksgiving for Her Deliverance.”²⁴ In what may be termed “exorcism hymns,” the Christus Victor motif emerged in brilliant colors. In the first hymn, “Jesu!” is the desperate cry that opens the majority of the twenty-five stanzas. Verses six through nine give a feel for the tone consistent throughout:

Jesu! Come, and bind him, bind him,
Let him feel
His own hell,
Let thy fury find him.

Jesu! Than the strong man stronger,
Enter thou,
Let thy foe
Keep thee out no longer.

Suffer him no more to harm her,
Make her clean,
Purge her sin,
Take away his armour.

Jesu! Mighty to deliver,
Satan foil,
Take the spoil
Make her thine for ever.²⁵

The woman’s deliverance inspired a subsequent seventeen stanza hymn of praise. In stanzas four, eleven and twelve, Wesley’s power Christology is shown to include not only deliverance from Satan’s power but protection for the believer:

Christ, thou in our eyes art glorious!
We proclaim,
Christ the Lamb,
Over all victorious...

Is there any divination
Against those,
Thou hast chose

²³ John Wesley, *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*. London: Strahan, 1741.

²⁴ *CPH* [1741], 53-57. It is not possible to determine with certainty the identity of this woman. Charles Wesley’s journal for Thursday, January 25, 1739 mentioned a woman who “confessed herself under the full power of the devil” whom they prayed for and who finally exclaimed: “I have received the comfort.” Charles concluded: “Rose full of love, and joy, and triumph – whereof we are all partakers.” See S.T. Kimbrough, Jr., and Kenneth G.C. Newport, eds., *The Manuscript Journal of the Reverend Charles Wesley*, M.A. (2 vols.; Nashville, Tennessee: Kingswood/Abingdon, 2008), 1:159; hereafter *Manuscript Journal*.

²⁵ *CPH* [1741], 54.

Heirs of thy salvation?

Thou hast bought, and thou wilt have us:
 Who shall harm,
 When thine arm
 Is stretch'd out to save us?²⁶

In addition to the confrontation with the powers of darkness, Charles Wesley made a place in his thinking for Christ's power to heal, both spiritually and physically. His *Journal* records his conversion on May 21, 1738 and the words of Mrs. Musgrave to him, spoken through the door of his sick room, where inside, Charles was bedridden with pleurisy: "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities."²⁷ Robert Webster observed: "Like Charles...many of the Methodists in the modern era found God's healing grace a support and corroboration of their belief in the supernatural and an indication of the importance of God's new created order that was breaking into a sinful world."²⁸ Webster further noted that the younger Wesley frequently used the theme of healing in his journal, sermons and letters, employing healing verbs over five hundred times.²⁹

A touching example of Charles Wesley's belief in Christ's power to heal is his four stanza poem, "For a child in the small pox." The third verse (as the others) is addressed to Jesus:

Now then, if now I pray
 According to thy will,
 Thy power medicinal display,
 Thy balmy name reveal,
 The dire disease rebuke,

Conclude the painful strife,
 And by one sovereign word, or look
 Restore my child to life.³⁰

Summary

We return to the question that has guided our investigation so far: *What did John and Charles Wesley teach regarding power as related to Christ?* First and foremost, the power of Christ is power over sin. It is pardon from guilt and victory over the "works of the flesh." But power carries a broader meaning in their Christology. Jesus power also means – at least in some measure – physical healing. Further, it includes protection for the believer from the forces of evil

²⁶ CPH [1741], 56-57.

²⁷ *Manuscript Journal*, 1:106.

²⁸ Robert Webster, "Balsamic Virtue: Healing Imagery in Charles Wesley," in Kenneth G.C. Newport and Ted A. Campbell, eds., *Charles Wesley: Life, Literature, and Legacy* (Peterborough, United Kingdom: Epworth Press, 2007), 230.

²⁹ Webster, 231.

³⁰ S.T. Kimbrough, Jr. and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds., *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley* (3 vols.; Nashville, Tennessee: Kingswood/Abingdon Press, 1988), 1:291.

as well as the ability to confront Satan, to win triumphant victories in Jesus' name. With this understanding in-mind, let us move from 18th century England to 21st century Africa to see in what sense the current emphasis upon "Jesus power" is consistent with the teachings of our Wesleyan ancestors.

III. "Jesus Power" and some Nazarene clergy in sub-Saharan Africa

Paul Hiebert observed: "Most cultures do not make a sharp distinction between the natural and the supernatural. For them, the supernatural pervades the natural."³¹ "Patrice"³² – a student in the Nazarene Bible Institute in Côte d'Ivoire – noted on his exam paper: "Malaria is carried by the female anopheles mosquito. But I wonder: Who *sent* the mosquito to bite the sick person?" Superior power to ward off malevolent forces is viewed as a matter of survival. Kouakou PRAO, Central District Superintendent in Côte d'Ivoire, observed: "I live in a context where demons cause massive destruction in the population. Because of this, people are looking for a refuge, a protection. Consequently, I place an accent on the protective power of Jesus (Mark 6:15-18, 10:46-53, Acts 3:1-11)."³³

Works on Christology published in sub-Saharan Africa bear out Prao's contention of the importance of power for African Christians. *Towards an African Narrative Theology* includes chapters entitled "Jesus, Chief Diviner-Healer," "Jesus: Victor over Death" and "People Cure, God Heals."³⁴ Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz concluded: "The power of God and the power of Jesus Christ over evil and the devil (often equated with 'witches' in African culture) are basic to an African narrative theology of inculturation."³⁵ An example of the Christus Victor concept publicly celebrated can be found in Ghana, where many *trotros* (public transport) contain the slogan "Osahene Yesu," which in the local language, Twi, is a military metaphor used of conquering heroes, in this case applied to Jesus Christ.³⁶

To help determine how the power of Christ in its various aspects is reflected in the day-to-day practice of ministers serving on the Africa Region of the Church of the Nazarene, a brief questionnaire was sent to clergy via e-mail – see the Appendix. Thirty responses were received; the data gathered provided some indication of what Nazarene "power Christology" looks like in sub-Saharan Africa.

³¹ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985), 114. See also his excellent article, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," in Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* (3rd ed.; Pasadena, California and Carlisle, United Kingdom: William Carey Library/Paternoster Press, 1999), 414-21.

³² The student's name has been changed.

³³ From a response to a January 2012 questionnaire on Jesus and His power; see the Appendix for a copy of the questionnaires from which all quotations in this section are derived.

³⁴ Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, eds., *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications, 1996).

³⁵ Healey and Sybertz, 86.

³⁶ Stinton, 204.

Nine questions regarding aspects of Jesus and his power formed the heart of the questionnaire. To each question, the respondent was to indicate on a scale of 1-5 the level of their agreement or disagreement, as follows:

- 5 – strongly agree
- 4 – agree
- 3 – somewhat agree
- 2 – disagree
- 1 – strongly disagree

Below are the questions asked with the average score of all respondents:

1. Jesus has the power to forgive sins. (4.9)
2. When we invoke the name of Jesus in prayer, God heals the sick. (3.7)
3. Jesus gives Christians authority to drive out evil spirits, using the name of Jesus. (4.4)
4. Because Jesus has power over our finances, he can make us prosperous. (3.3)
5. In the name of Jesus, we can pray for rain to fall during a drought, and it will. (3.3)
6. Jesus has the power to make us holy. (4.7)
7. If a person dies, we can pray over them in the name of Jesus, and they can resurrect. (3.0)
8. The power of Jesus can put a broken marriage back together. (4.1)
9. The power Jesus gives us includes the ability to resist temptation. (4.5)

In questions related to soteriology (1, 6, and 9), respondents gave a resounding vote of confidence to Christ and what he can accomplish. Christ forgives sins, makes us holy, and helps us conquer temptation. Importantly, not far behind soteriological concerns was the power Jesus gives us in his name to “drive out evil spirits” (question 3). Finally, still in the “agree” range was Jesus’ ability to restore a broken marriage (question 8).

Respondents harbored more doubt (scoring in the 3 range) on questions 2, 4, 5 and 7, dealing with physical healing, finances, drought and the ability to resurrect the dead in Jesus’ name, respectively. What lies behind their reticence? Regarding healing, one pastor replied: “Ours is to pray, the outcome is in His hands.” Likewise, Balibanga Katambu Jacques, District Superintendent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, insisted: “God is not obligated to heal our sicknesses even if we invoke the name of Jesus.” On the other hand, sixteen respondents mentioned that the sick have been healed during the past year in their congregation. Chabi HABIB, a pastor in northern Benin, holds a time of prayer and anointing with oil each Sunday after worship following the closing prayer. He testified that many physical healings have taken place.

Resurrection of the dead in response to the prayer of Christians ranked the lowest of all responses (3.0). One pastor in Côte d'Ivoire insisted that the nature of miracles means that God can indeed intervene in Jesus' name, restoring a person to life. However, Pastor Balibanga cautioned that "death is a natural phenomenon" and biblical instances of resurrection are no guarantee that the same will happen in response to our prayers. As for poverty and drought, they are directly affected by human actions. Wilfred Yambayamba, District Superintendent in Zambia, remarked:

While I strongly believe that Jesus can make us prosper, we need to realize that blessings of prosperity can only come up on us through hard work. When we work and pray in faith in asking Jesus to make our work or business successful he can do it. We need also to remember that the time of receiving "manna" from heaven like rain is long gone.

Jesus' ability to make it rain is no guarantee that it will. A respondent from Uganda noted: "He may or may not heal. It may or may not rain." Another from the Democratic Republic of the Congo insisted: "Forests help prevent drought, while deforestation contributes to droughts. If we damage nature by cutting down all the trees, God can't send the rain even if we pray in Jesus' name."

To conclude, among many respondents, there was a marked emphasis on Jesus' power over Satan and the forces of darkness. Wilfred Yambayamba of Zambia told the story of his 22 year old son, Joseph, who came under demonic attack. Over the next four months, the young man alternately manifested various demons, beginning with "lion," who said to Joseph's mother: "I am the King and I have come to kill you all." On another day, a river snake demon took control, forcing Joseph to writhe on the floor like a snake, even as he spit saliva that smelled like gun powder. He would go missing from home for several days, and was seen by others to be wandering aimlessly or picking trash at the dump. Over the course of six weeks, Pastor Yambayamba and his wife prayed and fasted for the boy, as did many others. The conclusion was positive:

On Monday 6th June 2011, Jesus's power was displayed, my boy was totally healed and his mind totally restored. And as am writing to you now, my boy has become a living testimony to the community, that Jesus can heal through prayer. And because of that some people are bringing their sick so that I can pray for them (Mark 9:14-29)... This is a true story. MY FAMILY, MY NEIGHBOURS AND MY FELLOW PASTORS ARE MY WITNESSESS. YES JESUS'S POWER IS STILL EFFECTIVE TO HEAL EVEN TO DAY WHEN YOU BELIEVE IN HIM.³⁷

This report agrees with the comment from a pastor in Kenya about his preaching regarding Jesus: "I talk about His power to heal, save, and deliver from demonic possession and also save us from our fears." In Africa, the power of Jesus is not theoretical, but eminently practical.

Some leaders have realized the importance of maintaining balance in the way African Nazarenes speak about the power of Christ. It is never a choice between emphasizing *either* the soteriological (ethical) aspects of what Jesus can do *or* what some might consider the more

³⁷ Capitalization was made by Rev. Yambayamba.

“spectacular” elements, such as physical healing and deliverance or protection from evil forces. Rather, Jesus’ power is holistic. Pastor Vidal Cole from Sierra Leone observed:

I think as Nazarene pastors and leaders we need to spend quality time teaching the people we lead about Jesus power from a Scriptural point of view so they can know exactly what the Scripture says about that and that they may also know where we stand as Nazarenes in (sic) this issue. If we do not continue to do this, then the other denominations are going to give them their own idea of Jesus power and they will have no choice other than to accept it. With the expansion of radio, television, and cyberspace connections our people encounter diverse views on this issue and so I consider it quite important for us to adequately minister to them so they will have a solid foundation. In Africa especially our people need to have the right perspective of Jesus power and how that can transform their lives so they can be able to serve the Lord with all their heart, soul and might, Amen.

IV. Conclusion

John and Charles Wesley spoke often of the power of Christ. Most marked was their soteriological emphasis, Jesus can pardon and deliver from sin and its power. However, power from a Christological perspective was found to be broader, encompassing physical healing in some circumstances as well as protection from evil forces and the ability to deliver those under the power of the devil. These same emphases are visible in the preaching and practice of Nazarene ministers in 21st century sub-Saharan Africa, producing a message that is both holistic and true to the spirit of their ecclesiastical ancestors, John and Charles Wesley.

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Appendix

SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE ON JESUS AND HIS POWER

Your name _____
 Gender _____
 Age _____
 Denomination _____
 Your post in the church _____
 Location (city, country) _____

Please answer the following questions in as few or as many words as you wish.

1. When you hear the term "Jesus power," what comes to mind?
2. Jesus said: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18b, NIV). For you, what does this "authority" include?

3. Here are a series of statements. Write a number in the blank, according to how you feel:

- 5 -- strongly agree
- 4 -- agree
- 3 -- somewhat agree
- 2 -- disagree
- 1 -- strongly disagree

- a. Jesus has the power to forgive sins. _____
- b. When we invoke the name of Jesus in prayer, God heals the sick. _____
- c. Jesus gives Christians authority to drive out evil spirits, using the name of Jesus. _____
- d. Because Jesus has power over our finances, he can make us prosperous. _____
- e. In the name of Jesus, we can pray for the rain to fall during a drought, and it will. _____
- f. Jesus has the power to make us holy. _____
- g. If a person dies, we can pray over them in the name of Jesus, and they can resurrect. _____
- h. The power of Jesus can put a broken marriage back together. _____
- i. The power Jesus gives us includes the ability to resist temptation. _____

Feel free to expand on any of your responses above, but make sure to specify the letter of the question/answer you are clarifying.

4. Do you ever preach about Jesus and his power? _____ (yes/no). If you answered "yes," how often?

What Scripture texts do you cite and what aspects of his power do you mention?

5. In your opinion, in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition of which you are a part, which of the following statements is true (circle one):

- a. We preach too much about Jesus and his power.
- b. We don't preach enough about Jesus and his power.
- c. We preach the right amount about Jesus and his power.
- d. Other (clarify) _____

6. What manifestations of Jesus' power have you seen in your congregation in the last year?

7. What represents power in your culture?

8. Do you have any other comments you'd like to make regarding Jesus' power and church ministry?

Check one below that applies:

- _____ 1. I give Dr. Crofford _____ permission to use both my responses and my name in his paper.
- _____ 2. Dr. Crofford. _____ may use my responses, but should not use my name.
- _____ 3. Other (explain)