

*Didache: Faithful Teaching* 9:1 (Summer 2009) Introduction  
Dean G. Blevins and J. Matthew Price

Welcome to *Didache Faithful Teaching* volume 9:1 (Summer 2009). The edition offers a wide array of articles addressing the major themes of this journal, a compilation of new writings available to our readership, and also an introduction to a new project exploring our generational heritage in theological education. The volume incorporates insights from a wide variety of Wesleyan perspectives while also exploring the future of Wesleyan Higher Education.

(Dean Blevins) Our first three articles engage our theological convictions and missional practice. John Wright and Greg Voiles offer two distinctly theological trajectories, justification and reconciliation, and situate them in a larger conversation with current church practice... particularly in our understanding of personal and social responsibilities in light of God's grace. David Wesley explores short term missions through the lens of a local congregation, raising issues and implications around this popular approach to missional engagement. Finally the journal turns to Wesleyan explorations in the fields of science and social science. Mark Maddix provides an intriguing overview of John Wesley's formative influences and their impact on his educational practice. Burton Webb, Professor of Biology, and Keith Drury, Associate Professor of Religion at Indiana Wesleyan University closes this section with an interesting exploration into genetic research and its implication for our understanding of sanctification.

One of the strengths of *Didache* rests with our ability to network and publish resources from other sectors of the Wesleyan tradition. This edition provides a unique opportunity to publish an article from the new publishing venture, *Methodist Review: A Journal of Wesleyan and Methodist Studies*. As an open access, peer-reviewed electronic academic journal, *Methodist Review (MR)* publishes scholarly articles in all areas and eras of Wesleyan and Methodist studies, including biblical, theological, ethical, philosophical, practical, historical, biographical, and social-scientific topics and methodologies. Sponsored by Candler School of Theology, Emory University; Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University; the Association of United Methodist Theological Schools (AUMTS); and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church (GBHEM), the journal's URL is: [www.methodistreview.org](http://www.methodistreview.org). *Methodist Review* is partly a successor to and partly a transformation of *Quarterly Review: A Journal of Theological Resources for Ministry (QR)*, which was published jointly by GBHEM and The United Methodist Publishing House from 1980 to 2005. Russell E. Richey (Candler) and Ted A. Campbell (Perkins) serve as the general editors of *MR*; Rex D. Matthews (Candler) is the managing editor; and Valerie J. Loner (Candler) is the current editorial assistant. I want to extend my personal thanks to Dr. Matthews for sharing this resource.

In addition we offer excerpts from a new text published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City titled, *Postmodern and Wesleyan? Exploring the Boundaries and Possibilities*. Directed to a lay-based audience, the book addresses a number of themes resonant with our journal and is available through Nazarene Publishing, <http://www.nph.com>. The version presented offers three representative chapters and I would like to extend my appreciation the Brent Peterson (one of the co-editors) who made the compilation possible. Finally the section closes with a review of another NPH publication as Dr. Andy Johnson offers a thoughtful treatment of Kent E. Brower's *Holiness in the Gospels*.

A now, a new venture...

(Matt Price) There has been a contemporary fixation on the generation gap, since the British rock group The Who belted out the lyrics, “Talkin’ about my generation!” That was over forty years ago. The people of God continue to struggle with ways to bridge the dreams of the old and the visions of the young, at least from the days of the Hebrew prophets. The contours of the transition from one generation to the next is drawn most sharply in the arena of education, in which the next generation is intentionally nurtured to take the reins of the previous one.

The editors of *Didache* wondered what if any gap exists from one generation to the next within the Church of the Nazarene concerning the trajectory of higher education. We asked parents and their adult children seven questions about their place in Wesleyan theological education and what direction they anticipate about their disciplines and their contexts. The questions are:

- *What is your current role?*
- *Why did you choose this discipline?*
- *What key contributions does your discipline offer?*
- *What is the future of your discipline?*
- *What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?*
- *Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?*
- *Final words for future “generations?”*

People responded from diverse parts of the world such as Latin America, India, England, as well as from multiple points across the United States. The disciplines represent compassionate ministries, pastoral ministries, youth ministries, lay education, philosophical theology, online education, and theological education. *Didache* would like to thank each of the contributors for offering their voices to the ongoing dialogue between the generations.

For those interested, we conclude with an article by E. Lebron Fairbanks that provides an overview to Nazarene education. Dr. Fairbanks, Commissioner of the International Board of Education, provides a comprehensive introduction to the IBOE, the sponsoring body of *Didache: Faithful Teaching*. If the Generations articles provide a sense of the historical “depth” of Wesleyan education, Dr. Fairbanks provides a sense of the “breadth” of formal Nazarene educational efforts around the globe.

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Our appreciation, as always, to the authors who have contributed to this edition. We would like to offer a special thanks to Shawn Stevenson who serves as technical advisor and "web master" for the journal. We would also like to thank Dr. Fairbanks (IBOE) and Dr. Benefiel (NTS) for their endorsement of this venture and Mrs. Barb Najarian (IBOE), an able assistant and good friend in these endeavors. Along with Shawn, Jeff Sykes, Director of Information Technology at NTS, worked behind the scenes to maintain our website. Jeff will be stepping down at NTS, and we will miss him. Our comfort rests in the fact that Robert Thomas, Jeff's replacement, will continue to provide the quality of service the journal has enjoyed these last four years.

*Didache: Faithful Teaching* remains a journal dedicated to being a resource for the total efforts of the Church of the Nazarene, and other educational institutions, for the sake of global Wesleyan Christian education. One reminder: we continue to solicit articles written by your students for future editions. In addition to offering articles by our scholars and educators, *Didache* would like to showcase some of our best and brightest students, at both undergraduate and graduate level, on issues of education, culture and theology. Submissions should come with a recommendation from one of our institutional educators. For additional information please feel free to contact Dean Blevins at [DGBlevins@nts.edu](mailto:DGBlevins@nts.edu).

## WHEN DID RELATIONSHIP REPLACE REPENTANCE AND FAITH?

John W. Wright  
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If 20<sup>th</sup> century thought has taught us anything, it has taught us that language matters. One merely has to respond to the colloquial inquiry, “How’s it going?” with “Groovy, man, groovy” and watch the response. Language creates, even as it refers. Language places us within a web of meaning that locates us within a particular people, at a particular time. Language opens the world to us according to the truthfulness of the language that has formed us. To hear the phrase, “Workers of the world, unite” reminds us that language places us within a particular tradition, presupposing an underlying narrative that both creates a polity even as that polity sustains the narrative through practices inherent within the narrative itself.

Shifts of language may indicate underlying shifts of socio-historical significance. Linguistic shifts may exhibit developments within a tradition as it attempts to resolve problems from within or engage new situations from without the tradition. Even more deeply, linguistic shifts may witness – and conceal -- profound ruptures that obscure deep political and ontological commitments. The full consequences of these shifts may not emerge for years or even centuries. Ontological assumptions and implications may remain buried invisibly within and continue to work long after the shift has occurred. Words carry bodies into a play of forces that create those bodies in their interaction with other bodies as they are formed to the reality that the language reveals.

Christian theology is primarily the linguistic pastoral work of repetition of the biblical narrative to sustain the on-going faithful witness of the church to the Triune God, an old/new language ever moving forward, ever looking backwards. As Philip Blonde writes,

the dialectic of repetition is easy, for that which is repeated has been –otherwise it could not be repeated – but the very fact that it has been makes the repetition into something new. . . . The peculiar character of repetition lies rather in its affirmation of what has been and its orientation to what might be. The orientation and fidelity to what has been . . . corrects the pagan demand for the simply new. . . . As they have no anterior faith in what has preceded them, they can affirm nothing but the new as utterly new. This relationship to the new is therefore both violent and false, because each time the new arrives it loses its value the moment it is accepted. . . . the new conceived in this way demands the abasement and sacrifice of all that has previously been for the sake of what might be.  
(Philip Blonde, *Post-Secular Philosophy*, pp.19-20)

Pastoral proclamation must let the language of the church arise out of and fit coherently within the biblical narrative, the rule of faith, and thus serve God through sustaining the life of the church – particular congregations of the baptized. We preserve the Christian language from the violence of the endless repetition of the new and improved even as we return again and again to the sources for the ever new updating of the language. The pastoral task is to repeat the faith given to the saints, without rupturing this language by re-placing it into other narratives than the one God has sanctified in the Scriptures.

Pastoral work, understood within this perspective, is the primary locus of the working out of the language of the church, language about the One, True, Triune God and all things in relationship to this God. Theology, as Barth argues, does not properly belong to a pre-given philosophical system within the academy; it belongs to the church as proclamation. Theology as proclamation bears the mark of a tradition, of repetition. Because repetition always necessarily involves a new language in a new situation and language moves as we move in language, the church's proclamation has historically become prone to assimilation to narratives outside the Scriptures and politics outside the communion of saints.

It is here that theology as it has accidentally developed within the Christian academy may play an important role in serving the proclamation of the Church. Theology in this special sense serves the church's proclamation, not to make it more attractive or understandable, but to keep it true to subject in its own repetitions. Barth states:

The Church produces theology in this special and peculiar sense by subjecting itself to self-examination. It puts to itself the question of truth, i.e., it measures its action, its talk about God, against its being as the Church. Thus theology exists in this special and peculiar sense because before it and apart from it there is in the Church talk about God. Theology follows the talk of the Church to the extent that in its question as to the correctness of its utterance it does not measure it by the talk of the Church to the extent that it concretely reminds it that in all circumstances it is fallible human work which in the matter of relevance or irrelevance lies in the balance, and must be obedience to grace if it is to be well done. (Barth *Church Dogmatics* 1.1., p. 4).

Because proclamation is fallible human talk about God, theology as a second order discipline serves to evaluate the obedience of faith found in the church's proclamation.

Discontinuous language arising within the pastoral task needs interrogation, an assessment of the fittingness of the language within the story of God's redemption of all creation in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit. This is the task of theology as a reflective enterprise. I would like to look at once recent discontinuity within basic Christian language within American evangelicalism: the re-placement of the language of "repentance and faith" with the language of "relationship" to describe the human side of initial justification. I would like to argue that this linguistic shift evidences a significant rupture in the repetition of the faith given to the saints. The language indicates an eclipsing of the biblical narrative as read through the rule of faith. It thus witnesses to a means of assimilating the church into contemporary society – the church becomes in and of the world. The language introduces incoherent and instability into the language of congregations and thus, ultimately will be a means of God's judgment on the church.

### *Repentance, Faith, and Initial Justification*

The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church clearly articulates a common understanding of justification that may surprise American evangelicals. The Declaration states:

15. In faith we together hold the conviction that justification is the work of the triune God. The Father sent his Son into the world to save sinners. The foundation and

presupposition of justification is the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. Justification thus means that Christ himself is our righteousness, in which we share through the Holy Spirit in accord with the will of the Father. Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.

The Declaration rings with an evangelical tone, in the fullest sense of the term. It emphasizes the Christological center of justification, its wholly gracious, unmerited nature, and its reception in human faith, itself a gift of God.

The statement repeats the biblical language of justification and faith, ordering them in relationship to their center in Jesus Christ. It reminds one of John Wesley in his important sermon, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*: “Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of justification. It is the *condition*: no one is justified but he [or she] that believes: without faith no man [or woman] is justified. And it is the *only condition*: this alone is sufficient for justification. Every one that believes is justified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words: no man is justified till he believes; every man when he believes is justified. . . .faith is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to justification” (CD III. 1, 3).

Wesley, as an important source of the evangelical tradition, emphasizes a previous step in the way of salvation not found in the Joint Declaration: repentance. Though not essential to justification, repentance normally precedes faith. Repentance is the appropriate human response to God’s revelation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ: “all that Christ hath done and suffered for us, till He ‘poured out His soul for the transgressors.’” (SWS, I.3). Repentance for the unjustified normally, but not essentially, precedes justification. Wesley writes,

God does undoubtedly command us both to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; which if we willingly neglect, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all; therefore both repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, are, in some sense, necessary to justification. But they are not necessary in the *same sense* with faith, nor in the *same degree*. Not in the *same degree*; for those fruits are only necessary *conditionally*; if there be time and opportunity for them. . . . Not in the *same sense*; for repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary; necessary in order to faith; necessary in order to faith; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to justification” (SWS, III.2).

Wesley understands that in light of the justification, the pardon or forgiveness of sins offered by God the Father through Jesus Christ, the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit, humans normally participate in justification through a movement that takes the person through repentance to faith on the way to a life of perfect love through the love of God shed abroad in the human heart. As Wesley famously summarized when speaking of his Methodists, “Our main doctrines, which include all the rest, are three, that of repentance, of faith, and of holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third is religion itself” (Works, 9:227).



A word of caution is in order here. Repentance for Wesley does not mean a drop in self-esteem at the end of a campfire in the mountains. Repentance means a conviction of one's sin; if genuine, it is bodily visible in the 'fruits meet for repentance', "forgiving our brother, ceasing from evil, doing good, using the ordinance of God, and in general obeying him according to the measure of grace which we have received" (A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion). As Kenneth Collins notes, the "structural triad" of ceasing from evil, doing good, and using the ordinances of God – Scriptural ordered practices as fasting, searching the Scriptures, prayer, and receiving the Lord's Supper -- are the "same three elements as the principal rules to guide the [Methodist] societies. This fact demonstrates quite clearly that the very design and purpose of the Methodist societies was one of repentance, of preparing sinners to 'flee from the wrath to come'" (Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace*, p. 158). Repentance for Wesley involved a conviction of sin that led to the incorporation into a Methodist society that found its end in the Eucharistic worship of the church.

Of course, the Wesley's language of repentance, fruits meet for repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ was not original with him. The language appears throughout the New Testament: "The Kingdom of God is near: Repent and believe the Good News! (Mark 1:15). More than this, the language presupposes a certain underlying narrative concerning God, creation, and human life. Perhaps this is most evident in Wesley's sermon, Justification by Faith when he describes "the general ground of this whole doctrine of justification." The story begins with God's good creation and humanity made in God's image: "God made him to be an 'image of His own eternity,' an incorruptible picture of the God of glory" (I.1). Yet "man did disobey God. . . . for the moment he tasted that fruit, he died" (I.5). Thus, 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so death passed upon all men,' as being contained in him who was the common father and representative of us all" (I.6). Wesley continues the story: "In this state we were, even all mankind, when 'God so loved the world, that he Gave His only begotten Son, to the end we might not perish, but have everlasting life" (I.7). Thus, "by the sacrifice for sin made by the second Adam, as the representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world, that He hath given them a new covenant; the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, 'there is no more condemnation' for us, but 'we are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ'" (I.9). The general ground of the doctrine of justification is the narrative of God's creation, human sin, and God's redemption in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ – of course, a brief summary of the biblical narrative.

This narrative grants intelligibility to the language of repentance and faith in Christ as the human perspective in participating in initial justification. Christ remains the focal point of the narrative, its center, the fulfillment of the problem introduced into God's creation through human disobedience. Repentance is necessary because of the disobedience that is sin, and the offense against God that results; the fruits of repentance necessary as one moves from stories of disobedience, life within this evil age (to wax Pauline), to the obedience of faith, the new age initiated in Christ and actualized as the already/not yet reality of the Church. All this is possible only because of Christ, in whom we see the obedience of faith in whom we participate through faith, "a divine *evidence* and *conviction* not only that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself,' but also that Christ loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" (SWS, II. 1). Through faith in Christ, one participates in the forgiveness that is God in Christ, drawn into the narrative of the Scriptures to witness to God's original intent for creation. Wesley's language arises from Scripture, not merely in its verbiage, but its underlying narrative deep structure that the language

presupposes. This is why Wesley's language, and its underlying narrative structure, finds deep affinities with the language of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. They draw from a common source of Scripture as read within the Rule of Faith.

*"Relationship" with God as the Ecclesial Product*

Perhaps the Joint Declaration and Wesley's language sounds vaguely, distantly familiar, like a Beatles song from Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heart Band. One occasionally hears it played on the radio, but the Red Hot Chili Peppers, or God forbid, Hannah Montana, get more air time. The market has moved on. Repentance, faith in Christ, justification, and the narrative that sustains such language bear the musty smell of churchiness, a death knell in the competitive "religious free market" of maintaining and increasing one's market share in an economy where it seems that religious recession always lurks just on the horizon.

More familiar to us is language like that found in Brian McLaren's *Generous Orthodoxy*:

I am a Christian because I have confidence in Jesus Christ—in all his dimensions (those I know and those I don't). I trust Jesus. I think Jesus is right because I believe God was in Jesus in an unprecedented way. *Through Jesus I have entered into a real, experiential relationship with God as Father, and I have received God's Spirit into my life. . . . As I seek to follow Jesus as my leader, guide, and teacher, I believe I am experiencing life in its fullest dimensions—full of joy and love, and yes, full of struggle and challenge, too.* (emphasis mine, p. 69)

This is not to say that McLaren does not use the same language as Wesley at times. He writes, "We often refer to this saving judgment as God's 'convicting' us of our sin and our need for repentance. Again, without it there is no true salvation. Forgiveness without conviction is not forgiveness: it is irresponsible toleration" (p. 95). Yet such language is not central for McLaren. McLaren's assessment of Evangelicals is revealing: "Sure, I think Evangelicals have painted themselves into a lot of corners – theologically, politically, socially. But evangelical passion for spiritual experience, for spiritual understanding, for mission is precious" (p. 120). "A real experiential relationship with God," an undefined "spiritual experience," lies at the center of McLaren's story.

Rick Warren's use of similar language should not surprise us. Relational language fills the pages of *The Purpose Driven Life*. "Faith in Christ" language is not missing, though language of repentance and justification is absent, to my knowledge, from its passages. Warren summarizes the first purpose of human life: "The smile of God is the goal of your life" (p. 69). How do we bring this about? "This is what God wants most from you: a relationship! It's the most astounding truth in the universe – that our Creator wants to fellowship with us. God made you to love you, and he longs for you to love him back" (p. 70). Warren ends a key chapter with a question, "Will you make pleasing God the goal of your life? There is nothing that God won't do for the person totally absorbed with this goal" (p. 76).

"Relationship with God" provides Warren with the category in which to fit the various biblical stories: "In Eden we see God's ideal relationship with us: Adam and Eve enjoyed an



intimate friendship with God. There were no rituals, ceremonies, or religion – just a simply loving relationship between God and the people he creative. . . . We were made to live in God’s continual presence, but after the Fall that ideal relationship was lost. Only a few people in Old Testament times had the privilege of friendship with God” (p. 85). “Then Jesus changed the situation . . . Unlike the Old Testament priests who had to spend hours preparing to meet him, we can now approach God anytime. The Bible says, “Now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God – all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God” (NLT of Romans 5:3; p. 86). Thus, Warren is clear: “There is nothing—absolutely nothing – more important than developing a friendship with God. It’s a relationship that will last forever” (p. 99).

The church represents the opportunity to have eternal relationships with other human beings as well. Here “faith in Christ” enters into Warren’s language: The invitation to be part of God’s family is universal, but there is one condition: faith in Jesus . . . Your spiritual family is even more important than your physical family because it will last forever. . . . our spiritual family – our relationship to other believers – will continue throughout eternity” (p. 118). The Purpose Driven Life is an experience of relationships – with God and with others – that leads to an ever deeper, authentically meaningful life now because it will last into eternity.

As he often does, George Barna penetrates to the core of the centrality of the language of “relationship with God”. In his book, *Marketing the Church* (Navpress, 1988). Barna argues that marketing approaches help clarify a congregations task. What, then, is the product, that which is offered to consumers to satisfy an expressed or felt need: “The real product of the church is relationships. These relationships occur on two levels. The core relationship is that developed with Jesus Christ. A relationship with Jesus is the very essence of Christian ministry. The mission of the Church is to make believers of all people through a permanent, personal relationship with Jesus that is both life changing and life giving. Our relationship with God is made possible through our relationship with Jesus Christ.” The second level is relation with other human beings, that is, human interactions within the church. A congregation is a relationship distribution agency, much like Myspace or Twitter.

Lest we think that “relationship with God” has occupied a central place only within popular, best selling types of evangelical or post-evangelical thought and piety, we also find this category as central within American evangelical systematic theology: as the church prays, so it confesses. John Sanders in his work, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*, writes,

Thinking of God as risk taker only makes sense within a particular theological model: a personal God who enters into genuine give-and-take relations with his creatures. Neither an impersonal deity nor a person deity who meticulously controls every event takes risks the portrait of God developed here is one according to which God sovereignly wills to have human persons become collaborators with him in achieving the divine project of mutual relations of love. Such an understanding of the divine-human relationship may be called ‘relational theism.’ By this I mean any model of the divine-human relationship that includes genuine give-and-take relations between God and humans such that there is receptivity and a degree of contingency in God. In give-and-take relationships God receives and does not merely give” (p. 12)

Language of the individual human “relationship with God” has moved to the central place in narrating what used to be narrated as justification through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. It has become a mediating language to translate older language into more relevant, readily accessible language. The older language still remains in the background, but relationship preempts its structural importance and overdetermines the older language when it rarely emerges.

If one attends closely to this language in relationship to the Christian Scriptures, several things become significant. “Relationship with God” is a language abstracted from the Christian Scriptures, not language found within the Scriptures themselves. Neither the Old Testament nor New Testament uses the language of “relationship with God” *per se*. The phrase “relationship with God” is a false biblicism given to language that has come to centrality in contemporary evangelical language. Such language is a historical innovation; the phrase is not used by Wesley or, to my knowledge, by the tradition, at least before the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This does not make it necessarily wrong; it is the nature of repetition that is a tradition as in Nicea’s use of the term *homoousia* to provide a rule for reading Scriptures. Yet it should raise some eyebrows.

More seriously, relational language seems to rely upon an underlying narrative to render it intelligible that fundamentally eclipses the biblical narrative. Christian Smith has recently summarized this story in his *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford, 2005) as the “Creed” of contemporary theological convictions in America:

- (1) A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
- (2) God wants people to be good, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- (3) The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- (4) God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
- (5) Good people go to heaven when they die.”

The contemporary God of America is a God involved in give-and-take, a divine agent among similar human agents. Having created the individual, the individual, living in the deprivation outside the relationship, may enter relationship with this God as desired and need, for this God respects the autonomy, i.e., the freedom, of the individual. By entering relationship with God, the individual may find their true end in life by experiencing the fulfillment of their life in this relationship. In the Christian version of this story, the Scriptures are read as various characters seeking this relationship until God makes the relationship more readily available through Jesus. Jesus is a useful exemplar within this story – he becomes a reliable, open mean to an experience of relationship with God. Jesus is not the divine-human relationship himself without whom the whole story collapses. In the story that renders intelligibility to the relational language of Jesus represents, exemplifies and even makes available divine-human relationship for individual human beings (and even non-human realities) so that they might move from an unsatisfactory affective lot in life to a more satisfactory, even loving, affective condition. It is the story of an individual who moves from unfulfillment to fulfillment by their personal faith – now a work, the active reaching out to God. Such a story eclipses the biblical narrative.

Smith calls this contemporary American “religion” “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” This is not a more “general” or “public” concept of god, but, as Smith recognizes, it is

a very particular kind of God: one who exists, created the world, and defines our general moral order, but not one who is particularly personally involved in one’s affairs . . . . God sometimes does get involved in people’s lives, but usually only when they call on him, mostly when they have some trouble or problem or bad feeling that they want resolved. In this sense, the Deism here is revised from its classical eighteenth-century version by the therapeutic qualifier, making the distant God selectively available for taking care of needs. (pp. 164-5)

Rather than a deistic god, we might call this revised Deism, “relational theism.” The replacement of “repentance, faith in Christ, and justification” language by “relationship with God” language seems to indicate a shift away from the biblical narrative, the communion of saints that has sustained it, and the practices which render it intelligible for those who live within and outside the biblical story. What lies behind this shift?

### *Relationship, Romanticism, and the Univocity of Being*

The language of “relationship with God” as a functionally equivalent phrase for justification involves a deep shift in the grammar of the Christian faith. To re-narrate this full story goes far beyond our time, not to mention my expertise. The story involves deep cultural and ontological transitions within Western European culture as they worked themselves out and became indigenous to a North American setting in the Protestant United States. It is a story of the creation of religion as a unique inner experiential relationship to a transcendental ground of being within Romantic expressivist culture, a mediating position between the absolutely secular and the authority of traditional Christian orthodoxy. But before turning to this story, perhaps it may helpful to understand the logic inherent within the everyday use of the language of relationship, particularly as when such language involves God and the world.

The everyday use of the language of “relationship” in mainstream North American culture involves a type of affective “give-and-take” within the private sphere of our lives. The private realm spills over into our public life to support our endeavors. Oprah is the queen of “relationship” – a realm outside of reason that nonetheless deeply impacts the satisfaction that we experience in life. “Relationship” is not the realm of reason, but affection. “Relationship” belongs in the psychological, private, and therapeutic cultural realm. The language belongs in the realm of psychological “intimacy.” As Charles Taylor states, “We stand in a relation of intimacy with someone when there is a flow of feeling between us, when our barriers are down, and we can sense each other’s emotions” (Taylor, p. 137). We might speak that we know the local car mechanic; to say that we have “a relationship” with her, however, is to say something very different. A senior pastor should think twice before speaking of “having a relationship” with her Treasurer to her District Superintendent.

The rise of “relational” language in Christian pastoral language describes well what Phillip Rieff prophetically declared in 1966:

In the emergent culture, a wider range of people will have ‘spiritual’ concerns and engage in ‘spiritual’ pursuits. There will be more singing and more listening. People will continue to genuflect and read the Bible, which has long achieved the status of great literature; but no prophet will denounce the rich attire or stop the dancing. There will be more theater, not less, and no Puritan will denounce the stage and draw its curtains. On the contrary, I expect that modern society will mount psychodramas far more frequently than its ancestors mounted miracle plays, with patient-analysts acting out their inner lives, after which they could extemporize the final act as interpretation. . . .

The wisdom of the next social order, as I imagine it, would not reside in right doctrine, administered by the right men, who must be found, but rather in doctrines amounting to permission for each man to live an experimental life. (Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, p. 26)

The linguistic use of relationship places the life of believers and the church into a cultural sphere of the therapeutic.

Here we discover the impact of a deep cultural shift: the newly expressivist culture that has emerged in the last fifty years at least in the United States. Charles Taylor writes:

I believe, along with many others, that our North Atlantic civilization has been undergoing a cultural revolution in recent decades. The 60s provide perhaps the hinge moment, at least symbolically. It is . . . an individuating revolution, which may sound strange, because our modern age was already based on a certain individualism. But this has shifted on a new axis, without deserting the others. As well as moral/spiritual and instrumental individualisms, we now have a widespread ‘expressive’ individualism. This is, of course, not totally new. Expressivism was the invention of the Romantic period in the late eighteenth century. Intellectual and artistic elites have been searching for the authentic way of living or expressing themselves throughout the nineteenth century. What is new is that this kind of self-orientation seems to have become a mass phenomenon. (*A Secular Age*, p. 473).

The language of “relationship with God” mediates between the populist, evangelical tradition and this new expressivist order.

This expressivist order is not ontologically neutral. “Christianity is not a religion; it is a relationship”, a common evangelical mantra goes. Yet relational language depends upon the ontology from Romanticism in which Christian discourse shifts from one about God to one about “religion.” “Relationship” in its expressivist sense demands a deep commonality in affective agency. One may have a fetish for a screwdriver; one does not have a “relationship” with it. A “relationship with God” demands an ontology in which God and humanity shares sufficient commonality in being to have an affectivity that humans may experiences.

Charles Taylor in his *Sources of the Self* argues that “the picture of nature as a source was a crucial part of the conceptual armoury in which Romanticism arose and conquered European culture and sensibility” (p. 368). Romanticism moved nature as source to an experience within the individual. Nature communicates from within the human, “an inner impulse or conviction

which tells us of the importance of our own natural fulfillment and of solidarity with our fellow creatures in theirs” (pp. 369-70). As God becomes Nature and Nature God, as argued by Spinoza, humans discover a common element in “diverse expressions of piety” – “the consciousness of being absolutely dependent, or which is the same thing, being in relation with God” (Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, proposition 4; p. 12). Schleiermacher thus speaks a paean of praise to Spinoza in his *On Religion*:

Offer with me reverently a tribute to the manes of the holy, rejected Spinoza. The high World-Spirit pervaded him; the Infinite was his beginning and his end; the Universe was his only and his everlasting love. In holy innocence and in deep humility he beheld himself mirrored in its most worthy mirror. He was full of religion, full of the Holy Spirit. Whereof, he stands there alone and unequalled; master in his art, yet without disciples and without citizenship, sublime above the profane tribe” (Speech 2, p. 40).

God and humanity, God and nature, the Infinite and the Finite, the Absolute and the Contingent, must all belong within a common category of being in order for humanity to experience a “relationship with God.” Under this dualism lies a deeper monism. As Conor Cunningham in *Genealogy of Nihilism* states, such a dualism “collapses into a monism as each dualism resides within a symbiotic unicity; a unity which is at times named, alluded to or ignored” (p. 236). Relationship with God ultimately pulls God into an ontology of immanence, in which God becomes the “depth dimension” of that which is.

If this analysis is accurate, we discover an interesting irony. Evangelical language of “relationship with God” finds its origins within the founding matrix of Protestant liberalism. Protestant liberalism originated within the attempts to pull “the very class that have raised themselves above the vulgar” (Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, p. 1) back into the church by translating the Christian faith into categories drawn from romanticism.

Within such a conceptual scheme, “Orthodoxy is believable, for those who believe it, ultimately as the best interpretation of this voice or élan” (Taylor, *Sources*, p. 371). Yet the faith given to the saints is extremely unstable with these presuppositions. As Taylor states, “a slide to a kind of pantheism [or panentheism] is all too easy, and this we see in the Romantic generation with the early Schelling, for instance, and later in another form with Hegel. This slide can go further and take us outside of properly Christian forms” (p. 371). Similarly, Gary Dorrien documents how in the United States, Unitarians began as a “religious alternative to the tottering remains of Puritan orthodoxy” (*The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805-1900*, p 5). As the movement aged, it absorbed romantic presuppositions more deeply within it. Dorrien’s words are telling: “Liberal Christianity seemed to have gone too far; there had to be a line that guarded the liberal church from anything-goes-relativism. Unitarians would not survive – or at least not flourish – as a humanistic fellowship of liberal Christians and non-Christian ethical humanists and naturalists. . . . The Unitarian conference retained its minimal tie to the faith of historic Christianity, but in a way that marginalized the faith language of Christ as Lord and Savior” (pp. 108-09).

Post-WW II American consumer capitalist culture was both formed by and has promoted the expressivist cultural with its roots in Romanticism. Evangelicalism, always highly sensitive to market dynamics, has and still is slowly moving into the same unstable theological categories

of those provided by modernist forms of Christianity. The movement from the language of repentance, faith, and justification to relationship with God, well-intentioned as it is, witnesses to deeper historical shifts in the grammar of the Christian faith itself. One wonders whether the assimilated evangelicals given to “relational theism” will share the fate of the Unitarians in the years ahead.

### *Conclusion*

Pastoral language is hard work. Congregations live in a linguistic world that presents itself as natural and inevitable. Even the language that we use to invite unbelievers into the faith may have profound consequences, not only for the individual and the present congregation, but for generations to come within particular congregations, regions, and even beyond. Theological language used in one generation and even in one congregation can have impact long after and far beyond that particular time and place often in ways very hard to trace, except from a broader perspective.

Pastoral formation in this culture takes intense faith and intense intellectual work in order to serve God through holy orders in their specific congregations. Mastering management techniques is essential in this cultural environment; but we must subordinate and order these techniques to the greater end of proper repetition of the faith given to the saints. Pastors, not professional theologians in Christian universities or seminaries, are the primary theologians in whom God has entrusted the gospel. Within the voluntaristic, free-market environment of contemporary United States, pastors must learn to engage this environment fully, but not surrender to it. We must master the skills of moving persons into the biblical narrative through repentance and faith in Christ rather than eclipse the biblical narrative.

Perhaps a good place to start is remembering that speaking of God is delicate and difficult business. Our main danger is not irrelevance, but idolatry. We know God as One Unknown in this life, except as God has revealed God’s Triune Self in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit as witnessed to in Scriptures. This knowledge comes to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, whom takes us to the Father through the Son. We can only receive such justification in faith and hope that rises to love.



# IMAGINING RECONCILIATION: THE EUCHARIST AS RECONCILING ACTION OF GOD

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## *Introduction*

Our proclamation as the Church of Jesus Christ is that the world was created in an original harmony. This harmony was centered in the fact that the creation, particularly the image God that is humanity, lived in harmony with its Triune Creator. We, however, live in a world of fragmentation in which this original harmony has been grossly disturbed, much like an out of tune - chaotic orchestra with the wrong director. In such a world of disharmony and fragmentation Eucharistically-formed Christians are to be people of reconciliation. Wesleyan, Roman Catholic, and other catechists have seen the necessity of the transformation of the imagination in making reconciliation happen.<sup>1</sup> Yet, theologians like William T. Cavanaugh and catechists such as Catherine Dooley have argued that this reconciliation is not happening. Part of the reason this is not occurring remains that catechists have not seen the *extent* to which the transformation of the imagination needs to take place. This “extent” of transformation by the practice of Eucharist is articulated by the Roman Catholic Theologian William T. Cavanaugh in his work *Theopolitical Imagination*.<sup>2</sup> In this paper I will connect Cavanaugh’s vision of the radical transformation of the imagination through the Eucharist with larger catechetical/mystagogical practice. This paper is written from a Wesleyan/Anglo-Catholic perspective, so the connection of Cavanaugh’s Eucharistic vision with catechetical/mystagogical practice will be construed liturgically through the Eucharistic right of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. This connection is important precisely for understanding the extent to which catechetical practice can transform Christians.

## *Imagining Reconciliation: The Imagination of Eucharistically-formed Social Relationships*

During the past few decades of liturgical renewal there has been a connection of the liturgy with catechesis in various streams of the larger Christian Tradition. In this connection of liturgy and catechesis the role of *imagination* in our participation in liturgy has been an important area of discussion and liturgical renewal.<sup>3</sup> However, this can be misleading. It is no doubt true that our entry into full participation in the reconciliatory life given in the Eucharist requires a transformation and training of our imagination into the shape of the Paschal Mystery.

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<sup>1</sup> Kelleher, Margaret Mary, “Liturgy and the Christian Imagination,” *Worship* 66 (March 1992): 124-148. See also his chapter “The Catholic Imagination” in Rausch, Thomas, *Being Catholic in a Culture of Choice*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006) as well as “What is the Imagination” in Collins, Patrick W. *More than Meets the Eye* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 23-45.

<sup>2</sup> Cavanaugh, William T., *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovery the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (London: T&T Clark, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> For discussion on imagination and its role in liturgy see Thomas P. Rausch, *Being Catholic in a Culture of Choice* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 20-35 and Patrick Collins, “What is Imagination,?” in his *More than Meets the Eye* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 23-45. See also Margaret Mary Kelleher, “Liturgy and the Christian Imagination,” *Worship* 66 (March 1992): 125-148.

Nevertheless, it is my contention that we are deceived if we believe that participation in the liturgy requires imagination while our participation in the “real world” of social relationships such as family, city, market, state, and so on *does not* require a particular forming of our imagination, as if these relationships were simply *rational* common sense, while our relationships in the Body of Christ, constituted by the Eucharist, are *imaginary*. This perspective rests on a false notion. It assumes the false opinion of modernity that there are simply universal, rational givens that any rationally thinking person adheres to, givens that are simply there, without question and without formation of the imagination. I do not mean to say there are no commonalities among humans. However, all of the aforementioned social formations<sup>4</sup> in all their complex vision require initiation into various visions of imagination.

Our various socio-political (“political” in the broad, classic sense, not limited to the modern sensibility that tends to limit the political to voting and governmental politics) relationships require a practice of imagination. These relationships, whether family, nation, city, culture, etc. are always, as William Cavanaugh so insightfully describes, the ‘art of the possible.’<sup>5</sup> As an example of this imaginary formation in the various social formations in which we participate Cavanaugh says,

How does a provincial farm boy become persuaded that he must travel as a soldier to another part of the world and kill people he knows nothing about? He must be convinced of the reality of borders, and imagine himself deeply, mystically, united to a wider national community that stops abruptly at those borders. The nation-state is...one important and historically contingent type of ‘imagined community’ around which our conceptions of politics tend to gather.<sup>6</sup>

The “state,” along with “civil society,” “the global market” and other similar notions are interrelated and disciplined ways of imagining time and space. The state as such really does not exist. What actually exists are border patrols, buildings, humans, airplanes, tax forms, and automobiles. These existing things are mobilized and organized into the project called the ‘nation-state’ by the disciplined imagination of a community. This community occupies a particular space and shares “a common conception of time, a common history and a common salvation form peril.”<sup>7</sup> It is a mistake to believe that this imagination is a symbol of something

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<sup>4</sup> My use of the term “social formation” to describe the social relationships of state, market, family, city, etc. is drawn from D. Stephen Long and his learned analysis of these realities in light of the social body that is the Church in his wonderfully illuminating work in D. Stephen Long, *The Goodness of God: Theology, The Church, and Social Order* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (London: T&T Clark Ltd., 2005), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 2. Cavanaugh points out, and I quite agree, that the *modern nation-state* (which means that one is talking about the state formation of the last two to three hundred years that has come to dominate western Europe and North America, not necessarily the state *per se*) tends to be formed around a “false soteriology” or parody of the salvation of the social body of the Church. This story of salvation consists in the modern nation-state’s rescuing the body politic from the so called European “Wars of Religion”. This rescuing involves keeping religious people from killing one another by separating church and state and giving the power of ruling and the means of violence to the state. According to Cavanaugh however, this false soteriology is simply

more real, like a non-material structure founded on a material base. We cannot separate cultural from material production. The socio-political imagination is the power or condition of possibility for the organization of human bodies into society or various forms of social relationship. Modern politics, such as the modern nation-state or global market, are not simply found or discovered by social scientific investigation in which there is the proper separation of the “secular” from the “sacred,” which had become confused, such as the chemist’s separation of the element iron from its ore. Modern politics was not in fact discovered as much as it was *imagined* or *invented*.

One may object that there is a difference between a modern-nation state and an ancient, definition of nation which is perhaps more based on biology. One may further make the case that the family is certainly not just imagined (even if imagination is given its legitimate place, in that we understand it is vital in the formation of social relationships and not *merely* imagination or fantasy) for it is clearly biological. Granted, there are more fundamental biological elements to these two social formations as compared to the modern nation-state. However, this does not mean that there is still not a significant power of imagination exercised in the organization of the more ethnic nation and family. For instance, what “family” are we talking about? Are we talking about the strict ‘nuclear family’ so prevalent in conservative evangelical or neo-conservative political discourse or are we talking about the *tribe* of Cherokee Indian culture or the tribe, and thus larger familial understandings, of ancient Israel? Furthermore, what about the concept of adoption and the belief of many parents that their adopted children are just as much family as their biological children? These various discourses are of course similar and related. They are not their own hermetically sealed language games. However, they are also not necessarily carbon copies of one another.<sup>8</sup>

The point in acknowledging the imagination of various formations of social relationships is to keep Christians from adopting the notion that living in *any* form of *unreconciled* relationship is *natural* at all. To live in unreconciled relation is also a product of imagination and, namely, the failure of the ability to imagine the possibility of the relationship being made right or reconciled. God created us as His Image in a primal unity which Christ came to restore and further to its telos. Therefore, it is necessary for us to now give the briefest of sketches of the Christian Story that the Church’s liturgy enacts in its drama. This drama exposes the perversion of large scale or small scale unreconciled or estranged relationship as false and enacts the restored relationship of Christ offered in the Eucharist as God’s intention for humanity.

As stated earlier, humankind was created in an original harmony, ordered by its relationship with its Creator. William Cavanaugh, in a tone similar, yet very different from Rousseau’s *The Social*

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historically untrue. He somewhat convincingly makes the case that one can find a number of examples in the history of the so-called Wars of Religion where Catholics and Protestants were fighting on the same side. Cavanaugh makes the case that the Wars of Religion were not essentially about theological issues at all. Rather, the driving force of the wars was the *coming to formation* of the modern-nation state, which tells this false story of salvation in order to legitimate itself and form the imagination of its citizens. In addition to *Theopolitical Imagination* see William T. Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State," *Modern Theology* 11, no. 4 (October 1995): 397-420

<sup>8</sup> Below we will examine how even biological relationships can be imagined in such a way that can fragment people from one another. The example we will explore is the case of racism and the modern creation of the idea of ‘race’ or ‘multiple races.’

*Contract*<sup>9</sup> says, “humankind was created for communion, but is everywhere divided.”<sup>10</sup> The banishment from the garden of Eden, Cain’s fratricide, the scattering of the people and confusion of language at the Tower of Babel, and the wickedness of Noah’s generation can only be properly understood against the larger backdrop of a natural unity among the human race. This unity is seen in the creation story found in Genesis one. The supernatural unity of the Body of Christ instigated in the Death and Resurrection of the Jesus, the sending of the Holy Spirit, and the furthering of this unity in the Eucharist finds its locus in the fact that in the Genesis narrative the whole human race is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Henri de Lubac sums up the anthropology of patristic theology by stating, “For the divine image does not differ from one individual to another: in all it is the same image.” He goes on to say, “The same mysterious participation in God which causes the soul to exist effects at one and the same time the unity of spirits among themselves.”<sup>11</sup> The unity, which Christ’s reconciliation in the Cross and Resurrection restores, is such that, as de Lubac comments, we cannot talk about humans in the plural anymore than we can talk of God as three Gods. The human race as a whole is created in the image of God rather than simply individuals.<sup>12</sup> Through the Word that is the Second Person of the Trinity the entirety of the human race, not just individuals, is created and redeemed regardless of nationality, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. This essential unity in humanity’s creation and redemption is the fundamental source of a Church that is truly Catholic and into which all are called.<sup>13</sup>

This primal unity is at the root of Paul’s explanation to the Romans that ‘sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned’ (Rom. 5:12). Adam represents humanity as a whole and is not simply the first individual. However, Adam’s disobedience to God shatters this original created unity. Adam and Eve’s attempted seizure of God’s position necessarily is accompanied by a disruption and fracturing of human unity. This is the case because, through the *imago dei*, our participation in God is a participation in one another. The broken relationship with God issues forth in broken relationships among humans. This disruption is seen in Genesis 3:12 when Adam attempts to blame Eve for the sin. Genesis 4-11 goes on to tell the story of the effects of this Fall as strife, division, and violence among humans. Cain kills his brother Abel and later, in Gen. 6:11, we hear that the ‘earth was filled with violence.’ The dynamic of the fall from unity is summed up in the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11: 1-9), for in the attempt to usurp God’s position the race of humans is broken and scattered far afield. Again, this sequence of stories can be fully

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<sup>9</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Willmoore Kendall (South Bend, IN: Gateway Editions, 1954).

<sup>10</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, quoted in Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> This certainly does not mean that there is no place for talking of individuals as the image of God, and here Cavanaugh may be a bit too strong in his approach to talking of the collectivity of humanity as the *imago dei*. Nevertheless, even here, we should perhaps speak of individuals as *in* the image of God rather than being the image of God all alone.

<sup>13</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 10-11.

comprehended only against the backdrop of the assumption of the primal unity of the creation story.<sup>14</sup>

Henri de Lubac traces this theme of unity and fragmentation through the writings of the Fathers. Maximus Confessor understood the Fall as the disintegration of the created unity in which there could be no contradiction between what is thine and what is mine. Cyril of Alexandria says ‘Satan has broken us up,’ while Augustine portrays Adam virtually as if he were a china doll which has broken and shattered upon falling and these fragments are scattered throughout the world. de Lubac summarizes these and other passages:

Instead of trying, as we do almost entirely nowadays, to find within each individual nature what is the hidden blemish and, so to speak, of looking for the mechanical source of the trouble...these Fathers preferred to envisage the very constitution of the individuals considered as so many cores of natural opposition.<sup>15</sup>

So the effect of sin is the creation of individuals as such, the creation of an ontological distinction between the group and individual.<sup>16</sup>

Since sin is the fragmentation into mutual antagonism, at least in terms of humans toward God as well as amongst humans, then redemption takes the form of restoring harmony or unity through participation in Christ’s Body. Christ is the new or second Adam for in His Incarnation He assumes the whole of humanity. The salvation of individuals is only derivative of Christ’s salvation for the whole human race. In the Incarnation God takes on human nature as such and not simply the body of an individual human. It is certainly true that Christ is incorporated in a human body (otherwise how would we know He was truly human?), but correspondingly humanity is redeemed by being incorporated into the Body of Christ.<sup>17</sup> “The Body of Christ is the locus of mutual participation of God in humanity and humanity in God.”<sup>18</sup> It is through the practice of Eucharist that we are incorporated into Christ. However, the Eucharist is not simply a segment of the Church’s life. Rather, it is the central site or action when and where the Church both participates in Christ’s reconciliation of God and humans and humans to other humans, *as well as* the action through which the Spirit of God propels the Body of Christ into the world to be a *reconciling people*. The members of the Body of Christ are made into people who practice reconciliation in everyday life for the Eucharist becomes the lens through which we see all of life and all social relationships. We are united in the Body of Christ and then the Body of Christ

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<sup>14</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 12. For an insightful exploration of this original unity or *ontological peace* versus the *original violence* so often assumed in modern and postmodern political theory and other discourses see John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2005), and David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003).

<sup>15</sup> de Lubac, *Catholicism*, 34, quoted in Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 12-13.

<sup>16</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 11-13.

<sup>17</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 13.

extends into the world through us that all social bodies and all relationships may be incorporated into or mapped onto the Body of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

It is important, as we think about the Eucharist and reconciliation, that we remember that through incorporation into the Body of Christ we participate in the *restoration* of the original unity of the human race. This entails that the means and power for reconciling estranged relationships are available to us from the Father, through the Son, in the Love of the Holy Spirit. In the Anglican Eucharistic Rites this is symbolized by the fact that the action of the passing of the peace of Christ comes immediately after the confession and forgiveness of sin and is just before the communion at the table.<sup>20</sup> This reminds us and enables us to participate in reconciliation with God and our fellow humans. This reconciliation is then consummated in the Eucharistic communion through the Body and Blood of Christ. Through incorporation into Christ's Body in the Eucharist the broken or tarnished image of God in humanity is restored. Col. 3:10 says, 'you have put on a new self which will progress towards true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its Creator; and in that image there is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised and uncircumcised, or between barbarian and Scythian, slave or free.' Ephesians 2:14-16 beautifully expresses it in terms of the hostility between Jews and Gentiles:

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

This reconciliation anticipates the eschatological gathering of all nations or peoples to Israel, through whom all nations or peoples will be blessed, thus fulfilling Gen. 12:3.<sup>21</sup> The foretaste of this gathering that we experience at the table of the Eucharist is in anticipation of the new heaven and new earth (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). The fact that we experience a true foretaste at the table as we participate in the Body and Blood of Christ is a sign that this eschatological vision is already partially present. Our participation in this reconciliation is articulated powerfully by Rowan Williams when he states:

...Because of the death of Jesus, God and the world are no longer strangers to each other, and thus too the world is not divided into communities that are forever strange to one another. Peace is practically identical with the condition of the new universe, the wholeness that now exists where before there were only fragments of human reality at odds with each other.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> For a lucid and sophisticated discussion of the 'mapping' of various social bodies onto the Body of Christ and the Church's role in this see Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London: Routledge, 2000), 152-260.

<sup>20</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979), 330-333.

<sup>21</sup> For an extremely helpful account and analysis of the Enlightenment Age creation of the modern notion of 'race' which is situated within a eucharistically-centered theology see the breathtaking work of D. Stephen Long, *The Goodness of God: Theology, The Church, and Social Order* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001), 197-204.

<sup>22</sup> Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 265.



So in the continuation of the work of Christ, which restores and carries forward the original unity of the human race as *imago dei*, in the Eucharist we participate in Christ's reconciliation of God and humans and humans to humans. In the action of Eucharist we are swept up into the act of God and made reconciling people in order to live out this Eucharistic reconciliation in the world. With this general theology of the Eucharist in hand we will now look more intently at what has already been alluded to here in general. Namely, we will examine the Eucharist as *action* and particularly the Eucharist as the action through which the Spirit sweeps us up into Christ's reconciling of God and humans and relation humans to one another.

*Caught up in the Reconciling Action of God: Eucharist as Symbolic Action*

This action is seen in the Anglican rite of Eucharist by the fact that the confession of sin involves the kneeling of our bodies; the passing of the peace involves the movement of bodies to one another and offering the peace of Christ to one another as well as reconciling if there be the need. The rite then moves to the table which is enacted through the bodily movements and words of the priest which ultimately lead the bodily movement of the congregation to the table to partake of the supper together, the consummation of communion in Christ and, therefore in one another. The liturgy then 'concludes' by not really concluding at all. Rather, the reconciling action of Christ in the Eucharist, into Whose action we have been incorporated, is extended out into the world for the priest sends us forth with the words "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." People respond "Thanks be to God."<sup>23</sup> We are sent forth as the Body of Christ in the reconciling *peace* of Christ to serve the Lord in the world. This service is action that includes being people of reconciliation.

Nevertheless, the Eucharistic living out of Christ's reconciliation is neither easy on a systemic nor a more intimate level. The past is often painful to recall, for it involves our complicity in systematic evil such as the history of racism in the United States or our participation in economic transactions that give us comfort and ease but are produced on the backs of people laboring for what the catholic tradition could never affirm as a just or living wage. It involves our scars from being betrayed by those whom we trusted and abuse that we have received. It involves love lost and our failure to live up to the commitments that we made to that loved one. It involves our betrayal of those who trusted us. It involves us in the memory of leaving our families, burning those bridges of relationship and destroying virtually all the gifts of relationship. And yet, as the Anglican Holy Eucharist: Rite Two calls us, we continue to confess the mystery of faith, "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again."<sup>24</sup> All of our painful yesterdays, all of our tomorrows, are placed within the context of this redeeming story. Christ has welcomed us into his resurrection life and made possible a life in which the last word is never our sin against God or one another, the last word is His forgiveness and reconciling Love. In other words, the last word is never death, the last word is Life, God's Life.

Jesus has been raised from the dead and a future of reconciliation is open to us as His Body, as humans, indeed His reconciliation holds a hopeful future for the entire cosmos. This is true

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<sup>23</sup> *Book of Common Prayer*, 340.

<sup>24</sup> *Book of Common Prayer*, 363.

because this is the Kingdom, the New Reality of reconciled communion that is instantiated in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and which is now continued by His Spirit in the action of the Eucharist. Participating in this Eucharistic living where brothers who have wasted everything as contemporary prodigals are reconciled to those they have hurt commands us as the Church toward an intentional mystagogy. We are called to mystagogy in which we, through pastoral moments in the liturgy such as instructing the people to use the passing of the peace as a time to reconcile with those in the congregation with whom they are estranged, and times of intentional, communal reflection on the action of the Eucharist tell one another the stories of the Scriptures, the Tradition, and contemporary stories of reconciliation. We must take the reconciled life seriously enough to stop eating for a time in order to cultivate the mystagogy, the practices of Eucharistic living in order to ensure that we are ‘discerning the body’ and truly living reconciled lives that reflect the reconciling love enacted in the Eucharistic meal.

### *Conclusion*

In this essay we have explored the Christian liturgical rite of the Eucharist as the central site for the continuation of the reconciling work of Christ through His Body, Church. We have investigated how our imagination of reconciliation is enacted and shaped by the symbolic action of the Eucharistic liturgy. In this reflection we have found that we must understand Eucharist as Spirit-empowered *action* in which we are incorporated into the Body of Christ. This *reconciling action* of God in Christ is then carried forth in and through us as the Body into the world as we live out Christ’s reconciliation in the various social formations in which we participate, whether that be the Body of Christ (which is our orienting center), the family, the market, the city, or the state. This being a reconciling people or living Eucharistically requires an intentional mystagogy within the liturgy and in communal reflection the liturgy and living the liturgy. It is not an easy task, but by the Spirit’s power may we be the Body of Christ, witnessing in our life together to a new reality, a Kingdom where prodigal sons and faithful daughters are reconciled, where sinners are forgiven, the hated are loved...and the dead are raised.

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## SHORT TERM MISSIONS RESEARCH PROJECT\*

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### *Introduction*

It is natural that Christians would have a desire to be a part of God's redemptive activity in the world and it is a sign of good health when a church is finding ways to use a variety of resources to the glory of God in the nations. This study seeks to explore three ways that people use resources in order to participate in missions [1] and it also seeks to explore the relation that new forms of giving may have on traditional giving of money. In many ways, people in churches today are very interested in giving to help others. Giving, however, is not limited to putting money in an offering for others to administer.

Patterns of giving amongst church members are often consistent with giving patterns outside of the church. In recent years, great media attention has been given to individuals who are donating large sums of their wealth to address global humanitarian issues. In the year 2000, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which has been reported to be the largest private funded foundation in the world was established with \$126 million endowed by Bill Gates. In 2006, Warren Buffet "announced that he would donate thirty-one billion dollars over a period of years, to a foundation named not for himself but for two other major donors – Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, and his wife, Melinda." [2] International organizations' validate the foundation's efforts, documenting their effort:

Since the Foundation was created, the Gates, who are considered to be the world's biggest philanthropists, have donated over 10.5 billion dollars towards global development and the fight against diseases such as malaria and AIDS, which are devastating the most deprived areas of the world. [3]

This movement toward global aid has grown as highly visible individuals such as Bono, Oprah Winfrey, Brad Pitt, and Angelina Jolene have donated large sums of money to global, humanitarian projects.

### *Targeted Missions Giving within the Church of the Nazarene*

The same trend of wealthy individuals giving to specific causes (and especially humanitarian causes) is evident in church and mission organizations as well. In the particular denomination of which I am a member (The Church of the Nazarene) two organizations have been formed in the past ten years to focus specifically on this type of giving. One organization is known as "Jesus Film Harvest Partners" which works with donors who focus their giving on "The Jesus Film Partnership" which provides equipment such as Jesus Film equipment, and other items which can be utilized for evangelism [4]. According to the 2007 published report of this organization, the income for that year was \$2.9 million, most of which came from donations [5]. A second organization, the Nazarene Foundation, was explicitly created with the objective to connect giving in the Church of the Nazarene with ministry opportunities through donations of cash contributions; as well as with non-cash assets contributions of real estate, bonds, stocks and life

insurance. This organization works with people who wish to prepare wills and long term financial planning. [6] The focus of the Nazarene Foundation is not toward a specific ministry such as the Jesus Film Harvest Partners, but rather towards people who wish to specify giving to any ministry, including humanitarian efforts administrated by the Church of the Nazarene.

People who have large investments to make, often prefer to channel donations to organizations like these instead of the local church. These sources of giving to Christian and secular related organizations are impressive. To date, within the Church of the Nazarene there has not been any substantial research which would indicate if this type of focused giving has adversely affected traditional giving to the local church as well as denomination, non-specified giving. If we were to use the giving to the World Evangelism Fund –WEF [7] (which is the general fund for supporting the World Mission Department as well as the International offices) as a measure, the total amount that comes into that giving has not substantially increased or decreased in recent years. There is, however, concern within the denomination that trends toward greater designated giving and greater giving towards local compassionate ministries will affect “WEF” giving that supports the infrastructure of the denomination. According to an unpublished report prepared by a commission in the denomination to study the relationship between designated giving and “WEF” support [8], there has been growing discontent in local churches toward the budget formula. The report points out “a new type of philanthropy that is being introduced by a new generation of donors.” The report also points out that the Church of the Nazarene since its beginning has worked to find a balance between unified giving and designated giving. The conclusion of the report was that the church should continue with a combination of unified and designated giving, thus giving multiple giving tracks across socio-economical lines. This report does not take into account the growing capital found in volunteerism. Additional research would benefit the denomination in understanding the real impact that focused volunteer giving could have to specific ministry needs.

### *Generalized Volunteer Efforts as “Voluntourism”*

Besides the impact of designated giving of finances, the impact of volunteer efforts on traditional giving and the impact that volunteerism does or does not have on the mission of the church is also a factor for the church. Although it can only be assumed that trends in society as a whole will also be seen in the church community, it would be a safe assumption to make. According to the Department of Labor, the greatest growth in giving may not be measured in cash and may not come from foundations or individuals such as Bill Gates. The greatest giving in the U.S., however, may come from middle class individuals who serve as volunteers.

The U.S. Department of Labor released a report in February, 2008 based on a sampling of 60,000 households conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau of Labor Statistics which estimated that 60.8 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September 2006 and September 2007[9]. The proportion of the population who volunteered was 26.2 percent. The median for this time period (September 2006- September 2007) was 52 hours that ranged from a high of 96 hours for volunteers age 65 and over to a low of 36 hours for those 25 to 34 years old. At the minimum wage during this time period of \$5.85 for an average of 52 hours of volunteer work per year, that represents \$18.4 billion dollars in labor donated to institutions and causes.

The qualitative affect of volunteerism on organizations as well as individuals is a primordial aspect of these trends. Whether this growing volunteer resource is being used to further the objectives of the organization or it is what some have called a form of “voluntourism” which unites motives of tourism with a desire to contribute or gain social capital is debatable. For any organization that utilizes volunteers, it would be of great benefit to exegete the context of volunteerism as a form of capital that if used correctly could result in a positive situation for the volunteer, the organization as well as the recipients of the service. For the mission agency, theological as well as missiological issues which deal with life transformation and culture are crucial. These aspects are not easily measured, but they have long term implications that make good stewardship of human resources all the more imperative.

What is the profile of those who volunteer? For those who work with donors, it is critical to know them well. It is just as important to know those who give their time. A few observations from the report of the U.S. Department of Labor:

- \* Volunteering was more prevalent among women (29.3 percent) than among men (22.9 percent), a relationship that held across age groups, education levels, and other major characteristics.

- \* Interestingly, persons age 35 to 54 continued to be the most likely to volunteer (30.3 percent), while 26.6 were teenagers, possibly reflecting volunteer activities in schools and churches. Young workers in their early twenties and persons 65 years or older had the lowest rates of volunteerism.

- \* Parents with children under age 18 were substantially more likely to volunteer (33.7 percent) for organizations focused on children than were persons without children of that age (23.2 percent). People without children were more likely to volunteer for organizations related to community service, hospitals, or social organizations. Volunteer rates were higher among married persons (31.9 percent) than among those who had never married (20.9 percent).

Individuals with higher levels of educational attainment volunteered at higher rates than did those with less education. Among persons age 25 and over, more than 4 in 10 college graduates volunteered compared with fewer than 2 in 10 high school graduates and almost 1 in 10 of those with less than a high school diploma.

A growing number of people are donating significant time and resources each year. In relation to mission organizations and especially related to Short Term Missions it is interesting that most volunteers give their time through an established organization or two. The main organization—the organization for which the volunteer worked the most hours during the year was most frequently religious (35.6 percent of all volunteers), followed by educational/youth service related (26.2 percent). Another 13.1 percent of volunteers performed activities mainly for social or community service organizations.

*Volunteering in the Church of the Nazarene*



If we were to use the Church of the Nazarene as a case study for comparison, we find some interesting parallels. According to the 2007 database for Nazarene Volunteer Ministries which works with volunteers who channel their volunteer activities through the denominational headquarters [10], a total of 11,359 people participated as volunteers for 21-90 days. With a total church membership of 642,523 U.S. members, this represents 1.7% of the church involved in denominational volunteer ministry. Even with the fact that people volunteer outside of the denominational structure, a substantial percentage of volunteer donation is made to efforts within the denomination which can be traced in these statistics.

The labor hours represented by these volunteers represents a total of 702,290 labor hours that were donated. At the minimum wage rate of \$5.85 an hour, that would total \$4.1 million dollars. The amount of money that came through the Nazarene World Mission headquarters for Work and Witness [11] alone, which is one part of short term mission in the Church of the Nazarene for travel and building supplies of these teams during the same time period, was \$7,215,998. That indicates that a conservative estimate is that donations through volunteer efforts in the Church of the Nazarene in 2007 were at least \$11.3 million dollars. The total amount of money that was raised through offering in local churches for the World Evangelism Fund was \$46,146,000 during the same time period.

#### *Olathe College Church of the Nazarene*

Considering these trends in the society as well as trends within the church, it may be surprising to find that Olathe College Church of the Nazarene's (OCCN) giving patterns prove atypical to these studies, and may indicate the profile of a local church remains unchanged by the moving giving trends of similar size churches, and U.S. society. The volunteer efforts at OCCN, perhaps, are also elusive and efforts outside of short term missions' (STM) specific efforts were not measured in this survey. The growing juxtaposition, however, of two dynamics of traditional giving and giving which is designated to specific projects and volunteerism can be seen in the case study research of OCCN. The system of giving to a unified denominational system through cash offering and a trend toward younger members to have a lesser value of that system can be seen in the research. The original intent of this case study was to explore the extent to which changing giving patterns; especially through volunteer efforts in Short Term Mission may have on a local church. The findings in some ways were quite distinct from my original expectations. The finding that short term missions, for example, had such a low profile in the church was quite surprising. The creative tension between general cash giving towards missions, giving to designated missions projects and volunteerism, however, are central to understanding the future of missions support in this church as well as any local church.

#### *Research Findings*

In this brief research project of OCCN I found the leadership of the Church, as well as a large percentage of the membership of the church, appears highly committed to the support of the denomination of efforts of the Church of the Nazarene including its missions program. One does not find, however, homogeneity in the church related to perceptions of missions or money. I found a dissimilarity in perceptions which was clearly defined by age group more than participation in short-term missions or other mission activities. In one interview, the High School

pastor indicated an intentional connection in the High School programs between personal faith and the missional aspect of the church. The students understand their role as Christians to be a part of God's mission. The traditional programs and structure of international missions in the church, however, remain "invisible" to students. [12]

The following is an overview of the primary findings of the surveys and interviews of my research:

1) One of my primary objectives at the beginning of this project was to explore the interrelatedness between short term mission participation and the awareness of long term missions that may lead to giving to mission agencies through denominational faith promise giving. In this particular study I found that there is no explicit connection that can be made between short term mission participation and missions giving. People tend to give the same whether they go on STM trips or not. This finding may be disturbing to some people since it is contrary to anecdotal belief in the Church of the Nazarene as well as other churches that short term missions results in people having a greater appreciation of the missions effort of the denomination which will result in greater understanding and support of long term missions. I cross referenced various parts of the survey to arrive at this conclusion:

a. The control group for this survey was people who had not gone on any short-term mission trips. When asked if long term career missionaries are crucial to the mission of the church and should be generously supported, there was a very slight variation between those who had gone on more than four short-term mission trips and those who had not gone on mission trips. 88.9% of those who went on more than four STM trips agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. 90% of those who had never gone on a trip agreed with this statement.

b. When asked how their personal giving to Faith Promise had changed in the past five years, 33.3% of those who had gone on more than four STM trips had increased their giving compared to five years ago. 41% those who had not gone on any STM trip had increased their giving.

c. When cross referencing the number of STM trips people had taken with whether they were currently participating in Faith Promise, 51% of those who had not gone on a STM trip participated in Faith Promise. The following graph gives the full result of this comparison, with a breakdown of the number of short term trips people had taken. The total number of people who responded that they currently participate in Faith Promise giving was 113 people. 58 of the 113 who participate in Faith Promise giving had not gone on any short term mission trip. 55 of the 113 who participate in Faith Promise giving had gone on at least one STM trip.

d. Amongst those who answered that they did not currently participate in Faith Promise giving, 42 of the 77 people who do not participate in Faith Promise giving had not gone on any STM trip. 35 of the 77 had gone on a STM trip and do not currently participate in Faith Promise giving.

2) Although there is an atypically low emphasis in short a term mission at OCCN, there is a very high desire to be involved in missions through participating in giving offerings, praying, and financially supporting short term missions as well as full time missionaries.

a. When asked if “the local church should give priority to Faith Promise giving, even in the face of financial crisis”, 74% of the 190 people surveyed, responded that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

b. When asked, “If I had funds for giving to just one mission project, I would...” 51% said they would invest in Faith Promise. 34% said they would invest in compassionate ministries. Only 15% said they would invest in Short Term Missions. Although Faith Promise at OCCN includes a large percentage to compassionate ministries, people responded strongly to supporting just compassionate ministries as opposed to “block giving” that included compassionate ministries as well as traditional, global missions.

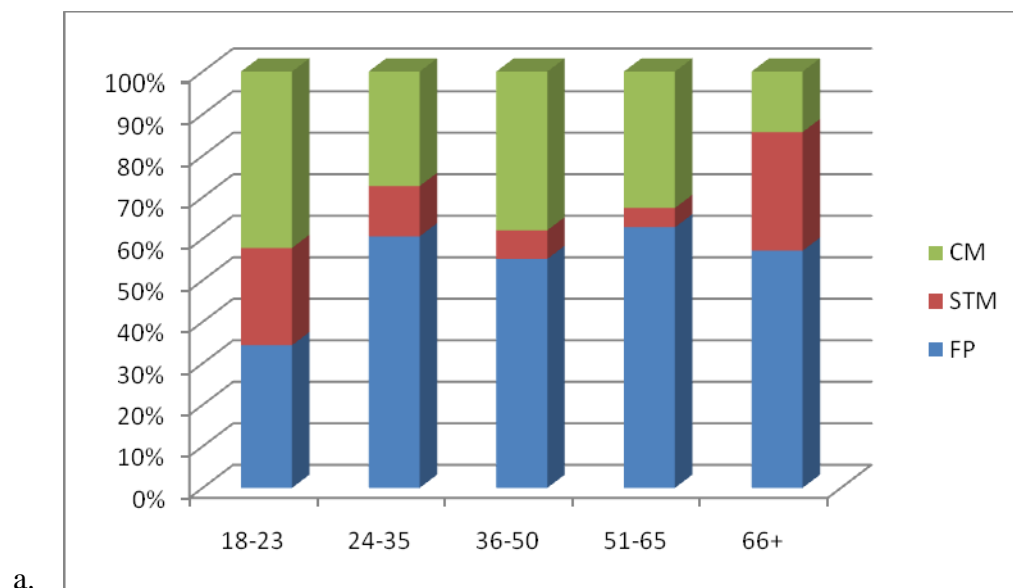
c. An interesting finding was that although as many as 74% of those interviewed stated that Faith Promise should be supported, even in times of financial crisis, only 59% self reported that they currently participate in Faith Promise giving. 27% percent of those surveyed, self reported that they did not participate in giving to Faith Promise or STM.

3) Age was the greatest indicator of missions giving and participation.

a. There was a balanced representation of age groups surveyed which allowed for a good comparison of tendencies according to age. The following graph shows the breakdown of the 190 people who were surveyed according to age:

b. 100% of those surveyed over the age of 66 self reported that they currently participate in Faith Promise giving. In contrast 23.4% of those between 18 and 23 self reported that they currently participate in Faith Promise giving. In the 24-35 age range, 45% of those surveyed self reported that they currently participate in Faith Promise giving, in the 36-50 age range, 93% participate and in the 51-65 age range, 81%.

c. When asked, “If I had funds for giving to just one mission project...” 57% of those in the 66+ age group answered that they would invest in Faith Promise, 28% of this age group said that they would invest in STM and 14% said compassionate ministries. The following chart shows the results of these questions, cross referenced with age group: (CM represents Compassionate ministries, STM is short term missions and FT is Faith Promise.)



Although this chart does not represent actual giving, it does represent perceived values that people have regarding mission giving. Further research which followed these values to real giving would be helpful.

4) The survey indicated that when it comes to global ministry, there is a greater value for participating in giving of finances more than personal involvement through STM. This survey measured primarily mission activity outside of the U.S. The survey did take into account that some people would include giving to compassionate ministries through volunteering time as well as resources to be interpreted as local involvement in mission. The survey, however, did not take into account the very large participation of members of OCCN in local outreach ministries. Through the interviews with the pastors as well as an overview of investments that OCCN has made in ministries in their own community and throughout the U.S., it is evident that this local church is highly invested in many ministries which were beyond the scope of this study.

5) Although there continues to be a strong tie to denominational missions, I found in the leadership interviews signs of the church considering having additional ministries which partner with specific international congregations and non-Nazarene ministries. These partnerships and ties to other ministries do not seem to have an adverse affect on denominational giving, but they do indicate a tendency that is found in other large, Nazarene churches to have a greater role in their missions giving and be to move to collaboration in the greater evangelical, Christian community.

### *Conclusion and Suggestions*

Because of various limitations, this research is tentative at best and is not meant to be conclusive in its findings. This case study research, however, indicates a need for further research within the Church of the Nazarene related to Short Term Missions. It also indicates a local church with a love for missions and a willingness to invest itself in others. The pastors of the church were open and anxious to participate in a study which would lead them to make decisions based on

research. The findings and conclusions of this brief study come out of respect and admiration for a church that has a history of investing in long term mission efforts which have in turn impacted many lives.

1) One could conclude that this case study and this particular local church are unique in showing that short term missions (STM) did not result in increased support of missions. In a more comprehensive research project, it would have been beneficial to develop research tools which measured the affect of STM on the participant before as well as after the trip. It would also have strengthened the study to measure giving beyond Faith Promise and STM. A further element to strengthen this research would be to follow up on the survey in order to clarify various findings. The findings in this study, however, are consistent with findings of several qualitative studies related to STM which have been conducted in the past ten years and which utilized various research tools that I did not include in this brief study which give validity to their findings. Kurt Ver Beek, conducted a qualitative case study research of nearly 200 North Americans who went to Honduras after Hurricane Mitch to build houses. Ver Beek found that these STMs trips results in very little lasting positive change in either the lives of the North American or the Hondurans [13]. Within Ver Beek's report he cross references his work with various other STM research projects and notes that of the 44 quantitative studies he reviewed, 13 followed research procedures that included a pre and post-test of standardized questions, a post-test with a control group, or triangulation of the respondent's answers with secondary data sources. In 11 of these 13 studies, Ver Beek found "little or no change in short term mission participants. "This is not to say that all findings are that STM makes no impact whatsoever on participants or "recipients." Undoubtedly there are many anecdotal examples of lives transformed and great impact being made. The findings of the Ver Beek research project was that greater impact was made when there were longer periods of time that there were joint work projects. For the purposes of this study, however, the findings were that 73% of the people at OCCN who participated in STM trips had been on trips of two weeks or less and that these experiences did not lead to measurable change in financial support of missions.

The unique aspect of this case study is that OCCN has very little emphasis on STM. In a comparison with a survey conducted by Robert Priest related to Mega Churches and missions [14], OCCN is consistent with the average of other mega churches in giving to global missions. The projected spending to global efforts through OCCN for 2009 is \$485,400 [15] which is within the median range for annual expenditure to ministries abroad in Priest's survey. The per capita giving of membership to missions for OCCN is \$150.88 which is also consistent with the median of mega churches researched by Priest. The comparison of OCCN and the mega churches researched by Priest are parallel at nearly every point, with the exception of short-term mission involvement. In the study that Priest conducted of 1230 mega churches, the average church had more than 100 people each year that went on international short term mission trips through the local church. In this survey, 18 of the 190 people surveyed had been on a STM trip in the past 12 months. The growing trend outside church work for individuals to be involved in volunteerism may be consistent with the involvement of members of OCCN in local ministries, although this study did not research that aspect. Every indication, however, would be that the low participation in STM through OCCN is atypical and that there may be reasons within the

leadership of STM efforts at OCCN that diminish the scope that volunteer efforts through international STM has and the number of people who choose to be involved in these efforts.

2) The findings of age being an indicator of mission giving and participation is somewhat difficult to measure at OCCN. Since the church is located on the campus of Mid America Nazarene University, many of the people interviewed who were 18-23 may have been college students who came from a variety of churches and were not consistent members of OCCN. The results of their responses, however, are not completely consistent with what would be expected from a university which has a very large emphasis in short-term missions. Although one could argue that giving correlates with expendable income, it would be helpful to conduct follow up interviews with those in the 18-23 age range as well as those in the 66+ age range to find why there is such a difference in mission giving as well as attitudes toward global missions.

3) The profile of the volunteer at OCCN is somewhat elusive since many of them take in on their own initiative to find avenues to minister. This is a healthy sign that attendees of OCCN have desire to live their faith in their community. One suggestion, however, would be to form a stronger emphasis on intentional volunteer efforts (especially for short-term mission efforts) which flow from the central mission of the congregation instead of a marginal emphasis that is dependent on personalities of individuals in the church.

4) The finding of OCCN even considering congregation to congregation partnerships with international congregations and youth projects which work with Christian organizations beyond the Church of the Nazarene is significant. This may indicate a larger tendency within other Nazarene Churches to work more collaboratively with the greater evangelical community, and a tendency for large congregations to have a more active role in missions in ways that have until now been considered the role of Nazarene World Mission. The impact of this on the local church as well as the denomination which has historically tied WEF giving with missions giving should be explored.

\*Adapted from David Wesley's online blog-site actsoneeight (accessed April 12 2008):  
<http://actsoneeight.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2008-01-01T00%3A00%3A00-08%3A00&updated-max=2009-01-01T00%3A00%3A00-08%3A00&max-results=6>

#### *Notes:*

[1] Resources include financial resources which are focused on traditional faith promise giving, designated giving to specific ministries, and volunteer resources which are primarily donated through short-term missions.

[2] Fleishman, Joel L. *The Foundation: A Great American Secret*. New York, Public Affairs, 2007

[3] "Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation." The Prince of Asturias Foundation available online (accessed July, 2008)  
<http://www.fundacionprincipedeasturias.org/ing/04/premiados/trayectorias/trayectoria807.html> (accessed July, 2008).



[4] “The JESUS Film Changes Lives” Jesus Film Harvest Partners available online (accessed July, 2008) <http://www.jfhp.org/>. This website states that every \$3 donated will result in a person making a faith commitment.

[5] “Celebrating Ten Years of Harvest: Jesus Film Harvest Partners 2007 Annual Report.” Jesus Films Harvest Partners available online (accessed September 2008) [http://www.jfhp.org/pdf/2007\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.jfhp.org/pdf/2007_Annual_Report.pdf)

[6] “Nazarene Foundation Annual Report 2007 Video.” Nazarene Foundation, 2009, available online (accessed September 2008) <http://www.nazarenefoundation.org/annualReport2007.php>.

This information comes from the 2007 report in a video format which does not provide specific income and expense reporting.

[7] WEF is the World Evangelism Fund to which Nazarene Churches contribute voluntarily. This fund is primarily understood to support the World Mission Division of the Church of the Nazarene, but it also funds the international administrative infrastructure of the Church including the international headquarters and higher education. The primary means of collecting WEF funds is through Faith Promise giving.

[8] Unpublished document prepared by a committee of the General Board of the church of the Nazarene to study how the church can most effectively respond to the growth of the designated giving in our church. This committee was formed by the action of the 78th General Assembly of the General Board, February 2001.

[9] “Volunteering in the United States,” News release, Bureau of Labor Statistics. United States Department of Labor (Washington DC) available online (accessed September 2008) <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/volun.pdf>

[10] Note that these statistics do not include those who volunteer through their local church, independent organizations or through a University unless those activities are channeled through the Church of the Nazarene International Headquarters..

[11] Work and Witness is a short-term mission program in the Church of the Nazarene which began in the mid 1970’s which focuses primarily on construction project.

[12] Wardlaw, Brian, personal interview. December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007. Mr. Wardlaw serves as the High School Pastor at Olathe College Church of the Nazarene.

[13] Ver Beek, Kurt Alan. 2006. The Impact of Short-Term Missions: A Case Study of House Construction in Honduras. *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XXXIV, no. 4, October: 477-99.

[14] Robert Priest unpublished report of research, 2008. Robert Priest surveyed responses from 395 Megachurches, defined as averaging 2000 or more for weekend worship.

[15] Hendrix, Ray. “How Faith Promise Monies Will be Appropriated: December 1 2008-November 30 2009. *Olathe College Church of the Nazarene*, available online (accessed April 12 2008) [http://ccnmissions.org/pdf/mission\\_faithprom/faithprom\\_stats.pdf](http://ccnmissions.org/pdf/mission_faithprom/faithprom_stats.pdf). Information taken from brochure used to promote Faith Promise giving printed by the church. This amount includes \$365,000 toward Nazarene World Evangelism Fund, \$30,000 to two Jesus Film teams, \$15,000 towards initiating new work in Sierra Leone, \$18,000 to global hunger relief, and various other designated projects.

# JOHN WESLEY'S FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES: FOUNDATIONS FOR HIS EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY PERSPECTIVES

Mark A. Maddix

## *Introduction*

John Wesley's life and ministry transformed 18<sup>th</sup> century England. His proclamation of the gospel of freedom from sin and social liberation revolutionized society. The Methodist movement was marked by structured small groups that helped people grow toward "holiness of heart and life." Wesley's theology was worked out in his ministry, much of which were shaped by his early life experiences. The intent of this article is to explore the formative experiences of Wesley's life and how they shaped his educational ministry perspectives. First, they included the informal influences of his family, especially his mother, Susanna Wesley. The discipline, nurture, and formation of these learning experiences shaped Wesley's view of Christian formation. Second, Wesley's formal education at Charterhouse and Oxford provide the context for Wesley's educational perspective and the development of small groups and spiritual formation. These educational experiences were formative in the development of his spiritual life and the rise of Methodism. Third, Wesley's non-formal learning experiences, including his trip to Georgia, the influence of the Moravians, and his Aldersgate experience, shaped and molded his theological framework and educational practices. These experiences are framed in a holistic educational framework that includes the following aspects of learning: informal, non-formal, and formal. An overview of these formative experiences provides a holistic framework for Wesley's educational perspectives (figure 1).

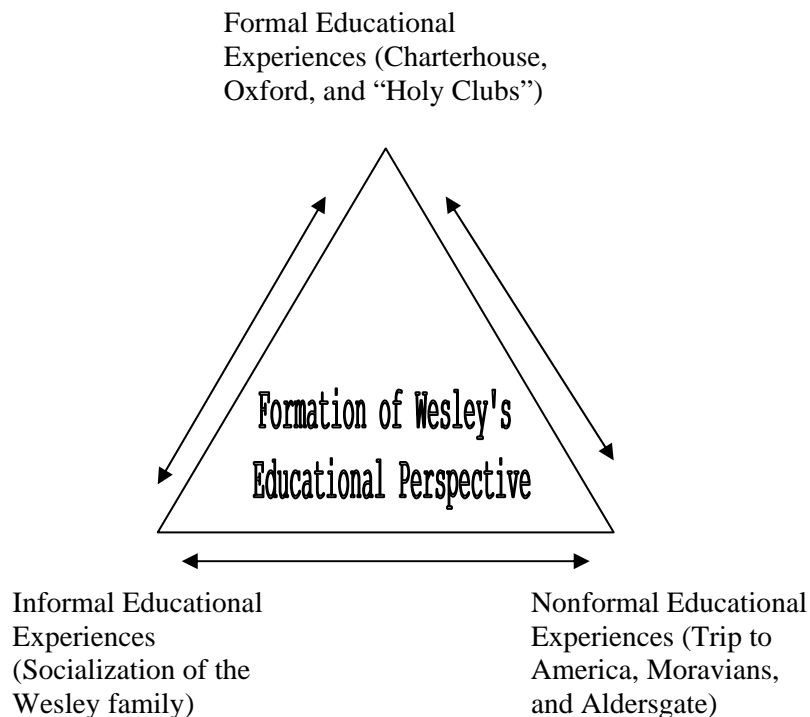


Figure 1. Formation of John Wesley's Educational Perspective

### *Wesley's Informal Education*

John Wesley was born on June 17, 1703. His life spans nearly the entire eighteenth century (1703-1791). His parents were Samuel and Susanna Wesley. The home in which John was born provided much of the impetus of his later educational interests. His father Samuel was an Anglican clergyman and a biblical scholar of considerable renown (Green 1961, 12). Samuel provided an excellent model of scholarship and instructed his children in the rudiments of liberal education and classical languages, so that several of the children could read the Greek New Testament before the age of ten (Henderson 1997, 34).

Even though Samuel was a good scholar, he was a poor hand at practical affairs and displayed an overly argumentative temperament. His mismanagement of money resulted in his being placed in debtor's prison for at least a few months and was a continual controversy throughout his life (Collins 1999, 11). The Wesley family was large consisting of nineteen children, of whom John was the fifteenth. Due to the poor medical practices of the day, nine of these children died as infants (Collins 1999, 11).

Much of Wesley's success as an educator can be traced to factors in his own training at home. In later years, when John and his brother Charles had the opportunity to instruct thousands of people in personal spiritual growth, they employed many of the same methods their parents had used (Henderson 1997, 34). Susanna's influence on the Wesley family was impressive. As a strong disciplinarian, she cared for children according to rule and method. She provided the primary education of her children and had a significant influence on the formation of John. Susanna would spend six hours a day at school where instruction was serious and thorough and where loud talking and boisterous playing were strictly forbidden. She refused to send her children to the local schoolmaster, John Holland, because of his notorious incompetence and wickedness (Prince 1926, 104). Susanna looked upon all her children as talents committed to her under trust by God, and although she desired that they should be versed in useful knowledge, it was her principle intention to save their souls.

After the near tragic death of John during the burning of the Epworth Rectory, Susanna made a habit of spending one evening a week with each child separately. She devoted Thursday evening to John, and was especially careful of him, seeing in his miraculous escape from the fire some deep providential meaning (Wesley 1872, 3:32-34). The near-death experience communicated to John and Susanna not only God's superintending providence, but also that the Lord had a noble purpose for John's life (Collins 1999, 14).

Susanna's educational practices were very influential in John Wesley's educational perspective. John Prince states, "He (Wesley) derived more of his convictions concerning the education of children from his cultured and pious mother, Mrs. Susanna Wesley, than from any other source" (1926, 104). During the absences from Epworth she continued family worship and held services Sunday evenings for her children and servants, which neighbors also joined, often packing the house. Susanna prepared literature and books suited for children's needs, finding none that met her severe requirements.

Susanna influenced John's theological foundations of his educational practices. Susanna's theology was to educate children into salvation. She provided nurture and care for John in the midst of a much regimented life. However, many scholars state that Susanna's child-rearing practices were not as severe as John's educational practices. She permitted her children

to play games of chance and skill, and cards, in the Epworth home (Prince 1926, 108). In regard to the balance of child-rearing practices and education of Susanna to her family, Body states,

Mrs. Susanna Wesley presents an example of patient yet firm intelligence, which is almost a complete justification of the home system. But she was an exceptional woman, with ideas on education carefully formulated, and the ten children who survived infancy claimed her untiring attention and industry for many years. (Body 1936, 38)

Susanna's methods of child rearing and education are displayed in *The Way of Education* (Wesley 1872, 3:43-39). *The Way of Education* was a letter written to John at his own request for the details of her method of raising children. It reveals a discipline strict and persistent, but withal calm and unhurried. It shows that Susanna governed by inflexibility, ruled nearly every detail of her children's lives--their physical growth, their play, their study and work, and their piety and devotion (Prince 1926, 114-115).

Susanna's influence cannot be overstated, for she modeled an approach to education that was adopted and practiced by John. Both Samuel and Susanna had strong religious convictions and strong personalities, with earnest and sincere hearts. It was their influence at the Epworth Rectory that instilled an uncanny seriousness in moral and spiritual affairs in many of their children with the good result that all three of their sons, Samuel Jr., John, and Charles, would eventually become priests of the Church of England (Collins 1999, 16).

Another primary influence on John Wesley's educational perspective modeled by Susanna was discipline. Wesley, following his mother, conceived the training of children to be a twofold task. One branch of it is discipline, the other reading (Prince 1936, 115). The disciplinary work is to correct the bias of nature by curing the diseases of nature. It is done chiefly in two ways, the one negative and the other positive. The growth of the disease should not be stimulated; it should not be fed. Also, parents should follow positive methods to root out the diseases and to heal them (Prince 1936, 115). Thus, the parent's task was that of a disciplinary. The religious instruction of children begins before this is accomplished, merging with it and supplementing it. The dawn of conscious religion should be coincident with the dawn of reason. The combination task should begin as early as possible. As Wesley stated,

Scripture, reason, and experience jointly testify that, inasmuch as the corruption of nature is earlier than our instructions can be, we should take all pains and care to counteract this corruption as early as possible (Wesley 1872, 7:459).

Susanna's emphasis on discipline is adapted by John and provides an important aspect to his educational perspective. As discussed above, it stems from their theological conviction of original sin and the need to "Break the will of the child." One of the key tenets of Methodism is clearly evident in the educational philosophy of Susanna Wesley: the management of the human will. Susanna considered the mastery of the child's will to be the decisive factor in character molding (Henderson 1999, 35). As stated above, the emphasis on personal discipline and spiritual submission became the essential component of John Wesley's educational strategy as he applied it, not only to children, but also to the urban masses that crowded into England's industrial centers.

However, life in the Wesley household was not totally oppressive. Susanna and Samuel showed real concern for the spiritual well-being of their children. Samuel influenced his sons through his own devotion to scholarship. Also, Samuel was a dedicated Anglican pastor who

influenced his sons with a high view of the sacraments and the Eucharist. In addition, the Wesley household embraced a number of different styles of devotional literature (Schmidt 1966, 1:63). Wesley was indeed indebted to his family. His childhood offered a strong blend of Puritan devotion and Anglican sacramentalism and churchmanship, all of which influenced Wesley's own educational practice (Monk 1966, 23).

Although John Wesley was the founder of Methodism, Susanna Wesley gave Methodism its methodical nature. She sought to bring every activity, word, and even thoughts and motives into a well-regulated regimen. She passed on to her children the discipline of time management and orderly conduct (Henderson 1997, 38).

### *Wesley's Formal Education*

In eighteenth-century England, many families sent their children to a private boarding school. The formation of Susanna and Samuel were limited to the first ten years of John's life, for then he entered the Charterhouse Boarding School at ten years of age (Wesley 1872, 2:209). Wesley's experiences at the Charterhouse were not always pleasant and influenced his view of childhood education (Mathews 1949, 25). British historian H. F. Mathews states that some of the restrictions at Kingswood may well have come from his own painful experiences at Charterhouse (1949, 25).

After graduating from Charterhouse, Wesley attended Oxford and received his bachelors' degree in 1724 at age of 21 after five years of competent study (Henderson 1997, 40). He demonstrated considerable proficiency in classical studies, but his greatest delight was logic and debate (Wesley 1872, 2:72-73). Wesley was not an exceptionally good student during a bad period of Oxford's educational history, particularly early in his career (Seaborn 1985, 45-51). However, it was at Oxford where Wesley's formal education was most influential. It was a place where Wesley experimented with "practical divinity" and developed an appreciation for both the classics and a wide range of devotional literature. This took place primarily through group formation (Henderson 1997; Blevins 1999; Harper 1983).

After his graduation from Oxford, Wesley began to contemplate ordination in the Church of England and to dedicate his life to the priesthood. His father had encouraged his technical theology with special emphasis on the study of biblical languages and the scholarly preparation that a clergyman might need. On the other hand, Susanna, reflecting her deeply ingrained Puritan training, urged him to give his primary attention to practical experiential divinity (Henderson 1997, 41). However, it was not the advice of his parents that impacted his decision, and young John began to examine his life to determine whether he could attain to such a high calling. It was the influence of Thomas 'a Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* (1426), Jeremy Taylor's *The Rule of Exercise of Holy Living* (1650), and *The Rule of Exercise of Holy Dying* (1651), and William Law's *Christian Perfection* (1726), and *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1728) that converted Wesley to a disciplined lifestyle. The classics had a profound influence on Wesley's life and thought:

I met with 'a Kempis's 'Christian Pattern.' The nature and extent of inward religion, the religion of the heart, nor appeared to me in a stronger light than ever it had done before. I saw that giving even all my life to God (supposing it is possible to do this, and go not farther) would profit me nothing, unless I gave my heart, yes, all my heart to him.  
(Wesley 1872, 2:366-67)

For Wesley, this marked a pivotal time in his life, one that would propel him into the future, one that he would never forget. Ken Collins states regarding this experience,

He (Wesley) realized that religion entailed not simply outward exercise and duty, but also the tempers and affections of the heart that it embraced not simply works of mercy, but works of piety as well, and that religion encompassed not merely external exercises but also inward devotion and dedication to God. All this and more Wesley learned as he prepared for ordination. (Collins 1999, 24)

John Wesley was ordained deacon of the Church of England on September 19, 1725 with the blessing of Susanna and Samuel Wesley.

Wesley became a tutor at Oxford after his graduation in 1729. As a Fellow at Lincoln College, he had been appointed to supervise and tutor a group of undergraduates in both academic and spiritual progress (Schmidt 1966, 2:196-197). John gave leadership to a group of undergraduates who were meeting four nights weekly for study of the classics and reading the Greek New Testament. In addition to their classical studies they practiced Bible reading, prayer, fasting, confession, and frequent partaking of the sacrament. In addition, the students served others by visiting the sick, elderly, and imprisoned, and provided clothing and financial aid where they could. It was through this formal educational experience that their disciplined manner was dubbed the names, “The Holy Club”, “The Bible Moths”, or “The Methodists” (Tyerman 1872, 69-70).

The holy clubs became very influential in Wesley’s adult education practices in his ministry. His educational theory and practices were being developed through these group encounters. He demanded a balance between both cognitive and intellectual stimulation as well as the practical application (Henderson 1997, 43). Wesley was concerned that these formal groups be laboratories for living out what had been learned in the context of their education.

### *Wesley’s Non-formal Education*

The previous discussion centered primarily on the influence of Wesley’s childhood experiences and the informal learning that took place within his family and during the early years of his life. The influence of Wesley’s formal education and the formation of the Holy Clubs are described. Both his family and education formed his theology and educational perspective. However, other primary influences were his trip to America, his encounter with the Moravians, and his Aldersgate experience. These non-formal learning experiences were instrumental in his overall theology and educational practices. Hence, these experiences were educational and provide a background for his order of salvation (*ordo salutis*).

John and Charles Wesley sailed for Georgia on October 21, 1735. John’s missionary journey was motivated by a desire to work out his own salvation and a longing to preach Christ to the Indians. Under the leadership of Colonel Oglethorpe, a friend of Samuel Wesley, John and Charles sought to accomplish these desires (Telford 1960, 74-75). However, their missionary work to the Indians was abandoned and John became the pastor of the English churches at Savannah and Frederica (Henderson 1997, 44).

During Wesley’s nearly three years of service in America (1735-1738) the influence of the Moravians had a crucial impact on John’s spirituality. He went to be a missionary to the Indians, but found that his experiences were a means to his own spiritual growth. It was through his conversations with the Moravians and their religious piety that Wesley was forced to question



his own spiritual condition. During their voyages in a succession of storms, Wesley, ashamed of his unwillingness to die, ask himself, “How is it thou hast no faith?” (Telford 1960, 78) The Moravians had made a significant impression on his life by their humility and devotion and their fearlessness in the storm. Wesley found that the Moravians were delivered from pride, anger, and revenge. They even sang in the midst of the storm, while the English passengers were trembling and screaming with terror (Telford 1960, 78-79).

One of the primary lessons learned from the Moravians was their belief that God granted individuals salvation instantaneously. At that moment, a person is born-again and could be assured of this divine favor by the subjective experience they called “the witness of the Spirit.”

Mr. Spangenberg, a Moravian minister from Savannah, ask Wesley a few questions. His first question, “Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?” Wesley was so surprised by the question that he didn’t know what to answer. The German observing this asked, “Do you know Jesus Christ?” He paused, and said, “I know He is the Savior of the world.” “True”, was the reply,” “but do you know He has saved you?” Wesley answered, “I hope He has died to save me.” Spangenberg only added, “Do you know yourself?” Wesley replied, “I do.” “But I fear they were vain words,” was his comment. Wesley’s heart calved to this faithful friend. He made many inquires about the Moravian Church at Hernhuth, and spent much time in the company of the German settlers (Telford 1960, 79-93).

John’s experience with Moravians and his missionary work were formative in his own salvation. He states in his journal,

It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity. But what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why (what I the least of all suspected), that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God. (Wesley 1872, 12:33)

Wesley now desired with all his heart to find that faith which would deliver him from fear and doubt, and bring the assurance of the acceptance of God.

Wesley’s interaction with the Moravians was very influential in his own spiritual journey. Wesley returned to England very defeated and disillusioned. He continued to preach in England, but became very dissatisfied with his preaching. He was ready to quit. He contacted Peter Bohler, a German pastor and Moravian, for guidance. Bohler encouraged Wesley to seek after an experience of instantaneous conversion as the solution to his personal dilemma.

Wesley searched the Scriptures trying to find the solution to his spiritual condition. After several weeks of relentless searching, Wesley found the answer. While attending a Society meeting in Aldersgate Street where someone was reading Luther’s *Preface to the Epistle of the Romans*, Wesley describes his May 24, 1738, experience in his Journal:

About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change, which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. (Wesley 1872, 1:103)

Wesley at once began to pray earnestly for his enemies and publicly testified to all present what he now felt.

Wesley's Aldersgate experience resulted in a "heart-felt" religion that became the central thrust and aim of Methodism. His preaching and educational endeavors were centered on the transformational power of the experience. The influence of the Moravian's focus on instantaneous conversation was foundational for his doctrine of sanctification and "holiness of heart and life."

### *Conclusions*

Wesley's early life experiences were critical in shaping his faith and his educational ministry practices. The influence of his family, especially his mother Susanna shaped his view of education and Christian formation. His formal educational experiences at Oxford shaped intellectual pursuits and his understanding of group formation, through his participation in the "holy clubs." His experience with the Moravians shaped his theological understanding of sanctification as an instantaneous act, and his Aldersgate experience resulted in a religion that included the heart as well as the mind. The influence of these informal, formal, and non-formal experiences shaped Wesley's educational practices later in his life and ministry.

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POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF GENETIC FACTORS  
ON SIN, SANCTIFICATION, AND THEOLOGY

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*Abstract:*

Emerging evidence in both the scientific and medical literature seems to indicate that several addictive behaviors some Wesleyans traditionally have recognized as sinful may be linked to mutations in specific genetic sequences. Although this does not necessarily indicate a cause-effect relationship, it does raise interesting questions regarding the nature and inheritance patterns of these behaviors. Genetic predispositions toward alcoholism, smoking, drug abuse, and gambling have all been suggested. Schizophrenics are more likely to commit petty crimes and assault than the general population. Some research supporting a genetic link for homosexuality has been in the literature in the last several years. This paper will explore the theological implications of this genetic research by raising important questions for Wesleyan theologians to consider: To what extent is an individual culpable for sin influenced by genetic factors? Should genetic predispositions change the church's view of sin? If we learn to manipulate genes, will "genetic sanctification" be possible?

*Presuppositions (Burt)*

When writing on a topic as potentially controversial as the possible genetic origins of sin, as a scientist, I should probably start out by stating a few of my presuppositions about both science and faith. By doing this I hope to set a certain framework around the biology that I will present while setting the stage for the material that Keith will address shortly.

1. While I believe that reductionism is not the best way to pursue science, it does provide certain insights, that when placed in proper context, give us valuable information about the world around us. For example, studying the specific genetic defects present in a cancer cell may allow us to understand the origin of that specific cancer, but it will not allow us to understand the complexities of the disease's impact on the person from whom the cell was isolated. Indeed, we may be able, by a reductionist approach, to treat the cancer and save the patient – but at what cost to the patient? What quality of life? What side effects? What relational effects? Humans are complex biological, emotional, and spiritual beings and a reductionist approach to genetics provides limited information about only one of these three aspects of humanity. What I will argue here is that genetic predispositions (genes) and the protein structures they code for can have an impact (subtle or overt) on the emotional and spiritual domains of our humanity.
2. While I am not a genetic determinist when it comes to behavioral traits – I may, occasionally, wander close to that view long enough to point out that our genetic

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and epigenetic make-up influence our choices and behaviors in ways that we are only beginning to comprehend.

3. I am a firm believer in the idea of free will. I do not believe that we are pre-programmed automatons, walking through the motions of a robotic predestined universe. I do not see God as puppet master, but as someone who wanted a reciprocal relationship with humans so passionately that he was willing to risk the possibility that they might reject him.
4. I am also a firm believer in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform a life – no matter what the genetic predisposition.

I suppose there are many other things I could mention in my list of presuppositions, but for this paper, these four should be adequate.

Now, on to the first topic of this presentation: *Do our genes cause us to sin?* Is there any evidence that humans carry genetic material that might influence them to violate the laws of God as presented in the Bible and interpreted by the church? I will begin our discussion with a brief review of basic genetic theory before moving to a discussion of some specific behaviors that many Christians would call sinful – addictive behaviors like alcoholism, and drug abuse – and then turn to more overtly sinful behaviors like crime and homosexuality.

#### *Background: DNA and the House – An Analogy*

To understand any of this we must understand something of the central dogma of biology: DNA – RNA – Protein. Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) is a particular kind of chemical capable of storing vast amounts of information in a very small location. By way of analogy, think of DNA as a hard-drive copy of a blueprint for the construction and maintenance of a very large, very complicated house (the cell). Right away, things get complicated because the central room in the house has two non-identical copies of this hard-drive blueprint that are competing with each other to be read by the builders of your house.

DNA is far too large to be read in its entirety by the builders of the house. So, small sections (genes) of the blueprint are copied and sent out to the builders. These small copies of genes are called RNA and each RNA contains only enough of the blueprint to make a small part of the house (cell). The actual structure of the house is made of another material called protein.

Think about a house for a minute. Is everything in the house made of the same stuff? No, of course not. Houses are made of metal, plastic, drywall, wood, stone – all sorts of things. Your cells are no different; they are made of a variety of building materials (proteins, lipids, carbohydrates, ions, etc) and each component has an enormous number of possible designs. In the cell, the blueprint (DNA) contains the designs for about 30,000 different proteins. Some are structural, like the wood studs that most houses have in their walls, and some are more functional like a doorknob.

Having two different blueprints can be both a blessing and a curse. For example, you get two different kinds of doorknob designs to choose from. You can either make them in roughly equal

amounts in each room, or you can choose to use one over the other. Sounds like a nice design feature doesn't it... but wait, there's more! Let's say one of your doorknobs doesn't work properly. It is possible to completely turn off that section of the blueprint! In the cell, this epigenetic<sup>2</sup> change is called methylation. Once methylated, a gene is completely inactive – that style of doorknob can no longer be made.

Finally, when your cells divide the entire blueprint must be copied. This is no small feat; there are over 3 billion letters in the blueprint that are copied one letter at a time. Needless to say, mistakes are occasionally made and the results can be inconsequential, beneficial, or disastrous – depending on the mistake<sup>3</sup>. The ability of DNA to be changed is the basis for all of the biological diversity that we see around us<sup>4</sup> – and it gives humans many strange looking doorknobs.

### *Do our Genes Pre-dispose Us to Sinful Behaviors?*

It is not my goal to argue whether this behavior or that behavior is sinful. I will leave that to the biblical scholars and the theologians (perhaps Keith would like to shed some light on that). In this section I will talk about the published evidence that *seems to indicate*<sup>5</sup> a genetic link to addictive behaviors, violent crime, and homosexuality.

#### *Addictive Behaviors:*

Early studies of addiction to alcohol focused on the pleasure centers of the brain and the genes that regulate the pleasure response. 15 years ago a variation in OPRM1, a gene coding for an opiate receptor (pleasure response), was implicated in about 15% of people with alcohol addiction. We all carry all carry this gene, but in some people the shape of the protein it codes for is slightly different (a different style doorknob). When a person drinks alcohol it stimulates the release of a group of chemicals called endorphins. These endorphins, in turn, attach to the opiate receptors in the brain and stimulate a pleasurable feeling. In the brain of a person carrying the altered form of OPRM1, the endorphins stimulate a response that is both stronger and longer

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<sup>2</sup> Epigenetic literally means above the genes. Indeed, this is what the change appears to look like at the molecular level. Bases that make the DNA molecule have carbon-hydrogen (methyl) groups added to them thereby changing their appearance from the “top”. These methylated genes are no longer used for making RNA and proteins.

<sup>3</sup> Mutation in the DNA is a tricky thing. Mutations are fairly common and most do not result in any substantial change in the way a cell operates. We have enough extra DNA that acts as insulation against mutation, and the code itself has a certain redundancy/degeneracy.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to carrying the information necessary to make proteins, plants and animals need two things out of their DNA – stability and instability; stability from the point of view of the individual and instability from the point of view of the species. The ability to adapt and change to environmental pressures is central to our understanding of biology.

<sup>5</sup> Scientists are very good at using words like “seems to indicate”. Everything we do in science is a prediction about the world around us that is based on certain theories and statistical probabilities. Scientists must be cautious and err when they make pronouncements about biology with too much certitude.



than what the rest of the population experiences<sup>6</sup>. In other words, the shape of the doorknob allows the door of pleasure to remain open for too long. These people are addicted to feeling *really* good. Their use of alcohol feeds the good feeling and they are prone to use it to excess. Dozens of studies have been conducted comparing families with significant numbers of alcoholics in them to families without alcoholics. Among the most robust is a study published in the journal *Addiction Biology*<sup>7</sup> that compared the genomic DNA of 2310 individuals from families of alcoholics to 1238 individuals from control families. In this paper, Edenberg and his colleagues at the Indiana University School of Medicine were able to demonstrate strongly significant correlations between alcoholism and at least three clusters of genes: GABA receptors, ADH genes, and the gene for the muscarinic acetylcholine receptor, M2. Perhaps the most significant was one of the GABA receptor genes called GABRA2. At present over 31 mutations (called SNPs in the literature<sup>8</sup>) are strongly associated with alcohol dependence, one of them has a P value = .000000022 (.01 is normally considered significant). Carrying a mutation in the GABRA2 gene causes the individual to be at significant risk of developing alcohol dependence in their lifetime.

#### *Crime and genetic indicators:*

Crimes are committed for a variety of reasons – poverty, lust, power, greed, to name but a few. Can we add bad genes to the list? In a paper published by Per Jensen in the Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry<sup>9</sup> the answer maybe, yes. In this work, Jensen compared crime rates in individuals suffering from Huntington's disease (a single gene disorder) to unaffected relatives and the general population. He found that men who carried the Huntington gene were several times more likely to commit violent crime, seven times as likely to be arrested for drunken driving, and twice as likely to commit any of the types of crimes studied. But this observation is by no means the end of the story. Several genetically associated mental diseases like schizophrenia and major affective disorder have been correlated with an increased risk for the commission of crime. Indeed, one need look no further than the Marion county jail to determine that crime must be linked to one prominent genetic marker – the Y chromosome.

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<sup>6</sup> Markus Heilig *Triggering Addiction – Molecular biology teases out two distinct forms of alcoholism*. (2008) The Scientist.

<sup>7</sup> Howard J. Edenberg, et al *Variations in GABRA2, Encoding the  $\alpha 2$  Subunit of the GABAA Receptor, Are Associated with Alcohol Dependence and with Brain Oscillations*. (2004) American Journal of Human Genetics.

<sup>8</sup> A SNP or single nucleotide polymorphism is a point mutation in a particular gene. Our DNA is loaded with SNPs and they are responsible for most of the diversity that we see between member of the same species.

<sup>9</sup> Per Jensen, Kirsten Fenger, Tom G Bolwig, Sven Asger Sørensen, *Crime in Huntington's disease: a study of registered offences among patients, relatives, and controls*. (1998) Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychology.

## *A gay gene?*

Since the 1980's several papers have been published suggesting a link between homosexuality (particularly in men) and genetic factors. The majority of the data point to 1.) Familial inheritance patterns, 2.) Genetically correlated twin studies, 3.) Birth order/number of older male siblings, 4.) Hormonal influences *in utero*, and finally certain 5.) Genes<sup>10</sup>. In a highly controversial paper, Dean Hammer<sup>11</sup> reported that there might be an altered form of a gene on the X chromosome that was associated with homosexual behavior. Hammer's hypothesis has been both confirmed, and confounded in the literature. Leading to a certain amount of confusion regarding his work. More recently, genome-wide analysis of homosexual and heterosexual men has revealed three additional loci of interest. However, we have no solid evidence in humans... yet.

But, what of other species? Recently, a gene has been identified in *Drosophila* that codes for a glial amino acid transporter. Mutations in this gene result in an increase in homosexual behavior in the affected individuals indicating that the strength of glutamatergic synapse interactions may play a role in same sex attraction<sup>12</sup>. Fruit flies are not humans – but they often do provide valuable information about human genetics. A quick scan of the human genome reveals that there *is* a human orthologue to the drosophila gene – thus far, no one has published a human study of the glial amino acid transporter known as *gb*.

While none of these evidences are completely compelling on their own, when viewed together we begin to see a pattern emerge. For *some* sins there *might* be an underlying genetic relationship. Correlation does not always indicate causation, but the signs are there – time will tell.

## *Can our genes be modified to alter behavior?*

So you carry a gene or two that predisposes you toward sinful behavior. Does carrying that gene doom you to a life of addiction or other sinful behavior? Do your genes predetermine your behavior? Are you predestined to sin?

While carrying a mutation in a gene like GABRA2 places an individual at increased risk for becoming addicted to alcohol, the expression of these genes is rather plastic throughout life. It is **not only** the presence of a gene that determines the trait; it is the **expression** of that gene which really matters. At times we make more or less of the genes we carry in the DNA. We will,

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<sup>10</sup> Qazi Rahman. *The neurodevelopment of human sexual orientation*. (2005) Neuroscience and Behavioral reviews.

<sup>11</sup> Brian S. Mustanski & Michael G. DuPree, Caroline M. Nievergelt & Sven Bocklandt, Nicholas J. Schork & Dean H. Hamer. *A genomewide scan of male sexual orientation*. (2005) Human Genetics.

<sup>12</sup> Yael Grosjean, et al. A glial amino-acid transporter controls synapse strength and homosexual courtship in *Drosophila*. (2007) Nature Neuroscience.

occasionally, turn certain genes off completely or turn them down<sup>13</sup> to a level that they no longer affect us. Altering the structure of a gene and thereby altering its expression by natural or pharmacologic mechanisms is known as epigenetic change.

Several studies now indicate that epigenetic changes throughout life impact the expression of genetic material. Usually, the expression of a gene is guided by pre-programmed cellular factors like developmental stage. For example, there are several hundred genes present in the DNA of every cell that are only expressed during fetal development. These genes appear to govern things like how long your fingers grow, where your lungs are located, and what sex you are. Expression of these *fetal* genes in *adult* somatic cells often results in diseases like cancer.

But, there is a growing body of evidence that things in our environment can result in epigenetic changes to the DNA. Make no mistake; these are physical changes to the DNA molecule resulting from interactions with the world around us. Recently at a meeting of the American Psychological Association, Stephen Suomi and his colleagues reported that macaques carrying a polymorphism (mutation) in a specific serotonin transporter were much more likely to experience anxiety and antisocial behavior when raised with peers carrying similar mutations. However, when individuals carrying the mutation were placed in family groups – communities that reinforced good social skills and behaviors. Not only did their behavior change – so did their DNA<sup>14</sup>. The mutated genes were heavily methylated and no longer expressed. In other words, *nurture changed nature*. Not surprisingly, there is a human orthologue to this macaques gene.

One wonders whether epigenetic changes in gene expression or genetic regulation might account for a specific interaction between body and spirit. Could God save a person from their genetic predispositions by altering their epigenetic makeup? Several intriguing possibilities exist, but I shall leave those to my colleague, Keith Drury.

#### *The potential influence on theology (Keith)*

Dr. Webb has outlined potential developments in genetic research that could influence on how we think about theology. It is now my job to conclude this joint paper but outlining some potential influence these discoveries—if they persist—may have on future theological discussions, particularly if we discover a material/biological propensity to certain sins and the possibility of genetically altering a physical propensity to sin if we find it.

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<sup>13</sup> This concept is not widely known outside biologist circles, but the expression of genes we carry is highly regulated. It is as though there were a series of rheostat dimmers on our genes so that expression can be adjusted ever so finely.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that this was an oral presentation and has not been published in the peer-reviewed literature yet. Similar papers have appeared, but not with this specific kind of correlation. The greatest change in behavior was in individuals that were heterozygous for the affected gene.

## *Biological Propensity to Certain Sins*

First, if we discover a material/biological propensity to certain sins a number of new considerations surface concerning a wide variety of subjects from original sin and anthropology to our hope grounded in the resurrection and anticipation of view of the future.

### *Original Sin*

Such a discovery may have the greatest influence on our doctrine of original sin. The doctrine of original sin (at its most basic understanding) proposes that humans have an inherited propensity toward sin inherited from the original fall of humankind.<sup>15</sup> Most Christian thinkers have seen this propensity to sinfulness as “spiritual” rather than a physical inheritance. A firm discovery of a *material* inclination toward a certain sin (or all sin) would shift the Christian theologian’s thinking from the spiritual to the physical.<sup>16</sup> If Original Sin were shown to have genetic influences theologians would be pushed more into the material world to explain why humans seem inclined toward sin. Theologians would probably revisit the monistic leanings of Jewish thought seen in the Old Testament—a kind of “non-reductive physicalism”<sup>17</sup> when explaining original sin. A possible positive effect could be a more holistic understanding of humanity and sin rather than our present bifurcated spirit-and-body approach. However, such a discovery would not be earth-shaking to Christian theology. In some ways discovering a genetic inclination to a particular sin (or even *all* sin) would merely tell us one way we inherit original sin—though it would amplify the physicality of it.

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<sup>15</sup> Original sin is different from actual sins in that it describes the state of humans as inclined toward evil. Actual sins are thoughts, words and deed a person commits as the effect of the “proneness” toward sin, or original sin. The Old Testament provides hints beyond the story of “the fall” in Scriptures including Psalm 51:5 and Psalm 58:3. The New Testament (especially the Apostle Paul) is clearer in describing this inclination toward sin in Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:22. Islam and modern Judaism do not offer this teaching along with some Christians who follow the thinking of Pelagius (fourth Century BCE) who believed that humans were not inclined toward sin but could choose themselves and could choose good without God’s intervention. The Third Ecumenical Council—the Council of Ephesus in 431, rejected Pelagianism establishing original sin as firm orthodoxy even since though periodically there emerge theologians who follow more closely along the Pelagianism line of seeing humanity and born neutral.

<sup>16</sup> Interestingly many preachers in the “American holiness movement” did appear to treat original sin as a “thing” in their style of preaching—depravity as *something* that God could remove or “eradicate” from humans by a miraculous act of entire sanctification, though most holiness preachers and theologians today have abandoned that approach as juvenile and are more likely to teach the proneness to sin as a wholly “spiritual” malady with “spiritual” solutions.

<sup>17</sup> “Non-reductive physicalism” treats the physical seriously, giving it a major role but stops short of reducing humanity to flesh alone or seeing the body as the *exclusive* factor. This line of thought recognizes there may be other factors (e.g. human will) that also may contribute to whole makeup of humanity. Should an actual material propensity to sin be confirmed in research theologians will be talking more with people like Indiana Wesleyan University’s Keith Puffer who has been thinking and studying this subject for years.

## *Monism*

Such a discovery might affect our anthropology perhaps promoting Monism. Many Christian thinkers, philosophers and anthropologists have seen humans as made up of three “parts:” spirit, soul and body, a *tripartite* being. Others have seen humans as *bipartite*—we are made up of body and spirit/soul. *Monism* sees humanity as a single indivisible part—a human cannot be fully human without a body. Monism has seen a recent resurgence among evangelicals including Joel Green, a New Testament scholar, recently at Asbury Theological Seminary. Recent discoveries in brain research have seemed to fortify the physicality of things we formerly thought were only “spiritual.” If we discover a physical link in the inclination toward sin, monism may become a more popular approach to anthropology or our doctrine of humanity.

## *Resurrection of the Body*

Such a discovery might also increase our interest in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Christian orthodoxy teaches that all human beings will be resurrected at some future time. The Apostle’s Creed concludes with the final two statements, “I believe... in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.” The pagan belief during the time of the early church was that the immortal soul went directly to the afterlife when a person died. Most considered the material body as evil so escaping it was the only way to purity. The first Christians argued against this “spiritual heaven of spirits-without-bodies” and taught that the human *body* would one day be resurrected like the body of Jesus was resurrected. Modern “Sunday school Christians” have tended toward the spirit-goes-to-heaven-immediately approach of the first century pagans more than the orthodox doctrine of the resurrection of the body. They have opted for the “absent from the body-present with the Lord” which seems like a more comforting thing to say at funerals. If we discover a greater role in the physicality of humanity there will likely be a renewed interest in the “least believed doctrine in the Apostle’s Creed”—an actual future resurrection of the body. The more we discover humanness is tied to the body and not just a spirit that inhabits a body, the more likely we will be to investigate how the *body* might be resurrected so that a full human could enter “life everlasting.”

## *Eschatology*

A discovery like this could also affect our eschatology, or doctrine of the future. If we find that what we formerly thought was “all about the spirit” is actually also about the body theologians may rethink our view of the intermediate state between death and resurrection. What happens to a person when they die if they cannot be a “real person” apart from the body?<sup>18</sup> We might

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<sup>18</sup> The notion of the “immortality of the soul” or a “detachable soul” is not automatically a required orthodox doctrine of Christianity though among current popular belief it is almost universal. N. T. Wright and others have doubted the idea of a body-less soul and some theologians have suggested that a person is not a person without a body thus a resurrection of the body is necessary for humans to be fully a person in eternity. If we discover that “more things are physical than we thought” it may nudge popular Christianity to highlight the classic historic orthodox teaching that our *bodies* will some day be resurrected. The doctrine of the resurrection

become more inclined to suggest some sort of “soul sleep”<sup>19</sup> to describe the intermediate stage between death and resurrection. Or we might propose continued existence until the resurrection in some sort of a temporary body God gives us until the resurrection.<sup>20</sup> These are some of the more prominent areas theology might ponder if these discoveries become firm.

### *Genetically Altering Sin*

Discovering the possibility of genetically altering a physical propensity to sin if we find it also raises several fundamental questions on the nature of salvation and the Christian life.

### *Sanctification*

Such a discovery would have a significant impact on our view of sanctification. If we were to discover that there is a genetic proneness to some sins (or even to all sin) and that these genes could be altered so that a person could be “cleansed” of the inclination to a sin we would likely expand our view of sanctification. Sanctification is the Christian doctrine of how God helps us put off sin and put on righteousness, becoming more like Christ. It is not a doctrine of a few “holiness” denominations but an orthodox doctrine of Christianity from the Church Fathers like Augustine through to virtually every Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox

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of the body however, raises all kind of “modernist” questions. We ask, “If I am destroyed in a fire and my cells go up in smoke, how are the cells of my body going to be recovered and all put back together again?” Or, we ask, “What if someone was eaten by a shark and their cells become absorbed into the cells of the shark—how will these cells be raised?” Since the body is constantly being renewed, we ask, “Which cells and atoms will get raised again, the ones in my body at death or a sampling of cells from my entire lifetime?” We wonder how many cells God would need to recreate our “body” from scratch. These modernist questions have persuaded many to simply dismiss the whole notion of resurrection. Many have dropped down to the sub-Christian view of the resurrection of a *soul*, excluding the bodily resurrection. Then again, we have recently witnessed how cloning can grow a duplicate body from a single cell of a donor body so the notion is not seem so far-fetched today than it was 50 years ago—even for human scientists to accomplish, let alone God.

<sup>19</sup> “Soul sleep” is the idea that the soul is unconscious between the death and resurrection and time passes unconsciously like it passes when we are sleeping. Roman Catholics teach the soul is judged immediately after death (though a temporary stay in purgatory finishes up the purification for heaven). Popular Protestant belief is similar to the Roman Catholics (excepting the Purgatory part) though theologians have tried (mostly unsuccessfully) to persuade Christians of importance the resurrection of the body. Eastern Orthodoxy teaches that the soul inhabits a kind of “abode of the dead” until the final resurrection of the dead, where the dead “rest in peace.” John Calvin rejected “soul sleep” and tended toward the Eastern Orthodox view. The resistance of moderns to accept the resurrection of the body may also be an indicator of our faulty view of the body as being evil which may be a larger question of an anthropological error.

<sup>20</sup> The theory that God may grant us a temporary physical house at death and before the resurrection may actually be a good theory though this is one of those ideas that get dismissed when its detractors label the idea with a derisive term like “rent-a-body.”



theologian today. We have tended to see sanctification as a wholly “spiritual” action performed by God in us to enable us to change. When a person is trapped by a “besetting sin” like pornography, drunkenness or homosexual behavior we usually urge them to seek God’s changing grace so they can be “delivered” through a wholly spiritual transaction. What if they could simply get their genes altered? Instead of going to the altar they could go to the doctor? Overcoming sin and adding virtue to our character has largely been a domain of religion more than medicine in the recent past. Could science in the future provide a route to sanctification that once was largely the domain of religion? Might even future medicine provide the “entire sanctification” we once thought was purely a miraculous act of God?

To me this offers the most interesting possibilities for future inter-disciplinary exploration. How would theologians respond if we could alter a person’s genetic makeup so they were no longer inclined toward sin or so that they would be naturally inclined toward love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and temperance? Would such genetic sanctification “count?” Or would you say these people were character-robots? This is the area for the most fruitful inquiry in the coming decades. If we actually discover there is a genetic inclination to sin (or to virtue) and if we discover ways to alter this make-up what would theologians say?

The evidence is not yet firm, but if they become convincing we at least already have a model for dealing with them: *physical healing*. Most of us believe God can heal a person physically. He does not always heal but God *can* heal and sometimes does. Yet we also believe God heals through medicine as well. In fact we “count” this as healing too. To most of us it is not an either/or proposition—God can heal instantaneously and miraculously but God also heals through the God-ordained use of medicine. In the doctrine of providence we believe God has already provided cures and we are to go find them in nature and apply them to sick people. There are certain molecules which combined can relieve suffering, pain and bring health back to sick people. We say we “discovered” these cures and we are right—they are already here by God’s great love through providence—our job was to find them.<sup>21</sup> Thus healing is not a proposition of God *or* science but God *and* science... and even God *through* science.

So, if we discover a way to alter a person’s inclination to a particular sin by altering their genetic makeup theologians might consider such a discovery similarly to how they view penicillin or the truths of psychology and counseling—God given gifts that help persons find wholeness. If a Christian goes through a year’s counseling sessions and comes out a godlier person we Christians do not say, “God was not needed—counseling did it all.” As Christians we believe God uses medicine and counseling to heal us and bring us to wholeness just like he might use a trip to the altar. If we discover ways to alter genes to make godlier people I suspect we will say something similar.

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<sup>21</sup> The doctrine of providence is perhaps one of the most critical theological ideas underlying a Christian approach to science and research. If God has provided in the universe everything we need to bring healing and end suffering for humanity our task is to practice the best science we can in order to discover what God has already given us.

### *Concluding cautions*

Finally we offer a few cautions as a conclusion to this paper before we open up to a larger discussion and your questions and comments. Here are four concluding cautions for us all:

1. *The evidence is not yet complete.* Our paper is ahead of the curve on this subject. We know this because we pitched the same paper to a theological society who was not ready for it yet. (so we are delivering it here.) There are some indications that some inclination to sin could be genetic but the findings are not yet final—thus our paper is still in the realm of conjecture. First studies are sometimes/often wrong and so we should not jump too quickly to conclusions, though we can certainly discuss them as possible issues of the future.

2. *We must stay humble.* Even if these early indicators prove to be true we should be wary of assuming that we might banish all sin through genetic manipulation and usher in the millennium ourselves. Science has been here before. Penicillin was a wonderful discovery but new strains of bacteria and viruses have mutated and new diseases like AIDS have emerged. We have great medicine yet we still have disease and death. If an inclination to sin is genetic it may be possible that new inclinations to sin might mutate as fast as we conquer the last ones.

3. *An inclination is not a license.* Even if we discover that some people are genetically inclined toward drunkenness or adultery or homosexuality this proneness is not a license to sin. Most of us would admit to a proneness to one sin or another—but we expect ourselves to restrain our sinful desires and do not grant ourselves the “right” to sin just “because God made me this way” any more than we accept cancer as God-given.

4. *Resist reductionism.* If we do discover a genetic proneness to sin it would not mean automatically that genetics is the *only* factor in sinning, after all Adam fell in the garden and Lucifer fell from Heaven. There are a variety of factors influencing sinfulness besides the flesh. If these discoveries continue and become convincing we will find that physical factors are stronger than we thought. This would not eliminate all other factors. Most of us believe there is a human will and there are spiritual beings that are factors—there is a real Satan and real spiritual forces in an unseen world and these also play into the equation. A person with absolutely no inclination toward sin can still be tempted by the “world and the devil” even if there were no temptation from the flesh.

Finally, we conclude with a personal word. The greatest discovery for the two authors of this paper is not about genetics and theology at all, but is the value we have found from interdisciplinary discussions. The two of us from different discipline have been exploring these matters for more than 9 years in three different semester-long reading groups and over several *hundred* hours of discussions together. Our greatest findings have not been in biology or theology but in the good that can result when people from different isolated disciplines bring their own discipline to the table and seek connections together. It has been one of the highlights of the last few years of our teaching here at Indiana Wesleyan University. Amen.

# What Makes Theology “Wesleyan”?

Sarah Heaner Lancaster

Catherine Keller

Donald A. Thorsen

Dennis C. Dickerson

Charles M. Wood

## *Abstract*

In an address to the 1982 Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, Albert C. Outler outlined an agenda for what he called “Phase III” of Wesley Studies, proposing a slogan for Methodist theologies: “Back to Wesley and his sources, and then forward—with his sense of heritage and openness to the future as one of our models.” Subsequently, much work has been done in the area of Wesley Studies to illumine Wesley and his sources. This has led to questions about the possibility of, and need for, what might be called a “Phase IV” of Wesley Studies—moving beyond Wesley Studies *per se* to apply the results of research in the area more broadly to the constructive theological work that is now being carried out in the life and thought of the body of Christ (and not only in those church traditions having a historical connection to John and Charles Wesley). Some theologians use Wesley and Wesleyan themes in their work, but they may or may not self-consciously identify themselves as standing in the broad Wesleyan (or Methodist) tradition. Some make specific reference to or use of the theology of John and Charles Wesley in their own constructive theological work; others do not. The panel discussion presented here, from a Wesleyan Studies Group session at the 2008 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, focused on the question of whether a “Phase IV” of Wesley Studies can yet be discerned by addressing the question “What makes theology ‘Wesleyan’?”

## *Introduction: Sarah Heaner Lancaster*

The Wesleyan Studies Group (WSG) of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) began meeting in 1984 (with roots in a roundtable discussion and consultations from 1981 through 1983). Only two years before, in 1982, Albert C. Outler had delivered an address entitled, “A New Future for Wesley Studies: An Agenda for Phase III,” to the Seventh Oxford Institute of Methodist Studies in which he had summarized the state of scholarly research on John Wesley and sought to set an agenda for future research.<sup>1</sup> Outler described “Phase I” as focusing primarily on the link between John Wesley and Methodism, done by and for Methodists. This research treated Wesley as a “hero” for a particular Church, and it was often “denominationalistic” and even “triumphalist in tone.”<sup>2</sup>

As denominationalism began to be replaced by an ecumenical spirit, scholarly studies of John Wesley underwent a shift into what Outler described as “Phase II.” Scholarship in this phase saw Wesley in a wider context than simply Methodism, and it began to probe specific areas of his thought. By reducing Wesley’s “hero” status within Methodism, though, and opening the question of his place in larger Christian history, scholars were faced with the question of whether he deserved to be remembered as an important figure in Christian history at all. “Phase III” then, for Outler, needed to be a period of positioning Wesley in his context so that his place in the larger backdrop of Christian history could be seen more clearly, and Outler hoped that by doing so, his theological descendants would be able to see more clearly Wesley’s relevance for new times and places.

The WSG, then, began at a time when a particular vision for Wesley studies had been articulated clearly and persuasively. In its formation, though, the WSG did not restrict itself to John Wesley. The title “Wesleyan” rather than “Wesley” was intended to be broad enough to encompass other influential people in this stream of history who shared the last name but who were not John (for instance Charles and Susanna). It was also intended to include research into figures who did not bear the name “Wesley” at all, but who contributed significantly to the movement begun and nurtured by the Wesley brothers. Recognizing that this movement produced groups and Churches that were not

<sup>1</sup> The entire address may be found in M. Douglas Meeks, ed., *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), pp. 34–52. It is also posted on the website of the Oxford Institute for Methodist Studies (accessed April 14, 2009): [http://www.oxford-institute.org/meetings/1982/04\\_1982\\_Outler.pdf](http://www.oxford-institute.org/meetings/1982/04_1982_Outler.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Outler, “A New Future for Wesley Studies,” p. 37.

always called "Methodist," the term "Wesleyan" could be extended even to the study of groups that had roots in Methodism but had achieved their own status and independence from Methodists. The WSG did not restrict its study of any of these groups or figures to the field of history. Sessions at AAR were intentionally planned to encourage multi-disciplinary study. With this approach, the WSG has thrived for more than twenty years, and has been the launching point for much important scholarly work in the field of Wesleyan Studies.

At the 2007 meeting of the AAR, the first session of the WSG prompted discussion that led to the panel presentations recorded on the following pages. A few of the papers at this session had moved beyond research about what a figure from the past had thought into proposing in their conclusions some constructive suggestions for how the ideas under discussion should be thought of in our own time. Respondent Richard P. Heitzenrater noted with a reference to Outler's 1982 address that with this constructive turn Wesleyan Studies showed signs of moving into "Phase IV." The members of the WSG Steering Committee, which is responsible for setting the program each year, were interested in taking up this idea of "Phase IV" in a panel discussion at the next annual meeting. The committee charged the co-chairs Sarah Heaner Lancaster and Rex D. Matthews with the responsibility of organizing such a panel.

One of the first questions that had to be addressed was how to instruct the panelists to approach their presentations. The designation "Phase IV" did not by itself give content to the kind of study that might be done, and Outler himself had not hinted at a fourth phase. Was there some way, then, to place the question of constructive work on the table that would, not only give the panelists guidance, but also provoke reflection and conversation? Matthews remembered a 1999 book review essay in *The Christian Century* by Philip Meadows entitled "Following Wesley" in which Meadows proposed several possible answers to the question "In what sense can Wesley be claimed as a source for theology today?"<sup>3</sup> Matthews summarized and adapted the categories from Meadows' essay and distributed them to the panelists as a possible framework for their preparation. The categories did indeed prompt ideas for the panelists, and some of them refer directly to the list that Matthews sent:

<sup>3</sup> Philip Meadows, "Following Wesley," *The Christian Century* (Feb. 17, 1999): 191–95. The article reviewed two related works: Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998); and Randy L. Maddox, ed., *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998). The latter volume is a collection of essays dedicated to Runyon.

### *Approaches to Wesley's Theology Today*

(1) ***Wesley is theologically prescriptive.*** This approach treats Wesley either as a model theologian whose thought is still constitutive of the theological enterprise, or as one who established specific orienting concerns and priorities which still lie at the heart of, or are centrally related to, the theological task today.

(2) ***Wesley is theologically instructive.*** This approach does not attempt to replicate Wesley's own message and method today; instead it attempts to discern primary emphases or "central trajectories" of his thought which can then be suitably recast for our very different times.

(3) ***Wesley is theologically supportive.*** This approach attempts to mine the substance of Wesley's message for theological insights that can illumine present concerns, whatever may be the source or origin of those concerns. By beginning with present concerns, looking back to Wesley for supportive theological insights and arguments, then returning to the present, this approach seeks to avoid the simplistic celebration of a glorious heritage and the anachronistic correlation of present questions with Wesley's past answers.

(4) ***Wesley is theologically suggestive.*** This approach tries to connect Wesley's thought with issues that go beyond the horizon of his own concerns. It typically begins by pointing out the inadequacy of Wesley's own thought and practice for our situation, but goes on to develop the incipient or apparently premonitory themes in Wesley that are relevant to the contemporary context. One variant of this approach attempts to extend the original logic and intention of Wesley's own thought so as to make them useful or applicable in the new context. Another variant uses Wesley's thought as a launching pad for a line of argument that is admittedly discontinuous with his own thinking.

(5) ***Wesley is theologically irrelevant.*** This approach may acknowledge Wesley as a denominational founder or heroic religious leader from the past who should be honored and celebrated as such, but does not find his theology to be relevant to or helpful with the concerns of the present. A variant may appeal to Wesley's thought in general ways as a warrant for claims or positions that are not directly or organically related to his own core theological concerns.

This list of categories places the focus, as Outler himself did, on John Wesley, but the question of constructive relevance need not be limited to him. Phase IV may begin with John Wesley, but it may grow to include other signifi-



cant figures in the tradition. (In fact, the 2007 Wesleyan Studies Group papers that launched this discussion were about Charles Wesley.)

The panelists of the 2008 WSG session in Chicago each provided distinct perspectives that can illumine the ongoing work of Wesley studies. From lived theology to formal analysis, from tentative suggestion to central ideas, theologians in the twenty-first century find fertile ground for reflection in John Wesley's work. If the field is indeed moving into Phase IV, these different voices may be demonstrating that the phase will have significant variations within it. When asked to do so, the panelists all readily agreed to revise for publication the opening comments they gave at the beginning of the session in Chicago, and the result is the composite text presented here (in an altered order).

First, **Catherine Keller** (Drew University), recounts her autobiographical discovery of Wesley through his influence on others. After some initial reluctance, she has developed a connection to Wesley that is fluid, like the oceanic imagery that she employs. In various ways, Wesley draws her reflection beyond himself to the depths of God.

Next, **Donald A. Thorsen** (Azusa Pacific University), explains how he understands his theology as "Wesleyan" even though he no longer belongs to or attends a Methodist-related church. Describing Wesley's thought as a "theology of holy love" Thorsen identifies six key concepts in this theology that particularly mark Wesley's concerns. These key concepts have instructed Thorsen's own theological work as a "Wesleyan."

**Dennis C. Dickerson** (Vanderbilt University) then brings to the conversation a perspective drawn from the rich history of African American Methodism and focuses on lived theology. He identifies social holiness as the mark of what is genuinely "Wesleyan" and therefore the point of contact for a reinvigoration of Wesleyan theologizing. He recalls specific witnesses to social holiness who can serve as models and inspiration for theology that is not simply academic, but that engages the world in a Wesleyan way.

In contrast to the approaches of his colleagues, **Charles M. Wood** (Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University) takes up the topic by engaging in a formal analysis of the term "Wesleyan theology" rather than trying to identify specific content that would be "Wesleyan." The broadly conceived tradition of the Wesleys may serve as resource, not simply for Methodists/Wesleyans but for the larger Christian community, it may serve as norm for Christians within the specifically Methodist/Wesleyan heritage, and it is also a body of work on which theologians can and should reflect critically. Theology needs to

consider the Wesleyan tradition in all three ways because all three tasks belong to constructive theological reflection.

What cannot be presented here is the discussion that ensued in Chicago, which was characterized by one long-time WSG member as “one of the best I have attended at the AAR in recent years.” That member continued:

The presentations . . . led to a fruitful discussion among many prominent Methodist and Wesleyan theologians present in the session. This fruitful interchange was due largely, I believe, to the fact that session was so well designed and prepared. While the plenary discussion was mostly among senior scholars, several young scholars posed penetrating questions. After the session I heard nothing but enthusiastic appreciation from the attendees. It was a moment in which the several generations of scholars genuinely affected and encouraged each other by honesty about the difficulties of being a Wesleyan theologian in the academy and the church. I had the sense that there was a profitable future to this discussion.

How Wesleyan theology will be constructed in the twenty-first century is still very much an open question, but this panel discussion provided a valuable start for an important conversation, and *Methodist Review* hopes to encourage the continuation of the conversation and contribute to its “profitable future” by presenting this article to its readers.



### Catherine Keller

When rivers return to the sea, carrying their sediments and nutrients, for good and for ill, they form a delta.

The sea is an excellent figure of the fullness of God, and that of the blessed Spirit. For as the rivers all return into the sea, so the bodies, the souls, and the good works of the righteous return into God. . . .

— John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, in *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 3rd. ed., 14 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 11:435–36.

In Wesley's trope of the divine ocean—the primal *tehom*—the delta is a zone of profound relationality.<sup>5</sup> Whether, however, all Wesleyan rivers return into Wesley is another question. I was honored and a bit surprised, given the narrow rivulet of my own contribution, to be invited to comment upon the question of Wesley's theological influence on or relevance to my work.

I find Rex Matthews's adaptation of Philip Meadows' five categories helpful for thinking about theological precedents.<sup>6</sup> A precedent is an antecedent that has become an exemplar, privileged over other antecedents to influence the present. Protestants are always a bit nervous about granting any theologian a privilege that belongs *sola* to *scriptura*. And when we do, as in the late-twentieth-century attempt to subordinate Methodism to a so-called ecumenical consensus forged at Nicaea and Chalcedon, it seems to require a catholicizing move in order then to funnel the self-designated orthodoxy through Wesley. Such moves render Wesley "theologically prescriptive," a category one inflection. To be a *precedent* is not necessarily to function in Matthews's sense as a *prescription*, which later offers itself as the sole or normative model.

I started at the opposite end, with category five: for me, Wesley was "theologically irrelevant." He didn't seem to me offensively patriarchal, just not particularly deep. I hadn't yet encountered his oceanic fullness. I came from an uncomfortably reformation-based background, and landed as a doctoral student at Claremont with passionate interest in John Cobb's philosophical Christianity but none at all in his Methodism. But when I came to Drew a couple decades ago and found myself living among some marvelous Methodists who happened to remain intentionally Wesleyan, I got interested in what they found interesting about Wesley. When Marjorie Suchocki delivered herself on the matter of "Coming Home: Wesley, Whitehead, and Women" at our Tipple Vosburgh Lectures in the late 1980s, I got it.<sup>7</sup> Yet my feminist resistance to any proliferation of paternal authorities—even when sororally mediated—was stubborn. But of course feminism is born in part from a wounded desire for good fathers, nurturers of the daughter's gifts. My heart was finally warmed to Wesley by way of a fortunate patrilineage: it was Cobb's *Grace and Responsibility*

<sup>5</sup> The Hebrew word *tehom* refers to those primal, oceanic depths churning "in the beginning" of the Genesis narratives. For a return into God's fullness and an exploration of creation not *ex nihilo* but *ex profundis*, see Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> See p. 10 above.

<sup>7</sup> Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "Coming Home: Whitehead, Wesley, and Women," *The Drew Gateway* 59/3 (Fall 1989).

that finally made theological sense for me of the hints I'd been garnering for years. Sanctification takes time!<sup>8</sup>

In this reading, Wesley fosters a practical theology of non-coercive grace in a panentheistic relationalism; in further contrast to the classical Reformers, it is open to the future, firmly counter-determinist. But like the Reformers, its primary precedent is scripture. Unlike them it is transdisciplinary, interested in the sciences of the time. It was experimental in institutional structure, active on behalf of the rights of the oppressed, even animals. This is the Wesley behind process theology, joining a vocabulary of grace, sanctification, and the Holy Spirit with that of initial aims, concrescences and the consequent nature of God.

Other streams of Wesleyan thought then began to matter more to me. I was struck by Wesley's importance to Jürgen Moltmann. My seminary teacher Doug Meeks' collaborations with Moltmann, and then his shared interest with Cobb in issues of global economics, now appeared to be rather more non-accidentally Methodist. Ted Runyon's triad of *orthodoxy*, *orthopraxy*, and *orthopathy* recaptured the contextualism of Wesley's theological practice for a new context, a new creation.<sup>9</sup> I became aware of Methodist liberation theologians like José Míguez Bonino and Néstor O. Míguez who were making use of Wesley as precedent but not as sufficient prescription.<sup>10</sup> I came to appreciate the work of un-Methodist Wesleyans like Tom Oord, who facilitates fertile conversations between Wesleyan, evangelical, radical orthodox and process theologies.<sup>11</sup> And I learned from theologian (and Drew alum) Michael Nausner, the postcolonial Wesleyan theologian in Germany.<sup>12</sup> Such variegated Wesley-

<sup>8</sup> John B. Cobb, Jr., *Grace and Responsibility: A Wesleyan Theology for Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, José Míguez Bonino, "Wesley in Latin America: A Theological and Historical Reflection," in *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism*, ed. Randy L. Maddox (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1998), 169–82; and Néstor O. Míguez, "The Old Creation in the New, the New Creation in the Old," in *Wesleyan Perspectives on the New Creation*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2004), 53–92.

<sup>11</sup> See Bryan P. Stone and Thomas Jay Oord, eds., *Thy Nature and Thy Name is Love: Wesleyan and Process Theologies in Dialogue* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> Michael Nausner, "Geistgewirktes Mit-Sein: Methodistische Ekklesiologie als Ausdruck globaler Verbundenheit," in *Ekklesiologie aus freikirchlicher und römisch-katholischer Perspektive*, Hrsg. Burkhard Neumann (Patmos Verlag: Paderborn, 2009). For a brief survey of the breadth and depth of Methodist thought, in addition to the works already noted, see M. Douglas Meeks, ed., *Trinity, Community, and Power: Mapping Trajectories in Wes-*

ans do not comprise a school or a party line, but my handle on a net holding strong amidst the conflicting currents of Methodism. It is the relationalism itself—with that prescient metaphor, the *connection*—that attracts me. It intertwines with the relationalism of the ecology, feminism and any theology of planetary responsibility.

In the famous passage cited by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as first usage of the word "react," Wesley enunciates a radically relational claim: "God does not continue to act upon the soul unless the soul re-acts upon God."<sup>13</sup> This reciprocity is couched in pneumatological language: God "will not continue to breathe into our soul unless our soul breathes toward him again. . . ." This inter-breathing Spirit echoes the oceanic rhythm of "return into God." This is not a quiescent but an activist spirituality. Randy Maddox observes "how closely Wesley ties the affirmation that grace is *responsive* to the insistence that it is also *responsible*—it is only as we react, that God acts more fully in transforming our lives."<sup>14</sup>

The saving grace is perilously resistible—dependent upon our free response for its actualization. Where synergy has been replaced by what we might call "monergy," the logic of a sovereign omnipotence predetermining our salvation pumps up the imagery of God as an imperial patriarch. Relationality in the Wesleyan synergy takes the place of a unilateralist monergy. So it is with Wesley's influence—it is not coercively irresistible but synergistically attractive.

When I appeal to Wesley, I am in category 2, being instructed by him. I don't remain there; often I am in 3, supported by Wesley, usually in 4, appreciating some resonance of his insights. I suspect this locates me not in Wesley Studies but in a supplemental version of the fourth phase of Methodism, glad for the hand in hand and the heart for heart. What would matter most to Wesley amidst the chaotic creativity of our present moment is not the return to Wesley but to the divine ocean—at any moment. Wesley still shapes a mighty delta.

I'll close with an oceanic psalm from the other Wesley:

*Wesleyan Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2000); and Joerg Rieger and John Vincent, eds., *Methodist and Radical: Rejuvenating a Tradition* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God," §III.3, in *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984—), 1:442. Cf. *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I*, §1.3–5, in *Works* 11:106–108.

<sup>14</sup> Randy L. Maddox, "Nurturing the New Creation: Reflections on a Wesleyan Trajectory," in *Wesleyan Perspectives on the New Creation*, 31; cf. 21–52.

Thou didst thy mighty wings outspread,  
 And brooding o'er the chaos shed  
 Thy life into th' impregn'd abyss;  
 Thy vital principle infuse,  
 And out of nothing's womb produce  
 The earth and heav'n and all that is.<sup>15</sup>



### Donald A. Thorsen

I have long called my theology Wesleyan, but I did not always do so. My earliest theological training occurred, growing up, in a Free Methodist Church. The denomination is an evangelical offshoot of Methodism, founded as part of the Holiness Movement in the nineteenth century. However, as a youth, I did not identify my beliefs, values, and practices as being Wesleyan, Methodist, or Holiness. Most people in churches do not care a great deal about theological and ecclesiastical monikers.

I attended Stanford University as a Religious Studies major and Asbury Theological Seminary for a M.Div., and both schools greatly expanded my theological worldview. However, when I attended Princeton Theological Seminary, I realized that I definitely disagreed with the Reformed traditions with regard to my beliefs, values and practices. Instead, I found myself drawn back to Wesleyan theology, and I completed my Ph.D. in Theological and Religious Studies at Drew University, where I focused on the theology of John Wesley.

If there is a particular word or theological concept one could use to describe Wesley's theology, then the words *holy* or *holiness* would seem obvious choices. In fact, I think that holiness embodies much of how Wesley conceived of God, God's loving relationship with humanity, God's offer of salvation—both for people's justification and sanctification—and how God wants to work through believers to transform the world into a more righteous, just, healthy, whole, and indeed holy place. Unfortunately, people nowadays—including those who call themselves Wesleyan—caricature holiness in ways that distort

<sup>15</sup> Charles Wesley, "Hymn to the Holy Spirit," 28 (1776) from *Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father*. See Michael Lodahl, *God of Nature and of Grace: Reading the World in a Wesleyan Way* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2004), 9f.



Wesley's understanding of it. I think that holiness can and should be recovered as a descriptor of Christian theology, especially among those from a Wesleyan perspective. The recent *Holiness Manifesto* represents a helpful restatement of holiness for the twenty-first century.<sup>16</sup>

As indispensable as holiness is to Wesleyan theology, I think that love represents a more essential descriptor of Wesley's theological and ecclesiastical legacy. I was strongly impressed by the primacy of love in Wesleyan theology after reading *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* by Mildred Bangs Wynkoop.<sup>17</sup> Wynkoop talks about how Wesley emphasized a Spirit-filled life, whose essence is love. She describes love as the dynamic of holiness in personal relationships. Those relationships include the need for holiness between people and God, people and themselves, and people and others—individually and socially. Wynkoop concludes with one of the most helpful descriptions that I have ever read of Wesley's understanding of sanctification and the perfection of Christian love.

Despite Wynkoop's insightful guidance in interpreting Wesley, I modify it. Rather than referring to "a theology of love," I prefer to talk about "a theology of holy love." Wynkoop, I think, would agree with the modification. The words holiness and love both need to be included in describing Wesleyan theology. Holiness includes emphasis upon God's righteousness and justice; love includes emphasis upon God's relationality and salvation. Holiness and love represent key foci within the entirety of Wesley's beliefs, values, and practices. Love still seems to have a place of priority in his theology, though love cannot be fully understood and put into action apart from holiness.

Given these preliminary comments, how can or should theology be described as Wesleyan? Of course, there have been many attempts to do so throughout church history. I do not presume to give the only or even the best description of what makes theology Wesleyan. What I can do is describe, in summary form, how Wesley affected my theology. Moreover, I can share key concepts that I consider helpful in encapsulating the essence of Wesleyanism.

Using the typology provided by Rex Matthews, I would say that Wesley is theologically *instructive* of my beliefs, values, and practices.<sup>18</sup> I certainly do not consider him *prescriptive*, but there are central concepts (themes, trajectories)

<sup>16</sup> Kevin W. Mannoia and Don Thorsen, eds., *The Holiness Manifesto* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 18–21.

<sup>17</sup> Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press 1972).

<sup>18</sup> See p. 10 above.

that I consider more than just *supportive* in dealing with the breadth and complexities of life. At the same time, I do not refer to Methodism as representative of my theology. Of course, I no longer belong to or attend a Methodist-related church, though I still describe my theology as Wesleyan. Methodism is *suggestive* for me, but it is not generally constructive for my theology. Occasionally I refer to my theology as Holiness-oriented, but only as found in contemporary expressions of it, for example, the *Holiness Manifesto*.

There are six concepts that I, at least, find instructive in calling my theology Wesleyan. The concepts are not exhaustive of Wesley's theology, and they certainly are not exhaustive of subsequent developments in Wesleyan, Methodist, Holiness, Pentecostal, evangelical, and other theological traditions that have drawn—to greater and lesser degrees—from Wesley. But these six concepts represent a constellation of theological ideas that signify more than the sum of the parts. At this time, let me briefly list them, along with systematic doctrines historically associated with the concepts. The theological concepts and doctrines are not identical, nor are they exhaustive of either the concepts or the doctrines. But in this presentation I like to be “methodical,” though the methodical nature of Wesley and the Methodists had far more to do with the Christian life rather than systematic theology.

(1) **A love-centered doctrine of God.** Wesley emphasized the love of God more than the sovereignty of God, characteristic of Reformed traditions and other Christian theologies. Although Wesley considered God sovereign, sovereignty does not preclude relationships with people that are genuine, reciprocal, and loving. Conceiving of God primarily in terms of love permeates other Christian doctrines, since the doctrine of God impacts all other beliefs, values, and practices. Even the doctrine of the Trinity reflects the loving, relational nature of God. Consequently, the nature and works of Jesus and the Holy Spirit should be conceived primarily in terms of love.

(2) **A Quadrilateral-centered doctrine of religious authority and theological method.** If the so-called Wesleyan Quadrilateral is a myth, as some critics of it have suggested, then it is a useful myth. A dynamic understanding of how Wesley affirmed the interdependent relationship between the primacy of scriptural authority and the genuine, albeit secondary, religious authority of tradition, reason, and experience encourages theology that is relevant, constructive, and effective for life and ministry. Of course, it is important to bear in mind Wesley's emphasis on the primacy of scripture. In addition, he functioned with a critical understanding of biblical interpretation and its applica-

tions to life and ministry, which reflects the use of the quadrilateral in interpreting scripture.

(3) **A synergistically-centered doctrine of humanity.** Although the image of God (*imago Dei*) may include many characteristics, people's ongoing freedom of choice (free will, or free grace, as Wesley implied) centrally represents their nature and potentiality. Although God's grace pervades all of life, facilitating people's freedom, they still need to act responsibly in synergistically partnering with God for salvation and the Christian life. Such freedom is incorrectly caricatured as Pelagian or semi-Pelagian. On the contrary, Wesley's views more closely reflected the semi-Augustinian views characteristic of Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican churches. Freedom of choice represents an aspect of God's image inclusive of all people, regardless of gender, race, culture, language, nationality, and other differences sadly used to divide, rather than unite people.

(4) **A holiness-centered doctrine of salvation.** God intends people to be saved holistically, renewing relationship between God and people, through Jesus Christ, and nurturing them, through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, toward holiness (or Christ-likeness, love for God and neighbor, etc.). Salvation involves a so-called right heart or experience of God (orthokardia, orthopathy, or orthoaffectus) as well as right belief (orthodoxy) and right action (orthopraxis). Wesley was hopeful—indeed, optimistic—with regard to the degree to which God works in the lives of people toward their entire sanctification, understood primarily as love for God and neighbor.

(5) **A "no holiness but social holiness"-centered ethics.** Although this quote is usually taken out of context, it nevertheless can describe Wesley's social consciousness and activism. There is no split between personal and social ethics. Ethics are relevant to the relationship people have with themselves, others, and God. There is no greater need for a social concept of ethics than there is today, which includes social advocacy as well as compassion ministries. Methodist churches in the Holiness Movement were leaders in social activism during the nineteenth century, just as United Methodism has given leadership in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

(6) **A "Catholic spirit"-centered doctrine of the church.** Of course, the church is also to be one, holy, apostolic, and proclaim the gospel in word and deed, but the inclusive nature of Wesley's "catholic spirit" inspires a universal understanding of churches and their ministries. A catholic (or universal, ecumenical) spirit should undergird the life and service of churches. Their service or ministries include, among other things, evangelism, discipleship, sacra-

ments, spiritual disciplines, study, activism, and ecumenism. In endeavoring to show love for others, Wesley advocated a holistic understanding of the church and its ministries.



### *Dennis C. Dickerson*

I bring to this discussion a perspective from African American Methodism. The concept and practice of social holiness constitutes an essence of Wesleyan theology that singularly identifies Methodist adherents and distinguishes them from others affiliated with various religious bodies. Although ministers and members in other sects are heirs to traditions for societal renewal, few can draw on a well articulated link between scriptural/spiritual holiness and social holiness. It is axiomatic that the scriptural/spiritual holiness that Wesleyan believers embrace must be lived out primarily in public spheres rather than in private devotional practices. Though these two elements are inextricably bound, they must be expressed within a witness and work aimed at realizing the “new creation.” Moreover, I contend that those who worry about the decline of Wesleyan theological identity or the disappearance of a specifically articulated Methodist way of theologizing and behaving might turn to social holiness as a point of re-entry to the writings and witness of John and Charles Wesley.

In 2000 Robert Thomas, Jr., an activist pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church who had been elected and consecrated a bishop in 1988, inserted in the *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* a crucial addition to the collect for the consecration of deaconesses. Bishop Thomas’s jurisdiction in the Midwest included St. Matthew AME Church in Detroit where the “mother” of the civil rights movement, Rosa Parks, served as a stewardess. Previously, Parks had been a stewardess at St. Paul AME Church in Montgomery, Alabama. As a stewardess, Parks helped to prepare the Eucharist each month; at the same time she was also serving as secretary of the local chapter of the NAACP. These were her roles when she spearheaded the now famous Montgomery bus boycott on December 1, 1955. There was a clear link between Parks’s understanding of her Eucharistic duties and her social responsibilities. Bishop Thomas theologized Parks as a stewardess and social activist and concluded that Wesleyan social holiness integrated these spheres of Parks’s Methodist being. Hence, Bishop Thomas, who consecrated

Parks as deaconess in the Michigan Annual Conference, proposed, with the concurrence of the AME General Conference of 2000, language that revised the deaconess service of dedication. The passage reads as follows:

It becomes the deaconess that she shall be pious, chaste, temperate in all things, modest, humble, industrious, and devout, as she is to serve the Church of God and to His praise and glory. Throughout the history of the Church, God has been pleased to call and qualify certain women for the gentle and holy service of ministering to the Church and the ministry. Such women were Deborah, Mary, the Holy Mother, Eunice, Lois, Priscilla, Lydia, and Phoebe. And in the latter days He has been pleased to own and bless the labors of Sister Sarah Gorham, *Sister Rosa Parks*, and many others. May the Lord bless and acknowledge these persons according as He has blessed the ministration of all holy women. May they withdraw themselves from all worldly cares and vocations and give themselves up entirely to the ministrations of the Church and to suffering humanity.<sup>19</sup>

The insertion of Parks's name in the company of Deborah, Mary, Eunice, and others recognized the Wesleyan link between scriptural/spiritual holiness and social holiness. Her Wesleyan witness in Montgomery became a paradigm meant to instruct others about the urgency of social reconstruction and its grounding in the Methodist theology.

Parks was not a singular figure in the social holiness sphere. James M. Lawson, Jr. was a major theoretician and activist in nonviolent direct action in the civil rights movement. An ordained United Methodist minister and a veteran pastor of congregations in Tennessee and California, Lawson emerged from a background in the AME Zion Church and in the Methodist Church's segregated Central Jurisdiction. He also drew vigor and inspiration from Methodist pacifist movements which included both black and white clergy. His attraction to Gandhian nonviolence built on these Methodist foundations which tied him to Wesleyan social holiness. There are similar testimonies concerning civil rights activists James Farmer, a founding father of Congress of Racial Equality, and Joseph Lowery, longtime head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Like Lawson, they were reared in the black Methodist religious culture of the Central Jurisdiction.

<sup>19</sup> *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2004–2008* (Nashville: AMEC Sunday School Union, 2005), p. 516 (italics added).



Like Parks, AME civil rights leaders Oliver Brown, the plaintiff largely responsible for the Supreme Court suit, *Brown v. Board of Education*, A. Philip Randolph, the labor leader and tactician of grassroots mobilization, and Archibald J. Carey, Jr., another benefactor of CORE and a major civil rights spokesman in Chicago, pursued a lived religion anchored in social holiness modeled in Richard Allen's activist ministry. Social holiness seems embodied in the social witness of Methodists who took seriously their faith and its impact in a temporal world poised for realization of the "new creation."



### Charles M. Wood

Among the questions we panelists were asked to consider were these: "Does use of the adjectives 'Wesleyan' or 'Methodist' serve to define or shape, or to limit or restrict, the scope of constructive theological reflection? In what ways is the theology of the Wesleys seen as authoritative or instructive for constructive theology today—or is it?"

I want to use these questions to address briefly what we might call the formal or conceptual rather than the substantive side of the issues we are given to think about. That is, rather than trying to identify distinctive Wesleyan theological content or a distinctively Wesleyan theological approach, I want to ask what putting the adjective "Wesleyan" in front of the noun "theology" might imply so far as "the scope of constructive theological reflection" is concerned. I will have three points, all predicated on regarding the work of John and Charles Wesley as *tradition*. By their "work" I mean to designate not just their varied literary output but their activity and accomplishments as a whole. The three points I want to make about some possible roles of this body of tradition in theological reflection will yield three distinct senses of the term "Wesleyan theology."

(1) As tradition, the work of the Wesleys is a resource for contemporary theological reflection, and "Wesleyan theology" might then be construed in one sense as theological activity aimed at exploring this resource and proposing ways of making use of it. Those pursuing Wesleyan theology in this first sense are likely to be affiliated somehow with Christian communities that trace their origins to the Wesleyan revival, and to see this work as part of their theological vocation in that ecclesial setting; but they need not be: they might, for example, be Christians of other traditions who for one reason or another have



taken a particular interest in this one. The concern here in any case is to discover whatever insights this body of tradition might have to offer on the issues with which Christian theology is presently concerned.

(2) This Wesleyan corpus is not only a resource for Christian theology in general and for Wesleyan and Methodist communities in particular; within many of these latter communities, it also has a normative status and function, or at least some part of it has. Some of this material constitutes explicit standards of doctrine in various denominations, while much of the remainder exercises a less formal but still influential "norming" role in one way or another. "Wesleyan theology" in a second sense, then, might be construed as theological activity aimed at understanding how these doctrinal norms are to be applied, and then applying them to the contemporary life and witness of the community. "Wesleyan theology" in this sense might undertake to discern to what extent some act of witness undertaken in the name of this community is in accord with its own principles; or, in a more constructive vein, it might attempt to propose ways of achieving that aim in the current situation, whatever that might be.

The distinction between these first two senses of "Wesleyan theology" is that while the first is an attempt to retrieve from Wesleyan tradition insights and possibilities that might be fruitful for Christian practice today, the second involves testing insights and possibilities for Christian practice (whatever their origin) with regard to their consistency with the community's Wesleyan identity. That is, it is concerned with answering the question, "Is this an authentically Wesleyan understanding of this matter?" or "What would be a genuinely Wesleyan position on this issue?" (In a more explicitly denominational context, the question might be, "Is this view consistent with our standards of doctrine?" or "What statement or action best expresses our doctrinal commitments on this subject?")

These two senses of "Wesleyan theology," and the two uses of Wesleyan tradition they involve, bear some analogy to the two main kinds of authority ascribed to scripture in post-Reformation Protestant dogmatics: causative authority (scripture's role in bringing us to the knowledge of God) and normative or canonical authority (scripture's role in adjudicating controversies as to what the church should be teaching). The mention of scripture conveniently brings us to the third point.

(3) Wesleyan "tradition" is abundantly clear as to its own provisionality. The Anglican Articles of Religion that Wesley affirmed and (in adapted form) commended to his followers clearly proclaimed their own accountability to scripture: "... whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not

to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.”<sup>20</sup> In his own writings, John Wesley frequently appeals to his readers to examine his claims in the light of scripture—and of various other considerations, a fact giving rise, for better or worse, to the notion of the “Wesleyan quadrilateral”—and to correct him where he is in error. This appeal is certainly at least a rhetorical device, and the degree to which Wesley himself was in fact patient of correction by others is a matter best left to historical investigation; but in any case the crucial principle is on record, in material that belongs to the doctrinal standards of most, perhaps all, Wesleyan denominations. Theologians affiliated with these denominations have some responsibility to make good on this: that is, not only to ask whether present or proposed statements and practices are in accord with our Wesleyan/Methodist doctrinal standards, but also to examine both those statements and practices and the doctrinal standards themselves with regard to their adequacy in the light of considerations that pertain to the validity of any Christian witness whatsoever. And so a third sense of “Wesleyan theology” follows: critical theological examination of the material that constitutes normative Wesleyan tradition. Here, the adjective “Wesleyan” points neither to a resource nor to a norm, but rather to the subject-matter under critical scrutiny.

If the first and second senses of Wesleyan theology involve, in different ways, undertaking a responsibility *to* this tradition, the third sense points to a responsibility *for* this tradition; that is, a responsibility to hold it accountable within a broader context of Christian theological inquiry. The first sense amounts to taking this heritage seriously and dealing with it fairly and honestly as a potential resource for the contemporary church. The Wesleyan theologian in this sense is responsible to the Wesleyan heritage in the same way that a reputable scholar in any field is responsible to his or her data. The second sense involves exercising a responsibility to the Wesleyan heritage for whatever is being said and done in its name. It comes into play whenever there is a concern to determine whether a particular claim, stance, or act is or would be “really Wesleyan.” The third sense is an act of accountability for the Wesleyan heritage: how adequate are the distinctive resources and commitments of this tradition to the task of bearing Christian witness? To what extent is the church of Jesus Christ—which, as the Westminster Confession remarks, can be “some-

<sup>20</sup> Article VI in the enumeration of the Church of England; Article V in Wesley’s enumeration; see *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2008* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2008), ¶103, p. 61.

times more, sometimes less visible"—visible in the various branches of the Wesleyan tradition? What factors in that tradition tend to promote, and what factors tend to impede, its participation in the life and work of the one holy catholic and apostolic church?

I believe these three senses of "Wesleyan theology" are compatible with each other (that is, not mutually exclusive) and that the enterprises they name can be, and often are, fruitfully interrelated in practice. At least, I find them so in my own work. Nevertheless, I do not ordinarily think of my theological work as Wesleyan theology, nor would I describe myself as a Wesleyan theologian. As a member of The United Methodist Church, I am more inclined to think in "United Methodist" terms than in "Wesleyan" terms. I am, or at least I aspire to be, a United Methodist theologian in something quite close to all three of the senses I have just given to "Wesleyan theology," and perhaps especially to the second and third senses. That is, part of my theological vocation as a member of this denomination is to participate in its ongoing effort to be faithful to its own doctrinal commitments, and part of my theological vocation is to participate in its ongoing efforts to test its doctrinal commitments.

It is my specific ecclesial location that makes "United Methodist" a more apt qualifier than "Wesleyan" for this particular effort, at least as I see it. To call myself a Wesleyan theologian would be likely to mislead my hearers either as to my denominational affiliation or as to my theological expertise, or both. Although I have taken "Wesleyan theology" as the subject of inquiry in these reflections in accord with our common theme, much the same points could be made—with some interesting and instructive variations—with other, more denominationally-specific, adjectives substituted for "Wesleyan." The variations might have to do in part with the ways different branches of the Wesleyan/Methodist tradition—United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, Free Methodist, and so on—tend to handle matters of doctrinal and theological identity and responsibility.

Even more interesting and instructive might be a comparison of some answers to the question "What makes theology 'Wesleyan'?" with some answers to questions such as "What makes theology 'Lutheran'?" and "What makes theology 'Reformed'?"



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## CHAPTER 3: TRUTH AND POSTMODERNISM

Thomas Jay Oord

Postmodernists reject truth.

At least that's what many Christians think. Type "Christian," "truth," and "postmodern" into an Internet search engine, and you'll find plenty of Christian apologists saying that postmodernism abolishes truth.

These apologists typically react to postmodernism by declaring that God *is* truth. They quote the biblical passage saying that Jesus is the truth. Or they contrast postmodernism with Biblical Truth (capital letters required).

But does postmodernism require rejecting truth?

A wide variety of postmodern traditions exist. So answering this question well is difficult. In this chapter, we briefly explore some central issues regarding truth.

### *The Loss of Certainty*

The story of truth in the postmodern traditions begins with a modernist: Rene Descartes. Descartes discovered that our five senses--sight, smell, touch, taste, sound--cannot give absolute certain knowledge about the world.

We all make mistakes. These mistakes often occur because of faulty sense perception. We think we see water on the roadway, for instance, but it turns out to be an optical illusion. We think we hear our name being called, but our hearing is impaired. We think we're tasting beef, but it turns out to be deer. Our senses are not foolproof.

Descartes came to believe that we cannot know with absolute certainty the truth about objects beyond ourselves. Certainty cannot be attained through sense perception.

It's hard to overestimate the impact of this loss of absolute certainty about what we can know through our senses. So much of what we consider true comes from sensory perception. And yet we have to admit that our senses are not 100 percent accurate.

One modern response to Descartes is to say that language gives us a certain foundation for knowledge. We can be certain about verbal statements that are logically coherent with one another. Various statements--often called propositions--claim to mirror reality faithfully or describe reality fully.

Some Christians jump on the bandwagon that propositions provide absolute certainty. We can have absolute certainty about reality, they say, if the dogmatic propositions we affirm rest on a certain and sure foundation.

The foundation many modern Christians adopt is the Bible. They assume that God inspired the writing of the Bible in such a way as to produce it error-free. These Christians insist



that biblical inerrancy and infallibility guarantee the Bible as a certain foundation for knowledge. Such a deduction defends Christianity from both infidels and modern critics.

Sadly, the modern project of biblical inerrancy collapses on itself. A close reading of the text reveals numerous inconsistencies. And the oldest manuscripts from which our Bibles come differ. Those who cling to the idea of an inerrant Bible must invent wild interpretations to reconcile these inconsistencies. Or they offer the worthless claim that the biblical autographs--which no longer exist--were inerrant. And when history, science, or literature contradicts the Bible, inerrantists are forced to reject this knowledge. They claim that the Bible is *the* book of all truth. It is the authority concerning all things religious but also all things economic, civic, historic, and scientific.

### *Extreme Relativism*

If our perceptions about the world cannot provide us with absolute certainty, if language cannot give certainty, and if the Bible is not a certain foundation, on what basis can we speak of truth at all?

Extreme relativists--including some who adopt the label "postmodernist"--believe we cannot be confident that some statements about reality are truer than others. The truth of any statement--for example, the sun is hot--is ultimately up to the individual or is socially constructed. Extreme relativism says that truth is whatever any person or group decides.

Extreme relativism has many problems. These problems lead other postmodernists to reject the idea that truth is completely dependent upon the individual or the group.

The first problem is that extreme relativism is inconsistent with itself. After all, extreme relativism says it is true that there is no ultimate truth. And yet extreme relativists sound as if they intend this claim to be ultimately true even if some people choose not to believe it.

The second problem with extreme relativism, say some postmodernists, is that it cannot be consistently lived. We all presuppose that some statements about the world are truer than others. The way we live reveals this presupposition. Our friendships, our court system, our agricultural practices, our marriage arrangements, and so on, all presuppose that some views are truer than others. We don't have to know all truth to know this.

Finally, extreme relativism flies in the face of a number of central Christian claims about the superiority and enhanced value of living a life of love. Even if Christians cannot know reality in its fullness, the Christian message seems based upon the view that some ways of living are better than others. And some statements about reality are truer.

### *Humility and Conviction*

Postmodern Christians can live faithfully between the absence of absolute certainty and the abyss of extreme relativism. This middle ground promotes both humility and conviction.

Postmodernists reject the idea that we can know with absolute certainty the full truth about reality. Absolute certainty requires inerrant sense perception. It requires a set of inerrant

ideas. Or it requires an inerrant interpretation of an inerrant source. Such inerrancy does not exist.

This lack of absolute certainty about the full truth of reality, however, is not bad news for Christians. After all, *faith* resides at the heart of the Christian message. Christians are believers not proposition defenders.

Faith is different from absolute certainty. But it's different from absolute mystery too. Faith need not be blind or unreasonable.

To believe is not to reject reason or evidence altogether. One can affirm a degree of confidence in the greater plausibility of statements, ways of living, or perceptions. And this greater confidence can foster reasonable conviction. Faith can be grounded.

A number of postmodernists affirm that what we regard as true extends well beyond verbal statements. Truth also has a livable, embodied element. It has an aesthetic element too. Truth is personal, communal, and even cosmic. Truth is multifaceted.

Postmodernists recognize that we cannot comprehend truth entirely. We see through a glass darkly. And this inability to be absolutely certain or to know reality fully should lead us to humility.

Pride still comes before a fall. But pride emerges not only when we retain full control of our lives but also when we think we have full and certain knowledge. We forget that the just live by faith. Postmodernism can foster the virtue of humble living.

In sum, postmodernists need not reject truth. But postmodernism reminds us that "we know in part." Christian convictions embraced in humility can help us live an abundant life in our emerging world.

### *Questions*

1. Do you feel threatened or encouraged about this chapter? Why?
2. How do we know things are true? What is the difference in believing the sun gives off heat and that God loves the world?
3. Can there be a relationship between faith and absolute certainty? Why or why not?
4. Is evidenceless or reason-free faith enough for us Christians or should we search for evidence, reasons, and even proofs for our beliefs?
5. How do you feel about rejecting both extreme relativism and absolute certainty?

### *Application*

In light of this chapter and its topics, how might you act differently? Think differently? Feel differently? Relate differently?

## CHAPTER 13 EVANGELISM IN THE POSTMODERN MATRIX

Dana Hicks

“Suppose you were to die today and stand before God, and he were to say to you, ‘Why should I let you into my heaven?’ What would you say?”

Over the years, I have used this question countless times in my spiritual conversations. You may recognize it as a crucial part in one of the most popular evangelistic tools of the twentieth century. It’s a diagnostic question used to determine whether a person knows the right answer to an ultimate question in life.

Like many who came of age in the 1980s, I was nurtured in a faith community in which canned sales pitches and thinly veiled manipulative invitations were used to get people to say a magic prayer. That prayer was believed to keep people from going to hell when they died.

Like many others, I memorized that pitch. I confronted people I barely knew. And I swallowed hard to bury that deep-seated intuition that this whole process felt off-kilter. Deep down, I felt I was saying something that was pretty much like, “What will it take to get you into this car today?”

The truth is, I care a lot about people. I really believe that life is infinitely better when I follow Jesus. I believe that evangelism is not just something I do to get another notch in my award belt. And yet in my evangelistic journey, the good news of Jesus became associated with a lot of anxiety.

In recent years, conversation--more than confrontation--has become the evangelistic trend among emerging church leaders. For many, evangelism is becoming more respectful, more empowering, and less manipulative. This is a good thing. But this trend is not without its unintended negative consequences.

Brian McLaren’s book *A New Kind of Christian* has a dialogue between Dan and Neo. And that dialogue includes this insight: “One of my mottos in life is that people are often against something worth being against, but in the process they find themselves for some things that aren’t worth being for.”<sup>13</sup>

So here is the dirty little secret about the emerging church: it’s often not very good at evangelism. For all its talk about being missional, the emerging church is generally a monolithic group of burned-out, white, middle-class, college-educated, young adults who are sick of the American expression of church. Somehow being against manipulative and inauthentic evangelism has meant being the kind of person who is insular and conspicuously silent about matters of faith.

When I was a rookie pastor, I became good friends with a man named James who oversaw the local chapter of Narcotics Anonymous. As a former drug addict, James had deep

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<sup>13</sup> Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 48.

compassion for those suffering from addictions of all kinds. That is why I called him when a guy named Larry visited our church.

“James, I have this guy who came to church. I think he might be a drug user. Can you meet with the two of us and give me some insight?” James quickly agreed and we set up a time for coffee at the local Duffy’s restaurant.

After brief introductions in a window booth, James awkwardly stirred his coffee and said, “So, Larry, when are you going to stop using?” Both Larry and I were stunned at James’s frankness.

“I’m not using,” said Larry. He smiled and shifted uncomfortably on the cheap vinyl bench.

“When are you going to stop lying to yourself and others?” James said without batting an eye.

Just as I was beginning to regret bringing James to this meeting, Larry dropped his head and began to confess his addictions. It was one of those rare moments of both truth and grace. James became a conduit of God’s grace to a broken man in desperate need of reality.

As we stood later in the parking lot, I said to James, “What was that all about?” To which James gave me words that have formed my way of understanding church ever since, “We don’t do people favors by ignoring their self-destructive behavior.”

Drug addiction may be an extreme example. But I believe that if we are serious about loving the people God has placed in our paths, it may mean more than just accepting them. It will likely mean having difficult conversations with people about their self-destructive patterns. Not conversations from a position of superiority but conversations in a spirit of love and compassion.

I think sharing the Good News means both accepting and affirming people as human beings. But it also means helping them escape their own self-destructive sin. Jesus’ words in John 8:11 to the woman caught in adultery illustrate this difficult balance: “Neither do I condemn you,” to which he adds, “go and sin no more” (NKJV).

So how does one reframe evangelism in the postmodern era to reflect our loving hopes for our world? How do we both speak the truth and do it in love?

Simple formulas probably cannot encapsulate the line we must walk. But a good place to begin may be to rethink the questions we ask in our spiritual conversations. Perhaps we should add these to our list of diagnostic evangelism questions:

*“If you knew you were going to live another forty years, what kind of person would you want to become?”*

This question reimagines the infamous evangelism question about why any of us should get into heaven when we die. Maybe because we live in a society that sterilizes death and removes us from the experience of dying, many people do not agonize over death.

Focusing evangelism on what happens to us after we die tends to create disciples who are not concerned with either whom they are becoming or the kind of world they will leave behind. Of course, we may die tonight. But it is much more likely that we will live a while longer--a decade or two or three or more. What happens in the meantime? Will we live an abundant life? What kind of legacy will we leave behind?

*“If you could know what God is doing in the world, would you want to be part of it?”*

I have been asking this question a lot lately. And I’ve never had anyone answer by saying, “No!”

I like this question, because it focuses evangelism on God’s agenda instead of our tendency to get God to care about our agendas. I also like this question because it opens the door to talk about what Jesus talked about the most--the kingdom of God breaking in to our world right now.

The modernist style of evangelism focused on right answers. That is, Christians wanted to hear the right answer from others about who Jesus is. Or they wanted the right answer to questions about what it takes to get a ticket to heaven.

People seem to be asking different questions these days. The questions focus less on “Is it true?” and more about “Does it work?” Paul’s posture in 1 Cor. 12:31 to a pluralistic, premodern world can probably help us engage our own postmodern world. Before a description of what the way of love looks like, Paul said “Let me *show* you a more excellent way . . .” (1 Cor. 12:31).

### *Questions*

Do you agree with the author that the dirty little secret of the postmodern church is its lack of evangelism? Explain your answer.

What qualities made James’s straightforward question to Larry appropriate in an awkward moment between strangers? What can we learn from James?

How receptive might your unchurched family, neighbors, and coworkers be to the author’s two main questions? Would you dare ask them at an appropriate time?

What do you think the author means when he says that the kingdom of God is breaking in to our world right now?

### *Application*

In light of this chapter and its topics, how might you act differently? Think differently? Feel differently? Relate differently?

## CHAPTER 19: WHY OUR (LOVING) PRACTICES MATTER

Terry Fach

Most people in our culture in the West are nervous about Christianity. For some people, Christianity is considered just one faith among others. But perhaps most distressing are the increasing signs of distrust toward Christians. Growing numbers are spiritually yearning but institutionally alienated. Many see Christianity as a religion of little interest.

Those outside the church often view Christianity as advocating an inert and powerless spirituality that has little relevance for everyday life. Christianity has become a religion that overpromises and under-delivers.

How could this state of affairs come to be?

I believe the answer, at least in part, is that Jesus' core message has largely been lost in contemporary Christianity. Over the past several hundred years, the influence of science and modern philosophy has made the church more concerned with defending the objective truth of its doctrines than with practicing Jesus' way of love.

But I also believe that Christianity has proven itself resilient and self-correcting over the centuries. Today, postmodern expressions of the church are challenging the disembodied holiness of modern faith and recovering essential formational practices from premodern times.

Christianity involves both *a way* and *a creed*. By creed, I mean a set of claims or statements one accepts about the nature of the universe (e.g., that it was created by God). Creeds also offer claims about how God has acted in the universe in various ways (e.g., through taking on fleshly form in Jesus and by sending the Holy Spirit).

But Christianity also offers *a way*--a pattern for living, a set of practices to follow. In fact, in its earliest days the Christian faith was often called "the Way" (Acts 9:2, NLT). Jesus was mainly inviting people to follow his way, his path to God. The earliest accounts of Christian practices include prayer, study, sharing food and fellowship, and the celebration of the Lord's table (Acts 2).

Jesus described the holy life in practical terms: love for God and love for others. Loving relationships are the sign of the true disciple. As Jesus memorably said, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:35, NLT). Not only that, Jesus says that those who embrace his way of love will be able to do even greater works than he did (14:12).

How can this kind of love be formed in us? The historic answer is this: by spiritual practices that form our souls in the likeness of Christ.

Unfortunately, many contemporary followers of Jesus have been influenced by a modern version of Christianity that places a strong emphasis on inner, private experiences and having correct beliefs about God.



I'm not saying that beliefs and personal experiences do not matter. But what we believe alone is not what matters most. Don't believe me? How many overweight people *know* that being overweight puts them at greater risk of death from stroke and heart disease?

What we want and need is a spiritual way of life that translates the intellectual and the experiential into a whole-life faith. If we are to be formed in the likeness of Christ and become the people we want to become, mere belief is not enough.

John Wesley frequently described holiness as renewal of the whole image of God. Created in the image of God, our goal is to avail ourselves of the Holy Spirit so that Christ's likeness may be formed in us (2 Cor. 3:18).

When we say yes to God, the Holy Spirit breaks the hold of sin in our lives. Our part is to cooperate with divine grace by submitting to a way of life that shapes not just our minds but our hearts and our bodies as well.

Formational practices, such as corporate worship, prayer, fasting, solitude, and works of mercy, are actions within our power that help us become capable of doing things currently beyond our power. In a world of instant gratification, for example, denying ourselves food through fasting teaches us the practice of impulse control. In a world of pretension and self-promotion, sharing our weaknesses and failures with others through confession teaches us humility and reminds us of God's gracious acceptance.

The premodern practice of the spiritual reading of scripture through *lectio divina* helps us to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. By allowing head to give way to heart, we are moving beyond information to formation. In this, we can be shaped by what we read.

The good news of Jesus is not a set of beliefs that if accepted will get you into heaven when you die. Rather it is an invitation to a new way of life right now. It is an invitation to participate in God's new community here on earth. This intentional community is called to reveal God's plan to redeem all of creation by its way of life.

In Wesley's view, a holy person is a *whole* person, one whose relationship with God, with other people, and with the natural world is properly expressed. Wesley put it this way: "The Gospel of Christ knows no religion but social, no holiness but social holiness."<sup>39</sup>

If holiness is social, our formation in holiness must be communal as well as individual. Our communal practices must extend beyond ourselves for the sake of all people, especially the poor. And if love is to be perfected in *all* our relationships, our formational practices will also include caring for the environment.

Why do we often lack the power to live and be formed as we ought? I think I know one answer: we're too busy. Jesus invites those who want to follow his way to deny themselves, to leave behind their selfish ambitions and to take up their crosses. The first important act of self-

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<sup>39</sup> John Wesley, "Preface to 1739 Hymns and Sacred Poems" in *The Works of John Wesley*, Jackson Ed. vol. 14:321.

denial for twenty-first-century followers of Jesus may be to say no to being too busy to be a disciple.

A Christian community that embodies the gospel does not happen by accident. It requires an intentional commitment to *a way of life* capable of standing against the dominant social realities of our world. In the postmodern world, demonstrating the truth of Christianity cannot be left to the philosophers. The plausibility of the gospel demands its faithful practice by the community of Jesus' followers.

### *Questions*

1. Do agree that many people are nervous about Christianity or nervous about the actions of “born-again” or “evangelical” Christians?
2. Do you agree that some Christians are more concerned with defending the objective truth of doctrine than with practicing Jesus' way of love? Can you give an example?
3. Do you think that the Church can become more concerned with success and power than self-denial? Can you give an example to augment your view?
4. In what way has being too busy been detrimental to your own attempts to follow God's call and engage in Christian practices?

### *Application*

In light of this chapter and its topics, how might you act differently? Think differently? Feel differently? Relate differently?

**BOOK REVIEW**  
**A (PARTIAL) VISION OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:**  
**KENT BROWER'S, *HOLINESS IN THE GOSPELS*<sup>1</sup>**

Andy Johnson  
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This book is a revised and expanded version of the Collins Holiness Lectures given at Canadian Nazarene University in 2000. Brower is Vice-Principal and Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at Nazarene Theological College in Manchester, England and throughout the book it is clear that his ecclesial commitments make his endeavor more than a detached, academic exercise. What we have here instead, is academically responsible, theologically sensitive, biblical interpretation carried out in service to the church. It is a superb addition to a number of books and articles that indicate a rekindled interest in the doctrine of holiness.

The book is organized into an introduction and six chapters followed by endnotes and a useful bibliography. In the introduction Brower begins by describing the contemporary state of the ecclesial context (that of the Wesleyan/Holiness movement) in which his reflections on holiness have taken shape. He notes that in that context a renewed passion for holiness is reemerging among the laity and younger scholars, a passion for a new vision of holiness that is “more biblically responsible and theologically coherent than the teaching they heard in the past” (14). Or, more sharply put, “They want to live the holy life in the 21st century not in a 19th-century Holiness theme park” (14). It is precisely that sort of new vision of holiness that Brower is attempting to carve out in this book.

In the rest of the introduction, he lays out several methodological and theological assumptions that undergird the book. Notable among these are his assumptions that the theme of holiness runs throughout the entirety of scripture and that word studies alone are simply too limited to serve as the major exegetical strategy for discerning scripture's witness to its nature and importance. Hence, rather than relying primarily on word studies and verb tenses (the tendency of some holiness interpreters in the past), Brower assumes that biblical narrative itself is a major vehicle of doctrinal truth. More particularly, in terms of his focus in this book, he assumes (and demonstrates) that the gospels, as theological documents in their own right, contribute to a coherent understanding of Christian holiness by means of the way their narratives unfold.<sup>2</sup> Finally, he notes two

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<sup>1</sup>Kent Brower, *Holiness in the Gospels* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2005). I was privileged to have access to this book prior to its publication. While it is fairly short (160 pages), I have chosen to offer a longer summary of it than I would in a typical book review making what follows something between a book review and a review article. This is because, to my knowledge, it is the first treatment of Christian holiness from someone in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition who takes seriously the theological contribution the gospels make to our understanding of holiness *precisely as narratives*. By making this more of a review article, I hope to expose busy pastors to: (1) the results of approaching the gospels as theologically charged narratives; (2) some of the recent currents of thought about holiness by theologians in the Wesleyan/Holiness movement that Brower exemplifies.

<sup>2</sup>Even though this is longer than the typical book review, I can only summarize the results of his efforts here. In order to fully appreciate how these narratives unfold theologically, one should buy the book and read it.

explicit theological assumptions that guide his work, namely, that holiness cannot be properly understood without explicitly framing it in both incarnational and Trinitarian terms. His consistency in framing the discussion this way gives his treatment of holiness more overall theological coherence than some older treatments of holiness which frame it more in anthropological and/or hamartiological terms.

Chapter one focuses on the historical context of the Greco-Roman world and second Temple Judaism as providing the framework within which the gospel was received and notions of holiness were developed. He begins by briefly summarizing various religious practices/conceptions across the Eastern Mediterranean that impinge on understandings of holiness and/or purity outside a Jewish context. Here, he rightly calls attention to the fact that religion dominated all aspects of first century life, social as well as political. But concern for holiness, purity, and impurity were primarily ritualistic or cultic issues having little to do with how individuals lived their life outside the context of temple activities such as celebratory meals/sacrifices. Typical Greco-Roman gods were neither models for moral behavior nor interested in ethical purity. In this context, the idea that a god would call a whole people to holiness as an imitation of that god's own holy character was very odd indeed.

In the second part of this chapter, Brower lays out the substructure of beliefs, practices, institutions and hopes that informed an understanding of holiness in second Temple Judaism. For those who have not read widely in contemporary NT studies, this section is very helpful particularly in its lucid discussion of how the political and social realities (Israel's continuing exile in its own land at the hands of the Romans) of the first century undergird a widespread concern for the purity and holiness of Israel. Following much of current NT scholarship (e.g., N. T. Wright, Marcus Borg), he shows in particular how important Temple, Torah, and the land are in this intensifying concern for purity and holiness in second-Temple Judaism. The latter part of this chapter is directed toward discussion of various "holiness movements" in the Judaism of the day: the Pharisees, the Qumran community, and the Jesus movement itself. This discussion helpfully points out similarities and differences between each of these movements and provides a good point of focus immediately prior to moving into his treatment of each of the four gospels.

In chapter two Brower's focus is on the Gospel of Luke where he highlights both the incarnational and incipiently Trinitarian aspects of Luke's portrayal of Jesus. Here he initially focuses on intersections of Jesus and the Spirit in Luke's narrative (e.g., the virginal conception, John's words in 3:16, the baptism and temptation scenes and the Nazareth sermon). In doing so, he shows how Luke depicts Jesus, as both uniquely Son of God (and truly divine) and yet perfectly obedient to his Father *precisely as a human being* full of the Holy Spirit. As the one who both acts in the Spirit's power and is giver of that Spirit, he begins the restoration of humanity and all of creation. By entering fully into our human condition and taking on our fallen flesh, he sanctifies our humanity and models what it means to be both truly human and truly Israel, thereby offering an alternative vision of what it means to be God's *holy* people. For the Lukan Jesus, therefore, the essence of holiness is not separation from impurity and performance of a holiness code (cf. the Pharisees), but rather inclusive, gracious, compassionate power that

actively seeks the marginalized in order to restore them to God's people. Luke's Jesus embodies the very essence of God's own character providing a paradigm for the Christian life of holiness, a life that is to be lived in and through the power of the Spirit.

In chapter three, Brower moves to the Gospel of John but limits his focus to the question: What is the relationship between the sanctification of believers and the language in John 17 of mutual indwelling, i.e., the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son and the mutual indwelling of believers in God? Before he comes to discuss John 17, Brower gives a helpful overview of contemporary Trinitarian thought in which he embraces a social model of the Trinity and shows how such a model sheds light on Genesis 1-3, i.e., on humanity's creation in the image of God and the marring of that image in the fall. With this overview as background, he then offers an exposition of the language of being one with the Father and the Son and with one another (John 17:11, 21-23) utilizing the theological concepts of *perichoresis* (as modeled in the incarnation) and *theosis*. These concepts are useful in conveying the truth that God's purpose is for his creatures to share intimately in the very life of the Triune God and yet precisely *as created creatures* (i.e., never being absorbed into the being of God). Approaching John 17:17-19 in this light, Brower argues that the language of sanctification in Jesus' prayer is directed toward the disciples being kept safe from the hostility of the world and toward their being in intimate relationship with the holy God *and with each other*. Hence, Christian holiness is "a social, not an individual, phenomenon" (79). The purpose of such sanctification/holiness is that the disciples might continue the mission of that holy God to the world, i.e., the mission of bringing God's holy, outward-looking, reconciling, salvific love to his world. As they enact this mission together, they are reflecting the character of the holy God to the world and thereby being restored into the image of the Triune God. Given that the sanctification language of John 17 is preceded in the narrative by the promised gift of the Spirit (John 14:16-18, 20-21), one can see the obvious resonance between this understanding of the holiness of the disciples and the life of holiness embodied by the Lukan Jesus in and through the power of the Spirit.

Chapter four deals with the Gospel of Mark which, as Brower notes, contains no explicit reference to sanctification and little holiness terminology. Brower begins the chapter by highlighting the significance Mark gives to the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus and the narrative's designation of him as the "Holy One of God" arguing that Mark thereby depicts Jesus as the very "locale of God among his people" (88). Unlike other chapters, in this one Brower traces the overall flow of Mark's narrative from beginning to end. As he does so, he highlights the theme of the journey of discipleship. On this journey, the disciples identify themselves with the Holy One of God and are therefore the holy people of God as they accompany him on his saving mission of proclaiming and embodying the Kingdom of God. On this reading, the theme of discipleship in Mark is another way of speaking about Christian holiness. This chapter concludes with a helpful discussion of various aspects of the journey of discipleship/holiness in Mark's gospel, aspects which have clear contemporary significance.

In chapter five, Brower focuses on the Sermon on the Mount. He devotes about a third of the chapter to setting the literary context of the sermon, emphasizing the significance of

Matthew's prior depiction of the identity of Jesus as a crucial factor in interpretation of the sermon. In the remainder of the chapter he focuses on specific parts of Matthew 5: the language of hungering and thirsting for righteousness (v. 6); purity in heart (v. 8); greater righteousness (vv. 17-20); the command for perfection (v. 48). Here, in dialogue with major contemporary interpreters of this gospel, he deftly negotiates the exegetical challenges this section of Matthew presents. He argues that in the sermon Jesus does not effect a new law or some sort of entrance test to the kingdom; rather its demands should be understood as the grace-enabled fruit of a new "in the heart" covenant, fulfilling the promises of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. There is clearly human response called for, however, and that response is perfection, to mirror the very character of the Father. Such perfection is not a moral or legal standard, but rather "perfect love, that single-minded devotion to God and love of neighbor that is the summation and fulfillment of God's great commands to us" (125). This cannot, however, be reduced to a matter of "inner intentionality," but can only take place as it is concretized in relationships within the community of faith and even (or especially) in grace-filled relationships with one's enemies. As such, "the greater righteousness of 5:20 turns out to be nothing less than being perfect like our Father" (126).

Brower's concluding chapter summarizes the main characteristics of Christian holiness that have emerged throughout his study. He concludes the chapter with a series of probing questions that are primarily, albeit not exclusively, addressed to those in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition.

There is much to commend this small book. The prose is clear and engaging and Brower makes potentially difficult theological ideas (e.g., his discussion of the *theosis* and *perichoresis* in chapter two) accessible to students and pastors. In addition, he demonstrates expertise in contemporary NT scholarship and conversance with contemporary developments in systematic theology (particularly those having to do with the Trinity) enabling him to set the doctrine of Christian holiness on stable grounds, both biblically and theologically. Given the resistance to rethinking the doctrine of holiness in certain quarters of the Wesleyan/Holiness movement over the last couple of decades, Brower shows considerable nerve in consistently focusing on the substance of Christian holiness rather than on its particular point of origin (i.e., "the experience"). While maintaining the *intensely personal* nature of the life of holiness, he refuses to characterize it primarily as an "individual" experience. Rather, he underscores its communal nature and never brackets "inner intentionality" off from holy practices within a concrete ecclesial community. Beacon Hill Press is to be commended for publishing the book.

The main complaint I have about the book is not in terms of its content but in terms of its layout. Brower has a large number of content endnotes that deserve to be read, particularly by those for whom this approach is new. These should have been printed as footnotes at the bottom of the page rather than placed in the back of the book where they are inconvenient to access.

Brower is very conscious of the fact that his treatment of the gospels is limited and that any full-blown exegetical treatment of Christian holiness must also pay attention to the



rest of scripture, particularly to the witness of Paul. As such this is indeed a partial vision of Christian holiness and much remains to be done (e.g., showing how this material on holiness is related to Pauline language like justification/rectification, sanctification, new creation). Even so, this small book has gone a long way toward anticipating what a biblically responsible, theologically careful, vision of holiness might look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I highly recommend it, not only for use in courses on the Gospels or on the doctrine of holiness, but especially for pastors who are desperate for trustworthy resources that will help them teach and preach in ways that provide a catalyst for God to transform their congregation into his holy people.

DIDACHE: “GENERATIONS”  
Kent Brower and Deirdre Brower Latz

***Question #1: What is your current role?***

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

I am currently working for *Nazarene Theological College*, in Manchester England as lecturer and head of Pastoral and Social Theology. I also lead the pastoral team of a local church (Community Church of the Nazarene, Longsight) part-time.

*Kent Brower*

I am also at *Nazarene Theological College* in Manchester as Vice-Principal and Senior Research Fellow in Biblical Studies. In addition to teaching some undergraduate courses, I currently supervise seven PhD candidates in NT. My administrative role includes being chair of the Research Degrees Committee as well as being available for support of the International Board of Education.

***Question #2: Why did you choose this Discipline?***

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

I think that I stumbled into practical theology. I am called to be a pastor, but love teaching, and when the opportunity presented itself to me to teach, I took it. Initially I was involved in teaching in the field of youth ministry - NTC had just started a programme in Youth work and Ministry. Then, over time, my interests shifted towards contextual and practical theology – in dialogue with history. I think that part of my character is activism, and so an area of theology that had its roots in the soil (so to speak) was strongly appealing, but mindfulness of the big questions of **why** we do what we do as well as **how** we do seems really important.

*Kent Brower*

Yes, Deirdre, you probably did stumble into the discipline of practical theology. But I remember when you talked to me about your call to be a minister. I knew it would be costly for you, and I recall the chats we had about the pressure on women in ministry but confirming my full confidence in you and your response to this call. I have also watched you emerge as a very gifted teacher. You probably scored better than most because of your experience as a youth pastor and international leader in NYI. That certainly made you the ideal person to be part of our new programme. Of course, your BA (honours) and MA dissertations in John Wesley prepared you for the PhD research you have been conducting on Wesley and the Emergent church. I have watched this with great interest and learned a lot from it. I see whole areas of great interest and importance stemming from this general topic that will be of potential benefit to the church.

In some senses I stumbled into biblical studies. I think it was during my MA studies that biblical studies began to rise to the surface (I was also very interested in philosophy of religion), but it was not really until I finished my PhD that the direction was clear. In fact, for four years after finishing my MA, I did something completely different – I returned to the family farm to work with my father and brother. On reflection, that contributed more to my development than might

be thought. So, I would probably say that my sense of direction and calling emerged over the years rather than a clear direction from the start.

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

It's funny, but I think 'the farm' and your up-bringing there are essential to your character as a teacher – you practice 'good husbandry' taking incredibly good care of your students – it's one of the things that I love about your example. Not only that, but the way you work in rhythms and seasons – and your willingness to think in new ways – maybe all of that came from 'making do' on the farm. I also think that you've never been afraid to think differently about something – even though that makes you unpopular sometimes!

**Question #3:** *What key contributions does your discipline offer?*

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

I think that practical theology marries thinking and practice – encouraging the church to actively reflect on who she is, and how she lives out who she is.

*Kent Brower*

This is a healthy view of practical theology. An older paradigm, one that I grew up with, really divided practical theology from 'academic' theology. It is a great relief to see those artificial distinctions disappear. Theology, in my judgement, must by definition be practical or it is not theology.

I work as a believing biblical scholar. Both adjectives are important for the integration that you speak about. And I am particularly interested in a narrative approach to scripture because I think it is both fruitful and faithful to the canonical shape of the text. This, in turn, influences my hermeneutical strategy because I see scripture as the witness to God's revelation in Christ throughout the story of God's interaction with his creation. I also believe that the work that I do must be conducted in the context of dialogue within believing community. So I try to help my students see how an internalisation of the story of God's work with his created order is essential for their lives as God's holy people.

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

And again, your churchmanship, and commitment to the local and particular is part of what keeps your thinking in the realm of biblical scholarship so fresh. I wonder what the main changes have been in Biblical studies in the time you've been teaching?

*Kent Brower*

Hmm. That's a very interesting question. I think I could highlight three shifts among many. First, when I was working on my PhD in the gospels, the reigning historical critical paradigm was form criticism. That was coupled with a touching confidence by some scholars in their ability to analyse ever smaller bits of text to distinguish between tradition and redaction. That has gradually changed. Formal structuralism was making an impact on biblical studies. This proved to be largely a scholarly cul-de-sac; but what I gleaned from it was an appreciation of narrative structure that was not dependent upon particular structuralist models. Second, a major paradigm shift occurred in Pauline studies leading to the so-called 'new perspective on Paul', a view that

wished to understand Paul within the context of Second Temple Judaism. Third, in the UK at least, the face of the discipline has evolved significantly in the right direction. Forty years ago, Professor Bruce, my supervisor, was probably the only evangelical scholar to hold a top professorship in a British university. He was very much a pioneer, demonstrating by his world class scholarship that believing Christians could also use the tools of scholarship with integrity and rigour. Now, many of the top professorial chairs in the UK are held by practicing Christians. And the high profile of people like N T Wright, the Bishop of Durham, in the academic as well as the public sphere has been amazing.

***Question #4: What is the future of your discipline?***

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

Practical theology is evolving – continually drawing on the thinking of other disciplines and seeking to integrate them into a whole. I love that! That history, biblical studies, theology, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology can be drawn on to enrich recontextualising is important. I think that practical theology as an integrative approach to thinking will be increasingly important in developing an ‘everyday theology’ that is able to exegete the culture and enable theological reflection into the future.

*Kent Brower*

One of the blessings in my life is to be active in a local church where the proclamation of the gospel is rooted deeply and consistently in God’s revelation in Christ mediated to us through scripture and theology. (It so happens that you are one of my pastors!) It is gratifying to see the integration of theology and practice in practice. This is, in some respects, a reflection of the encouraging dissolution of walls between the theological disciplines so that theologians and practitioners are engaged in serious reflection on scripture and that biblical scholars are in conversation with them.

***Question #5: What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

Sometimes I think that the church thinks of Wesleyan Higher Education as neither use nor ornament, as if theology doesn’t really matter ‘on the ground’ and is just for ‘academics.’ I think that more and more people are less able to afford education (without racking up enormous debts) is a threat too. Umm...

*Kent Brower*

Actually, I echo your concerns at a range of levels. This suspicion of education is not, of course, a new phenomenon. It has been lurking in the background throughout my whole ministry as a lecturer for well over three decades. Years ago the title of a book called *The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church* was haunting accurate. The most worrying thing is that this silence is so pronounced in churches which affirm, as we do, that scripture is our rule of faith and practice. And, to be fair, people who are in my guild of biblical scholars have to take a significant part of the responsibility for this. We have been isolated from the church all too often – and those walls

have been built from both side. Our work needs to be done with skill and integrity for the sake of the people of God, not merely for academic point scoring

From the church's side, I worry about the apparent inexorable drift towards evangelical fundamentalism. Here is where a robust and coherent Wesleyan view of scripture would counter this brand of fundamentalism. I think that scholars need to listen and patiently articulate our firm commitment to the authority of scripture while resisting the eclipsing of Christ in the fundamentalist view of scripture.

As for your second concern about the perceived cost of education, I, too, worry about this, but perhaps not simply in terms of the debt. (For what it is worth, I think the church should assume more of the cost of educating its ministers than it does, but that is likely too counter-cultural to be taken seriously in a very individualised culture.) Of course, you have had your education in a system where state support has been historically very good. My student loans lasted almost into my third decade of teaching! All too often the solution to 'the high cost of education' is to see if there is a shorter and cheaper way to 'tick the boxes'. But I remain firmly committed to a communal context for ministerial preparation.

The spiritual health of the people of God may be at risk if the vision of practical theology as integrative (as you outlined above) is lost and ministerial candidates in particular are not given the time to read, reflect and mediate deeply on scripture and theology. Our Wesleyan heritage is all grounded on scripture – tradition, reason and experience are taking their shape in conversation with scripture.

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

That's an interesting one, because I think that in both of our fields the role of Scripture as both engaging the world around us and drawing on the best of the past traditions of the church is critical. Being able to engage in meaningful cross-disciplinary thinking is vital.

Generally I also think that the idea of the church being under threat makes us more 'protectionist' and a series of dangers (for the church and education) emerge: either, we become entrenched in defensive 'return to the halcyon days' type of thinking, or we become more offensive, fundamentalist almost – enforcing our views on others at the expense of humility and dialogue. Or, we become reductionist: if we provide enough 'tool kits' then the church will turn around, or faddish - following the latest and best trends... This impacts those of us in practical theology especially - the pressure to educate people who can 'perform' in product-driven ways makes us compete in the market-place rather than carefully consider the depths of what it means to form leaders and churchmen and churchwomen who are people of character, who have an understanding of how we should be as communities of the Kingdom of God and of how we can align ourselves with God's purposes.

***Question #6: Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

I think that a lot of Wesleyan theologians are involved in a process of engaging the best of our heritage in order to shape the present and future. Too, there's an increasing emphasis on

integrity within our scholarship, and a greater dialogue with the richness and breadth of theological thought which is helping us be honed. I am hopeful that Wesleyan theology is increasingly perceived as generous and dynamic and able to engage with real life people in real life situations – gracious towards people.

*Kent Brower*

I really cannot improve on your hope, Deirdre; I share it. I might articulate aspects of it in a different way. For instance, I think that one of the key points that emerges from scripture is that the people of God may need to be counter-cultural at significant points if they are to be God's holy people. That certainly applied to Israel vis-à-vis the Canaanite context; it is one of the challenges Paul faces in his new churches. And it will be, at the very least, uncomfortable for us in some situations – when we find ourselves arguing for social justice against a government and a popular press set against asylum seekers, for instance.

That leads me to the wider answer. From a biblical perspective, I think the Wesleyan voice needs to be heard clearly in the conversation the whole church has about the question, 'What does it mean to be God's holy people, on God's mission and in God's power in this world.' I find a delicious irony that the question of 'holiness' is very much on the agenda of current biblical scholars (in a way that was unheard of last generation) just at a time when its importance for our denominational identity is only gradually being recognized. But I am also concerned that discussions on the meaning of holiness within our circles is at risk of completely by-passing the work of this generation of biblical scholars who share a passionate concern for an understanding of holiness that is biblical grounded and theologically coherent. We cannot simply repeat the teachings of the past – we need to keep thinking and alive theologically on many questions, and probably specifically on this one.

***Question #7: Final words for future “generations?”***

*Deirdre Brower Latz*

Right and good thinking and right and good practice are vital for the church. As theologian Miroslav Volf says: “At the heart of every good theology lies not simply a plausible intellectual vision but more importantly a compelling account of a way of life, and that theology is therefore best done from within the pursuit of this way of life.” (Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology*, 2002)



DIDACHE: GENERATIONS  
Wilfredo Canales Farfan and Marco Canales

**Question #1:** What is your current role?

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

I am currently an ordained Nazarene minister serving as the Pastor of the San Fernando Church of the Nazarene. I am also pursuing my Masters in Divinity at Fuller Theological Seminary.

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Actualmente, soy Presidente del Centro de Estudios Pastorales (CEP), Chicago, Coordinador del Programa Hispano de Maestría en Ministerio en Olivet Nazarene University y Editor General de la revista Reflexiones Ministeriales (dirigida a pastores nazarenos hispanos en Estados Unidos y Canadá).

Currently, I am the President of the Center for Pastoral Studies, Chicago, Illinois. I am also the Hispanic Program Coordinator for the Masters in Ministry at Olivet Nazarene University and the General Editor of a magazine called Ministry Reflections (created for Hispanic Nazarene pastors in the United States and Canada).

**Question #2:** Why did you choose this Discipline?

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Como es evidente en los roles mencionados arriba, así como en mis años previos de ministerio en América latina, mi campo de estudio y servicio ha estado vinculado con la pastoral, entendida según el recordado misionólogo latinoamericano Orlando Costas, como “todas las acciones misionales que realiza el pueblo de Dios”. En otras palabras, la pastoral implica la puesta en práctica de la misión en un contexto determinado. Por lo mismo, la pastoral no se corresponde con una disciplina específica sino, más bien, constituye un campo que, por propia definición, es de naturaleza interdisciplinar y de integración.

As it is evident in the roles mentioned above, as well as my previous ministerial years in Latin America, my area of service and study has developed within “pastoral” (understood according to the Latin-American missiologist Orlando Costas, as “all the missional actions carried out by God’s people”). In other words, this involves the practical application of the mission of God in a particular context. Thus, “pastoral” does not correspond to one specific discipline rather it constitutes an area that in its nature is interdisciplinary and integral.

Las razones para que me ubicara en este campo ministerial fueron varias. Primeramente, el llamamiento de Dios al ministerio que, desde el primer momento, lo entendí como un llamado al servicio pastoral o a ministerios vinculados con este servicio. En segundo lugar, el contexto histórico en América Latina en el que ocurrió mi llamamiento, estuvo profundamente marcado por un esfuerzo de la iglesia cristiana (católica y protestante), por redescubrir la naturaleza de una pastoral que respondiera a los graves desafíos de la situación social, política y económica. Estos desafíos, ya los había experimentado como estudiante de ciencias económicas en la universidad (Perú), convertida en terreno de apasionada discusión ideológica. Fue en ese escenario y bajo el ministerio de InterVarsity (Filial Perú), que empecé a tener contacto con las reflexiones de John W. Stott, René Padilla, Samuel Escobar, José Miguez Bonino, Gustavo

Gutiérrez, entre otros, y a buscar relacionar mi propia fe con las demandas de la situación social. Posteriormente, al empezar mis estudios teológicos formales (Costa Rica), fui descubriendo el pensamiento y la acción de varios personajes a lo largo de la historia de la iglesia, cuyos aportes a la pastoral han sido significativos. De manera singular, por mi interés en el ministerio urbano de la iglesia, Jacques Ellul (francés) y Joseph Comblin (belga) me han impactado profundamente. Además, en mis estudios graduados en educación (Costa Rica/México) encontré aportes claves para aplicar no sólo en la pastoral de la iglesia sino, también, en la educación teológica con una perspectiva transformadora. Entonces, mi propia formación universitaria, previa a mi llamamiento, y mi conciencia del contexto social me llevaron a enfocar siempre mi acción ministerial desde una perspectiva pastoral interdisciplinar.

There are various reasons as to why I chose this area of ministry. First of all, I understood God's calling to ministry within the "pastoral" arena of Christian service. Secondly, the historical context in Latin America upon which my calling took place, was profoundly marked by an effort of the Christian church (both catholic and protestant) to rediscover the nature of a "pastoral" response to the vast challenges in the social, political and economic realities. I had already been exposed to these challenges as an Economics major during college (in Peru), so the ideological discussions during this time were very passionate and diverse. Within this scene and under the ministry of Inter Varsity Peru, I began to have contact with the reflections and writings of John W. Stott, René Padilla, Samuel Escobar, Jose Miguez Bonino, Gustavo Gutierrez, among others, and I searched for the relationship between my own faith and the demands of my social reality. Posteriorly, as I began my formal theological studies (in Costa Rica), I discovered the thought and the actions of various influential characters through the history of the church regarding the "pastoral" reality. Particularly, due to my interest in urban church ministry, Jacques Ellul and Joseph Comblin impacted me profoundly. Lastly, as I continued with my graduate studies in Education (Costa Rica/Mexico), I found key contributions applicable to the life and work of the church and to theological education with a transformative perspective. Consequently, my own university formation, prior to my calling, and my social context have led me to focus on the ministerial action from a interdisciplinary "pastoral" approach.

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

Growing up in the mission field and in a pastor's home, I was constantly in contact with ministry and its diverse challenges. I was not precisely inclined to be in full-time ministry but in the beginning of my senior year of high school, God challenged me to truly be a disciple and to disciple others. This challenge became a calling to minister those within the church and those beginning their Christian journey. A year later, I found myself at Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) as a Philosophy and Theology major preparing myself to be a youth pastor. It was during this time that I discovered words to express, describe, and define some of the various ministry experiences that I was exposed to throughout Latin America. In fact, it also led me to begin to build a theological framework to understand the reality and the challenges of cross cultural ministry. After my time at PLNU, the discipline of theological reflection amidst the urban context has proven to be an exciting and formative experience. I can see how the many different countries that I lived in, the different churches that my parents pastored, and the theological education that I received allow me to adapt to the multicultural context of the city. At the same time, ministry within the city, and more specifically within the Latino community,

continues to be a passion that God has been building and shaping throughout all of my previous years.

**Question #3:** What key contributions does your discipline offer?

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

Pastoral ministry contributes immensely to the ongoing dialogue of ecclesiology and missiology. I consider it extremely important to regard pastoral ministry as the crossroads between theory and practice, purpose and faithfulness, and mission and the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Understanding the reason as to why the church exists, moves, and “has its being” is crucially derived from its Christology. If we see the role of Jesus Christ as saving us “from something” rather than saving us “to something”, we rob the church of its presence in its physical surroundings. A shift from a church-centered praxis to a Christ-centered praxis will redefine the existence of the ekklesia as those that meet the living God in our neighborhoods and cities. This shift will also bring forth an intentionality in seeing our communities restored physically, emotionally, economically and socially.

Ultimately, pastoral ministry continues to embody the terrain upon which the creativity and the faithfulness of the church join the redeeming movements of our God. The mission of the church becomes that which God has revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, which forms faithful discipleship. This relationship and reflection upon Christ, church, and mission within specific communities and contexts continues to guide the reality and nature of pastoral ministry.

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Hijo, tu planteamiento me lleva a plantear lo siguiente. Primero, estoy totalmente de acuerdo con lo que dices. Segundo, solo sugeriría dejar el término “pastoral” a secas porque, generalmente, cuando lo usamos como adjetivo (ministerio pastoral) se hace alusión al ministerio de una persona o equipo de personas especializadas, desligándose al cuerpo (congregación) de la acción pastoral y su proyección al contexto. Es en este sentido que deviene oportuna una reflexión respecto a cómo se ha ido forjando un enfoque de la pastoral más integrador. La pastoral, tal como se ha ido forjando en la perspectiva latinoamericana, cambió la tipología clásica predominante en el campo de las llamadas disciplinas teológicas, cuyo desarrollo buscaba satisfacer las exigencias de la llamada racionalidad instrumental, indicador más notorio del paradigma de la modernidad. En la tipología clásica se hablaba, mayormente, de la teología “práctica” en oposición a la teología bíblica, sistemática o histórica que tenían la fama de ser disciplinas más objetivas y, por lo tanto, “académicas”. La teología práctica devenía en algo más eclesialístico y operativo.

Son, your approach leads me to propose the following. First, I am completely in agreement with what you have said. Second, I would suggest just using “pastoral” as a noun rather than an adjective. Whenever it is used as the latter it makes allusion to the ministry of one person or a team of specialized ministers, which completely disconnects the body (congregation) from the pastoral action and its engagement with its context. In this sense, it is necessary to opportunely reflect regarding a more integral understanding of the word “pastoral.” “Pastoral,” as it has been suggested within the Latin-American perspective, has changed the classical predominant typology in regards to theological disciplines, which attempted to satisfy the demands of the

rationality and the paradigm of modernity. Hence, in this classic typology, “practical” theology was predominantly seen in contrast to biblical, systematic, or historic theology; which were mostly considered as objective and consequently “academic.” Practical theology was seen as more operative and ecclesiastical.

En el esfuerzo, primero, del grupo ISAL (Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina), de trasfondo protestante y, después, en la acción y reflexión de varias líneas de la llamada teología de la liberación, predominantemente católica, se fue configurando la acción pastoral de la iglesia cristiana como terreno propio de reflexión teológica, con su propio instrumental de análisis e investigación pastoral y no solo como “terreno de aplicación” de los postulados de otras disciplinas teológicas.

The group ISAL (Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina- Church and Society in Latin America), from a protestant background, alongside the action and the reflection of various expressions of liberation theology, predominantly catholic, prepared the terrain for “pastoral” action within the Christian church not only as “the place of application” but also as the place of theological reflection, research, and analysis.

Además, el desarrollo de la pastoral como escenario interdisciplinario de investigación, reflexión y acción, produjo otro cambio significativo: el instrumental para el quehacer teológico no estaba constituido, predominantemente, por categorías o métodos provenientes de la filosofía, como era usual, ahora las ciencias sociales se tornaron funcionales al quehacer teológico ya que se trataba de interpretar el contexto y sus desafíos para poder articular una acción pastoral, bíblicamente fundamentada pero socio-culturalmente documentada para cumplir los objetivos del proyecto redentor de Dios.

In addition, the development of “pastoral” as an interdisciplinary realm of research, reflection and action, produced another significant change: the instrument for theological work was not constituted exclusively by categories or methods derived from philosophy, as it was common, but rather the social sciences began to be considered as functional elements of interpreting the context of the church and its challenges for “pastoral” action. Thus, the “pastoral” approach began to be biblically based and socio-culturally informed to accomplish the objectives of God’s redemptive project.

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

¿En este sentido, esta incorporación de ciencias sociales y fundamentos bíblicos para interpretar el contexto contemporáneo pueden ser muy útiles para responder a la posmodernidad y sus desafíos?

In that sense, this incorporation of social sciences and biblical foundations to interpret the contemporary context can be very useful to respond to postmodernity and its challenges?

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Definitivamente. Considero que la pastoral, tal como se entiende en contextos como los de América latina, Asia o África, está en mejores condiciones de responder a los desafíos, no solo de la posmodernidad en sentido general sino, fundamentalmente, a los rasgos peculiares que la posmodernidad presenta en cada contexto donde la iglesia ministra, sea que se trate de Latinoamérica u otro continente. En otras palabras, para la iglesia cristiana en Latinoamérica o para la iglesia hispana en Estados Unidos, la posmodernidad no solamente es un tema de

discusión académica sino un desafío pastoral que presenta características y demandas específicas a esos contextos y, por lo mismo, requieren respuestas pastorales pertinentes.

Definitively, I consider that the “pastoral”, as it is understood in contexts such as Latin America, Asia or Africa, it is in better position to respond to the challenges, that not only postmodernity poses in general terms, but to the specific concerns that postmodernity presents in each context where the church ministers (be it Latin America or other continent). In other words, for the Christian church in Latin America or for the Hispanic church in the United States, postmodernity is not just an academic discussion but rather a pastoral challenge unique to the characteristics and demands of specific contexts. In turn, this requires very relevant and pertinent pastoral answers to such issues.

**Question #4:** What is the future of your discipline?

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Considero que, la pastoral, como terreno de acción y reflexión del pueblo de Dios, en el marco de la misión, va a adquirir mayor relevancia debido a su proximidad con los grupos o sectores humanos a los que buscamos ministrar en obediencia a nuestro Señor. Por lo mismo, la pastoral debe discernir apropiadamente lo que constituyen los desafíos principales que debe atender en el contexto socio-histórico particular donde la iglesia sirve. Solo así podrá forjar discípulos de Jesucristo, fieles testigos del reino de Dios. En ese sentido, la pastoral debe preocuparse por dar luz a la iglesia para actuar evangélicamente en el terreno de la ecología, la economía, las culturas, etc.

I consider that, “pastoral,” as the terrain of action and reflection of God’s people, in the framework of mission, it will acquire a greater relevance due to its proximity to the groups of people that we are trying to minister in obedience to our Lord. In the same manner, the interdisciplinary “pastoral” concept must discern appropriately what constitutes the major challenges that need to be address in a particular socio-historical context that the church serves. Only in this way, it will be able to form disciples of Jesus Christ, faithful witnesses to the kingdom of God. In this sense, the “pastoral” must shed light to the church to act and respond as evangelicals in the areas of ecology, economy, culture, etc.

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

Dad, I agree with your statement regarding the greater relevance that pastoral ministry will have in the near future. However, I would add that this future also depends on the honest and thoughtful reconsideration of the methods and structures that are so prominent in our churches. In other words, in order to truly move faithfully into the future, we need to allow all current methods of evangelization, discipleship, and organization to be reconsidered in light of the heart of God as revealed in Scriptures. As long as we hold on to methods over the holistic and restorative message of God we will have a harder time in adapting to the changing times.

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Sin lugar a dudas, cuando la pastoral discierne los desafíos principales que debe atender, se obliga un replanteamiento respecto a cómo estamos realizando y cómo debemos realizar la misión de Dios en nuestro ámbito particular de acción. Por otro lado, me parece fundamental recalcar que, al final de cuentas, nos enfrentamos con el gran desafío de re-posicionar a la iglesia

local (el “laos”) en su lugar prominente como agente de la misión de Dios y, como tal, en gestora de una pastoral profética en medio de una realidad caótica y desesperanzadora.

Without a doubt, once the “pastoral” discerns the major challenges that it must attend to, there is a revision concerning how we are carrying out the mission of God in our particular context. On the other hand, it is fundamental that we face the great responsibility to re-position the local church (the “laos”) in its prominent place as the agent of the mission of God, and as such, as the prophetic voice in the midst of a chaotic and hopeless reality.

**Question #5:** What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

Wesleyan Higher Education has the challenge to develop students that are committed to the global *missio Dei*. It also has the challenge of forming students that will serve, appreciate, and seek intergenerational relationships within local congregations.

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Además de lo que mencionas, me parece que la Educación Superior Wesleyana tiene el tremendo desafío de encarnar: a) Un sentido de compromiso con la transformación integral del ser humano y su contexto total; b) Un sentido crítico de la realidad social global, poniendo al descubierto los signos de una cultura de muerte que se opone al Dios de la vida.

In addition to what you mentioned, I consider that Wesleyan Higher Education has the challenge of embodying: a) a sense of commitment to the integral transformation of the person and his/her whole context; b) a critical sense of the social and global reality, exposing the signs of a culture of death that opposes the God of life.

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

En esa línea de pensamiento, y pensando en la realidad de países como Estados Unidos y Canadá, considero que la Educación Superior Wesleyana tiene el reto de ser más proactiva en su aproximación multicultural. Es decir, uno de los desafíos a los que debe poner atención la Educación Superior Wesleyana es la inclusión intencional de alumnos, maestros, curriculum y material que haga justicia a una realidad multicultural que nos muestre como testigos de aquel legado expresado por Wesley de que “el mundo es nuestra parroquia”.

Along that line of thought, and thinking about the reality of countries like the United States and Canada, I think that Wesleyan Higher Education has the challenge of being more proactive in its multicultural approach. In other words, this challenge should lead Wesleyan Higher Education to pay more attention to the intentional inclusion of students, teachers, curriculum, material, and educational programs that reveals our multicultural reality and that points to our Wesleyan legacy of “the world is our parish.”

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Estoy totalmente de acuerdo y me parece un punto clave en esta discusión que merecería amplia reflexión y acción.

I completely agree with you and I think it is a key point that deserves a greater and more profound reflection and action.



Question #6: Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Por lo que has expresado anteriormente, estoy esperanzado respecto a la Educación Superior Wesleyana porque nos nutrimos, históricamente, de una visión global. La célebre expresión de Wesley de que el mundo es nuestra parroquia, no puede ser más desafiante hoy. Si el mundo es nuestra parroquia, la realidad total es nuestro campo de acción y, por lo mismo, la Educación Superior Wesleyana debe tomar en cuenta toda la realidad para que sus propuestas educativas sean pertinentes y adecuados aportes de transformación.

For what you have expressed earlier, I am hopeful regarding Wesleyan Higher Education since we are nurtured and influences, historically, from a global vision. Wesley's infamous expression could not be more relevant today. If the world is our parish, the total reality is the realm of our action, and in like manner Wesleyan Higher Education must take into account the global reality as it proposes educational programs that are relevant, adequate and transformative.

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

Eso era el mismo punto que iba tratar. Creo que si el llamado Wesleyano nos insta a una actitud y servicio integral y global, entonces puede haber gran esperanza para que la Educación Superior Wesleyana se mueva en esa dirección. Considero que otra de las realidades esperanzadoras de la Educación Superior Wesleyana es que siempre ha incorporado otras áreas académicas como parte de su intencionalidad de enriquecer al individuo. Es decir, la educación superior siempre se ha dado dentro de un concepto integral de la vida y de las ciencias que la estudian.

That is the same point that I wanted to make. I believe that if the Wesleyan call inspires us to an integral attitude and service, then there is still great hope for Wesleyan Higher Education. On the other hand, I also believe that Wesleyan Higher Education has historically incorporated other academic areas within its educational programs. It has intentionally enriched individuals in their learning process and this integral and holistic approach to life has given room for the sciences and theology to inform the human reality.

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Es verdad. También, me parece importante recalcar el hecho de que, especialmente en Norteamérica, la preparación de los ministros se desarrolla en el marco de las universidades, lo cual facilita y promueve un constante diálogo e interacción de los ministros con otros campos del conocimiento humano. Este enfoque, lastimosamente, no se siguió en otras partes del mundo donde la educación ministerial se realiza en ambientes demasiado cerrados y aislados del contacto y diálogo con otras disciplinas.

It is true. Also, I believe that it is important to highlight the fact that, especially in North America, the preparation and training of ministers has been done in the midst of universities within the liberal arts framework. Ultimately, this facilitates and promotes a constant dialogue and interaction between ministers and others areas of human knowledge. This approach, unfortunately, has not be replicated in other parts of the world where ministerial education has been done in close and isolated contexts, apart from other disciplines.

**Question #7:** Final words for future “generations?”

*Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan*

Me gustaría, teniendo como interlocutor a mi hijo, compartir unas palabras finales a las siguientes generaciones. Recuerda, mi hijo, que somos depositarios de una herencia que no empieza en la generación anterior, sino en el corazón de Dios. Somos parte de un proyecto cuyo artesano principal es el Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Tenemos el privilegio de haber sido convocados por el Señor para ser portavoces de una buena nueva que se selló con sangre en la cruz del Calvario y que se revelará en toda su majestad en el día final. De nosotros se requiere ser fieles, dignos de confianza, para sostener y traspasar el estandarte a cada nueva generación. Esto solo será posible si nuestra relación y comunión con Dios es cultivada día a día en adoración y obediencia. Entonces, con convicción, podremos declarar en medio de cualquier circunstancia “Mi Señor y mi Dios, heme aquí, envíame a mí”.

I would like to share few final words to the next generations, using my son as an interlocutor. Remember, my son, that we are entrusted with an inheritance that does not begin in the previous generation, but rather in the heart of God. We are part of a project whose main craftsman is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have the privilege of being called by the Lord to be spokespersons of good news, which were sealed with blood at the cross of Calvary and that will be revealed in all of its majesty in the final day. It is required from us that we are faithful and trustworthy to uphold and to pass on the baton to the next generation. This will only be possible if our relationship and communion with God is cultivated daily in worship and obedience. Only then, with our deepest conviction, we could declare regardless of the circumstance “My Lord and My God, here I am, send me!”

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

Gracias papi por tus palabras. Me encanta poder tener esto como guía.

Thank you dad for including me in. I love to have this as guide for my present and future years of ministry.

*Rev. Marcos Canales*

I would also like to share a few thoughts to the future generations. Consider “the great cloud of witnesses” that has gone ahead. Do not lose sight of what God’s intentions and purposes have always been. Remember that the Nazarene church should not only be known for things that you don’t do or that you abstain from, but rather for the practices and issues that you are committed to in the name of Jesus Christ. Remember that Jesus is to be embodied in the midst of your communities, neighborhoods, and then in your church buildings. Continue to cry out for God’s justice on behalf of the widows, orphans, the destitute, the stranger, the immigrant, and the not-so-liked. In your local congregations, seek, listen, and be open to God’s leading. May the Scriptures continue to nurture your creativity in living out principles that honor the Kingdom of God. May you continue to respond to God’s love- as expressed in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ- in humility, servanthood, and mutual love through the Holy Spirit. Every generation has received the grace-filled call to radical and genuine discipleship, will you take on that challenge?

DIDACHE "GENERATIONS"  
Ruben and Juan Fernandez

***Question #1: What is your current role?***

*Juan Fernandez*

I am currently a 10th-12th grade history teacher at a Christian high (secondary) school, worship leader and Sunday School teacher at my local church. I graduated in 2006 from Mount Vernon Nazarene University with a major in Communications.

*Ruben Fernandez*

I am a third-generation Nazarene from Argentina. Today, I am a missionary serving as the president of the Nazarene Seminary of the Americas (SENDAS), in San Jose, Costa Rica, and Regional Education Coordinator for the Mexico and Central America (MAC) Region. I have D.Min. from Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. I am currently pursuing a PhD in Ecclesiology at an evangelical university in San Jose.

***Question #2: Why did you choose this discipline?***

*Juan Fernandez*

I chose communications as my field of study because I feel that it is the foundation of our society. Christianity has a great and simple message, but somehow, Christians complicate things by not being able to communicate it properly. We sometimes get caught up in the deep theological discussions and forget that Jesus used simple analogies to communicate eternal truths.

*Ruben Fernandez*

I have a pastoral heart. I have been a pastor for many years in my home country, but at the same time served as theological professor in several seminaries there, because I am a pastor-teacher. Medical doctors prepare medical doctors; lawyers prepare lawyers. Pastors prepare pastors. While attending Bible institute in Buenos Aires, One hundred percent of my professors were pastors. That made a difference in me. I fell in love with the pastoral task back then, even during the breaks between classes, taking time to talk about ministry with real pastors!

Today I recognize that our seminaries are preparing men and women in several ministries, and we need experts in different areas (philosophy, sociology, history, etc.), but all our professors must have pastoral gifts and graces (and exercising them in local churches), if they are trying to teach pastors. In my case, I feel that preparing other colleagues I can expand my ministry.

On the other hand, I think I also have the gift to be able "to provide for others", or to lead (Romans 12:8 TNIV). In this way, I have served in various positions at local, district and general levels of the church, and in the last twenty years, more in relation to theological education.

***Question #3: What key contributions does your discipline offer?***

*Juan Fernandez*

As a Sunday School teacher and communicator, my discipline offers an indispensable source of discussion regarding our everyday walk with Christ. My college-age group is always eager to discuss about doctrinal issues, but not from a distant perspective, rather from a down-to-earth, experience-driven focus. How can we grow as a body of believers if important theological issues are only discussed in classrooms using complicated vocabulary? I'm happy that we have great theologians in our church, but it seems that their reflections and teachings do not reach the average church-goer, especially not in Latin America, where we live. The books Christians tend to buy are usually self-help books masquerading as religious. Authors write them because they know they will appeal to both Christian and secular markets. Now, I don't think this is wrong, we must strive to create material in every field and formulate appeals to non-believers; however, believers must seek to discuss the deep theological concepts in light of how they relate to their everyday life—something which I think is lacking greatly in our church today, and I seek to accomplish this through my Sunday School classes.

*Ruben Fernandez*

Theological education begins at home, in our everyday conversations with our kids (Deut. 6:7), before coming from the pulpit or into the classrooms. More importantly, theological education starts modeling Jesus to our family, friends and community. The fact is more than fifty percent of Nazarenes in Latin America have come to Jesus in the last fifteen years. They were not born in Christian homes. For them, theological education begins in Sunday School Ministries and Discipleship programs. One thing is sure, or at least should be: no one should begin theological education in the seminary or Bible institute.

Having said that, I think theological education is one of the means or tools for the fulfillment of God's mission in this world. We co-operate with the Holy Spirit in making more and better "...Christlike disciples in the nations," using the words of the Board of General Superintendents.

*Juan Fernandez*

Dad, do you think that in Latin America theological education is seen as something reserved only for those who have a pastoral call? Should we try to change this mindset, or should we provide other ways, besides Sunday School, for people to receive Wesleyan theological principles to strengthen Nazarene identity and walk with God?

*Ruben Fernandez*

As I mentioned, I believe that there are responsibilities that mainly belong to Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries. Our seminaries in the MAC Region require an intentional discipleship process in the local church for everyone who plans to follow an ordination track or degree granting program [for ministry].

There are challenges, however, regarding SSDM teachers' preparation and materials that need to be faced in order to revitalize that ministry in our context. Teachers need to be carefully taught in Wesleyan holiness theology, and also in teaching skills in order to be able to share deep but simple classes with lay persons. Some professors just "read the book" and share boring and

unexciting classes. Some materials are very good, but others are translated from English to a “generic” Spanish-speaking context (we need to remember that there are huge differences between someone living in Spain, USA or Latin America) or written in Spanish but emphasizing the Biblical world but with no connection with today’s world.

It needs to be said that a good percentage of our seminaries’ professors are serving also as SSDM teachers, and it makes a great difference, resulting in dynamic and well coordinated classes and contextualized materials.

I still need to believe (and I think that most of our seminaries do the same) that theological institutions have been raised to prepare pastors and other main leaders for the church. The problem that we are facing is that local churches are not teaching and discipling their members as they should be, and we are seeing, at least on the MAC Region, the potential for the institutions to collaborate with local pastors in that task.

***Question #4: What is the future of your discipline?***

*Juan Fernandez*

I believe that as times continue to get tougher around the world, Christians will be forced to deal with tough questions about their faith. Lukewarm Christians will be pushed toward a real decision for Christ. This will undoubtedly bring a revival to the body of Christ. Sunday School and small groups will play a key role in this movement. We are already seeing around the world, churches that grow the most are those that have a strong small-group foundation. Mega-churches come and go, but churches that have a strong doctrinal foundation based on one-on-one and small group discipleship are tough enough to resist through the troubled times ahead.

*Ruben Fernandez*

[The future is in] technology and delivery systems of education. We must be open to the whole new world that communications and educational technology have opened to us. In these new times, it is hard, and not healthy, to keep the concept that there is just "one way" to prepare ministers. We need to rethink and intentionally move forward with creative ways to continue educating with excellence all the people that God is calling.

[Also, the future is in] diversified lay training. As I already stated, we normally have thought that seminaries train pastors and local churches train lay people. That is true. However, in most of the cases and for different reasons, local churches are not discipling in a lifelong way. Last year, I received a call from the Regional Office to the theological institutions. They agreed in support and cooperate with local churches in a "School of Leadership" for those working in seven different ministries. That represents a great responsibility and a new exciting scope of service for us.

***Question #5: What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Juan Fernandez*

I guess I have already mentioned this before. How can we take deeper Wesleyan theological discussion into our local church's Sunday school and small group settings, in a language that the

average church-goer can understand? Jesus did not choose a group of philosophers as his twelve. He chose all kinds of men, the majority with very little or no education. If these men could understand Jesus' message so clearly, and be inspired by the Holy Spirit to write about such deep theological concepts in surprisingly simple words, why can't we do the same?

*Ruben Fernandez*

Some challenges that we will be facing more and more during the coming years are:

The existence of our schools in their present form. Latin Americans have lived in crisis for decades. So, the actual global [economic] crisis does not scare us. However, most of our schools depend on an allocation from the World Evangelism Fund, which have been and probably will be declining in the future. It is true that in some countries we do theological education in "survival conditions." On the other hand, it is also true that we have fostered -in some cases- paternalism and dependency. Only a few districts give support to their jurisdictional school, and we need to drastically improve that. Thanks to God, many schools have launched innovative programs and different ways to provide genuine local incomes for funding their theological education.

Doctrine. We need to be balanced in understanding of and living out our Wesleyan-holiness doctrine. We are at risk to being "not Nazarene enough" - losing our core values two and three (holy and missional people), our heritage and identity, but also we are at risk to being "too Nazarene" (if that is possible) – losing our core value one (christian people), believing that we are "the one" church, and not having communion with other good evangelical traditions.

Church growth. Hundreds of new churches are being established in our countries, in many cases in very rural areas. We need to get closer to the new pastors that God is calling with theological education by extension (that we call decentralized) in a proper way. The one-year training plan for lay pastors started this year in the MAC Region (School of Leadership) can be a very helpful tool for those with a very low education. Materials are needed to be written and distributed.

On one hand, I believe that there will be always a Christian responsibility that comes from the New Testament where the people in towns with more resources help people in towns with less resources. Philip Jenkins in "The Next Christendom" states that by the year 2050 the higher number of Christian people will live in the Southern hemisphere but the resources among the Christians will remain in the Northern hemisphere.

Documents like "Commitment with a Simple-living Style" from Lausanne (1980) reflected conversations and decisions between Christians in rich countries and poor countries Christians, and remain pertinent today. In some places in the Nazarene world the discussions are about what kind of plasma TV will be placed in the outside hall of the sanctuary, in other less fortunate places the discussions are about how they raise the money to buy a few bricks to build a small place to meet and worship the Lord. There is nothing wrong with having good facilities in order to attract people of all social levels to church in the developed countries, but at the same time, there is an extra responsibility for those churches (besides the normal support to the World Evangelism Fund). For example, Nazarene local churches, districts and institutions in the "first world" could help two or three local churches, districts and institutions in the developing countries by sending W&W teams, providing endowments funds for self supporting projects, etc.



On the other hand, we certainly need to change some things. In some countries on our region, the Nazarene [presence is] 104-105 years old. It is time to begin assuming our own responsibilities even in financial issues. Talking about theological education we are asking a tuition fee from every student in the Region (apart of the amount that he or she is paying in the district) to be sent directly to the jurisdictional institution. There is a cost in the education and they need to start contributing to that, at least in a small proportion. Also an annual offering from the local churches for the seminaries is being promoted. The recent decision of the General Board regarding a 2.5 % from every local church 's income be sent to the theological institution on its field would be extremely helpful to continuing the teaching process about a sense of ownership of district and local people for education.

*Juan Fernandez*

Dad, speaking of doctrine, one issue that I am concerned with is that US Nazarenes feel much more responsible for being involved in government and civil action than Latin Americans. It is very common to hear American Nazarenes outwardly supporting a political party or directly getting involved in political issues by attending rallies, public demonstrations, calling their representatives, etc. What similarities or differences do you see with the Latin American Nazarene, and how do you think our doctrine relates to all of this? Should we be more or less intentional in our doctrinal statements when it comes to the Church's position and its members' responsibilities when it comes to social injustices and moral issues in the political arena (abortion, gay marriage, etc)?

*Ruben Fernandez*

You are right, but you need to remember that there are huge differences between USA and Latin American histories and governments. The USA has lived in democracy from its inception. They have worked for a long time on social equality, consensus and civil participation. Latin Americans have lived under military regimes for decades. I was born in the 1960s and grew up in the 1970s under repression, no liberty at all, no human rights observed, thousand of missing people and a lot of stolen children. Back then, many people in Latin America voted for the first time [when they were] close to the age of 30.

You were born and I begun my ministry in the 1980s under a brand new democracy in Argentina (thanks to God). Other countries did the same. With the building of democracies in Latin America many evangelicals understood their political responsibilities as Christians, and became majors, senators and filled other governmental positions. Even though, regrettably, we have had some evangelical presidents in our continent who were also accused of corruption and violation of human rights. That fact discouraged some good evangelicals with a call to be politicians from being involved in political parties.

However, the church may not be foreign to the political arena. We just need more true servant leaders involved in our counties and states. Christians do have a political responsibility. Sadly, there are Christians who think that there is some kind of separation between "sacred and profane" or church-living and secular-living. In the last Latin American Encounter of Nazarene Educators in Quito this was one of the topics treated. We believe that from the classrooms we can change the mindset of thousands of ministers in formation. As we know, the way that the pastors think will be reflected in the way what churches do.

I believe that the national churches need to have a prophetic voice in human and moral issues, like the ones you mentioned. I think, by my own experience, the local mini-efforts to transform our communities in many different ways and making relationships, while trying to influence Nazarene ministers in our countries will be the encouragement the people need. The key thing is that all our pastors need to be involved in this process. We need to face the macro but always taking care of the micro.

***Question #6: Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Juan Fernandez*

I hope institutions teaching Wesleyan theology are kept in constant check regarding their focus. What is the purpose of this education? Is it to gloat about our theological knowledge or is it to have better tools to reach the lost for Christ? Is everything we are teaching focused around this objective?

*Ruben Fernandez*

Some things make me feel optimistic about the future are...

We are being more vulnerable, more open, more humane, in other words, more Wesleyan. In our schools the barriers between faculty and students are falling down.

We are the body of Christ together, holy people, together. We are not masquerading our feelings, or even weaknesses; we start to use small "accountability" groups as Wesley did. The process is slow, but is beginning.

Between West - East - North - South schools the same is happening. God has been and is still using some global leaders who—like the "expert builder" Paul—"laid a foundation" (1 Cor 3:10), for the global educational system in the Church of the Nazarene. And, the foundation is Christ himself before Whom we are all the same, without any kind of distinctions.

*Juan Fernandez*

Dad, when I read about the primitive church, I get the feeling that they relied much more on the Holy Spirit than we do today. Also, it seems that education, although they had teachers, happened because people were interested in discussing theological issues. They wrote to each other about them. It was the topic of their everyday conversations. Has the McDonaldization of our culture (where everything is quick and superficial) created a Church where people just do not care about discussing these issues as it once did? What will it take for us to go back to that hunger that the disciples had?

In Latin America we have lost some valuable things because we were afraid "to be identified as..." For example we have lost in some places the use of some rituals or symbols in our liturgy because we would resemble the Roman Catholics; but also we have lost the supernatural side of the Gospel because we did not want to be mixed with Pentecostals. We need to recover the

expectation for God's power manifestations and marvelous things that the Holy Spirit will do among us, in the same way that the primitive Wesleyans and founding Nazarenes had.

Why are we losing the interest in theology discussions? It's simple. The interest is fostered when the theology touches the needs of people's daily life.

Long and disconnected sermons and monologues in Sunday School classes, as I mentioned before, don't help very much. We need to begin seeing people in a different way. We must be more constructivists in teaching, starting where the people are, not trying to write on them as if they are "white sheets." We need to stop seeing laypersons in passive roles, just offering and tithing to support the "professional" ministers. We must see them as protagonists of the *Missio Dei*. That was God's plan, because He knows very well that we will never transform our society only with professional ministers.

### ***Final words for future generations***

*Ruben Fernandez*

Be an authentic Christian for your time. Keep the essence of the Wesleyan-holiness doctrine even maybe changing some words that will help post- postmodern people to a better understanding of our message. Stay focused on God's mission even changing some almost "sacred" methods. Be a continual learner and a Christ-like disciple. Teach with your life first. Be contagious to your family, friends and beyond. Be faithful and "pass the torch" to next generation.

DIDACHE: “GENERATIONS”  
Dr. Padu Meshramkar and Atul P. Meshramkar

***Question #1: What is your current role?***

*Padu Meshramkar*

Right now I am the local senior pastor of the Washim Church of the Nazarene. Actually, I have retired from being the India Coordinator for the Jesus Film Ministry. I served in this role for eleven years.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

How did you end up being a pastor?

*Padu Meshramkar*

I ended up being a pastor not by choice; but upon a request of the local church to be their interim pastor and to help them. I did that for couple of years, and now at the request of the church; I am doing it full time. God has been good!!!

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

Did you actively prepare in your early life for pastoral ministry or with the inclination?

*Padu Meshramkar*

I knew from the very beginning that I wanted to teach. And God made it possible for me to do that for the past 40 + Yrs. So, looking at myself with this background, I see myself as teacher with a pastoral heart. When I preach, I teach. And when I teach, I preach. This combination seems to be working. I truly believe that God had been preparing me for this pastoral ministry all through-out my life.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

My current role is that of the Country Coordinator and Director for Nazarene Compassionate Ministries in India. I have been serving in this capacity since December 2000. I fully enjoy my work and it is my passion.

*Padu Meshramkar*

I remember when you went off to the Nazarene College in Mount Vernon, Ohio, you were so determined to be a successful business-man with lots of money. What happened?

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

To answer you simply in one line: God got a hold of me in a chapel service. The background of that experience is that I had been avoiding listening to his voice—until that one day when I felt I could not run anymore.

***Question #2: Why did you choose this discipline or ministry?***

*Padu Meshramkar*

I would like to answer this first from my perspective as a teacher. I never wanted to be in the full time ministry. I had felt that (ministry) should be some thing anyone should always think of as a last option. But God was after me. It was in the second year of my college days that God got hold of me and said to me : “ I need you.” I just said “yes.” What it meant, I did not realize in the moment, but God led me one step at a time. After finishing college I went to the seminary to prepare my self for the ministry. It was at the completion of my Bachelor of Divinity that I was asked to come and teach at the Nazarene Bible Training School at Washim. I had many open doors to enter. But I wanted to be sure of God’s will. Through a friend God seemed to guide me saying “Out of all the open doors, enter which ever you feel is the most difficult door for you”.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

Was that advice helpful to you?

*Padu Meshramkar*

I did not know if that was theologically correct counsel or not, but it was given by a godly person with wisdom and counsel.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

How long did you teach at the Bible College?

*Padu Meshramkar*

For 27 Years.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

You earlier talked about “entering through the difficult door.” Was it all worth it?

*Padu Meshramkar*

During those years (1965-1992) I saw many of our young people graduate and enter the Nazarene churches as pastors, preachers, teachers, and deacons. They are now the leaders in the Nazarene churches and because of them the work is rapidly growing. So, yes it has been worth it all!!

Secondly, I want to respond from my role and ministry as a senior pastor. I do not think that I would have imagined myself as being a pastor. Now that I look back and reflect on it, it seems amazingly appropriate how God navigated me, prepared me, gave the exposure needed, the education, and wise counsel of godly people. This entire time the process of equipping me was going on—for—almost 44 yrs. All of that preparation for only one task: To be a shepherd. I think that it is the biggest responsibility that one can take on his or her shoulders.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

44 yrs is a long time....to be preparing for a role.

*Padu Meshramkar*

That is correct; however, it was not until recently that it began to dawn upon me that all this time God was preparing me to be a shepherd, when I thought that I had given him the best.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

As I was completing my degree at Mount Vernon Nazarene College (now University) and preparing to graduate, during the last final year I had a chance to attend Compassionate Ministries Regional Conference at Mount Vernon. The speakers profoundly impacted me, one of them being Dr. Robert Scott and Dr. Hermann who were there to meet with interested people. It would be improper to say that I chose “social care and concern” as my discipline. I believe that God called me into it, and I was “accepted” into the discipline. Thus began my journey of struggle and conversations with God in terms of future ministry and the role that he would guide me to do.

*Padu Meshramkar*

I think you mentioned a very important point: you were called and accepted. I would summarize and say, “God equips the called. It is amazing to see how God equipped you and me for His ministry. Atul – how were you groomed for the role that you are in today. I am sure that there was something that has been ingrained in you deeply...

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

Yes Dad. Do you remember how I was talking in Dec 1997 about being able to come back home, and then in Feb 1998, I returned back to India? I returned sensing and confirming God's call for me to be engaged in helping the church respond to the needy and the vulnerable. It was in a Christian higher educational institution that the roots of my present ministry were woven and sown. It was the attitude of *servanthood* that was taught by the professors; not in the class but in the actions of their lives. It was the attitude of *acceptance* shown by the “faith community” of MVNC when I felt out of place; but I was loved and accepted. It was the *humility* of servanthood shown by our teachers, workers, employees, and staff. Professors had a profound impact and left a lasting impression on me. I believe that my four years at MVNC prepared me for my present discipline and ministry.

*Padu Meshramkar*

You have mentioned some excellent qualities that we as forgiven people must possess. How do you see them being used in your area of work?

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

I remember having a discussion Dr. Gustavo Crocker who at time was serving as the Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM) International Director in Kansas City. It was during my visit to the head offices. We had discussions and during those times, it was said by him that we at NCM must enable and equip the church to be infused with the DNA of God's compassionate love for the needy and the vulnerable and bring hope for the hurting.” That statement has been very important reminder for me even today. And I believe that to be infused with God's compassionate love for the hurting, vulnerable, neglected, and oppressed, we need to have qualities such as *acceptance, humility and servanthood*. So did I choose this discipline? No, but God used an institution called MVNC and a “few good men” to equip me for this discipline.



Upon my return to my home in India, I felt it was necessary to be academically qualified and hence I went back to college and completed my graduate degree in Social Work.

**Question #3:** *What key contributions does your discipline or ministry offer?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

1. Emphasis on holiness preaching.
2. Encouraging young people to enter ministry
3. Ensuring the involvement of the laity in building the kingdom.
4. Faithful giving and stewardship.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

What did you mean by holiness preaching and giving?

*Padu Meshramkar*

It is not just the preaching but helping the people to understand that it is not enough to just be forgiven, rather it is also necessary to be cleansed by the incoming of the Holy Spirit. This is the core of the Wesleyan thought and holiness that I as a pastor want to and desire to share, teach and preach from the pulpit. People are hurting and hungry—and we need to share that Jesus is the answer to all these problems.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

We minister to the whole person, not just an aspect or a part of it. We exist to bring hope to the hurting world. Sometimes it is giving medicine to the sick child, at other times its helping a mother rescue her child. At other times, it is standing with someone who is facing injustice or is being oppressed. We also equip, enable and encourage the church to be extensions of God's compassion in everyday life. We strive so that a compassionate lifestyle for the people and churches becomes as simple as breathing is to us for survival. What is truly interesting is and I see a parallel with how we minister; it is in fact how I was ministered at MVNC holistically as a whole person and in fellowship with one another in the pursuit of Christ-like character.

**Question #4:** *What is the future of your discipline or ministry?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

The work of a pastor/shepherd never ends. We must continue to keep guiding, loving, and showing the way to those who seek. I as a pastor must continually share my personal experience of knowing Christ, and keep guiding our people towards the experience of receiving personal forgiveness of sins and entire sanctification.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

As long as people who are hurting exist; touching them with God's love and hope can never cease to exist. I believe, however, with so much advance taking place in the world, the fast pace of life, and "McDonaldization" of our lives—it is very important to ensure that we do not lose the personal touch. Much of our "contact" with people has become very impersonal and limited, and hence we are losing the opportunity to ministry to the whole person. What is important, however, is that in the days to come we need to be prepared to seek out people where we least

expect them to be; and be lonely, vulnerable and hurt. We need to reach out to these who are hurting

**Question #5:** *What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

(1) As one of the elders in the Church of the Nazarene in India, I see the challenge to reiterate the fundamental doctrinal position of John Wesley in our teaching and preaching ministries. Dr. J. B. Chapman, a great leader of the Nazarene church, was asked a question before he passed away. “Sir, do you think a day will come when the Church of the Nazarene will cease to teach and preach the old fashioned doctrine of entire sanctification?” Dr. Chapman replied, “No, but the thing I fear most is that the time will come when our people will have the theory, but not possess the experience.” The personal experience of entire sanctification is very necessary and needed for our Christian life. We must not become narrow by not sharing the need to experience personal forgiveness and entire sanctification.

(2) I also worry that we do not have a strong pulpit ministry in terms of preaching holiness and entire sanctification. The head knowledge is good and essential, but the heart must have the experience. This I believe is a matter of great concern. The possibility is that we can drift away from our doctrinal position. We may show the growth numerically, but if we lose our very reason for existence as a distinct holiness denomination then we need not worry about our theological position at all.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

I agree with you on strong pulpit ministry. I at times sense that we have good and nice messages being delivered from the pulpit, except that we have forgotten our heritage of preaching holiness the way it was practiced in the early days of our founding as a denomination.

In my response, I want to add that people want to see living, breathing example in a person’s life that has been molded, and shaped. The kind of person that people want to talk to, ask questions to, and share their dreams and hopes with. And it is in that personal sharing of hope that people connect with the other person and see Hope. I somehow feel that the “personal” touch of connecting, of sharing the personal experience of receiving grace, and of sharing dreams is also missing. Also, what is most important is that you have competent, committed and capable faculty who will emulate servanthood, humility and acceptance and help other students learn by being a “living” example. It is not only enough that we minister to the whole person, but also help him to have the experience of forgiveness that the Lord gives. What we are missing is the fact that living a forgiven life in a Christ like manner means more than just attending the church. How can we make it easier for people to understand our theology, so that they can embrace it, live it out practically and make a difference?

**Question #6:** *Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?*

*Padu Meshramkar*

There are some hopeful signs that we are seeing today. Our youth are more interested in becoming a vital part of the community of God. They are not interested in belonging to a

denomination, but to become real followers of Jesus Christ and want to get involved in God's mission.

I am confident that God will continue to move among us. I am optimistic as I remember my teaching days, and how people have embraced the theory in their practical personal experience. It is this experience that is helping them to grow day by day as the church grows.

I am sure that the small seed that is planted will result in fruit that remains!!!

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

It gives me immense hope to know that our college and faculties have the commitment and dedication that is needed and required to make a lasting impact.

**Question #7:** *Final words for future “generations?”*

*Padu Meshramkar*

1. Honor God in all that you do.
2. Concern as to how they will respond to the pressure of the world today as they grow.
3. Keep yourself pure and out of the harm's way.
4. Surrender their lives to Lord Jesus Christ. And be used of God for His glory to lead the future generation.

*Atul P. Meshramkar*

Become clay in His hands. Be molded. Be filled. Overflow.

DIDACHE: “GENERATIONS”  
David and Wesley Phillips

**Question #1:** *What is your current role?*

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

I am currently serving as the Vice-President for Online Education at Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I have been at NBC for eleven years, following 25 years of pastoral ministry, mostly in Southern California. I now find myself involved in helping to deliver education using Internet technology to those preparing for ministry.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

I am currently a Masters of Divinity Student at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. After graduating from Point Loma Nazarene University, I spent one year as a Mission Corps volunteer in the Caribbean Regional Office.

**Question #2:** *Why did you choose this discipline?*

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

As a high school student, I sensed what I later came to understand as a call to ministry. While I didn't fully understand all the implications of that call, I did know that it would determine the direction of my life. During a summer camp morning service, a missionary spoke, not about specific ministries, but about a willingness to simply say “yes” to whatever it is that God wants you to do. I responded to that invitation and made a commitment to follow God regardless of where He would take me or how He would call me to serve.

At that time, the call included getting an education and going to college was clearly the next step. Following graduation, I was directed to pastor a small church, serve as a youth pastor, then to pastor another church. Along the way, the call to additional education was clear and I responded while continuing to serve as the pastor of a growing church. Looking back, completing my education was critical in terms of God's ultimate plan for my life.

Consistent with God's previous direction, I developed an interest in helping others prepare to answer God's call in their lives. I did this in the local church as well as at the district level. When the call came to go to Nazarene Bible College, it was easy to make the transition because my past education and experience prepared me for this assignment.

So, in the simplest terms, I chose my current discipline because it is what God prepared me for and called me to do.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

I didn't really choose to pursue graduate studies in religion, rather it chose me. I just accepted the calling and am trying to faithfully follow it. I graduated from Point Loma with a degree in broadcast journalism with the goal of going into sports broadcasting. After participating in ministry at a church, I began to feel a deeper calling to ministry. For the first time in my life, I was drawn to answer a call to full-time Christian service. During my senior year at Point Loma, I

felt that I needed to experience life on the mission field. After a lot of soul searching and prayer, I decided to complete a year of volunteer work with Nazarene Mission Corps. I went to the Caribbean Regional Office and worked primarily with communication. While serving in the field, I accepted my calling to be a full-time minister and someday, a missionary. Following the call meant more education. Education is a part of the journey and will turn into experience, allowing me to be a better pastor and missionary.

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

As you envision your calling to missionary work, do you see your undergraduate studies in broadcast journalism as helpful in the things you will be doing in the ministry? What knowledge and skills learned will be especially helpful to you in the future?

*D. Wesley Phillips*

I think that my undergraduate work in broadcast journalism will help me a great deal. God has used many things in my life to lead me to where I am today. God used my drum playing skills to direct me to a church while I was in college where I served on the worship team. The church took me on a mission trip where I got the idea to call Mission Corps. My experiences in broadcast journalism, in conjunction with the mission trip, led me to the Caribbean Region and the year of service in the Caribbean led me to where I am today. God used those situations to teach me that whatever gifts you have, God will use them if you give Him a chance.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

Looking back at your life and the things that you have done, did you always feel that you were in the right place doing the right things, or did you ever have a feeling that God had more in store for you? Do you feel settled now or do you feel that God has more big steps planned for your future?

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

There have been a number of times that while I believed I was doing the right thing, I sensed there was something more that God was leading me to. It was a sense that while the current work was right for the time, it was also preparation for another stage in my life. As I look back, most of what I have done in life prepared me for what I am doing now.

Does God have something else for me? I don't know! Right now, things seem to be very much in place and I can't imagine where this could lead. However, that has always been a part of the excitement – to see what could come next.

**Question #3:** *What key contributions does your discipline offer?*

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

I am convinced that there has never been a time when having an educated clergy is more important. We are living in a day when many people are entering the ministry as a second career and serving in bi-vocational settings. As such, many who need an education cannot accomplish that in a face-to-face educational environment. Being able to deliver a quality educational

experience online is providing not only the opportunity to learn but the means to acquire an education.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

Being a student is very important, because it is through studying and asking questions that important answers are found. Many great truths were passed from Jesus to the disciples as He answered their questions. It is through students that the study of philosophy, theology, biblical interpretation, etc. is challenged and shaped. The reason you study and learn is not to just get a piece of paper with your name on it, but rather to be more effective in your current and future ministry. What key contributions will I make in the future? I do not know, but I know that they will be much greater because education is preparing me for what lies ahead.

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

I am impressed with your awareness for the need of education at such a young age. I must admit that I was much older before I realized the immense value in education. Is there anything that you can attribute this awareness to?

*D. Wesley Phillips*

I realize education is important because I see how important it is to people around me. Growing up, I saw parents who continued their education and were willing to go to great lengths and sacrifices to gain it. I saw my sister and brother go to college and excel in their careers. I have also seen the reverse situation, where people waited late in life to begin pursuing an education and faced added challenges as a result. People have an innate desire to learn. That is why little children ask questions, why we love to watch the Discovery Channel, and why game shows are so popular – there is a want and need for learning inside of all of us.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

In your work with online education over the past eleven years, what impact have you seen in the lives of your students within the greater Christian world? Have you been surprised by any of the things the students have accomplished or paths they have taken after graduation?

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

History will be able to tell a better story, but because the online delivery of education has made it possible for students anywhere in the world to get an education and I see many benefiting from it in various world regions. Probably the most significant part of online learning is the immediate impact it has on the ministries of the students and instructors. Participants are often actively engaged in ministry. They bring the real world into the classroom and then take the experience immediately back out into the world. I have also noticed that because learning in this environment is something that can be done while remaining in active ministry, many choose to continue pursuing education and become lifelong learners.

**Question #4:** *What is the future of your discipline?*

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

The need for education is going to increase and I believe the specific need for biblical, theological, and practical ministry education is going to increase. The projections concerning



adults returning to college all point to significant increases. There are many who feel that as adults return to college, they will be looking to prepare for something that will make a difference in their world. I believe many will seek to prepare for ministry.

In a 2007 article published by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) called, “Real-Time Collaboration”, Sam S. Adkins makes a prediction that by 2016, 75-80% of all US post-secondary students will be full or part-time online students (Adkins). The trends certainly give strength to that prediction, but even if the numbers are not that high, it is evident there is a future in online education.

With the growing desire for ministerial training and online education, I believe there will be a significant need for my discipline in the future.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

As long as there are sick people, we will always need doctors. In the same way, until Christ returns, we will always need pastors and missionaries. But, they may look differently in the future than they do right now. We must find ways to be effective in the midst of hard economic times. We must figure out new ways to reach and train people. We must continue to bridge the gap in our churches between young and old, rich and poor, and black and white. The future for my generation is exciting because, like the men and women before us, we get to take charge and do what God has called us to do. If there is anything that we have learned from the generations before us, it is that we must put our hope and trust in God. No matter what the obstacle is before us, we must find ways to spread the good news.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

How is Biblical online education going to impact the church in the future, especially in the worldwide church?

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

Providing education using Internet technology removes the barrier of distance. There are still some issues related to reliability and accessibility, especially in non-US world regions, but we can provide quality education to students all over the world using the most qualified instructors available. We can also enable students to learn from a multicultural perspective as they study with students from many different places, enhancing their worldview. Most importantly, training does not require relocation to a college campus. We can educate ministers in an effective and challenging way that allows them to immediately apply what they are learning in their current ministries.

**Question #5:** *What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?*

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

There are two challenges that we are facing in Wesleyan Higher Education today. The first challenge is to help our students understand what it means to be Wesleyan-Armenian. Students are inundated with theological concepts outside of our tradition, and the majority of books, seminars, and online sermons they access are not from a Wesleyan-Armenian background. In

many cases, they use this material without any knowledge of the distinct theological differences. The challenge is to help students understand the significance in the differences.

A second challenge is to make education practical. While it is important for us to provide the academic understanding of what it means to be Wesleyan-Armenian, it is even more important for us to help students understand how this makes a difference in the everyday life of those in the church.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

I think the biggest challenge for Wesleyan Higher Education is to reach the most people in the most relevant way without losing its purpose and mission. Wesleyan Higher Education must find ways to carry out the *Missio Dei* (Mission of God) by training students with the best technology, in the greatest learning environments, and with the brightest teachers; but most importantly, by keeping the focus on the Bible and on the people to whom we are called to reach. We have to find relative ways to compete with Hollywood, the Internet, and today's culture while we continue to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and reach the world for Christ.

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

I was impressed with your reference to providing education by using the "best technology ... with the brightest teachers." One of the great opportunities that we have using technology today is to enable teachers to teach people living in different places without the need to be face-to-face. Students can benefit from the best education available and teachers can expand their realm of influence far beyond their geographical areas.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

Being able to understand the differences is important. I know that colleges and universities seem to fall into categories or 'schools of thought,' and students tend to lean in one direction. How does online education help give students the opportunity to study under teachers that lean in different directions and how does it help the students make their own decisions on these issues?

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

Most schools have a predominate culture that reflects the history as well as the current thinking of the faculty. There may be some divergent thinking among the faculty, but probably not as much as some would believe. Most online programs, including the one at NBC, use faculty from many schools, as well as practitioners from many different places. NBC currently has 120 adjunct faculty members; 25% teach for other colleges/universities and the rest are educationally qualified practitioners. This provides for significant diversity, which gives students the opportunity to experience different ways of approaching life and ministry.

**Question #6:** *Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?*

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

I am hopeful regarding Wesleyan Higher Education because I believe the distinct doctrine behind our education is what those inside and outside of our heritage desire the most. It is what

our world needs more than anything else. Our distinctiveness and our ability to deliver this education to people anywhere in the world through the use of online technology are my reasons for hope.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

I am most hopeful because in all of the pain and suffering, in all the economic hardships and trials, and in spite of all the intolerance and injustice in the world – we still have the same loving God. God is still bringing salvation to this world in extraordinary ways, but God can only do it through the help of His called people. Seeing men and women trained to share the message of Christ is why Wesleyan Higher Education is hopeful to me. It allows me to better serve God in a fallen and seemingly hopeless world. If the education we receive is based on God's plan, then there is no greater hope for the world. As I continue to learn and grow, I get to see the love and grace that John Wesley talked about. I also get to see the struggles and sins that must be overcome in order to become a holy people.

**Question #7:** *Final words for future “generations?”*

*Dr. David M. Phillips*

As I look back at my life, I realize that one of the most significant decisions that I made was to continue my education. Education made it possible for God to open the doors He wanted to open in my life. I believe that I am in the place where God wants me, but if I had not furthered my education, I could not serve in this role. I also agree with the thought that remaining effective in our world requires an individual to complete 30 hours of graduate work every ten years. My final words are to continue your education and remain a lifelong learner.

*D. Wesley Phillips*

The one thing that comes to mind is to tell future generations to keep going. John Wesley's brother, Charles Wesley, once said, “God buries the workmen, but carries on the work.” To be used as God's instrument in the world and to do the work of God is why we keep going. It is why we study, it is why we pray, and it is why we prepare sermons, lectures, and children's church crafts. Just like the generations before us, we are challenged with the task of picking up the torch and carrying on the work. Our hope is to leave the world a better place, full of grace, so that future generations will have something to build on.

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DIDACHE: “GENERATIONS  
Mark Quanstrom, Ryan Quanstrom, and Dan Quanstrom

***Question #1: What is your current role?***

*Mark Quanstrom*

I am currently Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Olivet Nazarene University.

*Ryan Quanstrom*

Currently I am a student at Duke getting my M. Div. I like to think that my role is similar to the early years of Paul, Peter, Luther, or even Wesley. I have a heart designed for working in the church, but I am taking this time to be trained.

*Dan Quanstrom*

I am finishing up the last few weeks of my undergrad at ONU with a double major in history and philosophy/religion.

***Question #2: Why did you choose this Discipline?***

*Mark Quanstrom*

It was not my idea. I was called to preach and I knew that that particular vocation demanded continued study. After Seminary, I assumed the pastorate of Belleville First Church of the Nazarene and pursued a Masters Degree in Philosophy at SIUE (Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville) and then continued my study at St. Louis University, pursuing a Ph.D. in historical theology. I believed my vocation as pastor mandated this attention to the academic discipline. Study is worship. And so I did not pursue a Ph.D. in order to teach but in order to preach. In 2004, however, when the invitation to teach at ONU was offered, I discerned that this was what was next for me and I very reluctantly left the pastoral ministry.

*Ryan Quanstrom*

I do not know that many people choose this discipline... I think it chooses you. Ever since my first crisis experience at the age of 5, I have felt an urge to bring others to Christ. At that age I thought I was called to be a pastor. My dad was a pastor, my grandpa was a pastor, my uncles were pastors, my great-grandpa was a pastor. It was what my family did. As I grew, the calling to bring others to Christ changed shapes. After visiting Russia I became incredibly disillusioned with the American Protestant church. It seemed to me that American Christianity focused too greatly on intellectual conversions. Faith seemed to be “assent to belief” rather than “a sure and abiding trust.” Even among us holiness folk, we were only concerned with possessing sanctification or working until we are sanctified as if we sanctify ourselves. I had tried to sanctify myself and it did not work. I left the church, and I left God.

Fortunately God graciously brought me back to God through some classes. My struggle had been intellectual, however. Once I was freed from a major epistemological dilemma, God was able to break into my life and remind me that my salvation comes from God. I can only have a sure and abiding trust, which pushes me on toward sanctification. I think God has decided to sanctify me through the church. Though I am generally disillusioned with that institution, I have learned,

“The church is people, and people are sinners, therefore the church is messy.” I have decided to get my hands a bit dirty and see if God’s message of holiness cannot come through me, and I am terrified. In order to do that though, I believe it is fitting for me to study hard and learn all I can.

*Dan Quanstrom*

When I began my undergrad I “knew” I was going to be a high school history teacher. I loved history, and wanted to teach in the public school system. After my first semester I started feeling as if that might not be the case. I wrestled with God asking, “Why wouldn’t I be a history teacher? I know I’d be good at it, you could use me in so many ways, plus I’m secure knowing what my future would be. Why would I change that?” His response was simple, “Follow me.” This has become a common theme. After a few more “Follow me’s”, my degree changed. I spent a semester in Mukono, Uganda, and my degree changed again. I have come to a point where I am hearing, “Follow me.” Graduation is all too close and I have yet to make certain plans, but I must continue to follow. So, why did I choose this discipline? Maybe Ryan is right, maybe it chose me. Or maybe the Lord is my shepherd and I am just a sheep. I must continue to follow Him where He will take me.

***Question #3: What key contributions does your discipline offer?***

*Mark Quanstrom*

That question is a hard one as it asks me to articulate what seems to me to be obvious. While my work at NTS was valuable for pastoral preparation, and while I enjoyed the intellectual rigor of philosophy, it was when I began the study of historical theology that I discovered the relevance of my faith. I discovered that most of the “new” issues in theology are in fact, simply reiterations or variations of recurring themes. In particular, and to overstate it a bit, I discovered that the call to holiness was not discovered first by Wesley and that the holiness movement is not prescribed by the American continent in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. I think it is funny to hear people ask the question “Is the holiness movement dead?” The Roman Catholic Church has a pretty robust doctrine of holiness as does Eastern Orthodoxy. I re-discovered “holiness” when I read the church fathers and the medieval monastics. The key contribution my discipline has to offer is to ground contemporary theological understanding in the authoritative tradition of the church. As Wesley said, “But whatever doctrine is new must be wrong; for the old religion is the only true one; and no doctrine can be right, unless it is the very same “which was from the beginning.” (From Wesley’s sermon *On Sin in Believers*)

*Ryan Quanstrom*

It reminds us Christians who we are and where we came from. Sometimes we like to think of ourselves as unique. This often adds to our ego and keeps us from humbly submitting our opinions to the tradition or history of our church mothers and fathers. My take on historical theology is simple. God has been working in the world throughout history. I do not believe that there has been a time when God has stopped working. I also have this “hunch” that God is consistent and God’s message is consistent. If God has been consistently bringing God’s message through God’s disciples, then it seems as though we might be able to discover what that message is. In the midst of conflicting biblical scholarship, and contradictory theologies (Calvin vs. Arminius) I hope to find a consistent message that is worth rearticulating for our time.

*Dan Quanstrom*

I'm tempted to say, "duh..." But, maybe I have some tact, and will restrain myself. Maybe... I find obvious value in the study of history. Not simply to learn how we can change the future, but it places philosophy, theology, and biblical studies in context. One cannot fully understand theology or philosophy without the historical context. These two disciplines complement one another and cannot be separated.

***Question #4: What is the future of your discipline?***

*Mark Quanstrom*

I am not much of a prophet and I am always skeptical of those who predict the advent of or need for revolution. With that said, I believe that theological education is hindered when it is seen as primarily an academic exercise or best done within the academy. Christian theology needs to be done by those who are in a covenantal relationship with a community of believers. It requires a life of prayer. It demands corporate worship. It requires sacrificial service. It feeds on the Lord's Supper as well as on theology textbooks. If I could institute constructive change for theological education, I would insist on students committing themselves to a local church and submitting themselves to the authority of a spiritual mentor.

*Ryan Quanstrom*

I do not know of any changes that will be made, but I could comment on changes that I would like to see. Since I am graduate school I have become a bit disillusioned with graduate school. Often times the classes are divorced from what Susanna Wesley called "practical divinity." While the university is a great place for instruction, sometimes it fails to adequately train. Perhaps protestant seminaries could learn from the Catholic Church and the education of their clergy and scholars. Forced communal living could give students and professors the possibility to teach outside of the classroom. This of course would require complete devotion to the respective fields.

A second change would be the eradication of the lecture. While at times Christ taught the masses, he educated the first priests and deacons by living with them. The disciples committed at least three years of their life following Christ. They did not just go sit and listen to him for a period of time, instead they ate their meals with him. They developed intimate relationships. They knew Jesus as a person like you or me. We do not like to think of it, but I am sure there were times when walking to a new town they had to wait for Jesus to come out from behind the rock zipping up his pants. Who knows, they might have even heard Jesus pass gas. It is not pretty, but it is life. Matthew shows that the gospel is not contingent on the Jesus' teachings alone, but upon Jesus' person. This includes the beautiful and the ugly. I wonder what theological education would look like if we adopted a mentoring style instead of lectures and classes graded upon knowledge of books.

*Dan Quanstrom*



At the end of J.D. Salinger's "Franny and Zooey," Zooey is reprimanding his younger sister Franny for her naïve intellectual pursuit of religion. Franny is having a rough time, but Zooey just gives it to her. They're discussing their childhood as contestants on a child radio show when Zooey says, "Seymour'd told me to shine my shoes just as I was going out the door with Waker. I was furious... I just . . . wasn't going to shine my shoes for them, I told Seymour... He said to shine them for the Fat Lady. I didn't know what . . . he was talking about, but he had a very Seymour look on his face, and so I did it." Zooey relates this recollection to his sister's intellectual meltdown, "But I'll tell you a terrible secret—Are you listening to me? *There isn't anyone out there who isn't Seymour's Fat Lady...* Don't you know that? ...And don't you—listen to me, now—*don't you know who that Fat Lady really is?* . . Ah, buddy. Ah, buddy. It's Christ Himself. Christ Himself, buddy."

J.D. Salinger is no theologian, but makes a very important point in these pages. One cannot separate their relationship with Christ from their relationship with their neighbors. I cannot say what the future of my discipline looks like, but I anticipate it recognizing that our vertical relationship with Christ and horizontal relationship with our neighbors cannot be separated. (Matthew 25, James 1:27)

**Question #5:** *What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?*

*Mark Quanstrom*

I am coming to a greater appreciation for the American-holiness movement. In my continuing research of the Wesleyan and American-holiness traditions, I am discovering greater affinity between Wesley and the early Nazarenes than I had previously understood. During my time at Seminary, I uncritically accepted the idea that the later 20<sup>th</sup> century American-holiness writers were more faithful to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Wesley than the early 20<sup>th</sup> century holiness writers. And in my research for my dissertation, I was very critical of the early formulations. But I believe that I can make a strong argument that the American-holiness movement of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries is divergent from Wesley on more critical matters than was the American-holiness movement at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I believe the challenge for Wesleyan Higher Education is recognizing the value of our own tradition. We are learning from Eastern Orthodoxy. I believe we can learn more than we have from the Roman Catholic tradition. We can obviously learn from Wesley. And I believe that we can still learn from the 20<sup>th</sup> century American-holiness tradition. The challenge for higher education in the Wesleyan tradition is learning to appreciate all we have received while discerning the best in all of them.

*Ryan Quanstrom*

The methods of higher education conflict with the message or the intentions of higher education. Most often students are taught as individuals divorced from a community, yet they are supposed to view themselves and their teaching as within the community. Theological education in general ought to be connected to the life of the church.

On another note, some churches do not provide enough support for its students/educators to give them the luxury to commit their lives to study. Most students must work an unrelated job in order to provide for themselves. This prevents them from being the scholars that they ought to be.

Spener's program for reform of the protestant churches was a reform of the clergy. If we want this reform to take place, we ought to give them the liberty to pray, to study, and to worship.

*Dan Quanstrom*

The "future of my discipline" answer was left incomplete on purpose because it is directly tied with the challenges of Wesleyan higher education. We must break our Enlightenment individualistic concept of Christianity. In order to graduate I must write a Senior Thesis and mine is discussing this challenge. The individualism enjoyed during modernity allowed for compartmentalization and laziness. We created two separate relationships, one private with Christ (vertical), and one with our neighbors (horizontal). We became lazy in our care for our sisters and brothers, and as Ryan emphasized, became wrapped up in private personal holiness.

We recognized that the needs for the community needed to be met, but felt it was not our responsibility. Our vertical and horizontal were separated. This allowed for the political takeover of ecclesial matters. The challenge for Wesleyan higher education thus lies in teaching that the church is the Church. It is an authoritative institution and the bride of Christ. We must teach that our allegiance is pledged to and our hope found in God's elect, his people, his Church.

***Question #6: Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Mark Quanstrom*

I am hopeful because God is faithful and because there is the recognition in Wesleyan circles generally, of the primary authority of scripture, the normative authority of tradition, the clarifying authority of reason, and the affirming authority of experience.

*Ryan Quanstrom*

I am not as hopeful. The structures are too broken and our culture produces students that are depressed, anxious, sleep-deprived, and psychologically ill. If education continues on this path, we will probably continue to misinterpret the message of Christian perfection and distort it with perfection of works. Many thinkers have departed from the oppression of modernity in thought, but that has not yet translated into redemption of methods. If only we were willing to model the "holy club" in our many schools. Perhaps then theological education might combine the intellect with praxis.

*Dan Quanstrom*

As my father said, "study is worship." I find hope in the Church, and education is completely Kingdom building. The Church is the one institution that will not fail. We can rest knowing that God is our Shepherd leading us to green pastures and still waters.

***Question #7: Final words for future "generations?"***

*Mark Quanstrom*

Love the local church as much as you love your theological education.

*Ryan Quanstrom*

The world was not made in a day, it is not done being made, and it is not yet petrified. While God controls history, God uses people to control that history. We have an opportunity to shape the world if we are only brave enough to live the lives that Christ has taught us. If Christian perfection, perfection in love, is at all possible, it must manifest itself in a historical church bringing to earth a foretaste of heaven. We must not give up on the church, we must not give up on study, we must not give up on God.

*Dan Quanstrom*

Do it for the Fat Lady!

DIDACHE: “GENERATIONS”  
Gary Sivewright and Jason Sivewright

***Question #1: What is your current role?***

*Gary Sivewright*

After serving 17 years as Chaplain/Vice-President for Campus Ministries at Mount Vernon Nazarene University and 12 years in Nazarene Youth International Ministries in Kansas City, I am now pastoring a small church in Apple Valley, Ohio, and speaking in churches through a ministry I founded, Family Face to Face, and speaking for HomeWord parenting seminars out of San Juan Capistrano, California.

*Jason Sivewright*

My current role is media coordinator for Barefoot Ministries, the youth ministry branch of the Nazarene Publishing House. This position is a brand new venture for us and was basically created in direct response to my idea that the language of today's youth is, or revolves closely around, the many forms of media saturating our world.

This, of course, is not MY idea originally because many people in the field of youth ministry have discovered the same thing. But is an idea on which I have centered my ministry. What this has entailed in my year and a half of service here at Barefoot is the creation of video pieces to either supplement our current curriculum or stand alone as items to resource youth pastors.

***Question #2: Why did you choose this discipline?***

*Gary Sivewright*

First let me state that my discipline is Christian Education with a specific focus on youth ministry. I really did not know that going in. I think I was just following my heart and my head came much later. This I did know—I owed a lot to the church. Being the only child of a single mother, the church supplied much more to me than I would ever be able to repay. More than the Bible, men and women of the church taught me social graces, public speaking, athletic skills, choral music, party planning, dating etiquette, leadership dynamics, study habits, and most importantly, they showed me Jesus in flesh and bones. They were, for all intents and purposes, my family.

While working through all the vocational possibilities during my first two years of college, a religious education major was created and I jumped at the opportunity. I wish I could say that I heard a voice from heaven or saw handwriting on the wall, but I did not experience anything quite that dramatic. Instead there was this gnawing sense that I wanted to be as important in the life of some teen as those many adults, both youth pastors and laypeople, had been in my life. I have been doing some form of youth ministry ever since. Just as I graduated from college, Nazarene Theological Seminary created a degree in Religious Education so that seemed like the next natural step. Seventeen years later, George Peabody College, the education school for Vanderbilt, partnered with Scarritt Seminary in Nashville, TN to create a doctorate in Religious Education. Twelve of us were accepted into the program. Two years later Scarritt folded and the

program closed behind us. Vanderbilt kept its commitment to us and to this day there are twelve and only twelve with an Ed. D in Religious Education from Vanderbilt University.

*Jason Sivewright*

It sounds corny to say, but it is true. I did not really choose this discipline. It chose me. Or I should say that God chose me for it. I always have had a great interest in film. The way a moving visual image can create an atmosphere of emotion almost unparalleled by any other art form. It was through this and my interest in theatre that I found my equal passion for the written word. I received a degree in English from Mount Vernon Nazarene University where I spent most of my time wondering how God was planning on melding my passions and my experiences into a vocation that would keep me off the streets.

I thought I had found the answer in a LA film school geared towards Christians intending to infiltrate the film industry. This plan found its demise in a single form overlooked by myself and my advisor's postponement of my possible admission another year. To say the least, I was mortified. I was weeks from graduation without a clue as to what might come thereafter. I prayed.

A week later I received an email from my friend Brooklyn Lindsey. I had visited the church where she was a youth pastor during a mission trip and she was wondering if I would like to intern for the summer. I said yes without hesitation.

Now looking back I should have hesitated. Youth ministry is far too emotionally taxing a mission to accept haphazardly. That summer I poured my heart into teenagers for the first time and loved it. I found in those teenagers a genuine thirst for something bigger than themselves and that astonished me. I watched as the words of the Bible alone changed their hearts and affected their souls. We breathed in God together and it was a beautiful experience that changed me forever.

At the end of that summer I was still at a loss for what to do. A couple of years later I made a video proposal to Barefoot which resulted in my employment there and the venture in which I am currently involved. Within this job I have seen echoes of purpose for all of my passion and experience and have felt blessed (and sometimes cursed) by the opportunity to share my life in this way.

***Question #3: What key contributions does your discipline offer?***

*Gary Sivewright*

I have always felt that Christian educators are the modern-day Pharisees---those who are charged with taking the Word of God and breaking it down into livable bites for the people. What a great job! Especially if we do not mess it up. To be able to apply the Bible in every life situation is an incredible gift and a tremendous privilege. "Here's what the Word has to say about relationships..." ; "Here's what the Word has to say about making choices..." ; "Here's what the Word has to say about honesty..." And just like the Pharisees of Jesus' time, there is always the temptation to push programs more and the Word less. When we start being more concerned

about attendance and job security than relationships and Scriptural application we become more and more like the religious leaders that Jesus called hypocrites and pretenders.

*Jason Sivewright*

I understand that when dealing within the work of creative Christian media one is not just dealing with one slippery slope but many. I see my discipline as sort of like a walk along a tight rope. Any missed move or jiggle in concentration can be disastrous.

This is not unlike any other art form that labels itself, or is given the label, “Christian.” The most telling example of this is Christian music. I enjoy many Christian artists, but sometimes question the need for a distinction between “secular” and “Christian.” Are Christian artists just “holy” imitators of popular secular artists? What purpose does it serve? Whom does it serve?

All these questions and more play a part in every single video piece we create. One of my favorite authors is Donald Miller, and I watched an interview in which Miller was asked the primary purpose for his writing. His answer: entertainment.

I have adapted that same idea with the work that I do for Barefoot. With every piece I must ask myself, will this speak to teenagers? Will this grab their attention and speak their language? This is the purpose of my discipline—to provide for youth ministers a relevant and reliably creative library of media resources that speak the truth in a way that teens enjoy.

As I describe this, one might begin to see the tilts and totters of this proposition. If it is all about enjoyment and light on biblical principle then it is flawed. And visa versa. If it does not serve the youth minister and the youth equally it is flawed. If we are not constantly seeking to stay relevant artistically, biblically, and in the minds and hearts of youth then our way is lost.

When these questions are asked and our best is done to diligently check these areas then the resulting product is an invaluable tool for the church in helping reach the lost, the confused, and the seeking--those who may not be as open to the spoken or the written word as much as they are the art of visual media.

***Question #4: What is the future of your discipline?***

*Gary Sivewright*

BLEAK! My impression is that the Church, from denominational leadership down, has lost its sense of importance of the study and practice of God’s Word. Denominations cut back on staff, and local churches continue to hire youth program directors instead of actual ministers. Mark Yaconelli in his book *Contemplative Youth Ministry* writes about a friend that interviewed pastors from different denominations diverse in their racial, ethnic and theological backgrounds. When asked what kind of youth pastor they were looking for their answers were all the same: “a 20 something, attractive, guitar-playing, charismatic, youth-savvy, hip, hard-working, van-driving, free-spirited, denominationally-loyal, Jesus-loving, Bible-carrying, old-people-friendly, faith-filled, fiscally responsible, youth leader (preferably male with decorative facial hair and a mountain bike strapped to his car roof—or, if he’s unavailable, a spunky, to-die-for, fashion-conscious female who will cry once on youth Sundays and twice on summer mission trips).”



Yaconelli goes on to say that these pastors are like most every church he knows, praying for the coming of “the youth ministry messiah.” And I say, just like the Jews when the Messiah came, most churches will be bitterly disappointed when they find out that most youth pastors cannot decipher hip-hop lyrics any better than the parents. Churches will need to understand that there is more to youth ministry than keeping our kids busy. It will take a youth pastor along with a number of committed parents and laypeople to identify and listen to today’s generation of teenagers.

The future of Christian education generally, and youth ministry specifically, is the church allowing pastors and staff to create time for interaction concerning God’s Word. Some pastors do an excellent job of teaching the Word and providing ways for their message to be discussed in various venues. Too many, I’m afraid, have a tendency to throw out directives from the pulpit with no thought being given for follow-up or further teaching. A Christian education professor friend a few years back co-taught with a Theology professor a course introducing theology for ministers. Theory was immediately followed by practice. The idea was that no great theological thought is worth anything without knowing how to teach and apply the lesson. Proclamation and application go hand-in-hand. Forget whether it worked or not, the concept of a theologian and a Christian educator (who is also a theologian) working together should speak volumes to the Church.

The future of Christian education also depends on how the Church finds ways to minister to the entire family. Hopefully the day is over, or soon coming to an end, when age-level ministers plan programs without considering their impact on the family. I actually know of pastors who have preached on family togetherness, and yet if you looked at their church calendar, you would wonder how the family could spend any time together whatsoever. I know it sounds good to say we need to get back to the way they used to teach in the Old Testament, but I’m afraid we have given in to the cries of parents who have abdicated their teaching authority to the “trained professionals” of the Church instead of giving parents the encouragement and resources to enable them to be fellow journeyers with their sons and daughters.

*Jason Sivewright*

We live in the age of technology. Most of the media pieces we create are only available by download. This would have been unheard of just a few years ago. So, from a technological standpoint, with media we can only try to stay on top of the curve. The same goes for captivating the minds of the youth with the story of God and His people.

Young people today live in a reality where everything is a mere click away. This can be a great detriment to youth ministry or a great aid. For example we have a tracking assistant that is included with a subscription to the Barefoot Ministries site that makes it possible for the youth worker to be instantly in touch with every teenager in their ministry. Because of the internet teens are more aware of world needs than ever in history and the cool thing is that they care. And they are using this technology to make a difference.

The darker side of this is the growing number of teens falling into the trap of internet pornography or the dangers that come with social networking. When discussing changes we need

only remember that this is a growing trend, not a dying one. The World Wide Web only reflects the rest of a culture that is headed towards an “everything goes” mentality.

The important thing for people of my discipline—creative Christian media—is to continue in creating a voice amongst the shouting. It is imperative that as culture and technology change, so the church changes. Not in a way that is reactive and lacking in creativity, but in a way that pulls the best from these challenging tools never forgetting that our story is the best story. And that truth can be a beacon of light for young people amidst all the darkness.

I always hear that youth ministry is an ever changing field, but I disagree. The look may change, or the way it sounds, but the core is the same.

I was listening to my father speak in a chapel the other day and I watched the faces of the kids as he spoke. My dad has been telling different renditions of the same stories for years now. He manages to squeeze a new one in every once in a while, but as I watched the kids faces I realized that that doesn't matter. The reason why my father is so effective with youth is not because he's cool, or funny, or smart, or because his stories are fresh. It is because they listen to him speak, and they know he cares.

Whether it is creating a video lesson, preparing a sermon, writing a blog, or planning a Wednesday night worship session if the heart of youth ministry does not begin with genuine love for youth, and a genuine heart for showing them the face of God, then all is lost. This, no matter the format, will never change.

*Gary Sivewright*

I think there was a compliment in there somewhere. I think we all understand the importance of speaking with care and sincerity. I just do not want to overlook the value of telling stories. Everybody has them. It is important that they be told, and it is just as important that they be listened to. Dr. Daniel Taylor, who has written a number of books on storytelling, said in a seminar I attended, “Don't tell me just what you believe, but show me how you live by your story. To say you have no story or that it is not worth telling is an insult to God. The Bible is all about memory and when it wants you to remember it tells you a story.”

***Question #5: What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Gary Sivewright*

Relevancy. If I understand anything about this generation it seems that they are quick to bail on anything or anyone that is not relevant to them. Therefore if we proclaim a God or Gospel that does not fit into how they think things should be, then it has no relevancy in their lives. For example, I was doing a lesson on Hell. A young lady came to me and said “I wish you wouldn't talk about Hell around my friends. It makes them feel uncomfortable.” As the conversation went on, it occurred to me that she was convinced that God would not want her friends to feel uncomfortable and she was pretty sure that a loving God does not allow anyone to go to Hell. The more we talked I realized that this young lady, like many just like her, has created a God to fit her own theology. Even in the face of Scripture, her theology would not allow her to believe in a God who judges and condemns her friends. I think this is a challenge for Wesleyan Higher

Education to lovingly, yet straight forwardly, present the absolutes of the Gospel without compromise or apology.

*Jason Sivewright*

Relevancy is a huge issue. As I said before, every single video piece I create starts with the question of whether or not it meets teenagers where they are. If it does not then it is out of the question. I have seen with my own eyes teens watch and reject speakers, movies, songs, etc. within mere seconds when they get a sniff of irrelevancy.

To be honest, I have grown so tired of the term “relevant” that I almost hate the word now. And I do not think my hatred is misplaced. Because, in essence, what this means is just what my father was talking about—that somehow we have to change or disguise the gospel in order to make it “acceptable” to teens and I think that is false.

My friend Matt and I were planning a youth service and Matt had a crazy idea. Matt has never been at a loss for crazy ideas so I sat back and listened trying my best to look interested. His idea was that we don not plan anything.

Not that we do not prepare. We prepare by removing all the games in our youth room, all the televisions and anything that may cause distraction. We remove folding chairs, bean-bag chairs, and rugs...everything gone. Then we tell the kids to find a spot on the floor to sit and we read scripture...that’s it! Over and over we read the scripture verses that we had chosen. We did not modify it or explain it. We just read it, and the cool thing was that they got it. They really got it and I found that night that the Bible needs no help from us in making it “relevant.” Teens understand storms and they understand that Jesus can silence them, and that is just as relevant today as it was to the disciples in the boat.

I think the grander challenge lies in the intentions of Wesleyan Higher Education. If the intent of this path, for those who are called to it, is to gain knowledge and understanding that they will then offer as an instrument of righteousness to whatever end God deems necessary to the furthering of His kingdom then it is an invaluable tool to the church. Any deviation from this primary purpose and Wesleyan Higher Education is flawed.

I see too many of my friends deciding to travel the path of Christian education for, what seems to me to be, the wrong reasons. It is my belief that the church would find itself much better off when its leaders come from a variety of backgrounds both personal and educational. Maybe some studied law and some medicine. Some study philosophy and others psychology. Some live in the arts and others in architecture and design. Some may not have much education at all, but they embrace a deep love for people and understand God’s love for them.

To be honest I have to fight the thought in my heart that all Wesleyan Higher Education is years of study to prepare for something for which you can never be fully prepared. After being away from the church I interned with for a month I received the news that two sisters in my youth group had shared at a youth rally that they had been sexually abused by their father for years without ever telling anyone including each other. Their father was a reliable sponsor throughout my time at the church and one of the first to offer his time, his efforts, his house, his life to

anything we needed. He was convicted of twenty-one counts of child molestation and is still in prison today. There is no class, no ministerial technique, no words that could be shared that would shed light on this situation. But we could pray together, we could cry together, and we could tell those girls that Jesus loved them and so did we.

I believe that God calls people too many different kinds of ministry in many different situations. In some cases this path includes higher education but in some cases not. When Wesleyan Higher Education remains in its place not as an essential step, but a wonderful and useful tool that pairs itself closely with practical ministry and real life experience then it is at its best.

*Gary Sivewright*

I feel like I need to say for my colleagues in the teaching profession sometimes we feel like we have covered in class some of the difficult situations you mention. It kills us inside every time a student returns or sends a letter asking why they were not better prepared for the real life situations they face in ministry. It could be that they were not able to grasp the seriousness of the topic the day it was discussed in class (if they were in class), but it could also be that experience is sometimes the best teacher.

***Question #6: Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Gary Sivewright*

In a cynical and calloused world, Wesleyan Higher Education offers a refreshing view of faith learning because it offers learning with both heart, head and hand. When understood, classes mix the best of scholarship with service. Keeping an eye on compassion, every class is taught with somehow making a difference in the world. Every syllabus is written with service learning in mind. As long as there are learning institutions that believe and adhere to this type of education, there is hope for the Church.

*Jason Sivewright*

My friend Shawna, who is a bright seminarian, was telling me about a growing problem among the church that not many graduates are actually going on to be traditional church pastors. It seems that the trend is for graduates, during and after their studies, to be more interested in missions based ministries and after graduation are traveling to far off places to be with those facing water purification or shortage crises, AIDS epidemics, and other struggles in our world today. This filled me with hope. It is not that I feel good about the lack of traditional pastors, but when the teaching at these institutions of learning is sparking within students a feeling of desperation and purpose towards serving “the least of these” then it is truly close to the heart of God.

***Question #7: Final words for future “generations?”***

*Gary Sivewright*

At the risk of sounding really old here, I’d like to say “Don’t give up on the Church.” I understand the frustration of wondering how long it takes for new ideas to be accepted or for change to happen, but the denomination I know best has always come around. Mike Yaconelli, whose son I have already mentioned, was a speaker, writer and founder of Youth Specialties. I

had watched him from afar for years and seen him as a church cynic, critic and rebel. He was all that, but in his later years Mike was also a pastor, a pastor of a church, as he described it, “for people who hated church”. I joined Mike on a prayer retreat just a few months before he died and I saw him in his pastoral role. I think he always knew that there would always be a place for a shepherd, there would always be a place for the flock, and there would always be a need for an organized faith community. My cynical, critical, rebellious friend needed the church and the church needed him. You and I need the church and the church needs us.

*Jason Sivewright*

The church is the bride of Christ. No matter how much she may stray. I hear people my age discuss the church as if it can be “done right”. I am not sure what that means but closely related to this statement is always the feeling that the church has not fulfilled its role or has not lived up to expectations. I know this because I have felt this way myself. I have felt like turning away when I was hurt deeply by the church, but have come to understand that these thoughts are not only unproductive but stand in direct opposition to a system that Jesus believed in.

In every area of ministry that I have stumbled into I have stood by these words and it has blown me away. I do not know how theologically sound this is but here goes: PREPARE. Prepare like the Spirit will not move and then watch in awe as God blesses your preparation far beyond what you could ever hope or imagine.

DIDACHE: “GENERATIONS”  
Robin Smith and Joshua Smith

***Question #1: What is your current role?***

*Robin Smith*

I am an adjunct professor and teach a variety of Bible and Christian ministry courses. I also teach a weekly Bible Study at a local church. Teaching at the university and the local church has proven to be challenging, rewarding, and thought provoking.

*Joshua Smith*

I am currently serving as the pastor of Mountainside Communion—a church of the Nazarene located in Monrovia, Ca. I am also working to complete a Doctor of Ministry program at Fuller Theological Seminary in Missional Leadership. My most important role right now is being the husband of Arianna and father of Caleb (6), Zachary (4), and Luke (2).

***Question #2: Why did you choose this discipline?***

*Robin Smith*

Ecclesiology is really the discipline that I have invested my life in. Although my job titles have most often included Christian Education, it is really the study of the life and ministry of the church that has been my focus. As a child and teenager I loved the Church. I loved being with the church family. Even so, it came as a surprise when God called me to ministry as a full time vocation because the tradition I grew up in did not allow for women to be in leadership, let alone be ordained. But God faithfully kept his word in showing me how I would indeed make church ministry my life work. As a pastor and educator my focus has been on equipping Christians for service and faithful obedience to the gospel. Of course the truth always is that I, the pastor and teacher, have been the one who has continually grown, changed, and been transformed in my thinking, service, and understanding of what it is to follow Christ.

*Joshua Smith*

Much like you, ecclesiology is the discipline I am giving my life to. Thus far the roles have been as pastor and student, but ecclesiology is what I study and practice. Like many pastors might testify, I am not completely sure whether or not I chose this discipline or it chose me. Dad and your commitment to raising us in the church provided a wonderful context of encouragement, support, and formation for me. I always really enjoyed being a part of what God was up to in our local body and was affirmed from an early age that leading a community of God’s people might be something I was gifted for. In pursuing this vocation for the last ten years I have grown to love and appreciate the role of a pastor and would certainly choose it as a discipline for myself, but I still feel like it might have chosen me more than I chose it.

***Question #3: What key contributions does your discipline offer?***

*Joshua Smith*

It strikes me that if we are going to talk about the contributions that ecclesiology or the church can offer, we need to acknowledge the culture that we are living in. Our world is experiencing



what missiologist Al Roxburgh describes as ‘discontinuous change’. This is not change that can be predicted or controlled, but is change that we do not quite know what to do with. It might be described as a transition or shift in the way things are. This transition is brought about by realities such as global immigration, technological advancements, accessibility of knowledge, a changing global economy, awareness of staggering need, and, of course, a loss of confidence in primary social structures. When speaking of key contributions that our churches can offer we must be thinking in terms of this changing environment that we are a part of.

*Robin Smith*

You are right but as you know, change has historically been difficult for the church. To make the adjustments necessary for a faithful witness in these times I think we have to intentionally return to the teachings of Jesus and take more seriously the way Jesus lived. Jesus said that the most important commandment is to first love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength; to secondly love our neighbors; and to thirdly remember that on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 22:39) His life embodied these commands. In spite of the cultural changes we face, and they are significant, these three truths still provide the foundation and primary compass for how we engage this new world we live in.

*Joshua Smith*

What I hear you saying is that following the Spirit and teachings of Christ gives us our identity and shape as the Church and that this is true no matter what time and place the church is living in. I really like that. I especially like the metaphor you use describing Jesus’ teaching as a compass that guides us. I suspect that one contribution that the church will make by embodying this message of Jesus will be in addressing the incredible loneliness that people feel these days. One of the great forces in Western culture is individualism, and while it was probably birthed out of a desire to honor people, it now breeds loneliness. I talk with more and more people who are lonely. I think that one of the great contributions that churches can offer is redemptive friendship and community. When transition happens, like the transition we are facing as a culture, there is the possibility for community that brings about a new reality. In some ways this seems to be what the social networking phenomenon is all about. Modes of communication like MySpace, Facebook, and now Twitter are new attempts at friendship and community. And while these social networks make some nice contributions of their own, they lack any sense of incarnation. Aspects of relationships like embodiment, relational sustainability, connection to a particular place or context are things that the local church can contribute that are extremely important for life-giving and redemptive relationships. Practices like hospitality, welcoming the stranger, table fellowship, and love of neighbor as you mentioned, are contributions that the church has to offer that seem very important right now. I think that one of the greatest ministries a church could implement is to move church potlucks into the neighborhoods. What contributions do you see the church offering?

*Robin Smith*

I agree with you that people are lonely and I think they are also frightened—frightened of change, frightened for their future, even frightened of other people. Life-giving and redemptive relationships describe well what Jesus offered and taught. Glen Stassen and David Gushee in their book *Kingdom Ethics*, remind us that, “Christianity is a nonsensical enterprise apart from Jesus, its central figure, its source, ground, authority and destiny. Here is the problem. Christian

churches across the theological and confessional spectrum, and Christian ethics as an academic discipline that serves the churches, are often guilty of evading Jesus, the cornerstone and center of the Christian faith.” In my teaching and interaction with the Christian community I am regularly surprised at how Jesus is interpreted and understood. The Sermon on the Mount as the central teaching that sums up Jesus’ message from the beginning of his ministry to his ascension, and yet it is often overlooked as a way of life for the church today. Jesus really meant what he said and he said the same things over and over again through direct teaching, parable, personal encounter and dialogue. He does not waiver.

*Joshua Smith*

Much of the missional conversation that I am a part of has to do with helping the church to understand herself better theologically and allowing mission and ministry to flow from that. In large part, the missional conversation is trying to move the theological discourse from colleges and seminaries to the local context where the story of God is to be embodied. I think that your thoughts on allowing the teachings and life of Jesus to shape us are in line with the missional conversation and are very important. Like you are saying, the best contribution that the church could make to the world that God loves is to follow Jesus. This sounds simplistic, but these are important ecclesiological issues.

*Robin Smith*

I think that the culture has informed the life of the church more than she realizes. No generation has ever been bereft of relying on the culture to identify and make sense of God, but it seems to me that the culture of prosperity has blurred the vision of the church. Jesus does not back away from his message to care about and give to the poor, to welcome the stranger, to love and pray for our enemies, and to be very careful about judging anyone or any group of people because we have logs in our eyes. These logs are often shaped by the national and local culture we live in. These logs have to be acknowledged and removed or we will not be able to live out the truth and grace of the gospel. I agree completely that we need to shape our life and ministry theologically and it needs to be after the person and ministry of Jesus. This is the primary contribution that the church can make to the world.

***Question #4:*** *What is the future of your discipline?*

*Joshua Smith*

Much like the culture we are a part of, I think the church is going through some pretty intense changes as well and I am not quite sure if anyone knows what the future of the church will look like. My suspicion is that we are going to need to do a lot of listening and discernment in order to imagine the future that God is calling us to. One thing that seems important will be to continue to create opportunities like writing this article, where people of different generations and perspectives are invited to come together and listen to one another. Again, practices like table-fellowship will be important contributions the church can offer.

*Robin Smith*

What you are suggesting prompts me to remember again that Christ engaged the world he lived in. He really looked at people and cared about their circumstances. He enjoyed getting to know people, visiting in their homes, helping them when they had needs, and he regularly shared a

meal with all kinds of folks. Jesus had friends who worshipped God and friends who did not. He lived in the world confident of who he was and what his life was all about. I am concerned that my generation lost sight of Christ's down to earth, practical, and hospitable way of living. Jesus became human; he lived among people; wherever he was he was a prophetic voice and presence that was full of grace and truth. This kind of ministry cannot be programmed, it has to be experienced and modeled. How do you think we can lead people toward this vision of ministry?

*Joshua Smith*

When I think of pastoral leadership, I think of a definition given by Mark Lau-Branson and Al Roxburgh. They describe pastoral leadership as cultivating an environment within a congregation where she is able to discern the missional imagination that God is calling forth. I understand the pastoral role or contribution to be fairly poetic in that sense.

*Robin Smith*

I am intrigued by your choice of words. Your descriptions are so different than how we understood ministry thirty years ago. I was trained to see the church in terms of particular functions that had to be designed and carried out. There were absolutes like teaching, worship, advocacy, service and fellowship that not only had to be specifically planned for, but we would regularly evaluate these functions like goals that needed to be monitored. We did look at these functions as overlapping, but nonetheless, "cultivating an environment," "discerning missional imagination" and "poetic" are new ways of thinking about the life of the church.

*Joshua Smith*

That is interesting. When I hear your description of ministry and the pastoral role, I think of cultural heroes like CEOs and experts—people that have the "answers" or "know how" and tell everyone else what needs to be done or achieved. It reveals a conviction that we know what church is supposed to look like if she is being faithful in following Christ. I suppose I am pastoring out of the conviction God might be doing a new thing among us in the West and we need to lead out of a posture of discovery and discernment rather than certainty. It has to do with the transition we are in and an acknowledgment that we just do not know what the future holds.

*Robin Smith*

You are right in your sensing that our model for ministry required an "expert" or "top management" to oversee the ministry of the church. As I think about that, I realize how reflective of the culture that model was. Our generation understood and bought into the idea of having to have specific, measurable, and timely ways of doing ministry. Talk to me about what a discerning, poetic, and imaginative ministry would look like.

*Joshua Smith*

My hunch is that it involves leading a congregation into processes of listening. We need to listen to the stories of God's activity from the past found in scripture to our Wesleyan-Nazarene tradition, understanding it as a grace of God that propels us forward and not as something we need to replicate, and also to the other traditions that people in our congregations come from. Along with all of this, we need to listen to the personal stories of individuals in our churches and neighborhoods in order to get a sense of what the Spirit is up to there. I am finding that in communal listening like this, the Spirit of Christ is faithful to call forth vision and imagination

for the church. I would want to add that once this vision or imagination begins to take shape, strategies and measurable outcomes like you mentioned, can be used to help the church move towards the imagination that God has called forth through the listening process.

*Robin Smith*

Listening. That is a word and a spiritual discipline that is important for ministry yet too often ignored – especially in my generation. Speaking, directing, organizing, even controlling were the primary means of understanding and doing ministry. I think this becomes very apparent when I think about the metaphors we used for the church. In my lifetime, the American church understood herself and her mission through metaphors such as Army, Hospital, School, and Traditional Family.

*Joshua Smith*

Unpack those metaphors for me. How have they shaped the church?

*Robin Smith*

These metaphors were helpful and useful in creating a church that was organized, disciplined, evangelistic, committed to Christian Education, an advocate for the traditional family, and committed to keeping herself pure, safe, and secure. But these metaphors also contributed to behaviors and values that oppose the Kingdom of God. For example, like an Army, the church leaned toward control. We tended to understand our mission as being at war with the world, and we became hierarchical. As a hospital we made the church “a place” where sick people could come and be diagnosed, cared for, and rehabilitated. But in the process we became a bit like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day that were continually trying to keep themselves clean and sanitary, restricting who and what was allowed in, which ailments were worth treating, and relying totally on our knowledge rather than grace for healing and care. The classroom and organized curriculum became the primary means by which we disciplined, too often ignoring the truth and model that “living among them, full of grace and truth” is Christ’s way. And although we do and always will affirm the goodness and value of the traditional family, the church lost sight of the truth that in the Bible, God blesses and moves in the lives of all types of families. These metaphors really made sense to us but I realize now that although they seemed helpful and affirming of our faith, they also seduced us into an “Us and Them” and “Church vs. World” identity and way of ministry. These dualisms are not helpful and do not reflect the teachings and values of Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

*Joshua Smith*

It is really interesting to think about the different metaphors that we use to describe the church. Metaphors that many people of my generation are using are words like ‘exile’, ‘wilderness’, and ‘journey’. Obviously these metaphors are easily recognized in scripture, but they also reveal an acknowledged lack of certainty in terms of what God’s future for the church is. Once again, revealing the transition that we are in. I suppose this is why I think that skills in discernment and listening to the Spirit are so important. This lack of certainty may feel scary for some people, but as the scriptures remind us, this is not unfamiliar territory for God’s people. Like you said, people really are afraid of the future, so helping the church remember God’s faithfulness in times like this will be really important.

I also found it very interesting that you talked about the dualisms that we often use to define the church in relationship to the world. This is something that I have been thinking a lot about as I try and lead our congregation in mission and ministry. On one hand I want to think of God's people as distinct and particular because of our striving to follow God in the way of Christ, as you mentioned earlier. But on the other hand, I want to avoid the trap of taking on an identity described as "us and them" or "church vs. world.". Both of these descriptions seem problematic in terms of following a "boundary-crossing," "world-loving," and "people-welcoming" God. I guess I am most uncomfortable with the "versus" language. Some other ways of describing this relationship that I have heard and feel better about are "the church FOR THE SAKE OF the world," though that can become somewhat paternalistic. As David Bosch writes "the church WITH the world." These understandings of the relationship between the church and the world seem more faithful to God in Christ. How does that sound to you?

*Robin Smith*

It sounds more descriptive of God's relationship with the world and once again, Christ's way of seeing the world and living in the world. It also brings to mind your role as coach of Caleb and Zach's T-ball team. My generation would have viewed your coaching as something you did on your own time or "in addition to" your ministry at the church. But the relationships and connections that are made in that context—the conversations, laughter, and just being with the people—is ministry and it is life giving. I can only imagine all of the different ways that the church could minister to and impact the world for Christ just by being present in neighborhoods.

*Joshua Smith*

I think that you are really onto something when you talk about the church being present with people in neighborhoods. That description strikes me as very incarnational and faithful to Jesus' call to love our neighbors and to be stewards of creation. Many times I think we hear Jesus' call to love neighbors as pertaining to people "like us" or people that we like. I am sensing the church is being called to practice love of neighbor with the actual people that live in our particular neighborhoods. That is what is behind my commitment to coach the boys' T-ball team. This is also what is behind my family's commitment, and the commitment of other families in our church, to move into the local community and be involved. Whenever I think about this kind of thing I remember the annual Christmas Open House that you hosted for the people of our neighborhood every year. In a context of suburban sprawl where people would pull in and out of their automatic garage doors having very little conversation with each other, that commitment opened up new realities in our neighborhood in terms of relationships of grace, support, and hope. I suppose hosting that open house was cultivating an environment where God's kingdom might break in to our neighborhood. I think it was also a way for our family to be the "church WITH the world."

***Question #5: What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Robin Smith*

I suspect that higher education and other long-standing ecclesial institutions will face great challenges as they help the church adjust to the cultural realities and changes we have addressed. Our colleges, seminaries, and other denominational groups will be under a great deal of pressure to "keep things as they are" and in the minds of many "as they have always been". Living and



teaching the Kingdom of God is very challenging because like the people of Jesus' day, the church in the Western hemisphere does not easily recognize the kingdom. The kingdom of God was not a new concept for the people of Jesus' day. The problem was the kingdom of God that Jesus described, lived, and ushered in was radically different than what the people of God expected. Their expectations for the kingdom were national power, religious power, and legal authority. But as we all know, that is not what Jesus meant. There wasn't going to be "God's nation". There was not going to be a "temple"—that single place where God would reside. The Kingdom of God was not going to be about dictating laws, political strength, military might, or wealth and power. None of these things were, or are, evidence of the kingdom. Many who come to our [Nazarene] institutions to learn and who look to church leadership for direction and stability, find these truths and values foreign and troubling but our educational institutions must help the church identify the differences and distinctions of the culture and the Kingdom of God. I suspect that our educational and church leadership will face significant pressure as they continue to help us make these distinctions but I believe they will continue to stay faithful to the teachings of Jesus, and with grace and truth help the church have eyes to see and ears to hear.

I also think that the challenge of higher education will be to equip and empower men and women to take what is studied, discussed, and critiqued in the academic arena into the local church. This is similar to what you said the missional conversation is trying to do. In higher education we freely and enthusiastically consider and discuss biblical truth, culture, science, the arts, and ministry. But somehow these discussions get short-circuited and fail to connect at the local, congregational, and personal level. What do you think the challenges will be?

*Joshua Smith*

I think that the challenges you just named are primary for Christian higher education. In addition to these, I would like to see more emphasis placed on ecclesiology and communal spirituality in our academic institutions. This will be challenging, though in light of the individualism of our culture. A final challenge that I see is the need to train pastors to understand the importance of context for ministry when most students have to leave their context in order to go to school.

***Question #6: Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Joshua Smith*

In response to the challenges we just mentioned, Mark Lau-Branson, who is a professor of mine at Fuller, is experimenting with a few learning cohorts in an attempt to address these issues. The students do much of their course work and their internships in a cohort, within a particular tradition, and in a particular context. It is still very much in the experiment phase, but ideas like this excite me and bring me hope in terms of the challenges that we face.

Another aspect of Wesleyan Higher Education that brings me great hope is some of the work being done by Warren Brown, Joel Green, Sarah Marion, and Craig Keen. Within their different fields, each of them are working with the concept of embodiment and understanding human nature in holistic ways. I think that this has incredible implications for the mission of the church and I am very excited to see where this leads and how it moves into the curriculum of our academic institutions.



*Robin Smith*

I am very excited about the high level of scholarship and missional vision that is being nurtured in our Wesleyan institutions of higher education. I have been blessed to have been invited to several of these schools and I am continually impressed and energized by the critical thinking, engaging conversations, and wide range of literature that is being read and considered. The students are better prepared than ever and the various faculties are home to some of the most outstanding thinkers, researchers, and teachers anywhere. We also have incredibly bright and gifted young scholars who are joining these faculties. I think that Wesleyan higher education is well positioned to serve the church of Jesus Christ towards faithful ministry.

**Question #7:** *Final words for future “generations?”*

*Joshua Smith*

Mary Jo Leddy said it well in her book *Reweaving the Religious Life* in which she wrote, “We are living through one of those historical in-between times when a former model of religious life (either traditional or liberal) is fading away and a future model has not yet become clear. One could be tempted to flee from the dilemmas of this moment to some more secure past, to the surface present, or to some arbitrary resolution of the future. These are real temptations and they can be met only with the faith that this is our hour, our *kairos* [Greek for ‘season’ or ‘time’]. This is the only time and place we are called to become followers of Jesus Christ; there is no better time or place for us to live out the mysteries of creation, incarnation, and redemption. These are our times and, in the end, God’s time.”

*Robin Smith*

My final words are, do not be afraid. Do not minister from a place of fear. Do not try to be the “great defender” of God. God is our Savior and defender, not the other way around. There are changes occurring but heed the Apostle Paul’s advice: “Do not be conformed by the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to do the will of God; the good and perfect will of God.”

DIDACHE: "GENERATIONS"  
Dr. Henry W Spaulding and Hank Spaulding

***Question #1: What is your current role?***

*Hank Spaulding*

I am currently a student at Trevecca Nazarene University majoring in religion with a minor in philosophy and pastoral ministry.

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

I am currently Professor of Philosophical Theology and Christian Ethics at Nazarene Theological Seminary and in the fall I will assume the position of Vice President for Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer at Mount Vernon Nazarene University.

***Question #2: Why did you choose this Discipline?***

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

I am not sure if I chose this discipline or if it chose me. When I was in High School I read Nietzsche's *Gay Science* and I was enthralled it, shortly after, I read selections from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*. One day I noticed these books on the family book shelf. I have always found philosophy very intriguing. It asks some of the most fundamental questions. I ran across the theology of Paul Tillich while at TNU and his philosophical theology interested me from the beginning. So to put it as succinctly as possible this discipline has attracted me because of the questions it raises and the implications of those questions for people of faith.

*Hank Spaulding*

I guess the journey begins much later for me. I came to Trevecca majoring in music with the intention to dabble with a few religion courses. It was that dabbling, along with the confirmation of a call to ministry that I had received in 2003 in Houston, TX at the Nazarene Youth Congress that lead me to become a full time religion major. Philosophy captured my attention between my freshman and sophomore year when I was introduced to radical orthodoxy. From this point, I began to read all the philosophy I could get my hands on. I started reading people like Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Foucault, Sartre, Kierkegaard, Plato, Hegel, Kant, Aristotle, MacIntyre, and Plotinus. These philosophers helped me to more fully understand theology. I also began to read John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward who have defined a new theological school called radical orthodoxy. I started to see a philosophical thread in the struggles, pains, and thoughts of history and culture. I read philosophy and theology so that I will be better equipped to deal with the issues that confront our world.

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

You mentioned that radical orthodoxy offered a theological critique of philosophy, what exactly is that? And why do you feel it is important?

*Hank Spaulding*

I believe it to be important because it attacks the duality of secular/sacred space. Radical orthodoxy helped me to see the danger of autonomous reasoning that divorces Christian narrative

from secular narratives while privileging the secular. We see this in John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory*, especially when he shows that there came a point when the sciences (psychology, biology, social science, etc) were given the authority to speak with no reference to theology. Thus, sociology became a self-sustaining discourse. This suggests that truth is relative to the space in which it is spoken. It was here that theology, as John Milbank shows in his book, began to lose its place as the master discourse and develop a kind of false humility in response to it. Instead it should be that theology shows what truth is and what the truth ultimately will be.

Dad, you mentioned Paul Tillich, why do find him important?

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

Perhaps, the best place to begin is with a little semi-autobiographical book called *On the Boundary*. Tillich reflected upon his life in terms of many boundaries. For example, he was born in Germany yet lived in the United States. He also talked about being born in the nineteenth century but living most of his life in the twentieth century. He also talked about walking the boundary between theology and philosophy. While there are things that trouble me more now than when I was in college about Tillich and his theology, his theology has always seemed to wrestle with important philosophical questions. From the very beginning his theology expanded my theological horizon. Eventually, I did a doctoral dissertation on his theology. He is important because he deals with really basic questions.

***Question #3: What key contributions does your discipline offer?***

*Hank Spaulding*

Being a student is a curious thing, especially in regards to this question. On one hand I am still learning about the discipline, but on the other hand I am called to put what I know to work. Perhaps, the best way for me to think about this concerns what theology and philosophy bring to the questions my peers and I are asking. September 11<sup>th</sup>, Columbine, the Nickel's Mine incident, the Oklahoma City Bombing, and Virginia Tech killings have raised serious questions for my generation [living in the United States].

I am also part of the television generation. When any event happens in the world we can experienced it "live." It is in this mindset that we bring our fears and hopes into the conversation.

I have often asked, "Does theology have anything to say in such a world"? We see this in the work of Rob Bell and Donald Miller. These people ask some of the same questions raised by Paul Tillich, John Milbank, and Karl Barth, even if their answers have a very different tone. Thus, a narrative arises in the tension of contemporary culture and the Christian tradition. I guess this is the way every generation has expressed the faith.

My discipline becomes a conversation with the past into the future while dramatically claiming the present as the plane where God's voice may be heard.

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

The chief contribution of theology and philosophy is that it offers the opportunity for a much broader conversation. It helps me avoid ‘Nazarene parochialism’. This is a problem for all denominations, including our own.

I believe that one of the great dangers of theological education in the Church of the Nazarene and the Holiness Movement is the temptation to become narrow. So the study of theology and philosophy (and for that matter Church History and the Bible) have allowed us to have broader conversations across the ages with great thinkers like Irenaeus, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley. I believe that radical orthodoxy is a great example of how theology can be an all encompassing discourse. Radical orthodoxy is a bold theology in just this regard. It attempts to deal with aesthetics, language, music, economics, etc.

Another contribution for theology and philosophy is its ability to provide discipline for the way in which we think about the faith. One possible way to put this is that theology and philosophy can give us a “rule governed discourse” (to borrow a Wittgensteinian phrase) or a “cultural linguistic discourse” (to borrow a phrase from Lindbeck). This simply means that theology and philosophy help us to discipline our speech in appropriate ways.

I often hear that “everyone is a philosopher” or “everyone is a theologian”. Would we argue that everyone is a painter, or a mechanic, or a musician? Probably not, because we tend to link specific skills with these vocations. Likewise, theology and philosophy require discipline and learning particular skills. Theology and philosophy requires time to learn how to read difficult texts, to raise uncomfortable questions, and engage in debate. I think that this is what mature Christianity requires.

Another contribution is that this discourse gives us courage, or to use a phrase from Paul Tillich: “the courage to be.” This is to say that it gives us the courage to trust our instincts, to risk being wrong as others have been wrong before, to appreciate the contributions of the heretics, and to ask questions that would make most [people] uncomfortable. The discipline of theology and philosophy makes our faith stronger. The Church needs its theologians and its theologians need the Church.

*Hank Spaulding*

I would like to return to the topic of holiness. According to David Bentley Hart, God ventures into the ugliness of life and still he exists there as peace, love, and absolute beauty. This sounds a lot like Wesley, so it appears to me that holiness is vital to this conversation. Perhaps, part of the impetus for my discipline is the all embracing interest of holiness. It seems to me that this is the kind of conversation we can and should have as theologians and philosophers. Holiness should create action. When faith is embodied the message of holiness lives into the existence of the Church.

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

You are correct - Christian faith has never been far from the Christian virtues. Theology can never be satisfied with a mere metaphysical orientation or a narrative that structures cosmology or ontology, but rather the Christian faith has always sought to embody itself in particular

virtues. This becomes evident in the New Testament and in the earliest writings of the church. For example, the *Didache* for which this journal takes its very name, is about how faith becomes faithfulness.

John Wesley's movement was a corrective to remind us that behavior is important to Christian faith. Yet, when behavior becomes an end unto itself God moves out of our theology. Holiness seeks to combine moral behavior and transformation. To be honest the holiness movement sometimes argues about less and less significant things over time. Wesley in his day was having a far larger and more significant discussion. We do not have these conversations when we fight about nothing. Perhaps, some of the disenchantment and restlessness of the next generation arises at this point.

*Hank Spaulding*

I agree with what you said about my generation becoming disenchanted with holiness. I think it goes back to the Emergent Church conversation. How can the Church be vital, relevant and engaged while maintaining a dialogue with its own tradition?

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

Transformation is a very important term in both biblical studies and the doctrines of the church of the Nazarene in terms of regeneration. And this aspect of holiness does not grow out of style.

***Question #4: What is the future of your discipline?***

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

Philosophy and theology are moving away from the rationalistic categories that define liberalism and much of protestant religion. Theology and philosophy will probably begin to ask more of the questions that you find in Kierkegaard or in Wittgenstein and will begin to understand the pointlessness of trying to find a universal language of faith to converse with. Philosophy and theology is tied up with particular forms of life and a particular appropriation and extension of skills. I would argue that John Milbank and Stanley Hauerwas represent the kind of theology and the kind of direction that will flourish. I would echo Stephen Long's thesis that late into the nineteenth century and on in to the twentieth century that theology has, in one form or another, taken on the form of ethics. Therefore, the discipline of theology and philosophy must seek to link the metaphysical and the moral.

*Hank Spaulding*

My generation has to take these things more seriously. The disenchantment taking place among the younger members of society relates directly to theology. Some are able to separate the profession of faith and holy obedience. The Emergent Church movement addresses this, but perhaps too often as a deconstruction of essential elements of the historic Church. People like Brian McLaren are clear examples of this attitude. We need to look at Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein because they show that there is meaning. So my generation must begin to take seriously the fact that the gospel fills life with meaning.

God and theology are about peace, and this is a message that can be spoken in the face of violence that only the gospel can out narrate. This is most fully seen, I think, in the "death of

God” ideology that arose out of World War II and the holocaust, which is basically the question, “what can God possibly have to say in wake of the Holocaust?” I remember reading the work of Ellie Wiesel who says that we should remember that God has something to say because he too experienced the gas, hung from the gallows, and still exists there as beauty in that he can weave goodness in the midst of evil. God has something to say about every moment. This story must be embodied at all times because transformation is about real change in one’s life.

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

I think you are right because theology, philosophy, and the search for coherence that describes people of all times always runs the risk of allowing the form of the question (be it cultural or otherwise) to be determinative. This is a lot of what you see in Brian McLaren and seeker sensitive Christianity, at the same time those who stand solely on tradition fail to see that it arises out of some cultural issues and questions altogether. So, for example we may feel uncomfortable about how the God question arose out the modern atheist movement but that issue has informed all people who attempt to espouse a coherent form of faith. This goes back to theology must always be aware of the larger horizon. It is these harder questions that confront us.

*Hank Spaulding*

I think Ellie Wiesel in his work *Night*, which I saw in Jurgen Moltmann first was most helpful. Wiesel shows that it is essential to talk about God as one who hung from the gallows too. The broader horizon, especially the death of God question, is one that we must answer with God hanging on the gallows. This is essential because it makes the Trinity a living, breathing event within time that demonstrates the life of God as one who is free, free to love, and be holy. This event opens up the possibility of personal holiness. It is important that in every facet God is there as holy, even as he hangs from the gallows.

***Question #5: What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Hank Spaulding*

Wesleyan Higher Education has the challenge to develop a student in totality. John Wesley did not just write books about theology and the Bible. Wesley wrote about medicine and was actively involved in issue of social justice. We must reclaim the conception that holiness is about a people who are transformed and are then in turn be willing to do something about it. We must learn how to linger on the cross and develop practices that connect living and the faith.

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

We have to make the distinction that Wesleyanism is a broad theological movement that in some ways grows out of Anglicanism and in some expressions becomes almost Catholic and trickles down to the point of becoming almost charismatic.

When we talk about the challenges of Wesleyanism it is appropriate to say that a chief challenge is to understand the definition and the employment of particular ideas that can serve as criteria by which we can make theological judgments. Leaving aside the larger Wesleyan question, it seems that the question of Wesleyan-Holiness theology (which might be the focus of this question) is that we must leave behind a sense of inferiority that characterizes our life in the church and



schools that associate with us, which leads to this narrowing of the theological horizon that we keep talking about.

So the challenge of Wesleyan theology, in higher education, and the way it is approached in our tradition is to broaden the horizon sufficiently so that the big questions are embraced yet at the same time not lose the Christian faith and its attachment to the kinds of piety and its personal spiritual development that are crucial, so that it defines a particular intellectual faith so that people are serious about embodying the virtues that they proclaim.

*Hank Spaulding*

I would like to add that we must come to see that Wesleyan-Holiness theology is more than just being nice. It is about going to church, tithing, practicing the ministry of the church, supporting global missions, taking communion, and seeking social justice. That the Christian faith is, yet again, broader than we think...

***Question #6: Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?***

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

I am most hopeful when I reflect upon my years of teaching. It is easy to be hopeful when I reflect upon the quality of life and intellect of my former and current students. I am hopeful because the coherence of the faith is not just being discussed, but it is being embodied in pastoral ministry, scholarship, and faithful lay service. I am also hopeful because Wesleyan higher education is beginning to develop an identity and in that identity develop rules that govern the discourse.

*Hank Spaulding*

I am most hopeful because people are willing to bear the questions and willing to serve in these times of violence, confusion, and devaluation. I am hopeful that there are people who still wish to do the good work of theology and to appreciate the gifts of God as such. I am hopeful because with all the challenges that face my generation, God is not done yet ...

***Question #7: Final words for future “generations?”***

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

My final words might be framed in the mindset of what I would say to you as my son. I would encourage you to pick up the task in your own way in that you are conversant with what the church has been and in that study of history and the history of the faith and find a way to be hopeful in the context of expressing the faith for the next generation. It seems that every generation reaches a point that they must, as the Israelites had to, cross the river Jordan themselves. We have often thought of that in the twentieth century as the existential door we must cross (i.e. “the parable before law” Franz Kafka), but I think a much more apt metaphor is the understanding of the exodus where we walk together. So my words to you are: to know your history and to trust the God of an optimistic grace, to define your embrace of the next day, the new day.

*Hank Spaulding*

I think you touched on something very important, the image of the River Jordan. It is interesting that we brought this up in a discussion about generations, because once they walk across the river together, the Israelites stack stones so as to commemorate the occasion in which God acts. They stacked these stones so that they may remember how God was faithful and expect how he will be faithful again in the future.

For future generations and my generation it is important to remember and appreciate those who came before us. In some ways this is our plight: that the two sides, both yours and mine, work together in the Church of the Nazarene. Both sides must see that we wish for the same things and the same ends, and we must remember the stones we stacked together. In the story of the Israelites crossing the River Jordan, the young and the old walked together and stacked stones so they could remember what they had done. So maybe it is that today in our time we must learn how to stack stones together once more. I think in doing this we will understand what it means to be Wesleyan and to have a Wesleyan higher education.

*Dr. Henry W. Spaulding*

And I think that the phrase we can most apply to this is anamnesis, the pledge not to forget. This raises the importance of what Robert Bellah wrote years ago in his widely popular and misunderstood book *The Habits of the Heart*, which are dependent on our ability to form the kind of habits of association such as father-son, mother-daughter, elder-younger, [so that] people within the church learn to appreciate that which is important and walk away from that which is not. In this way we become a living tradition, not a dying traditionalism.

THE GLOBAL SYSTEM OF NAZARENE EDUCATION  
E. LeBron Fairbanks  
Education Commissioner, International Board of Education

*The Purpose of Nazarene Education*

As the Church of the Nazarene grows dynamically in so many parts of today's world, God matches this growth with the activity of the Holy Spirit in calling persons to ministry. The Spirit of God reaches into the hearts of young men and women of all ages in calling them to places of servant leadership to develop the holiness church in their own cultures.

At the same time, the Church of the Nazarene attempts to provide a system of preparation for these persons. This system is bigger than our existing academic institutions but it begins in and emerges from the institutions.

The "core" preparation is the living and essential "story" of the Church of the Nazarene. This story begins with the call to holiness of heart and life and the unchanging scriptural basis for this story. This unchanging story is what holds the Nazarene family together.

Belief in the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, the 16 Articles of Faith in the *Manual*, the mission and the core values of the denomination, and the covenants of Christian character and conduct shape the center of Nazarene education. These essentials enable Nazarene servant leadership to emerge in every culture and in every generation. This Nazarene core is the family resemblance as a church takes shape in diverse cultures. This Nazarene story will hold the church together as it grows in God's time and in God's way.

*The System of Nazarene Education*

The Church of the Nazarene is blessed with a worldwide system of education. The denomination supports 54 schools at various academic levels. Many of these institutions serve as hubs from which extension programs of ministerial education are offered through multiple systems of delivery.

The education providers are classified into six categories. You will find the placement of the 54 IBOE schools in the appendix section of this paper.

- *Graduate Seminaries and Theological Colleges.* These schools offer accredited master's and/or doctoral programs with an emphasis in theological studies and ministerial preparation.
- *Liberal Arts Universities and Colleges with Graduate Programs.* These schools offer accredited four-year undergraduate programs with a commitment of general education including one or more graduate programs.

- *Undergraduate Liberal Arts Colleges.* These schools offer four-year undergraduate programs with a commitment to general education.
- *Undergraduate Seminaries and Theological Colleges.* These schools offer campus-based and/or distance programs at certificate and/or diploma levels focused on theological studies and ministerial preparation.
- *Certificate and Diploma Bible College.* These schools offer campus-based and/or distance programs at certificate and/or diploma levels focused on theological studies and ministerial preparation.
- *Specialized Training Schools.* These schools offer undergraduate general education programs in specialized professional studies.

### *The International Board of Education*

The resources of all these schools, including the American colleges and universities, are linked together in a great network of support and collaboration under the International Board of Education (IBOE). The IBOE is led by a 14-member Board representing Nazarene education institutions globally. The IBOE Board meets annually. Members of the Board include the Clergy Development director, World Mission director, and the Education Commissioner. The regional education coordinators from the Africa, Asia-Pacific, Caribbean, Eurasia, Mexico and Central America, South America, Canada, and United States Regions meet with the IBOE and serve as resource to the Board.

The International Board of Education (IBOE) functions as the global church advocate for education institutions in the Church of the Nazarene worldwide. The administrator of the Board is the Education Commissioner.

The IBOE is a dynamic worldwide consortium of Nazarene universities, colleges, and seminaries to facilitate the mission of the Church of the Nazarene in making Christlike disciples and developing leaders for local witness and global impact.

This mission is accomplished by the IBOE:

- **serving** as a catalyst for networking, collaboration, and resourcing the IBOE schools globally for excellence in all educational disciplines and practice, especially in regard to ministerial education;
- **providing** connectivity between school needs for personnel and the diverse educational resources of the denomination within and between regions;
- **strengthening** the schools through quality and missional reviews and developing strong and effective governing boards for the institutions;
- **envisioning** the future of higher education in the denomination; and
- **assuring** theological and doctrinal coherency throughout the system of Nazarene education.

In addition, the IBOE functions as a consulting and linking agency of ministerial education to fulfill each institutional vision and mission, especially as they relate to clergy preparation. Global theological conferences are coordinated by the International Board of Education and the IBOE facilitates, as requested, regional theological conferences.

### *Resource Institute for International Education*

The International Board of Education can assign projects to and receive recommendations from the Resource Institute for International Education (RIIE). The RIIE is a Global Ministry Center “think tank” and collaborative clearinghouse for efficient solutions to education needs. The group meets throughout the year between annual meetings of the International Board of Education.

The RIIE is chaired by the education commissioner and consists of the World Mission director, Clergy Development director, Nazarene Theological Seminary president, USA Mission/Evangelism director, RIIE coordinator, and two Global Ministry Center members appointed by the Education Commissioner in consultation with the other members.

The Resource Institute for International Education, as the “nuts and bolts” vehicle for the International Board of Education,

- creates ad hoc committees, as necessary, to follow through on global education initiatives;
- recommends program development and implementation plans;
- serves as a Global Ministry Center cooperative venture, where individual agencies share resources as needed, appropriate, and by agreement; and
- facilitates Global Ministry Center conversations, including discussions with the regional education coordinators, regarding education and mission while recognizing the unique mission, mandate, and resources of each Global Ministry Center department and/or region.

### *The Academy for International Education*

For instance, the Academy for International Education (AIE) is a key project of the Resource Institute for International Education and approved by the International Board of Education. The AIE, in collaboration with IBOE school leaders, is being created to provide the structure, utilize the available technology, and coordinate the resources to network and facilitate the work of ministerial education in all IBOE schools.

### *Regional Education Coordinators*

Regional education coordinators (RECs) serve as key strategic links between the Global Ministry Center, including the World Mission Department and the International Board of Education, and the IBOE schools within the regions served by the regional education coordinators. In each of the six regions serving the World Mission Department (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Caribbean, Eurasia, Mexico and Central America, and South America), RECs serve

under World Mission appointment, report directly to the regional director for the region he/she serves, and may have other regional responsibilities.

The RECs work closely with the International Board of Education in ways already referenced. They attend the annual IBOE meetings, participate with the IBOE in the International Course of Study Committee (ICOSAC), and facilitate institutional mission and quality reviews. They are the chief advocates for education on the regions they serve.

Canada has a regional education coordinator. The ten USA universities, colleges, and seminary relate to the IBOE through the USA/Canada Council of Education, who elects a chair person to lead the Council.

### *Regional Education Councils*

IBOE schools are joined together on their regions they serve through regional education councils. The councils serve the education providers on their regions through networking, collaboration, policy formulation, curriculum and literature development, conference coordination, communication, and providing opportunities for mutual support.

The regional education coordinators usually lead the regional education councils; however, each council is developed and structured based on missional priorities and critical issues of institutions on the region and the strategic plans of the regional director.

### *International Course of Study Advisory Committee (ICOSAC)*

The International Course of Study Advisory Committee (ICOSAC) comprises two representatives from each world region, including the regional education coordinators from each region. The ICOSAC is responsible for approving all ministerial curriculum submitted through each regional Course of Study Advisory Committee (COSAC). Unless ICOSAC approves a particular ministerial course of study from an educational provider, that course of study will not be a validated pathway for students preparing for ministry in the Church of the Nazarene.

The committee is chaired by the Clergy Development director. The education commissioner is an ex officio member of ICOSAC as the Clergy Development director is an ex officio member of the International Board of Education.

The concept of “the schools educate and the church ordains” is affirmed through the dynamic relationship between the International Board of Education and the International Course of Study Advisory Committee.

### *Consortia of Nazarene Schools*

The International Board of Education seeks to facilitate several consortia of institutions and agencies to further envision the future of Nazarene education. These clusters of schools can more efficiently and effectively coordinate the diverse educational resources of the



denomination in response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In addition to the Academy for International Education, two collaborative initiatives to be launched in 2009 are the Consortium of Undergraduate Bible/Theological Colleges and the Luce Foundation funded, Nazarene Theological Seminary facilitated, Consortium of Nazarene Graduate Seminaries and Theological Colleges. In addition, a conversation with leaders of universities, colleges, and seminaries of the Church of the Nazarene globally is planned to pursue ways and means to mutually resource each other in appropriate and meaningful ways.

Collaborative initiatives are especially needed in countries where the church is being blessed with rapid growth and the need of holiness ministerial preparation, pastoral leadership development, discipleship training, and missionary education are crucial in developing Christlike leaders in the nations.

### *The International Board of Education and Member Institutions*

The International Board of Education (IBOE) and the above mentioned entities in no way replaces what is currently being done at individual Nazarene institutions. Each of the 54 IBOE schools within the system, uniquely and strategically led by elected leaders and appropriate governing boards, serves as a catalyst for consistent and coherent holiness ministerial preparation true to our heritage and worthy of the educational mission of the denomination.

In addition to the functions of the IBOE mentioned earlier, the Board also serves as facilitator for conversations between universities, colleges and seminaries on

- excellence in educational methodologies and practice;
- personnel and technological connectivity between schools within and between regions; and
- theological and doctrinal coherency throughout the system of Nazarene education.

The International Board of Education embraces the goal of Dr. Phineas F. Bresee, General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, 1908-1915, who affirmed for the Nazarene university he founded:

“The Word of God is taught through this institution... We believe in all branches of knowledge. God helping us, we propose to teach men and women that they may be at their best advantage for God.”

This overarching goal is critically important to ministerial preparation in the Church of the Nazarene. We seek no less than the very best level of education possible around the world consistent with the *Manual* expectations for clergy preparation.

The Church of the Nazarene colleges, universities and seminaries embrace Charles Wesley’s plea to “unite the pair so long disjoined, knowledge and vital piety.”

The late Dr. John A. Knight, who faithfully served the Church of the Nazarene as pastor, teacher, writer, editor of the *Herald of Holiness*, college president and finally as General

Superintendent, often stated, “Holiness, missions, and education are the hallmarks of who we are.” He was passionate in his conviction that “education and evangelism walk hand in hand. Without evangelism, education can become rationalistic and sterile. Put them together, and they are a powerful force for changing people and society.”

### *Conclusion*

For these strategic reasons, a stronger, more intentional and cohesive global system of Nazarene education is emerging as a network of Nazarene institutions worldwide under the umbrella of the International Board of Education. These education institutions are committed to the mission, Articles of Faith, core values, and the covenants of Christian character and conduct affirmations of the denomination AND to each other!

The International Board of Education seeks the very best resources possible in shaping the emerging servant leaders. Collaboratively and collectively, the Board wants to insure that well trained, highly qualified, culturally sensitive, spiritually mature, and spirit-filled Christians depart from our schools to serve our churches nurtured in the best of the Wesleyan-holiness theological tradition.

For this to happen we really do need to affirm and strengthen the global system of Nazarene education institutions committed to and collaborating with each other if, indeed, we will nurture and develop Christlike leaders in the nations. To this vision, the International Board of Education will commit its time, resources, and energy. We can do no less for such a noble purpose.

## *Appendix*

### *Graduate Seminaries and Theological Colleges.*

These schools offer accredited master's and/or doctoral programs with an emphasis in theological studies and ministerial preparation.

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Manila, Philippines  
Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri, USA  
Nazarene Theological College, Manchester, England  
Seminario Nazareno de las Américas, San José, Costa Rica  
Nazarene Theological College, Queensland, Australia

### *Liberal Arts Universities and Colleges with Graduate Programs.*

These schools offer accredited four-year undergraduate programs with a commitment of general education including one or more graduate programs.

Africa Nazarene University, Nairobi, Kenya  
Caribbean Nazarene College, Santa Cruz, Trinidad  
Eastern Nazarene College, Quincy, Massachusetts, USA  
Korea Nazarene University, Seoul, Korea  
MidAmerica Nazarene University, Olathe, Kansas, USA  
Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Mount Vernon, Ohio, USA  
Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa, Idaho, USA  
Olivet Nazarene University, Bourbonnais, Illinois, USA  
Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California, USA  
Southern Nazarene University, Bethany, Oklahoma, USA  
Trevecca Nazarene University, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

### *Undergraduate Liberal Arts Colleges.*

These schools offer four-year undergraduate programs with a commitment to general education.

Ambrose University College, Alberta, Canada  
Brazil Nazarene College, Campinas, Brazil

### *Undergraduate Seminaries and Theological Colleges.*

These schools offer campus and/or extension programs at certificate, diploma and bachelor's levels with an emphasis on theological studies and ministerial preparation.

European Nazarene College, Busingen, Switzerland  
Indonesia Nazarene Theological College, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
Japan Nazarene Theological Seminary, Tokyo, Japan  
Luzon Nazarene Bible College, Baguio City, Philippines

Melanesia Nazarene Bible College, Mt. Hagen, Papua New Guinea  
 Nazarene Bible College, Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA  
 Nazarene College of Theology, Siteki, Swaziland  
 Nazarene Theological College, Honeydew, South Africa  
 Seminario Biblico Nazareno, Santiago, Chile  
 Seminario Nazareno del Area Central, La Paz, Bolivia  
 Seminario Nazareno Dominicano, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic  
 Seminario Nazareno Mexicano, México  
 Seminario Teológico Nazareno, Chiclayo, Peru  
 Seminario Teológico Nazareno Cubano, Ciudad Habana, Cuba  
 Seminario Teológico Nazareno de Guatemala, Guatemala  
 Seminario Teológico Nazareno del Cono Sur, Pilar, Argentina  
 Seminario Teológico Nazareno Do Brasil, Campinas, Brazil  
 Seminario Teológico Nazareno Sudamericano, Quito, Ecuador  
 South Pacific Nazarene Theological College, Suva, Fiji  
 Southeast Asia Nazarene Bible College, Chiang Mai, Thailand  
 Taiwan Nazarene Theological College, Taiwan (inactive)  
 Visayan Nazarene Bible College, Cebu City, Philippines

*Certificate and Diploma Bible College.*

These schools offer campus-based and/or distance programs at certificate and/or diploma levels focused on theological studies and ministerial preparation.

Eastern Mediterranean Nazarene Bible College, Sin el Fil, Lebanon  
 Instituto Biblico Nazareno, Amazonas, Peru  
 Instituto Biblico Nazareno, Cobán, Guatemala  
 Nazarene Bible College of East Africa, Nairobi, Kenya  
 Nazarene Theological College of Central Africa, Lilongwe, Malawi  
 Nazarene Theological Institute, ITN/NTI, Equatorial and West Africa  
 Seminaire Theologique Nazareen D'Haiti, Petion-Ville, Haiti  
 Seminario Nazareno de Cabo Verde, Cape Verde  
 Seminário Nazareno de Mozambique, Maputo, Mozambique  
 South Asia Nazarene Bible College, Bangalore, India

*Specialized Training Schools.*

These schools offer undergraduate general education programs in specialized professional studies.

Nazarene College of Education, Manzini, Swaziland  
 Nazarene College of Nursing, Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea  
 Nazarene College of Nursing, Manzini, Swaziland  
 Nazarene Nurses Training College, Maharashtra, India

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